

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Charting a new path to a strong economy and workforce

By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner

Earlier this year, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Alaska Safety Alliance, with support from the Denali Commis-

sion, published a new workforce plan. *Alaska's Workforce Future* was driven by surveys of Alaska's industries, unions, job seekers, and young Alaskans.

Alaska's Workforce Future sets new goals and strategies to advance Alaska's workforce as we seek to grow the economy and partner with industries to provide well-paying jobs for Alaskans.

Goals include enhancing career awareness and pathways, developing a skilled and qualified workforce, retaining Alaskans and attracting

new residents, fostering regional workforce development, improving infrastructure and access to support services (such as housing, transportation, and child care), and ensuring sustainability and continuity of workforce development efforts.

Later this month, the Alaska Safety Alliance's Business Education Compact will convene workforce development leaders from across the state to implement *Alaska's Workforce Future*. The convening

will follow the Alaska Career and Technical Education Conference, Alaska's largest annual gathering of CTE educators in the state. You can register for the BEC Workforce Convening here or find the link on the Alaska Safety Alliance's homepage.

Our department's Alaska Workforce Investment Board will keep this momentum going in November by bringing Alaska's vocational training providers together. Regional training providers play a vital role in preparing Alaskans for employment or careers in their regions and meeting local employment demands.

Leaders across Alaska are committed to working together to meet Alaska's workforce development goals and help grow our economy. This requires frequent check-ins and small tweaks to ensure we're on the right track. Your feedback is a critical

part of the process, and I encourage you to get involved in this exciting effort.

Sincerely,

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

atherine Muin

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ON THE COVER:

A female bear and her cubs walk near a red elderberry bush on the edge of a cliff on Kodiak Island. Photo by Lisa Hupp, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LAF

DEPARTMENT of LABOR and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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

ON THIS SPREAD: The background image for 2025 is a panorama of snowy tundra at Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.

Photo by Lisa Hupp, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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.

Growing role of workers over 65

Numbers, share of workforce on a 20-year upward trend

By KARINNE WIEBOLD

A lthough Alaska residents who are 65 or older and still working make up a small percentage of the state's resident workforce, the percentage has more than tripled in the last 20 years.

Two separate trends are contributing to the increase. First, much of the unusually large baby boomer cohort — people born between 1946 and 1964 — has moved into the 65-plus age group. So one reason the percentage of 65-plus workers has increased is simply that the share of the total population that is over 65 has increased.

Second, migration-related losses and lower birth rates have reduced the working-age population, ages 18 to 64, over the last decade. In 2013, Alaska had 32,500 more working-age people than it had in 2023.

Pandemic years saw different patterns for U.S., Alaska seniors

Although seniors make up a larger share of the workforce, that doesn't mean a higher percentage

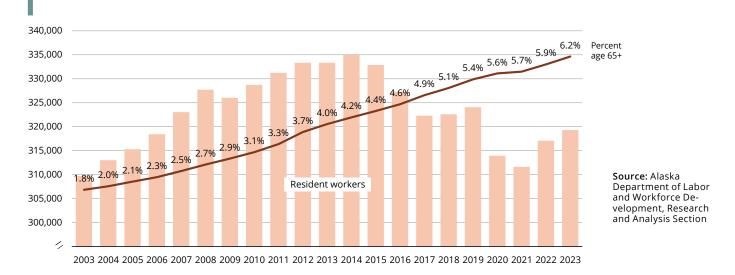
are working. Labor force participation across the board fell nationally at the beginning of the pandemic, but unlike other age groups, U.S. seniors haven't fully returned. Retirement is "sticky," meaning that once people retire, they usually don't reenter the labor force. Health and safety may have been a primary concern for older workers early on in the pandemic, but that had largely subsided by 2023.

Some seniors don't have a financial need to return. The baby boomer generation that's straddling the work/retirement fence has more financial assets than other age groups, and in the last several years, their home prices, stock portfolios, and retirement accounts have fared unusually well despite the pandemic disruptions. They are also more likely than younger generations to have a pension, another source of stable income.

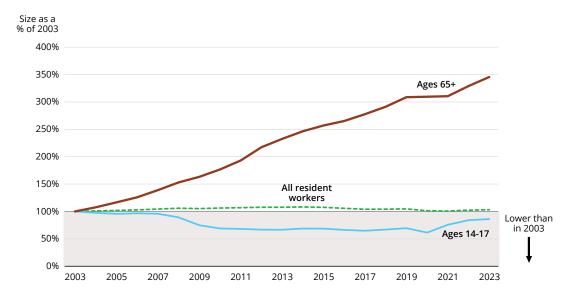
From 2019 to 2021, the number of workers over 65 held steady as Alaska's total resident worker count fell by 12,400. As a result, seniors became a larger share of the state's workforce.

However, because the total *population* over 65 increased while the number of seniors working stayed the same, the percentage of people over 65 who were working actually declined.

65-and-older share of resident workforce is on a long-term rise



Resident worker group sizes as a percentage of their 2003 counts



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

Most working seniors are younger, concentrated in certain industries

The median age of Alaska's working seniors is 68. Wages and the number of workers generally decline after 65.

Mirroring Alaska's overall workforce, most seniors are in the private sector. Private-sector industries with the highest senior percentages are private education, manufacturing, and arts, entertainment, and recreation.

Seafood processing drives the high number of seniors in manufacturing, especially in Kodiak, where 20 percent of processing workers are 65 or older. Ten other small communities' resident seafood processing workforces are over 10 percent seniors, although seafood processing relies mainly on out-ofstate workers.

By sector, local governments employ the most seniors overall. They also have one of the highest senior percentages, mainly in public schools. If we exclude school districts, local government is just over the statewide average of 6.2 percent for its senior share. Schools are much higher (9 percent).

A noteworthy industry for its *number* of seniors is health care and private social assistance (more than 3,300). Health care employment has risen steadily for decades and shows no signs of slowing. The industry

Workers age 65+ by industry, 2023

	Percent seniors	Number of seniors
Total	6%	19,697
Local Government (incl Public Schools)	8%	3,414
Health Care and Social Assistance	7%	3,323
Retail Trade	6%	2,249
Transportation and Warehousing	7%	1,466
State Government	6%	1,351
Accommodation and Food Services	4%	1,034
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Svcs	7%	940
Admin, Support, Waste Mgmt/Remediation	7%	897
Construction	4%	892
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6%	720
Manufacturing	8%	684
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	4%	404
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8%	392
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7%	381
Wholesale Trade	6%	363
Information	6%	284
Finance and Insurance	4%	276
Educational Services	9%	234
Utilities	5%	136
Management of Companies and Enterprises	7%	133
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5%	92
Unknown/Unavailable/Other	5%	32

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

has also struggled to hire, especially since the pandemic.

The State of Alaska, which has also grappled with staffing issues in recent years, employed more than 1,300 older workers in 2023: 800 in general government and 500-plus at the University of Alaska.

Similar to local government, general state government is on par with the Alaska average while schools are higher. Ten percent of the University of Alaska's workforce is over 65.

Older workers span many occupations

Unlike young workers, who are concentrated in just a few types of work, workers over 65 show up in hundreds of occupations.

Retail sales worker is the top occupational category for seniors, followed by health practitioners, office/administrative support, and teachers. When grouped, health ca

teachers. When grouped, health care and teaching stand out, as do office and transportation work.

Seniors make up just 4 percent of construction and extraction workers, but there are still hundreds in these and other physically demanding jobs.

Top 25 occupations for older workers, 2023

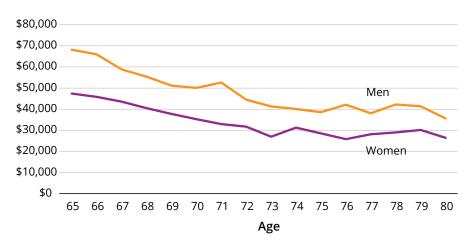
	Workers 65+	Avg wage
Retail Sales Workers	1,378	\$24,598
Health Care Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	811	\$95,952
Other Office and Administrative Support Workers	809	\$35,893
Other Teachers and Instructors	774	\$22,140
Motor Vehicle Operators	746	\$39,289
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	731	\$29,136
Top Executives	720	\$103,668
Home/Personal Care Aides; Nursing Assts, Orderlies	692	\$27,510
Information and Record Clerks	691	\$26,812
Construction Trades Workers	664	\$47,383
Other Management Occupations	607	\$78,591
Material Moving Workers	525	\$42,166
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	485	\$38,001
Counselors and Social Workers	484	\$49,102
Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	466	\$50,838
Financial Clerks	444	\$42,350
Other Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	422	\$23,879
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	407	\$26,794
Food Processing Workers	363	\$34,554
Postsecondary Teachers	357	\$43,308
Business Operations Specialists	329	\$66,933
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	318	\$23,265
Other Personal Care and Service Workers	298	\$17,711
Preschool, Elem, Middle, Secondary, Spec Ed Teachers	297	\$55,743
Operations Specialties Managers	291	\$85,818
Other Protective Service Workers	267	\$32,417

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

Men earn more, and the gap is wider among seniors

Women represent just over half of working seniors, but men earn more, averaging \$54,835 a year compared to \$38,797.

Senior men earn more than women at every age, 2023



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

The gender wage gap is more pronounced among people over 65 than younger groups, with women earning 71 cents for every dollar men earn. It's 73 cents for all ages combined and nearly equal for ages 14-17.

The gap widens with age as multiple variables drive men's and women's wages apart. Examples include the choice of industry and job, education and training, and time spent out of the workforce, such as caring for children.

Top jobs for older men include motor vehicle operators, construction trades workers, and retail salespeople.

When all types of teachers are combined, they become the largest occupation for older women. Others include retail sales workers, office and administrative support, doctors, information and record clerks, and home health and personal care aides.

Although older women also hold high-paying jobs as doctors, executives, and lawyers, there are fewer women in these positions, and they earn less than men in the same occupations.

Workers 65 and older by area

The oldest areas tend to have the highest shares of older workers, led by Hoonah-Angoon and Haines.

(See the maps on the next page.) Conversely, younger areas such as Kuslivak, Bethel, and the Northwest Arctic Borough were low for senior workers.

In two areas, commuting plays a role in their lower shares of working seniors.

The North Slope Borough's oil and gas industry attracts large numbers of workers from elsewhere, and few are over 65.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is middle-of-thepack for its senior population but has one of the lowest rates of working seniors. Nearly 700 Mat-Su seniors commute to Anchorage, categorizing them as Anchorage workers. Only 100 Anchorage seniors commute to Mat-Su.

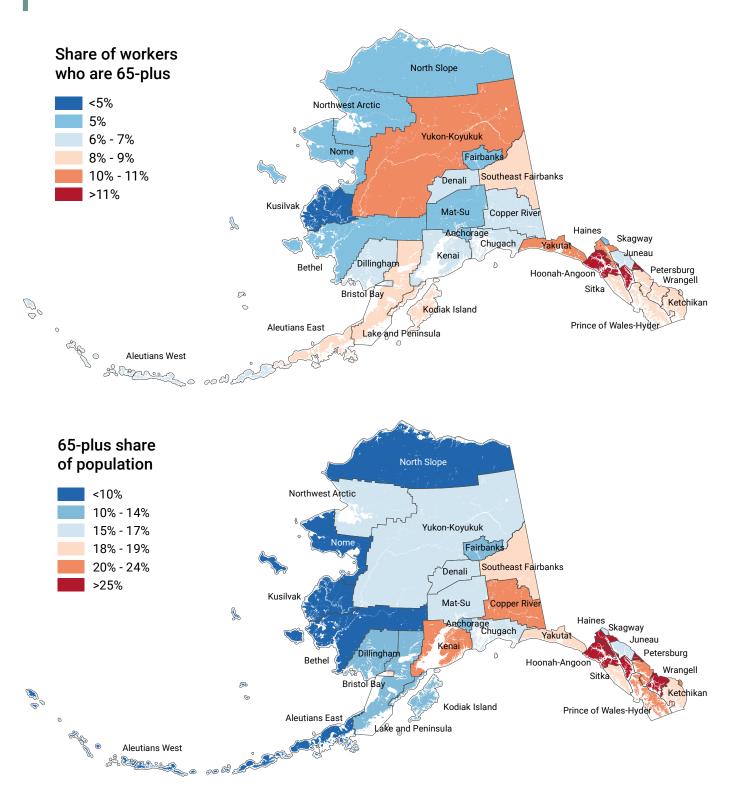
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Top 25 occupations for men, women 65 and older in Alaska, 2023

For men	Men 65+	Avg wage	For women	Women 65+	Avg wage
Motor Vehicle Operators	654	\$40,350	Retail Sales Workers	807	\$21,504
Construction Trades Workers	627	\$48,738	Office and Administrative Support Workers	621	\$34,088
Retail Sales Workers	571	\$28,970	Health Care Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	585	\$78,271
Top Executives	460	\$112,799	Information and Record Clerks	559	\$26,183
Installation, Maint, and Repair Occupations	431	\$52,066	Home Health/Personal Care Aides, Similar Assts	557	\$27,407
Material Moving Workers	417	\$46,829	Other Teachers and Instructors	548	\$21,245
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	401	\$30,145	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	428	\$38,505
Other Management Occupations	331	\$85,680	Financial Clerks	380	\$39,565
Vehicle/Mobile Equipment Mechanics	248	\$62,501	Counselors, Social Workers, Similar Specialists	344	\$48,490
Other Teachers and Instructors	226	\$24,311	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	337	\$23,907
Health Care Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	226	\$141,718	Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	330	\$27,910
Food Processing Workers	220	\$34,625	Other Management Occupations	276	\$70,090
Postsecondary Teachers	201	\$48,717	Top Executives	260	\$87,514
Engineers	199	\$103,103	Preschool, Elem, Middle, HS, Spec Ed Teachers	237	\$56,219
Office and Administrative Support Workers	188	\$41,854	Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	236	\$24,210
Other Protective Service Workers	177	\$36,949	Food and Beverage Serving Workers	219	\$23,592
Business Operations Specialists	175	\$72,684	Other Personal Care and Service Workers	216	\$17,791
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	171	\$30,359	Other Health Care Support Occupations	164	\$36,887
Computer Occupations	152	\$84,633	Postsecondary Teachers	156	\$36,339
Other Construction and Related Workers	146	\$48,040	Business Operations Specialists	154	\$60,398
Operations Specialties Managers	141	\$94,700	Operations Specialties Managers	150	\$77,470
Counselors, Social Workers, Similar Specialists	140	\$50,607	Financial Specialists	149	\$62,434
Other Transportation Workers	138	\$52,807	Food Processing Workers	143	\$34,446
Home Health/Personal Care Aides, Similar Assts	135	\$27,932	Health Technologists and Technicians	136	\$57,362
Information and Record Clerks	132	\$29,476	Supervisors of Sales Workers	111	\$31,245

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

People over age 65 as a percentage of area workforces and populations, 2023



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

More teens enter the workforce

Higher wages, labor shortages bring in more aged 14-17

By ROB KREIGER

eenagers from 14 to 17 were a steady share of Alaska's resident workforce — around 4 percent — until 2008, when their representation began to decline. The percentage dropped again at the start of the pandemic.

Since 2021, however, workers aged 14 to 17 have been on the rise. The number surged by 23 percent in 2021, to nearly 10,400. Their workforce representation jumped to 3.3 percent that year, the highest since 2008, and has continued to rise.

We don't often talk about workers this young because they make up such a small percentage of the workforce and their time and energy go mostly to school and growing up. But at 14, they can work a variety of jobs, and most 17-year-olds are still in high school, so their experience with work during these years tells us something about changing attitudes and opportunities for a group that will soon enter the adult workforce.

A decline began around 2008

The Great Recession of the late 2000s may have

played a role in the downward trend. While Alaska wasn't hit as hard by the housing crash as the Lower 48, the state lost some workers in 2009, many in the service industries that employ teenagers — accommodations, food service, and retail.

While these industries recovered in the subsequent years, the number of working teens did not. Instead, their share of the resident workforce stayed between 2.7 and 2.9 percent for the next decade.

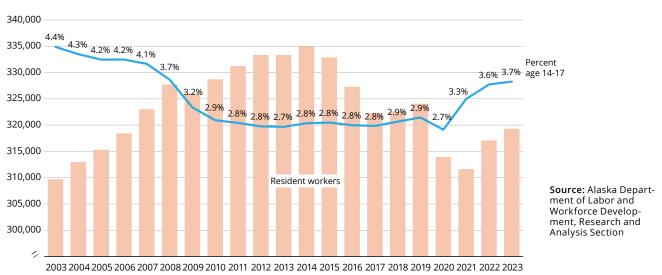
The downward trend was national

The teen workforce shrinking in 2008 and 2009 and then stabilizing at lower levels didn't just happen in Alaska. The same thing occurred nationwide.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published a study on teen labor force participation before and after the Great Recession that linked the decline to prioritizing school, including summer classes and heavier class loads. It also cited rising college enrollment — the BLS study covered ages 16 to 19, so it captured some college entrants.

This age group can act as an as-needed workforce, and during and after the steep national recession,

Teen share of Alaska resident workers dipped at COVID onset, then surged



they may have simply been less needed in a relatively tepid labor market that was slow to recover.

Alaska numbers rose after 2020

The downward trend intensified when the pandemic hit, but in Alaska, it also did a quick U-turn.

In 2020, the number and percentage of working minors dropped to the lowest levels in at least 18 years. At the same time. Alaska's total resident worker count fell to its lowest level since 2004.

While the total resident worker count kept falling in 2021, the number of working teenagers jumped by over 23 percent, pushing their share of Alaska's resident workforce back up. (See the exhibit on the previous page.)

The pandemic-spurred labor shortage, particularly in entry-level jobs, created multiple new opportunities for young workers. That combined with a significant jump in wages may have enticed many to enter the workforce.

Teens started earning a lot more

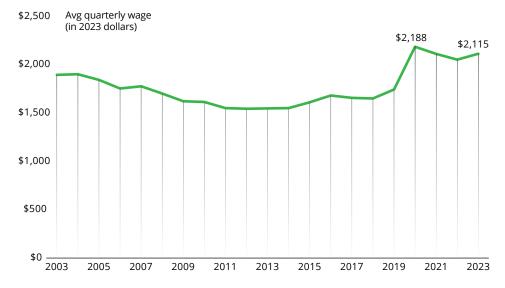
Wages for workers under 18 soared in the post-COVID years, although they remain low relative to other workers.

Child labor laws restrict hours and the types of work teenagers can do. (See the sidebar on the right.) Many work only in the summer, and hours are limited for those who work during the school year. As a result, over the last 20 years, inflationadjusted wages for the 14-17 category have averaged \$1,770 per quarter compared to \$14,560 for all working residents.

Still, teens' pay has increased considerably over the last few years. Real wages went up about 4 percent for all Alaskans from 2019 to 2023 and 21 percent for ages 14 to 17.

Most of the five-year increase for teens came in

Wages for Alaska teens jump at start of pandemic



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

About Alaska child labor law

Minors from 14 to 16 must have a work permit on file with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and 17-year-olds must have a permit if the employer is a restaurant licensed to serve alcohol.

No one under 18 is allowed to work more than six days a week.

When school is in session, 14-to-15-year-olds may work only between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m., and the hours spent in school plus work cannot exceed nine. Total hours worked in a week are limited to 23. During school vacations, work hours are limited to 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., and no more than 40 a week.

Teens younger than 14 can only work in newspaper sales and delivery, babysitting, handiwork or domestic jobs in homes, and in the entertainment industry, with a special permit. Workers under 14 are not included in this article.

The list of prohibited work, which is long and available at the link below, is almost all high-risk physical jobs. Minors also may not work in the cannabis industry or sell tobacco products.

Visit Summary of Alaska Child Labor Law for the prohibited jobs list and more detail on the law.

2020, when their wages jumped by over 25 percent. That same year, the number of teens working fell by 12 percent.

The wage spike shows that the types of jobs highschoolers take were in huge demand as the pandemic shuttered many businesses, especially those with face-to-face services. Employers had to pay much more to attract workers, especially during the worst of COVID.

The types of jobs haven't changed

While the number of working teens and their wages have risen in recent years, other characteristics have held steady over time.

For example, in 2023, over 75 percent were 16 or 17, and just 7 percent were 14. Child labor laws are far more restrictive for 14-to-15-year-olds.

The type of work they do also hasn't changed much, as jobs in high school are usually a young person's first real work experience. In 2023, half of these workers were in nine occupations, with the top two being fast food and counter workers and retail salespersons. (See the table at right.)

Similarly, the vast majority are in just a few industries, with 54 percent working in accommodation

Teen workers by occupation, 2023

	Percent of teens in job
Fast Food and Counter Workers	16.7%
Retail Salespersons	8.4%
Food Preparation Workers	6.4%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, Matl Movers	4.4%
Cashiers	4.3%
Office and Administrative Support Workers	3.8%
Hosts/Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, Coffee	2.1%
Food Prep and Serving Related Workers	2.1%
Waiters and Waitresses	1.8%
Dining Rm/Cafeteria Attend, Bartender Helpers	1.7%
Receptionists and Information Clerks	1.7%
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	1.6%
Grounds Maintenance Workers, All Other	1.5%
Office Clerks, General	1.5%
Dishwashers	1.4%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1.4%
Stockers and Order Fillers	1.3%
Customer Service Representatives Coaches and Scouts	1.3% 1.2%
	1.2%
Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Similar Workers Food Servers. Nonrestaurant	1.2%
Construction Laborers	1.2%
Recreation Workers	1.1%
Janitors and Cleaners, Exc Maids/Housekeeping	1.0%
Farmworkers/Laborers, Crop/Nursery/Green	0.9%
Packers and Packagers, Hand	0.9%
Sales and Related Workers, All Other	0.9%
Umpires, Referees, and Other Sports Officials	0.9%
Child Care Workers	0.9%
Cooks, Restaurant	0.8%

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

Workers ages 14-17 in Alaska by industry, 2023

	Number of teenagers	Percent of teen wkrs	Avg wage, quarterly
Accommodation and Food Services	4,175	35.3%	\$2,399
Retail Trade	2,171	18.4%	\$2,232
Local Government	1,079	9.1%	\$1,523
Other Services (except Public Admin)	935	7.9%	\$1,262
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	701	5.9%	\$1,335
Health Care and Social Assistance	473	4.0%	\$1,933
Construction	364	3.1%	\$2,993
Transportation and Warehousing	361	3.1%	\$2,656
Admin Support/Waste Mgmt, Remediation	295	2.5%	\$2,303
Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services	216	1.8%	\$1,692
Manufacturing	214	1.8%	\$2,170
Educational Services	204	1.7%	\$1,083
Information	168	1.4%	\$1,918
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	135	1.1%	\$1,986
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	129	1.1%	\$2,310
Wholesale Trade	65	0.6%	\$2,622
State Government	46	0.4%	\$2,063
Finance and Insurance	26	0.2%	\$2,507
Other/Unknown	54	0.5%	\$2,773
Total	11,811	100.0%	\$2,115

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

and food service — hotels, restaurants, food trucks, etc. — or retail. More than a third of all workers in accommodation and food services come from this age group.

Local government was another major employer of teens at just over 9 percent. In some parts of Alaska, especially rural areas where local government is the dominant employer because of the basic services it provides and because there are fewer jobs in hotels and restaurants, local government is also the largest employer of teens.

Concentrations of teen workers and top industries vary by area

Some areas have higher percentages of teens in their workforce than others.

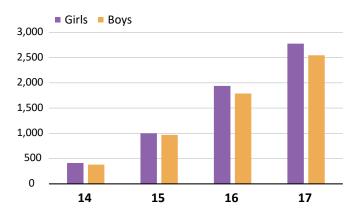
Nearly 10 percent of workers in the rural Kusilvak Census Area in western Alaska were under 18 in 2023. Kusilvak is the youngest part of Alaska, and its workforce skews young.

The Hoonah-Angoon Census Area was second at 7.5 percent. While Hoonah-Angoon has an older population overall, it has high shares of both young workers and workers over 60.

Bristol Bay and Yakutat were the lowest at less than 2 percent each. Both areas have small resident workforces, with Yakutat's being the smallest in the state. Yakutat is also one of the oldest parts of Alaska.

Bristol Bay's largest employer is seafood processing, work that child labor laws don't allow for this

More girls than boys working at all ages



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

Percentages of resident workers who were aged 14 to 17 in 2023

	Percent teen workers
Kusilvak Census Area	9.7%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	7.5%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	6.8%
Copper River Census Area	6.6%
Bethel Census Area	5.4%
Petersburg Borough	5.3%
Wrangell, City and Borough	4.9%
Haines Borough	4.9%
Sitka, City and Borough	4.9%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	4.8%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.8%
Chugach Census Area	4.2%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	4.2%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	4.1%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	4.0%
Juneau, City and Borough	3.8%
Denali Borough	3.8%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3.7%
Skagway, Municipality	3.7%
Nome Census Area	3.3%
Aleutians East Borough	3.3%
Kodiak Island Borough	3.3%
Anchorage, Municipality	3.1%
Dillingham Census Area	2.9%
Aleutians West Census Area	2.6%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	2.4%
Northwest Arctic Borough	2.1%
North Slope Borough	2.0%
Yakutat, City and Borough	1.6%
Bristol Bay Borough	1.5%

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

age group, and most workers are nonresidents. Teens working in Bristol Bay may also be working on family-owned fishing vessels, jobs that aren't included in the data.

The common industries for these young workers also vary by area. In urban areas such as Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the top industry is accommodation and food services.

As mentioned, in rural areas, it's often local government. Local government includes tribal governments, which can also be top employers for teens in rural Alaska.

A narrower gender-wage gap

One characteristic unique to these young workers is the lack of a notable wage gap by gender.

Top jobs for teens by gender, 2023

Alaska occupation

Girls, 14-17	Fast Food and Counter Workers Retail Salespersons Food Preparation Workers Cashiers Office and Administrative Support Workers Laborers/Freight, Stock, and Matl Movers, Hand Hosts/and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge and Coffee Shop Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers Waiters and Waitresses Receptionists and Information Clerks
Boys, 14-17	Fast Food and Counter Workers Retail Salespersons Food Preparation Workers Laborers/Freight, Stock, and Matl Movers, Hand Cashiers Office and Administrative Support Workers Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers Construction Laborers Dining Room/Cafeteria/Bartender Helpers Dishwashers

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

The most recent data on wage differences between men and women in Alaska found that among residents, women earned 73 cents for every dollar a man earned in 2023. The gender wage gap is complex, influenced by experience, training, education, hours worked, job and industry choice, and discrimination.

Among these young workers, girls earned 96 cents for every dollar a boy earned. The gap was widest for 14-year-olds at 89 cents and smallest among 17-year-olds, where it was just under 97 cents on the dollar.

There are gender differences among teen workers, however. More girls were working in 2023, and at younger ages. Teen workers were 51.9 percent female and 48.1 percent male. The largest difference was at

About the data in this issue

The articles in this issue both cover Alaska residents only: workers 65 and older and workers aged 14 to 17. By area, we categorize workers by where they work rather than where they live.

Although workers can change jobs or work multiple jobs within a year, each worker and total wages earned during the year are assigned to the industry, occupation, place of work, and employer where they earned the most in a single quarter. For the 14-to-17 age group, we used quarterly rather than annual wages because they tend not to work all year.

To calculate employment and wages, we match PFD applicants with quarterly reports Alaska employers file as required by state unemployment insurance laws. Federal workers, the military, and the selfemployed are excluded from those wage records because they are not covered by state unemployment insurance laws.

These articles use residency definitions and data from our Nonresidents Working in Alaska report, which considers workers residents if they applied for an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend in either of the two most recent years.

age 17, when it was 52.2 percent to 47.8 percent.

Both genders work in mostly the same jobs, at least for the top three, but the lists diverge further down. (See the exhibit at right.)

Top jobs that only made the list for girls included restaurant hosts, food preparation and serving workers, waiters and waitresses, and receptionists. Top occupations only on the boys' list were landscapers, construction laborers, dining room attendants, and dishwashers.

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

Gauging The Economy



Job Growth

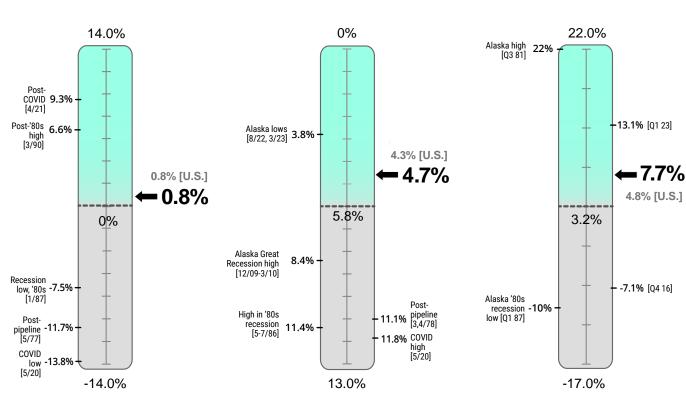
Unemployment Rate Wage Growth

August 2025

Over-the-year percent change

August 2025 Seasonally adjusted

1st Quarter 2025 Over-the-year percent change



Alaska's August employment was 0.8 percent above last August. National employment was up by 0.8 percent.

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

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

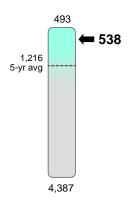
Wages were up 7.7 percent from year-ago levels in the first quarter of 2025 and 35.6 percent above the first quarter of 2019, before the pandemic.

Gauging The Economy



Initial Claims

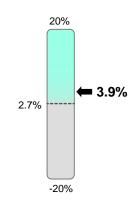
Unemployment, week ending Sep. 13, 2025*



Pandemic-driven high claims loads have fallen, and new claims for benefits are well below their long-term average.

GDP Growth

1st Quarter 2025 Over-the-year percent change*

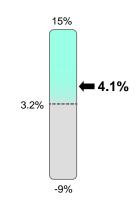


Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. It's an important economic measure but also a volatile one for Alaska because commodity prices influence the numbers so much — especially oil prices.

*In current dollars

Personal Income Growth

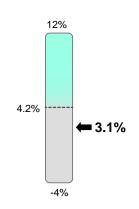
1st Quarter 2025 Over-the-year percent change



Personal income consists of three main parts: 1) wages and salaries; 2) dividends, interest, and rents; and 3) transfer payments (payments from governments to individuals).

Change in Home Prices

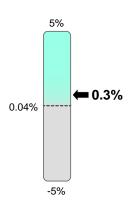
Single-family, percent change from prior year, Q1 2025



Home prices shown include only those for which a commercial loan was used. This indicator tends to be volatile from quarter to quarter.

Population Growth

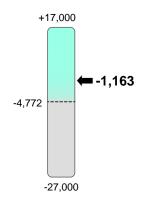
2023 to 2024



After four years of decline, Alaska's population has grown slightly in each of the last four years as natural increase (births minus deaths) has slightly exceeded migration losses.

Net Migration

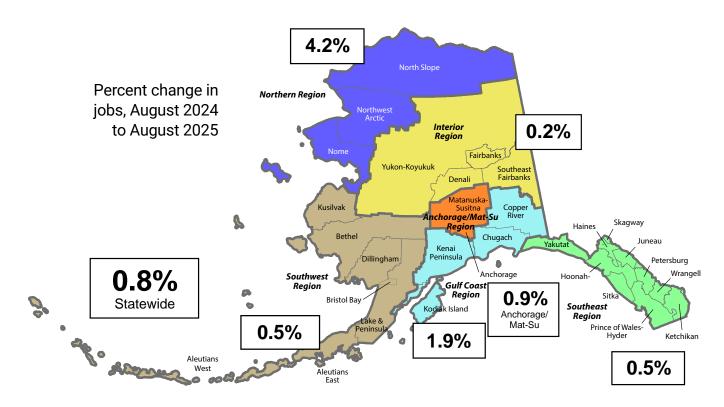
2023 to 2024



The state had net migration losses for the 12th consecutive year in 2024. Losses were on par with 2023 and significantly smaller than the late 2010s. Net migration is the number who moved to Alaska minus the number who left.

^{*}Four-week moving average ending with specified week

Employment Growth by Region



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	8/25	7/25	8/24
United States	4.3	4.2	4.2
Alaska	4.7	4.8	4.7

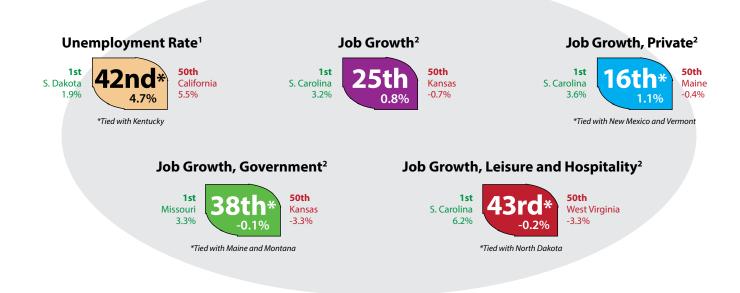
Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revi	sed	
	8/25	8/25 7/25 8		
United States	4.5	4.6	4.4	
Alaska	3.9	4.5	4.1	

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revi	d		Prelim.	Revi	sed		Prelim.	Revi	sed
	8/25	7/25	8/24		8/25	7/25	8/24		8/25	7/25	8/24
	0/23	1/23	0/24	Southwest Region	8.3	8.7	8.3	Southeast Region	3.2	3.6	3.3
Interior Region	3.5	4.2	3.7	•				J			
Denali Borough	1.5	1.6	1.7	Aleutians East Borough	1.9	1.9	2.8	Haines Borough	5.6	6.0	4.5
Fairbanks N Star Borough	3.1	3.8	3.5	Aleutians West Census Area	2.3	2.4	2.6	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	3.7	4.0	2.7
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	5.8	6.5	5.2	Bethel Census Area	12.0	13.3	11.4	Juneau, City and Borough	2.6	3.1	2.8
Yukon-Koyukuk	8.9	9.3	7.0	Bristol Bay Borough	1.6	0.9	2.0	Ketchikan Gateway	3.3	3.4	3.3
Census Area	0.5	5.5	7.0	Dillingham Census Area	5.8	6.3	7.1	Borough			
				Kusilvak Census Area	19.6	24.0	18.8	Petersburg Borough	3.8	4.7	4.3
Northern Region	7.0	7.5	6.4	Lake and Peninsula	5.4	4.4	5.5	Prince of Wales-Hyder	7.9	8.6	7.6
Nome Census Area	10.1	10.7	8.8	Borough				Census Area			
North Slope Borough	3.1	3.7	3.3	3				Sitka, City and Borough	1.9	2.2	2.7
Northwest Arctic Borough	9.8	10.2	8.9	Gulf Coast Region	3.8	4.5	4.1	Skagway, Municipality	1.7	2.6	1.4
5				Kenai Peninsula Borough	3.9	4.7	4.2	Wrangell, City and Borough		4.6	4.8
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	3.5	4.1	3.8	Kodiak Island Borough	3.2	3.5	3.9		2.5	3.6	
Anchorage, Municipality	3.3	3.8	3.6	Chugach Census Area	3.3	3.7	3.1	Yakutat, City and Borough	2.5	3.6	5.0
Mat-Su Borough	4.1	5.0	4.3	Copper River Census Area	5.9	6.8	4.8				

How Alaska Ranks



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

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)	270.441	1st half 2025	264.376	+2.3%	
Commodity prices					
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	\$69.28	August 2025	\$79.97	-13.4%	
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$2.89	August 2025	\$2.09	+38.6%	
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$3,674.40	9/18/25	\$2,570.70	+42.9%	
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$42.05	9/18/25	\$30.34	+38.6%	
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$4.60	9/18/25	\$4.24	+8.5%	
Bankruptcies	54	Q2 2025	69	-21.7%	
Business	7	Q2 2025	6	+16.7%	
Personal	47	Q2 2025	63	-25.4%	
Unemployment insurance claims					
Initial filings	2,256	Aug 2025	2,546	-11.4%	
Continued filings	15,960	Aug 2025	14,313	11.5%	
Claimant count	3,881	Aug 2025	3,866	0.4%	

^{*}Department of Revenue estimate

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

¹August seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

²August employment, over-the-year percent change





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SAFETY MINUTE

Employers have extra responsibilities with teen workers

Employers have unique responsibilities when it comes to workers under age 18. In addition to the OSHA standards they must observe for all workers, employers are required to understand and comply with federal and state child labor laws that prohibit certain work hours and hazardous tasks.

Young workers must be trained on how to recognize hazards and apply safe work practices. Training should include fire and accident prevention, how to respond to violent situations, and what to do if injury occurs.

Equipment used by young workers must be safe and legal for them to use, and equipment they

cannot used should be labeled.

Employers should also establish a mentoring or buddy system, ensuring an adult or more experienced teen worker is available for guidance.

Finally, teens should be encouraged to ask questions, and employers should ensure they know whom to ask. It's important to remember that youth workers are not "little adults," and they require careful communication.

Safety Minute is provided by the Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Training Section of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.