



ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

FEBRUARY 2026

Languages spoken in Alaska

ALSO INSIDE

The expanding role of out-of-state workers

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Lowering costs as we strengthen support for injured workers

By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner

For years, Alaska had the highest workers' compensation premiums in the country. Since 2018, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development has explored ways to make workers' compensation benefits more affordable while supporting injured workers who are able to get back to work.

The Medical Services Review Committee and the Alaska Workers' Compensation Board collaborate with Alaska's medical community to monitor and control medical spending, speed up the medical claims process, and mediate disagreements to lower the cost of medical benefits for injured working Alaskans. The committee, the board, and the Division of Workers' Compensation share the goal of supporting injured Alaskans in receiving the medical care they need and helping them return to the workforce.

According to a [2024 Oregon workers' compensation premium rate study](#), Alaska ranks in the middle among states, with costs only 6 percent higher than the national median and lower than states like New York and New Jersey. For context, Alaska's workers' compensation premium costs have declined by 38 percent since 2018.

In other news, Governor Dunleavy has proposed



exciting new legislation that will be a focus for the department during the legislative session. SB217/HB267 would make small adjustments to the employer tax for unemployment insurance, lowering tax costs for Alaska's employers while investing in career and employment training.

The new revenues invested in the State Training and Employment Program, or STEP, would allow the department to expand funding for Alaska's training providers, giving more Alaskans access to industry-recognized career training.

Lastly, I extend a warm welcome to all legislators, staff, and families who have reconvened in Juneau for the second session of the 34th Alaska State Legislature. We look forward to positive outcomes for the Alaskans we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Muñoz".

Contact Commissioner Catherine Muñoz at (907) 465-2700 or commissioner.labor@alaska.gov.



Follow the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development on X and [Facebook](#).

FEBRUARY
2026

Volume 46 Number 2
ISSN 0160-3345

SARA WHITNEY

Editor

DAN ROBINSON

Chief, Research
and Analysis

Design by Sara Whitney

ON THE COVER:

The Ati-Atihan Festival Queen performs in the July 4 parade in Juneau in 2016. Juneau Ati-Atihan is a Filipino community group that brings the flavor of one of the Philippines' largest festivals, Ati-Atihan, to Juneau events. In the Philippines, the 800-year-old festival is held in January in multiple towns in the Aklan province to celebrate the infant Jesus Christ.

Photo by Gillfoto under
[Creative Commons license](#)

**ALASKA
DEPARTMENT of LABOR
and WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

Governor
Mike Dunleavy

Commissioner
Catherine Muñoz

ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

**4 THE LANGUAGES
SPOKEN IN ALASKA**

**8 MORE NONRESIDENTS
WORKING IN ALASKA**

**12 GAUGING
THE ECONOMY**

Trends is a nonpartisan, data-driven magazine that
covers a variety of economic topics in Alaska.

ON THIS SPREAD: The background image for 2026 is by Erik Cooper under [Creative Commons license](#).

If you have questions or comments, contact the authors listed at the end of each article or the editor at sara.whitney@alaska.gov or (907) 465-6561. This material is public information, and with appropriate credit it may be reproduced without permission. To sign up for a free electronic subscription, read past issues, or purchase a print subscription, visit labor.alaska.gov/trends.

The languages spoken in Alaska

Alaska's language mix differs from the rest of the U.S.

By DAVID PHILLIPS

Alaska's unique mix of indigenous and immigrant communities has created a language use pattern unlike any other state.

About 16 percent of Alaskans primarily speak a language other than English at home, compared to 22 percent nationally.

While Alaska is slightly more English-oriented than the national average, the state has a relatively high percentage of indigenous language speakers and is one of the few states where Spanish isn't the overwhelmingly dominant second language.

Only about 3 percent of Alaskans primarily speak Spanish at home, compared to 13 percent for the U.S. That small percentage still makes Spanish the second most common language spoken in the state — but Alaska Native languages when grouped are spoken more than Spanish. (See the sidebar on page 7 for more on Native languages in these data sets.)

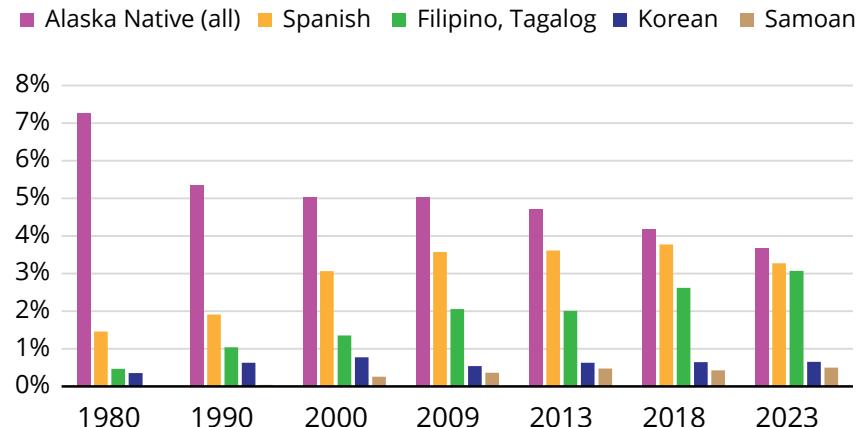
After Alaska Native languages and Spanish, the state's third most common other language is Tagalog, spoken in the Philippines. More than half of Asian Alaskans are Filipino.

How Alaska's language patterns have changed

In the 1980 Census, around 12 percent of Alaskans spoke another language at home, and the largest non-English language group was a collapsed "American Indian" category, followed by a very small Spanish-speaking population.

Besides indigenous languages and English, all other groups were tiny. They did, however, reflect some of

2023's top 5 non-English languages, over time



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial censuses through 2000 and then 5-Year American Community Surveys, for Alaska

Alaska's early immigration history, with small numbers of European languages and Tagalog. Other languages from Southeast Asia were virtually absent.

German ranked fourth in 1980, at just under 1 percent and about half as common as Spanish. French was sixth, roughly tied with Tagalog at a fraction of a percent.

Alaska's language mix changed dramatically between 1980 and 2023, the most recent data year available from the Census Bureau. (See the exhibit above.)

English remains the most common by far, but its primary use fell from 87 percent to 84 percent.

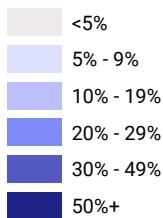
The share for Alaska Native — including Native American — languages also declined, from 7 percent in 1980 to 4 percent in 2023.

Spanish jumped from 1 percent to a little over 3 percent. Tagalog use grew considerably and is now about as common as Spanish in Alaska.

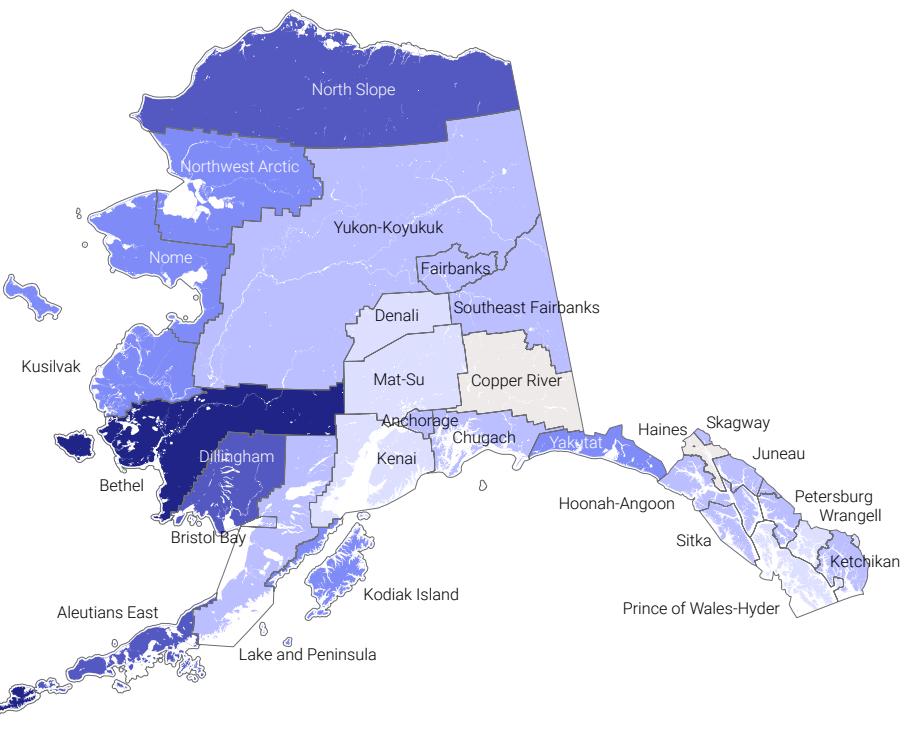
Hmong and Samoan, which were not listed in the 1980 Census, ranked among the 10 most common languages in Alaska by 2023. Hmong, or Miao, is spoken in southern China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand.

The percentage who speak another language at home by area, 2023

Speaks non-English language at home



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey, 2019-2023



The most common other European language in Alaska is now Russian, in eighth place in 2023. German was ninth, but German and Russian each represented less than 1 percent.

Language in the U.S. and the dominance of Spanish

More immigration from Latin America and Asia, as well as the dwindling use of European languages aside from English and Spanish, have also been national trends.

In 1980, roughly 89 percent of Americans spoke English at home and 5 percent spoke Spanish. Other European languages were common as a second language in the U.S. at that time, with Italian, German, and French rounding out the top five.

By 2023, like Alaska, the U.S. top five had no European languages aside from English and Spanish. The most prominent, in seventh place, was French. Spanish use in the U.S. climbed to 13 percent.

As mentioned above, as an individual language spoken at home, Spanish ranks second in Alaska

but its dominance is narrow, with Tagalog nearly as common after its use grew much faster than Spanish. Nationally and in almost every other state, however, no other second language comes close to Spanish.

The only states without Spanish as a strong second language are Maine and Hawaii. French is second for Maine, which borders Quebec. In Hawaii, it's Tagalog, which is even more common than Hawaiian. Only about 2 percent speak Hawaiian at home, and Spanish doesn't even rank in the top five in Hawaii.

Patterns for Alaska Native and Native American languages

The Census Bureau shows a static trend for indigenous languages in Alaska. The number of primary speakers has fluctuated, but it appeared to peak in 2010 and has declined slightly since.

Relative to 1980, the number of people in Alaska speaking an Alaska Native or Native American language now is about the same, although the proportion has declined as more international languages have entered the mix.

Primary languages spoken by area in Alaska, 2023

Area	English	Non-English	Breakdown of non-English			
			Spanish	Other Indo-Euro	Asian/Pac Isl	Other
Alaska	84%	16%	3%	2%	6%	4%
Aleutians East Borough	60%	40%	9%	6%	21%	5%
Aleutians West Census Area	44%	56%	9%	5%	37%	5%
Anchorage Municipality	82%	18%	5%	2%	9%	2%
Bethel Census Area	40%	60%	0%	1%	2%	56%
Bristol Bay Borough	84%	16%	3%	4%	5%	4%
Chugach Census Area	86%	14%	3%	2%	7%	1%
Copper River Census Area	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Denali Borough	91%	9%	2%	3%	4%	0%
Dillingham Census Area	62%	38%	1%	3%	1%	33%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	90%	10%	4%	2%	3%	2%
Haines Borough	96%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	85%	15%	3%	2%	1%	9%
Juneau City and Borough	89%	11%	3%	0%	5%	2%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	93%	7%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	89%	11%	2%	1%	7%	1%
Kodiak Island Borough	73%	27%	4%	2%	18%	2%
Kusilvak Census Area	73%	27%	2%	0%	0%	25%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	87%	13%	0%	1%	3%	9%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	94%	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Nome Census Area	75%	25%	1%	1%	2%	21%
North Slope Borough	63%	37%	4%	2%	7%	24%
Northwest Arctic Borough	74%	26%	1%	0%	3%	22%
Petersburg Borough	83%	17%	4%	2%	10%	1%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	93%	7%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Sitka City and Borough	87%	13%	4%	1%	6%	1%
Skagway Municipality	83%	17%	5%	9%	2%	2%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	85%	15%	2%	8%	2%	3%
Wrangell City and Borough	93%	7%	1%	0%	4%	2%
Yakutat City and Borough	79%	21%	2%	5%	9%	5%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	86%	14%	1%	0%	2%	11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey, 2019-2023

Combined Native American languages are the third most common category in five states: New Mexico, Arizona, South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming.

As far as where speakers of indigenous American languages live, Arizona is first, home to 29 percent of all Native American language speakers in the country. New Mexico is second at about 23 percent, followed by Alaska at 7 percent.

Arizona and New Mexico have two corners of the Four Corners region, the vast ancestral homeland of the Navajo, Hopi, Ute, and Zuni. The Navajo reservation is the largest in the United States.

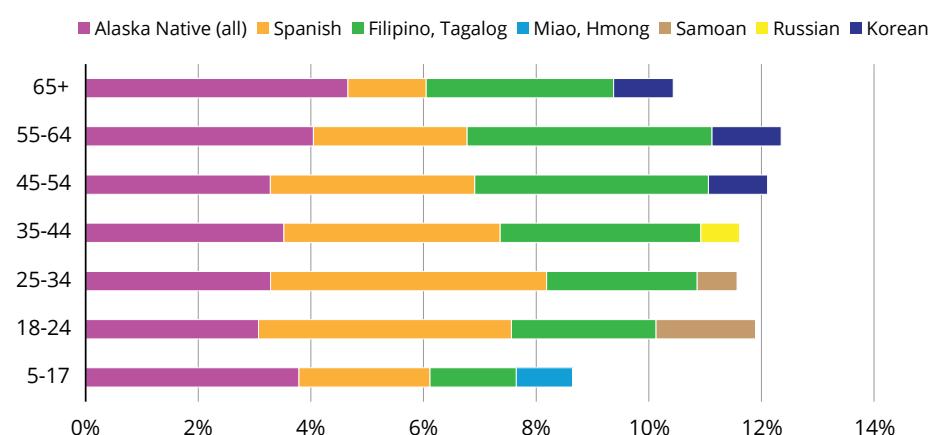
What is spoken around Alaska

By area, northern and western Alaska have the highest proportions of people primarily speaking a language other than English at home, and they are the majorities in the Bethel and Aleutians West census areas. (See the map on the previous page and the table on the left.)

Language data at the local level are less detailed and reliable than at the state level. The only categories available are English, Spanish, other Indo-European languages, Asian and Pacific Islander languages, and "other" languages.

In the Bethel Census Area, 56 percent speak a language in the "other"

Top languages vary by age group in Alaska, 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey, 2019-2023

category, which includes all Native American and Alaska Native languages. That reflects both the Alaska Native majority in that part of Alaska and the focus on learning, teaching, and using Native languages.

The Aleutians West Census Area, on the other hand, shows 37 percent speaking an Asian or Pacific Islander language, 9 percent speaking Spanish, and 5 percent speaking another Indo-European language. The area has a diverse commercial fishing industry and immigrant populations in fishing communities such as Unalaska.

Among urban areas, Anchorage has the largest share of primary non-English speakers, with 18 percent speaking a language other than English at home.

All other urban boroughs have a higher percentage of solely English speakers than statewide. Only about 6 percent of Mat-Su residents mainly speak a different language, followed by Kenai at 7 percent, Fairbanks at 10 percent, and Juneau at 11 percent.

The most common languages differ by age group in Alaska

The difference in primary languages by age group in Alaska also reflects the shifts in immigration over time, shown in the exhibit at the bottom of the previous page.

About 88 percent of kids in Alaska, ages 5 to 17, speak primarily English at home. Native languages are second, followed by Spanish, Tagalog, and Hmong. Hmong only made the top five for the youngest age group, and a plurality of Alaskan Hmong speakers are under 18.

Among young adults and younger middle-aged adults, Spanish is the second most common language in Alaska. In the 45-to-54-year-old group, Tagalog surpasses Spanish for second place.

The higher rates for Tagalog and Spanish in Alaska's middle age groups reflect immigration patterns among generations, where immigrants

About the data

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's decennial censuses and American Community Survey on languages spoken at home are for ages 5 and older. These numbers are for individuals who primarily speak a different language in their home, but it does not mean they don't speak English.

Categorizing Alaska Native languages

Alaska Native languages are typically grouped in Census data collections, including with other Native American languages. Native American languages in general have been inconsistently grouped and labeled over the decades.

The only detailed breakdown of individual Native languages in Alaska came during the 1990 Census, and it was an inconsistent list with some mislabeled or misspelled categories.

The 1990 Census showed Alaska Natives speaking primarily Yupik. "Inupik/Innuit" was a distant second, at less than half the Yupik speakers, followed in order by "Eskimo," "Athapascan," Aleut, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Kuchin, Tsimshian, Apache, Koyukon, and Tanaina.

from Latin America and the Philippines are likely to speak their first language at home while their children are more likely to speak English first.

Native languages are the second most common among Alaskans over age 65, at 5 percent.

Older Alaskans speak Spanish at a much lower rate than other age groups — only about 1 percent — and 3 percent speak Tagalog, which is similar to middle-aged Alaskans.

About 1 percent of Alaskans 45 and older speak Korean, a language that doesn't make the top five for any other age group.

David Phillips is a research analyst with the population unit at Research and Analysis. Reach him in Juneau at (907) 465-5970 or david.phillips@alaska.gov.

Nonresident workers on the rise

Residents in short supply as working-age numbers decline

By ROB KREIGER

A decade-long decline in Alaska's working-age population is making it harder to find residents to fill positions. To bridge the gap, employers are hiring more workers from outside the state.

In 2024, the most recent year available, more nonresidents were working in Alaska than at any other time since 1990, when we began producing consistent residency data. That broke the record set in 2023.

After a historic drop in 2020, the number of nonresident workers rose quickly, far outpacing the increase in Alaskans. Since the pandemic, the number of workers from elsewhere has jumped by 35.4 percent, while residents have increased by just 1.7 percent.

Why patterns differ from the past

The fact that nonresidents are increasing faster than residents isn't unusual; that's happened many times over the last 35 years. Historically, changes in the nonresident percentage were mostly driven by fluctuations in the industries that rely on them most.

Seasonal seafood processing and project-based spikes in oil and gas, mining, and construction are examples. Since the pandemic, however, *most* major industries have been hiring more nonresidents, not just those that have always relied on them.

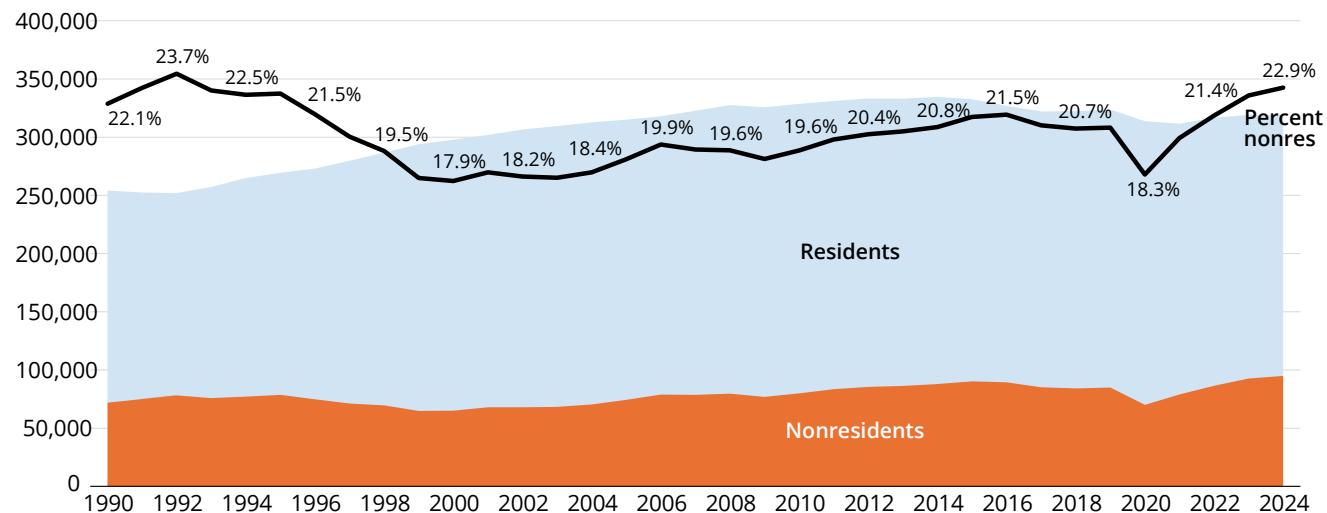
A long decline in the number of Alaskans aged 18 to 64 is driving the shortage. Our 2024 population estimates show the prime working-age population fell to 449,171, its lowest level since 2008. The group has gotten smaller nearly every year since peaking at 483,403 people in 2013.

The nonresident hiring trend is unlikely to ease in the coming years, because the working-age decline stems from Alaska's population getting older overall and more people leaving the state than moving in for more than a decade. While population aging is a given, migration patterns could change — but without more working-age people moving to Alaska, employers leaning on outside labor will become the new normal.

Recent highs and what drove them

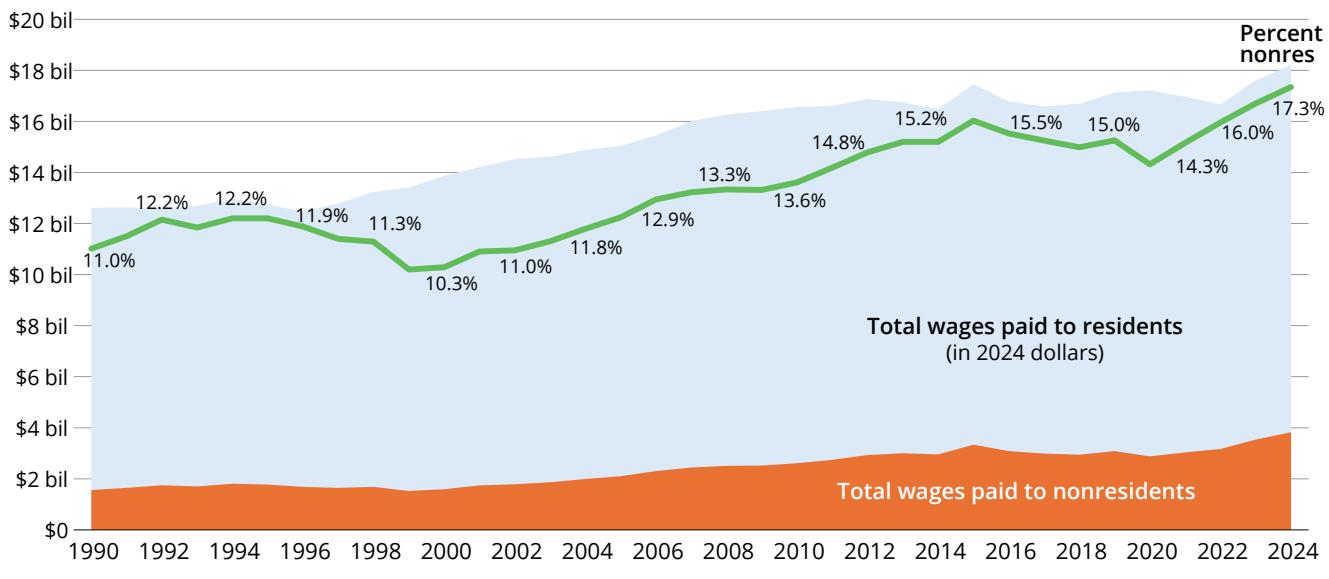
In 2024, 94,859 nonresidents worked in Alaska, the

Nonresident share of workers at highest level since the early 1990s



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Nonresident share of Alaska wages has climbed since the pandemic



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

highest number since data collection began. Their percentage of the workforce hit 22.9 percent, the second-highest on record. (The highest was 23.7 percent in 1992.)

Nonresidents' wages also hit new highs, overall and proportionally. They earned \$3.8 billion in 2024, taking in 17.3 percent of all wages paid in Alaska.

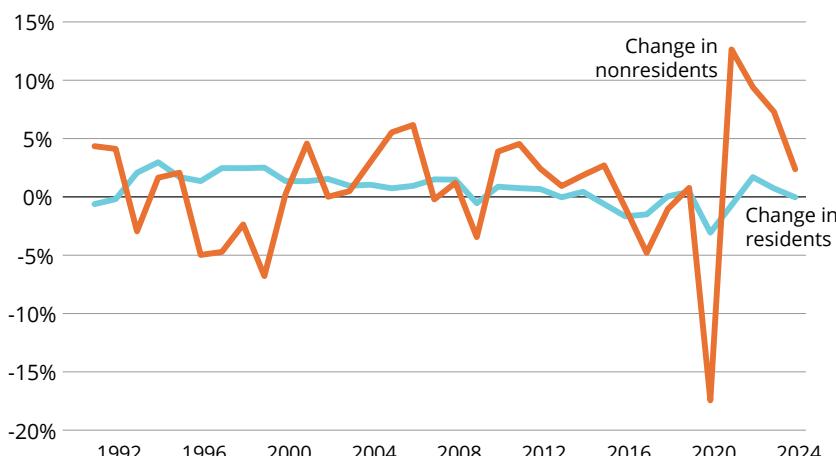
While more nonresident hiring was widespread, the largest increases came in the oil and gas and construction industries. Nonresident counts jumped by 19.4 percent and 18.6 percent in those

industries, respectively, driven by growing activity on the North Slope.

The pandemic was a turning point because many of the hardest-hit industries were those that have historically relied most on nonresidents. Seafood processing was one, and visitor-related industries also suffered major losses in 2020. As operations slowly resumed in 2021, a wave of nonresidents rejoined the workforce. The surge continued as resident worker growth remained sluggish.

Seafood processing is a notable exception to the post-COVID hiring trajectory, and it was an outlier among industries in recent years as the industry weathered major changes and challenges. Seafood processing has always had the highest concentration of nonresidents, at about 80 percent, but its nonresident and resident counts both dropped in 2024.

Yearly change in resident, nonresident workers



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Resident numbers slow to bounce back

Alaska had 319,008 working residents in 2024, down a tenth of a percentage point from the year before but slightly up from 2020. The resident count

Wages paid to residents and nonresidents by industry, 2023 and 2024

Industry	2023			2024			Change in residents	Pct chg, residents	Chg in nonres	Pct chg, nonres
	Residents	Nonres	Percent nonres	Residents	Nonres	Percent nonres				
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	1,694	989	36.9%	1,672	984	37.0%	-22	-1.3%	-5	-0.5%
Mining, Quarrying, Oil/Gas Extraction	9,133	5,823	38.9%	9,384	6,621	41.4%	251	2.7%	798	13.7%
Oil and Gas	5,924	3,538	37.4%	6,209	4,226	40.5%	285	4.8%	688	19.4%
Utilities	2,771	217	7.3%	2,779	236	7.8%	8	0.3%	19	8.8%
Construction	20,380	5,393	20.9%	20,931	6,395	23.4%	551	2.7%	1,002	18.6%
Manufacturing	8,264	19,172	69.9%	8,135	16,679	67.2%	-129	-1.6%	-2,493	-13.0%
Seafood Processing	3,765	18,087	82.8%	3,493	15,348	81.5%	-272	-7.2%	-2,739	-15.1%
Wholesale Trade	6,543	807	11.0%	6,540	899	12.1%	-3	0%	92	11.4%
Retail Trade	38,864	6,683	14.7%	37,585	6,913	15.5%	-1,279	-3.3%	230	3.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	20,178	9,113	31.1%	20,712	9,277	30.9%	534	2.6%	164	1.8%
Air Transportation	6,019	2,431	28.8%	6,012	2,314	27.8%	-7	-0.1%	-117	-4.8%
Information	4,672	680	12.7%	4,366	628	12.6%	-306	-6.5%	-52	-7.6%
Finance and Insurance	6,611	537	7.5%	6,408	614	8.7%	-203	-3.1%	77	14.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,130	753	12.8%	5,078	835	14.1%	-52	-1.0%	82	10.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Svcs	12,846	3,316	20.5%	12,883	3,639	22.0%	37	0.3%	323	9.7%
Mgmt of Companies and Enterprises	1,979	165	7.7%	2,071	209	9.2%	92	4.6%	44	26.7%
Admin, Support, Waste Mgmt/Remediation	13,339	4,249	24.2%	13,516	4,638	25.5%	177	1.3%	389	9.2%
Educational Services	2,612	580	18.2%	2,602	569	17.9%	-10	-0.4%	-11	-1.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	50,458	7,797	13.4%	51,377	7,921	13.4%	919	1.8%	124	1.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5,059	2,972	37.0%	5,080	3,136	38.2%	21	0.4%	164	5.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	29,348	14,213	32.6%	28,637	14,957	34.3%	-711	-2.4%	744	5.2%
Accommodation	6,478	7,100	52.3%	6,136	7,248	54.2%	-342	-5.3%	148	2.1%
Food Services and Drinking Places	22,827	7,098	23.7%	22,501	7,709	25.5%	-326	-1.4%	611	8.6%
Other Services (except Public Admin)	11,631	2,088	15.2%	11,705	2,270	16.2%	74	0.6%	182	8.7%
Public Administration	181	24	11.7%	158	31	16.4%	-23	-12.7%	7	29.2%
Local Government	44,711	4,453	9.1%	44,042	4,658	9.6%	-669	-1.5%	205	4.6%
State Government	22,314	2,421	9.8%	23,051	2,614	10.2%	737	3.3%	193	8.0%
Other/Unknown	394	219	35.7%	296	136	31.5%	-98	-24.9%	-83	-37.9%
Total	319,112	92,664	22.5%	319,008	94,859	22.9%	-104	0%	2,195	2.4%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

remained under its pre-pandemic level, however, and well below the 2014 peak of 334,628.

Resident numbers were slow to resume growing while the nonresident count rebounded, but even as the pandemic shockwaves subsided, the number of resident workers grew only slightly in 2022 and 2023, then dipped again in 2024.

How aging, migration are driving the working-age loss trend

As mentioned above, the number of people in their prime working ages in Alaska, 18 to 64, has declined almost every year since peaking at 483,403 in 2013. By 2024, that group had decreased by about 34,000 (7 percent).

Although the idea that fewer working-age people means fewer workers is straightforward, the reasons behind it and why it will persist are important to understand.

The March 2023 issue of *Trends*, which discussed the

working-age decline in more detail, identified two primary reasons for the systemic decline.

The first is net migration loss. Net migration is the number of people who move to Alaska in a given year minus the number who leave. Alaska's net migration has been negative for 13 straight years.

The second reason is an aging population, a nationwide phenomenon linked to the sizes of current generations. More people are leaving the workforce each year as they reach retirement age, and fewer are aging into their working years to replace them. Demographers predict this trajectory will reverse around 2030. The working-age population in Alaska will resume growing slowly through the mid-2040s, then decline again as the millennial generation reaches retirement age.

Over the next few years, a shift in migration patterns could stabilize the working-age population or even bump it up. But barring a massive influx of working-age movers, Alaska employers face ongoing difficulty finding workers.

Hiring more nonresidents has been the clear

response so far, although some employers are finding resident workers in other age groups.

Another approach to hiring has its limits

Employers have always had to hire outside Alaska for some positions, especially those requiring specialized skills or experience. But to fill some jobs, employers are leaning on teenagers and older Alaskans. (See the October 2025 issue of *Trends*.)

Teens aged 14 to 17 have historically represented a tiny slice of Alaska's workforce, but after the pandemic, their number and percentage rose.

Although teens are limited in their hours and types of work, especially if they're under 16, they can fill many low-skill, entry-level jobs. Their wages have also increased significantly, a sign that businesses need them and are willing to pay more to get them.

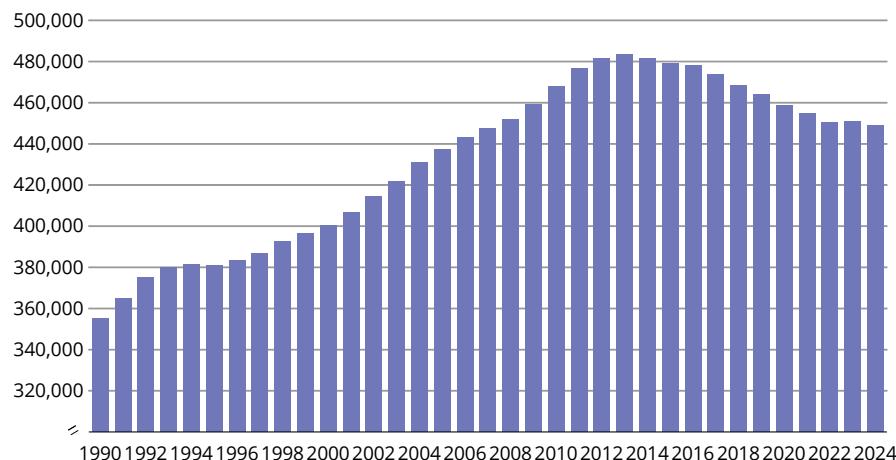
Alaskans over 65 are another source. In 2023, seniors represented a larger percentage of the resident workforce than they had in 20 years.

Unlike teens, older people can fill a wide range of jobs. In some cases, employers are enticing older workers to stay in their careers longer, with higher pay for hard-to-fill positions. In other cases, people over 65 keep working for economic reasons: insufficient retirement funds or the need for supplemental income.

These two age groups may boost the worker pool over time, but given their limits and small representation in Alaska's workforce — 4 percent for teens and 6 percent for seniors — hiring nonresidents will likely remain the primary way to address the working-age decline in the near future.

Rob Kreiger is an economist in Juneau. Reach him at (907) 465-6031 or rob.kreiger@alaska.gov.

Alaska working-age population on long decline



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

About the data

A person is considered a resident for our annual *Nonresidents Working in Alaska* report, on which this article is based, if they applied for an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend in either of the two most recent years. To be eligible for a dividend, someone must live in the state for a full calendar year, a more rigorous criterion than what's required to register to vote or obtain a license to drive, hunt, or fish.

To determine residency, we match PFD applicants with quarterly reports Alaska employers file as required by state unemployment insurance laws. They include the employer's industry and the workers' occupations, wages, and place of work. Federal workers, the military, and the self-employed are not part of those wage records because they are not covered by state unemployment insurance laws.

People who are Alaska residents by other definitions — those who have recently moved to Alaska, bought or rented a home, registered to vote, and obtained an Alaska driver's license — will initially be identified as nonresidents in this data set. Nonresident workers in this article are, in other words, a combination of new residents and nonresidents who work in the state but primarily live in another state. Some of the new arrivals won't stay long enough to meet the PFD criteria for residency, but some will. More detail is available in the full report.

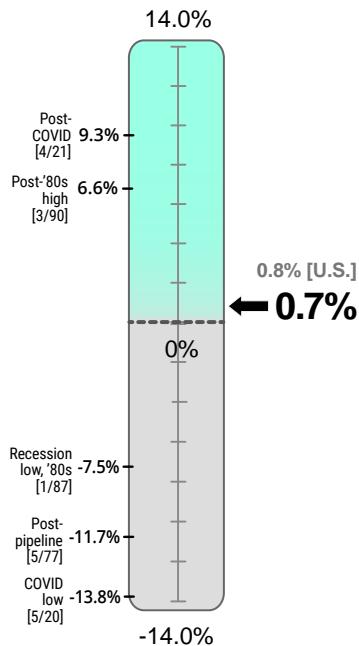
Because the PFD is unique among states and so popular — nearly every eligible person in Alaska applies — Alaska is the only state that can publish such a comprehensive report on working nonresidents. Other states could use driver's licenses or voter registration information to get a partial accounting of nonresidents working in their state, but neither of those sources would be nearly as complete as PFD applications.

Gauging The Economy

----- ALASKA'S
 10-YR AVERAGE
 ← CURRENT ALASKA
 ← CURRENT U.S.

Job Growth

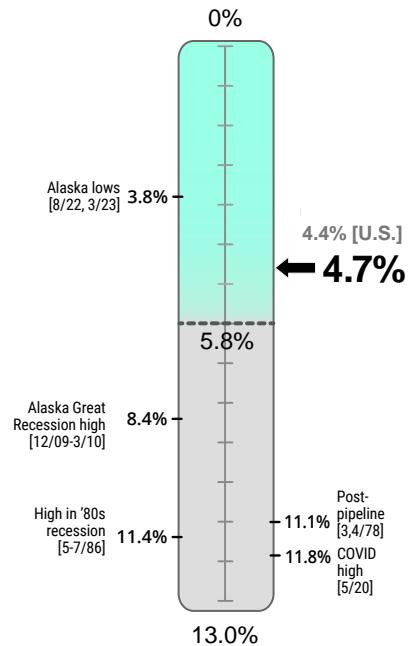
November 2025
Over-the-year percent change



Alaska's November employment was 0.7 percent above last November. U.S. employment was up by 0.8 percent.

Unemployment Rate

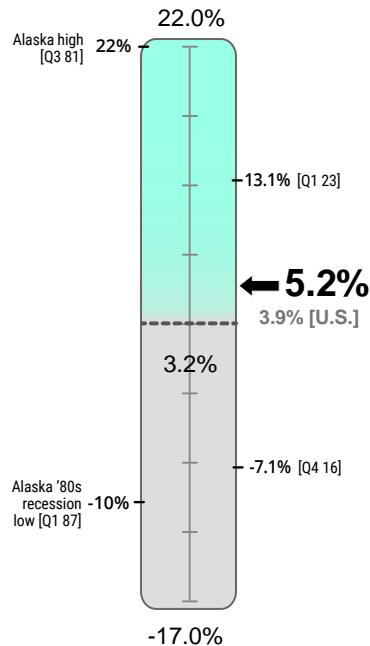
November 2025
Seasonally adjusted



Alaska's unemployment rate has climbed about one percentage point since mid-2022 but remains well below its 10-year average.

Wage Growth

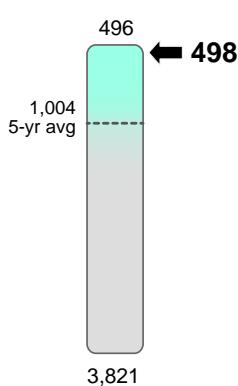
2nd Quarter 2025
Over-the-year percent change



Total wages paid by Alaska employers have shown strong growth in recent quarters.

Initial Claims

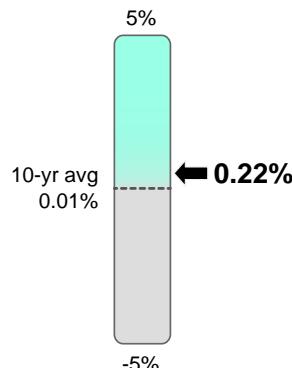
Unemployment, week ending Jan. 10, 2026*



*Four-week moving average ending with specified week

Population Growth

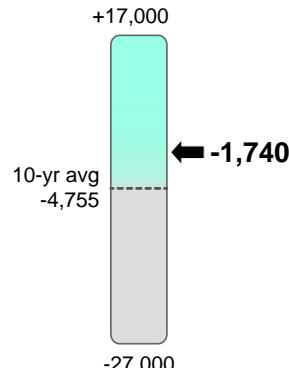
2024 to 2025



After an overall population loss from 2021 to 2022, Alaska's population has grown slightly over each of the last three years.

Net Migration

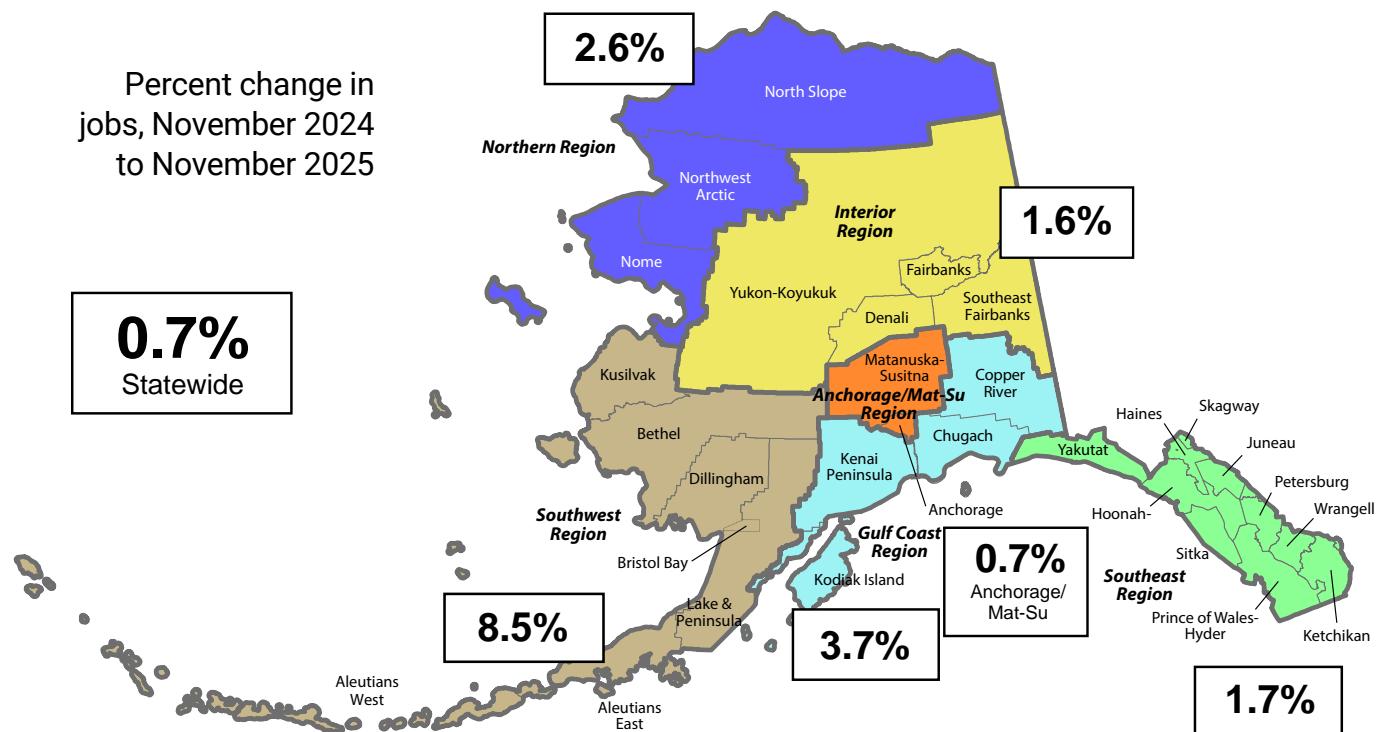
2024 to 2025



Net migration is the number who moved to Alaska minus the number who left.

Employment Growth by Region

Percent change in jobs, November 2024 to November 2025



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	11/25	10/25*	11/24
United States	4.6	-	4.2
Alaska	4.7	-	4.7

Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	11/25	10/25*	11/24
United States	4.3	-	4.0
Alaska	5	-	4.9

*Data were not collected during the federal government shutdown.

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.			Revised				Prelim.			Revised				
	11/25	10/25*	11/24	11/25	10/25*	11/24		11/25	10/25*	11/24	11/25	10/25*	11/24		
Interior Region	5.0	-	4.7	Southwest Region	9.6	-	9.5	Southeast Region	4.9	-	4.8	Gulf Coast Region	5.9	-	6.0
Denali Borough	9.9	-	9.5	Aleutians East Borough	5.9	-	5.0	Haines Borough	11.8	-	9.7	Kenai Peninsula Borough	5.8	-	5.8
Fairbanks N Star Borough	4.5	-	4.3	Aleutians West Census Area	4.1	-	5.2	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	8.9	-	7.9	Kodiak Island Borough	4.7	-	4.7
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	7.0	-	5.9	Bethel Census Area	10.6	-	10.3	Juneau, City and Borough	3.7	-	3.8	Dillingham Census Area	8.1	-	8.8
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	9.8	-	9.6	Bristol Bay Borough	6.4	-	8.8	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.7	-	4.8	Kusilvak Census Area	15.9	-	15.4
Northern Region	7.1	-	6.3	Dillingham Census Area	8.1	-	8.8	Petersburg Borough	5.6	-	7.2	Lake and Peninsula Borough	7.6	-	7.7
Nome Census Area	9.4	-	7.7	Kusilvak Census Area	15.9	-	15.4	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	9.0	-	8.3	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	7.6	-	7.7
North Slope Borough	3.6	-	3.8	Kenai Peninsula Borough	5.8	-	5.8	Sitka, City and Borough	3.2	-	3.0	Skagway, Municipality	16.3	-	14.5
Northwest Arctic Borough	11.1	-	9.1	Kodiak Island Borough	4.7	-	5.9	Wrangell, City and Borough	5.1	-	5.4	Chugach Census Area	7.8	-	6.7
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	4.4	-	4.2	Copper River Census Area	8.6	-	9.4	Yakutat, City and Borough	5.7	-	6.2				
Anchorage, Municipality	4.1	-	3.9												
Mat-Su Borough	5.2	-	5.1												

How Alaska Ranks

Unemployment Rate¹



*Tied with Kentucky and Mass.

Job Growth²



*Tied with Ariz., Co., Fla., In., and La

Job Growth, Private²



Job Growth, Government²



*Tied with Montana

Job Growth, Leisure and Hospitality²



Note: Government employment includes federal, state, and local government plus public schools and universities.

¹November seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

²November employment, over-the-year percent change

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Other Economic Indicators

	Current	Year ago	Change
Urban Alaska Consumer Price Index (CPI-U, base: 1982-84=100)	273.487	2nd half 2025	268.039
Commodity prices			
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	\$62.71	Dec 2025	\$71.66
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$4.39	Dec 2025	\$3.41
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$4,908.80	1/22/25	\$2,767.60
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$95.98	1/22/25	\$31.24
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$5.74	12/22/25	\$4.27
Bankruptcies**			
Business	71	Q3 2025	56
Personal	8	Q3 2025	14
	63	Q3 2025	42
Unemployment insurance claims			
Initial filings	3,405	Dec 2025	3,319
Continued filings	27,462	Dec 2025	30,964
Claimant count	6,696	Dec 2025	6,894

*Department of Revenue estimate

**Third quarter would typically be available now but is delayed because of the federal government shutdown.

Sources for this page and the preceding three pages include Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Bloomberg; U.S. Census Bureau; Yahoo Finance; COMEX; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Mat-Su Employer Expo: Building the workforce pipeline

The Mat-Su Job Center will host the [2026 Mat-Su Employer Expo](#) on Wednesday, March 25, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Menard Center in Wasilla. This free, community-wide event will connect employers, job seekers, students, and workforce partners to explore career pathways and job opportunities across the Mat-Su Borough and surrounding area.

The expo supports the department's workforce planning efforts and statewide initiatives focused on Alaska's youth while welcoming participants of all ages and experience levels. Employers from multiple industries will be available to discuss hiring needs, career pathways, and advancement opportunities.

School districts are invited to participate, expanding on student involvement from 2025 and encouraging early exposure to career options. The event will include apprenticeships and careers in the trades, reflecting a growing emphasis on skilled trades and college alternatives. Attendees can learn about

earn-while-you-learn opportunities, hands-on training, and industry-recognized credentials.

To ensure equitable access to career exploration opportunities, the department is reaching out to organizations working with at-risk and homeschool students and the school district to encourage these students to attend and to provide transportation.

Colony High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps students will assist as event volunteers.

Lunch and snacks will be provided for registered employers, and sponsorship opportunities are available. For additional information or to register as an employer, contact the Mat-Su Job Center at: (907) 352-2500 or [register online](#).

Employer Resources is provided by the Employment and Training Services Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

SAFETY MINUTE

Free safety and health guides, services for employers

With safety training, workers can recognize and control [Construction Focus Four Hazards](#): outlined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration: fall hazards, caught-in or -between hazards, struck-by hazards, and electrocution.

In 2023, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, an active national alliance with OSHA, put out additional specific guidance to complement the Focus Four. The [Focus Four for Health: An Initiative to Address Four Major Construction Health Hazards Guidance Document](#) informs managers, foremen, and workers of common and serious health hazards in the construction industry: manual material handling, noise, air contaminants and high temperatures.

If you have a business in Alaska with fewer than 250 employees, the [Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Training](#) section of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development also offers a free, confidential consultation to help you identify and address safety and health hazards

or establish/improve safety and health programs. After an initial visit, you can request free noise or air sampling or a review of material handling practices to help you select appropriate [hazard controls](#) and inform your [job hazard analysis](#) decisions.

Additional resources:

- [OSHA Active National Alliances and Ambassadors: American Industrial Hygiene Association](#)
- [OSHA Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs, Hazard Prevention, and Control](#)
- [OSHA Blog: Six steps to an effective job hazard analysis](#)
- [Alaska Occupational Safety and Health website](#)
- [Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Training request form](#)

This Safety Minute was provided by Rod Bracken at the Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Training Section of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. For more information on keeping your employees safe, please visit [labor.alaska.gov/lss/oshhome.htm](#).