

Jobs, total and average wages rise

Pay increased considerably in 2023 as inflation dropped

By KARINNE WIEBOLD

Jobs and total wages have been rising for the last three years, following the widespread pandemic disruptions that hit in 2020.

Wages rose the most in 2023, when employers paid an additional \$1.7 billion. The industries that contributed the most to the larger payout were construction, health care, and professional and business services.

Alaska also added 8,612 jobs in 2023. Nearly all industries grew, but leisure and hospitality employment rose the most numerically, followed by health care and construction.

Total wages are important as a measure of the size of a national, state, or local economy. Average wages are a way to measure whether workers are making more per job. At times, total wages grow even as average wages decline — when an economy adds a large number of low-wage jobs, for example. At other times, average wages grow despite declines in total wages. That happened in some industries during the pandemic when low-wage jobs were disproportionately cut.

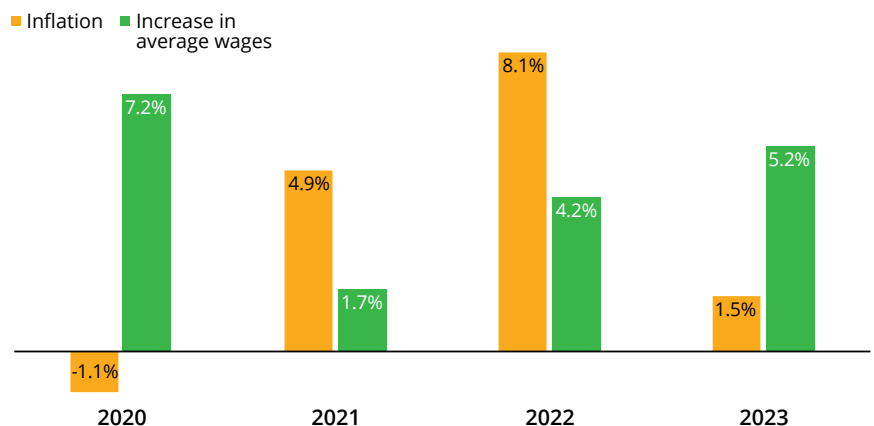
In 2023, however, total and average wages both increased, and average pay went up across the board, even in the two industries that didn't add jobs.

See the tables on page 11 for complete employment and total and average wage numbers by industry and area.

Tourism, health care, and big projects push growth

Visitor numbers have more than rebounded after

Average wages rose more than prices in 2023



Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for Urban Alaska

pandemic lows, hitting a record high in 2023 when 1.6 million-plus cruise ship passengers traveled to Alaska. Tourists and locals alike traveled within the state, stayed in hotels, and ate out, raising the demand for workers.

Restaurants and bars represented more than half of the job and wage growth in the leisure and hospitality sector last year, and the accommodations and arts, entertainment, and recreation categories also grew.

Total wages in leisure and hospitality, which includes all those industries, increased 10 percent over the year, pushing average wages up 5 percent, to \$32,369. These jobs pay the least among Alaska's major industries. Only retail comes close.

Health care has been on a long-term upward trajectory, adding 1,232 jobs in 2023. Hospital, outpatient services, and nursing home employment each rose 3 to 4 percent. Nursing homes grew the most in percent terms, but as the smallest category, the gain amounted to just 167 jobs. Outpatient services such as doctors and dentists added 570 jobs and hospitals added 495.

The health care industry paid \$199 million more

in wages over the year, a 7 percent increase, and its average annual pay rose to \$76,796.

Oil and gas projects and the beginnings of federal infrastructure projects drove growth in construction, oil, and professional and business services.

Construction added 937 jobs (6 percent) and paid \$227 million more in wages. All three types of construction grew, but heavy construction was strongest by far, adding 517 jobs and representing nearly half the construction industry's wage increase despite being the smallest category.

Building construction employment rose 5 percent (271 jobs), and specialty trade contractors added 2 percent (149).

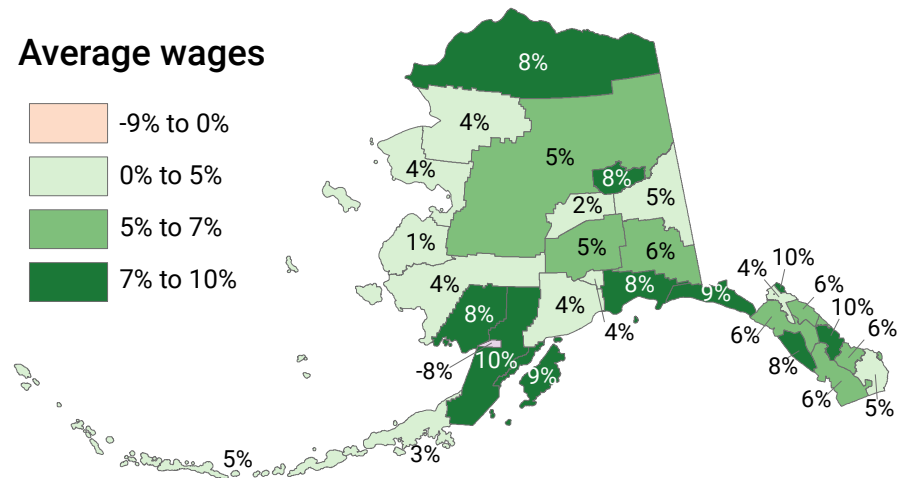
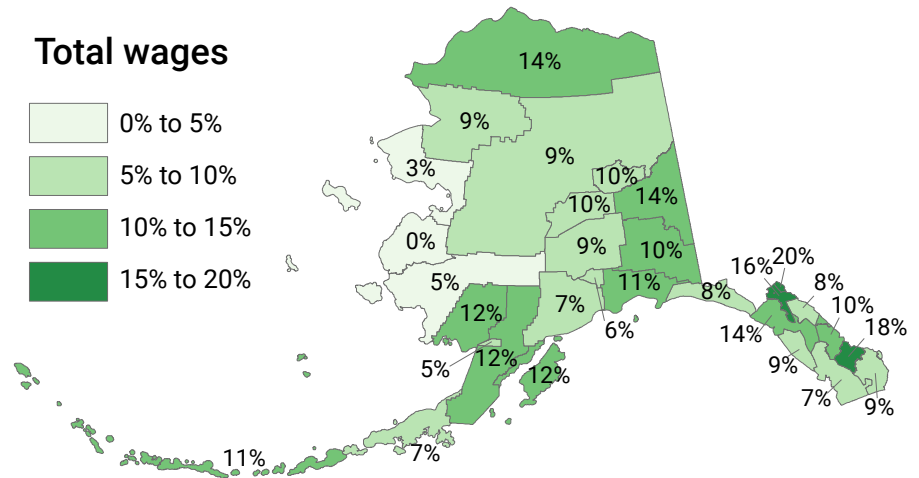
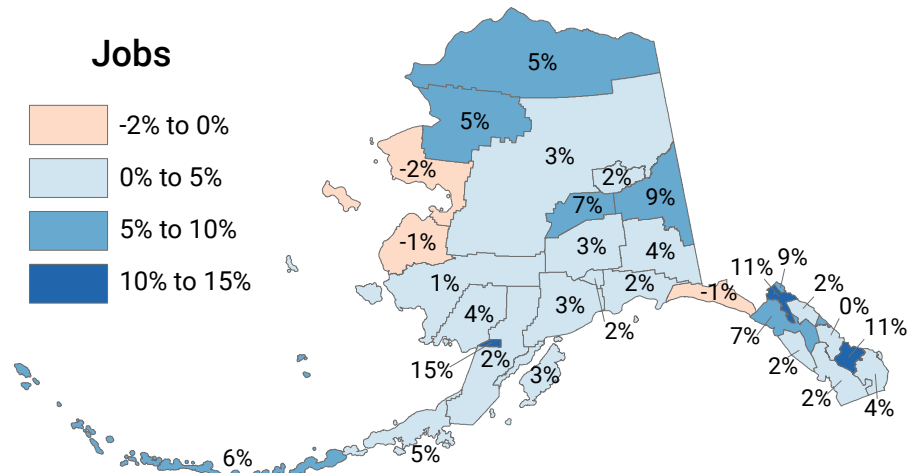
The oil and gas industry lost jobs for several years before it resumed growing in 2022. The industry added nearly 500 jobs in 2023 and its total wages rose 12 percent.

Oil and gas pays the most among industries at an average of \$181,143, which is more than two-and-a-half times the average for all Alaska jobs.

Professional and business services, which often support the previous two industries, added 661 jobs and \$187 million in wages, resulting in a 7 percent boost in average pay.

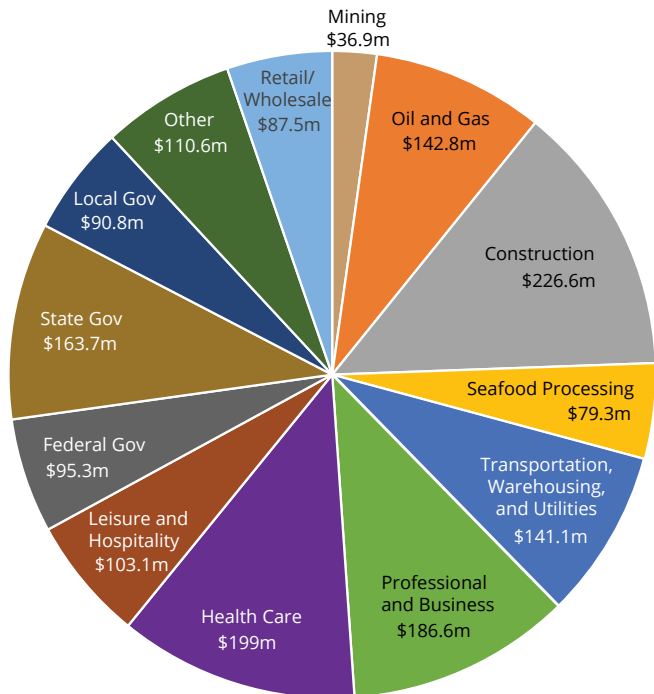
Construction topped total wage growth, however, paying 17 percent more over the year overall and 10

Growth in jobs and wages by area, 2022-2023



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

Amounts industries contributed to total wage growth, 2022-23



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

percent more on average. Seafood processing was second at 15 percent for total wages and oil and gas was third at 12 percent. These employers paid more to compete for a smaller pool of workers, and these industries also saw the most rapid job growth.

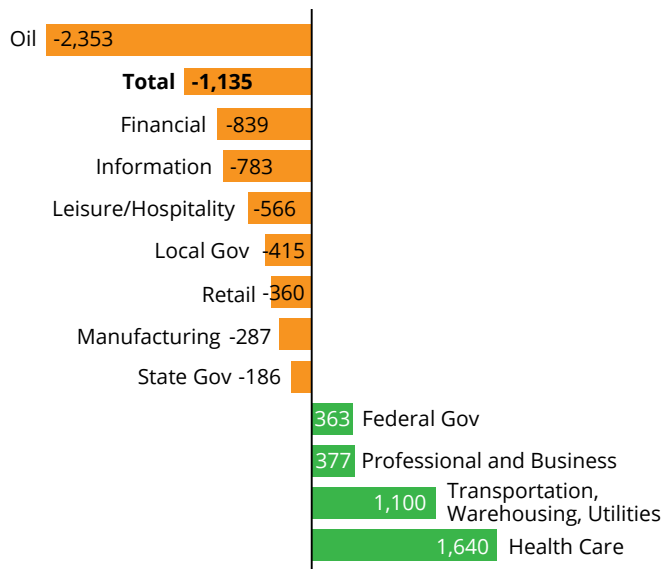
Only the information sector lost total wages, although coupling that with fewer jobs shows its average wage also increased. In other words, the jobs cut were lower-wage, on average.

The information sector includes traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television as well as telephone and internet providers. Employers in this category have been on a long-term decline as technological advances continue to change how these services are delivered.

Regionally, tourism and fishing areas stand out

Southeast communities' wages rose the most in 2023 — specifically Skagway, Wrangell, Haines, and

Few industries had recovered pandemic job losses by 2023*



*Difference between the industry's 2023 job count and its 2019 pre-pandemic level
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Hoonah-Angoon — during a banner tourism year.

The North Slope and the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area were fifth and sixth, with extraction projects boosting their total wages. (See the maps on the previous page and the table on the next page.)

Wage growth also topped the average in fishing areas such as Kodiak, the Aleutians West and Copper River census areas, and Petersburg.

Rural areas also drove the state's job growth in percentage terms, with Bristol Bay, Haines, and Wrangell job counts each jumping over 10 percent.

The largest areas added the most jobs numerically, but for Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Juneau, that represented less than the statewide average growth rate of 3 percent. Among the large areas, only the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's employment grew faster than that.

Three areas lost jobs: the Kusilvak Census Area in western Alaska, Yakutat, and Nome (each by -1 to -2 percent).

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Changes in jobs and wages by industry and area from 2022 to 2023

Industry	2023			2022			Percent change		
	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage
Total, All Industries	327,957	\$22,341,324,248	\$68,123	319,345	\$20,678,025,862	\$64,751	3%	8%	5%
Total, Private Sector	250,999	\$17,044,894,981	\$67,908	243,676	\$15,731,446,519	\$64,559	3%	8%	5%
Natural Resources and Mining	13,047	\$1,934,624,836	\$148,281	12,416	\$1,754,933,285	\$141,344	5%	10%	5%
Oil and Gas	7,532	\$1,364,365,509	\$181,143	7,039	\$1,221,586,575	\$173,545	7%	12%	4%
Construction	17,103	\$1,598,643,470	\$93,472	16,166	\$1,372,003,204	\$84,870	6%	17%	10%
Manufacturing	12,769	\$888,548,967	\$69,586	12,126	\$794,946,730	\$65,557	5%	12%	6%
Seafood Processing	8,495	\$626,181,157	\$73,712	7,992	\$546,879,810	\$68,428	6%	15%	8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	65,234	\$3,989,038,152	\$61,150	63,907	\$3,760,515,523	\$58,844	2%	6%	4%
Wholesale	6,385	\$453,870,439	\$71,084	6,218	\$425,015,764	\$68,352	3%	7%	4%
Retail	35,214	\$1,419,629,112	\$40,314	34,967	\$1,361,021,201	\$38,923	1%	4%	4%
Trans, Warehousing, and Utilities	23,634	\$2,115,538,601	\$89,513	22,723	\$1,974,478,558	\$86,893	4%	7%	3%
Information	4,560	\$375,896,760	\$82,434	4,769	\$384,567,465	\$80,639	-4%	-2%	2%
Financial Activities	11,704	\$814,878,806	\$69,624	11,854	\$812,029,698	\$68,503	-1%	0%	2%
Professional and Business Services	28,087	\$2,192,822,639	\$78,073	27,426	\$2,006,183,866	\$73,149	2%	9%	7%
Education and Health	50,862	\$3,523,397,981	\$69,274	49,463	\$3,293,463,446	\$66,584	3%	7%	4%
Health Care	40,179	\$3,085,602,988	\$76,796	38,947	\$2,886,600,731	\$74,116	3%	7%	4%
Leisure and Hospitality	35,684	\$1,155,042,490	\$32,369	34,269	\$1,052,014,232	\$30,699	4%	10%	5%
Other Services	11,657	\$552,346,804	\$47,383	11,118	\$490,384,135	\$44,107	5%	13%	7%
Total Government	76,959	\$5,296,429,267	\$68,821	75,670	\$4,946,579,343	\$65,370	2%	7%	5%
Federal	15,203	\$1,440,981,434	\$94,783	15,003	\$1,345,700,178	\$89,695	1%	7%	6%
State	23,071	\$1,634,588,666	\$70,850	22,513	\$1,470,860,666	\$65,334	2%	11%	8%
Local, incl tribal and public schools	38,685	\$2,220,859,167	\$57,409	38,154	\$2,130,018,499	\$55,827	1%	4%	3%

Borough or census area	2023			2022			Percent change		
	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage
Alaska	327,957	\$22,341,324,248	\$68,123	319,345	\$20,678,025,862	\$64,751	3%	8%	5%
Aleutians East Borough	2,324	\$165,958,509	\$71,411	2,223	\$154,585,885	\$69,539	5%	7%	3%
Aleutians West Census Area	3,252	\$265,399,189	\$81,611	3,082	\$240,053,867	\$77,889	6%	11%	5%
Anchorage, Municipality	146,520	\$10,369,464,908	\$70,772	143,536	\$9,758,252,588	\$67,985	2%	6%	4%
Bethel Census Area	6,543	\$343,032,588	\$52,427	6,492	\$327,332,448	\$50,421	1%	5%	4%
Bristol Bay Borough	1,362	\$91,137,132	\$66,914	1,186	\$86,609,559	\$73,027	15%	5%	-8%
Chugach Census Area	3,766	\$274,472,059	\$72,882	3,690	\$248,152,734	\$67,250	2%	11%	8%
Copper River Census Area	1,128	\$60,571,764	\$53,698	1,080	\$54,936,622	\$50,867	4%	10%	6%
Denali Borough	1,985	\$125,108,805	\$63,027	1,847	\$114,042,488	\$61,745	7%	10%	2%
Dillingham Census Area	2,153	\$135,192,434	\$62,793	2,064	\$120,188,182	\$58,231	4%	12%	8%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	37,115	\$2,425,848,816	\$65,360	36,352	\$2,209,806,955	\$60,789	2%	10%	8%
Haines Borough	1,017	\$46,933,091	\$46,149	913	\$40,488,561	\$44,347	11%	16%	4%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	983	\$47,145,222	\$47,961	918	\$41,351,038	\$45,045	7%	14%	6%
Juneau, City and Borough	17,722	\$1,170,512,391	\$66,049	17,349	\$1,082,863,218	\$62,416	2%	8%	6%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,330	\$1,266,329,037	\$59,368	20,791	\$1,182,360,441	\$56,869	3%	7%	4%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,281	\$432,561,442	\$59,410	6,983	\$396,480,699	\$56,778	4%	9%	5%
Kodiak Island Borough	5,759	\$352,777,481	\$61,257	5,618	\$315,635,236	\$56,183	3%	12%	9%
Kusilvak Census Area	2,073	\$76,187,107	\$36,752	2,088	\$76,195,394	\$36,492	-1%	0%	1%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	892	\$43,762,338	\$49,061	872	\$39,034,094	\$44,764	2%	12%	10%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	28,871	\$1,586,663,339	\$54,957	27,923	\$1,456,645,082	\$52,166	3%	9%	5%
Nome Census Area	3,871	\$265,450,128	\$68,574	3,941	\$258,927,883	\$65,701	-2%	3%	4%
North Slope Borough	10,689	\$1,332,219,864	\$124,635	10,140	\$1,172,263,013	\$115,608	5%	14%	8%
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,869	\$239,781,118	\$83,577	2,729	\$219,726,708	\$80,515	5%	9%	4%
Petersburg Borough	1,253	\$67,429,609	\$53,815	1,248	\$61,186,715	\$49,028	0%	10%	10%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,134	\$109,359,458	\$51,246	2,101	\$102,001,859	\$48,549	2%	7%	6%
Sitka, City and Borough	4,341	\$265,086,245	\$61,066	4,272	\$242,467,614	\$56,757	2%	9%	8%
Skagway, Municipality	1,017	\$54,886,563	\$53,969	932	\$45,706,113	\$49,041	9%	20%	10%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,018	\$257,107,573	\$85,191	2,780	\$226,377,951	\$81,431	9%	14%	5%
Wrangell, City and Borough	749	\$41,304,206	\$55,146	673	\$34,919,149	\$51,886	11%	18%	6%
Yakutat, City and Borough	340	\$21,868,152	\$64,318	344	\$20,236,779	\$58,828	-1%	8%	9%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,284	\$110,943,368	\$48,574	2,214	\$102,020,073	\$46,080	3%	9%	5%

Note: Columns may not sum because of rounding and the exclusion of unknown categories and areas.

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