

Job projections by occupation

Expected opportunities by the type of work from 2024 to 2034

By PAUL MARTZ

Projecting future jobs by occupation allows us to show more than just job creation or loss, as we do by industry. Occupational projections show that most job opportunities come from separations: people changing occupations, leaving the workforce for education or training, or retiring.

We estimate that between 2024 and 2034, Alaska will have 8,576 new jobs. Each year, however, 37,364 additional positions will open through people leaving their occupations.

48,500 jobs are in one category

In Alaska, 14.5 percent of jobs are in office and

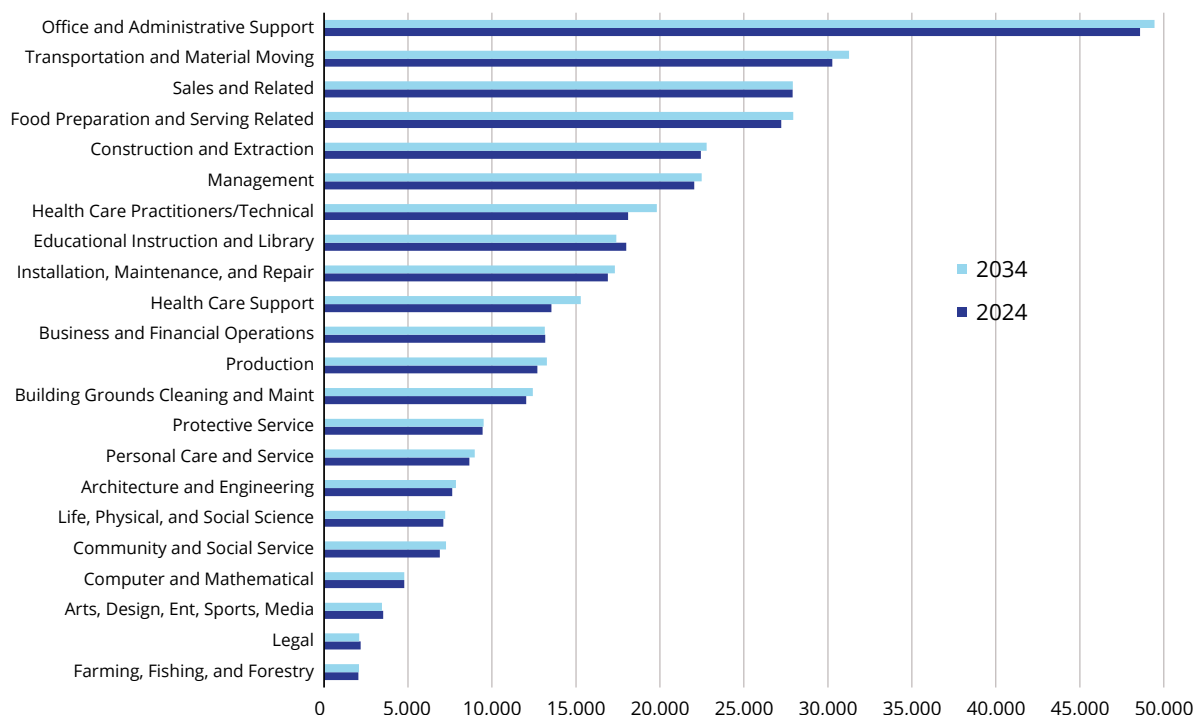
administrative support, the largest category. Office and administrative support covers 54 unique occupations representing about 48,500 jobs.

Because of its size, this category will have the largest number of job openings through separations over the 10 years. We project only about 853 new jobs over the decade (1.8 percent), but about 5,322 additional openings annually through a combination of people switching careers or leaving the workforce.

The smallest broad category is farming, fishing, and forestry, which represents about 0.6 percent of Alaska's jobs. The largest share of this category, about 38 percent, is farm workers, primarily in the cannabis industry.

These occupations grew quickly after recreational cannabis use was legalized in 2015, but as the

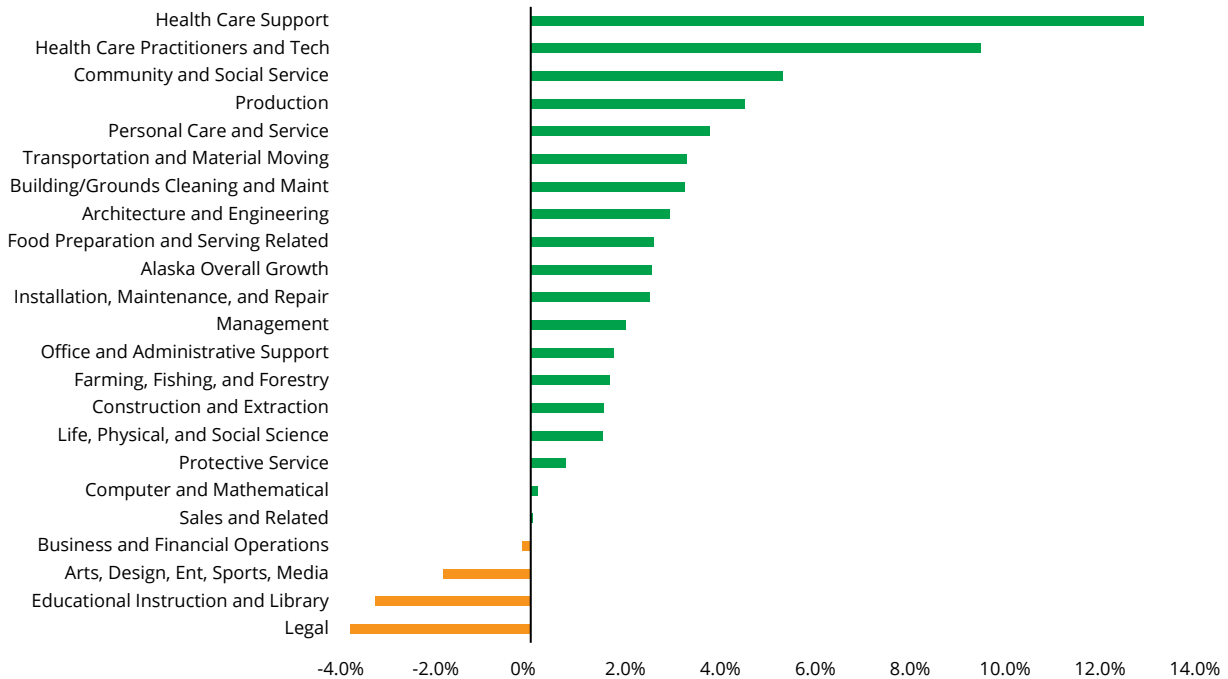
Projected total job counts by occupational group through 2034



Note: Occupational categories are based on the federal Standard Occupational Classification Manual.

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

Projected percent growth for occupational groups through 2034



Note: Occupational categories are based on the federal Standard Occupational Classification Manual.

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

industry has matured and leveled out, so has the number of greenhouse farm workers. We project just 34 new jobs in the farming, fishing, and forestry category from 2024 to 2034.

and 33 total openings a year, respectively. Total openings are a combination of annual growth and separations. Registered nurses are the largest practitioner occupation and will generate about 410 total openings per year.

Health care occupations will generate the most new jobs

The highest number of new jobs will come from health care. Support occupations in this category will grow by a projected 12.9 percent by 2034, followed by health care practitioners and technical occupations at 9.5 percent.

Combined, these two groups will represent 40 percent of all the new jobs in Alaska over the decade (about 3,500). Separations will create an additional 2,939 openings a year.

Within the support category, we project strong growth for home health and personal care aides (see the “top 25 and bottom 25” section for more). Among practitioners, psychiatric technicians and licensed practical and vocational nurses will grow a projected 12 percent over the decade, adding 27

Some will continue to decline

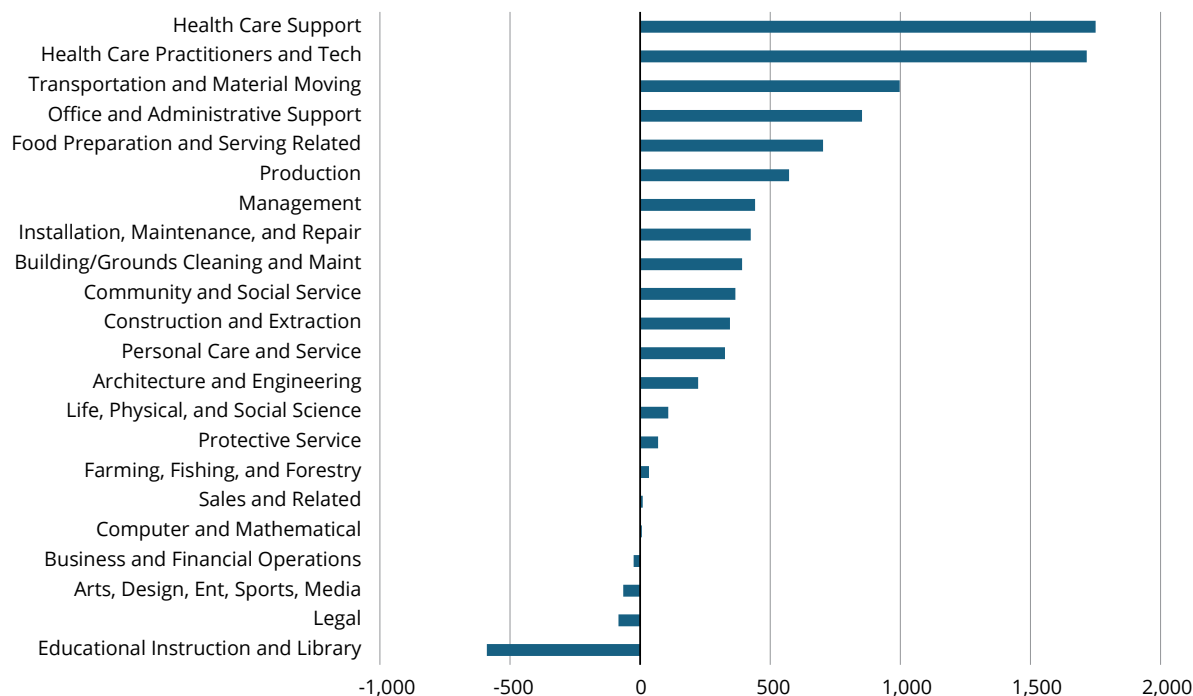
The category we expect to decline most over the decade is educational instruction and library occupations, by 589 jobs, or 3.3 percent. Because these occupations are concentrated in public schools, they will be vulnerable to the job losses we expect in education. Still, this field will generate an estimated 1,631 openings each year, even with job losses figured in.

Legal and media occupations have been decreasing for years as services become easier to obtain remotely, and others have moved to freelance or self-employment.

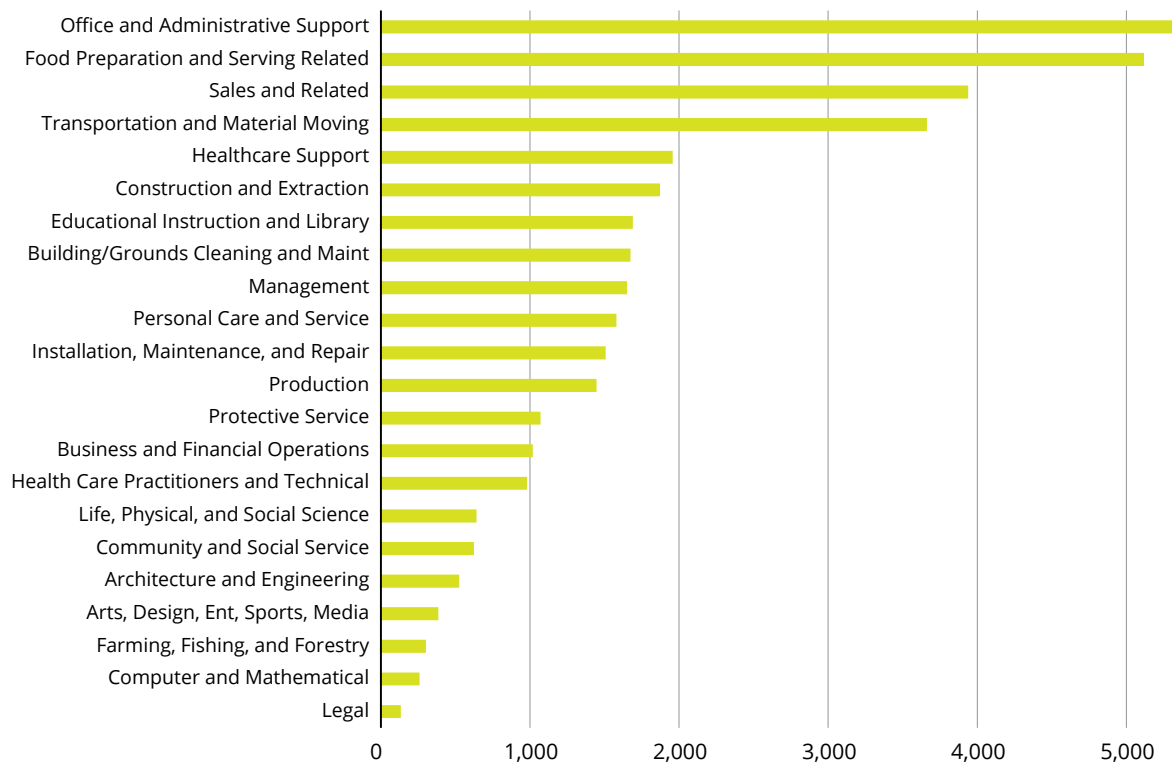
Legal occupations are projected to decline by 3.8 percent and media by 1.8 percent. The combined loss over the decade would be about 148 jobs.

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Growth openings by occupational category, 2024 to 2034



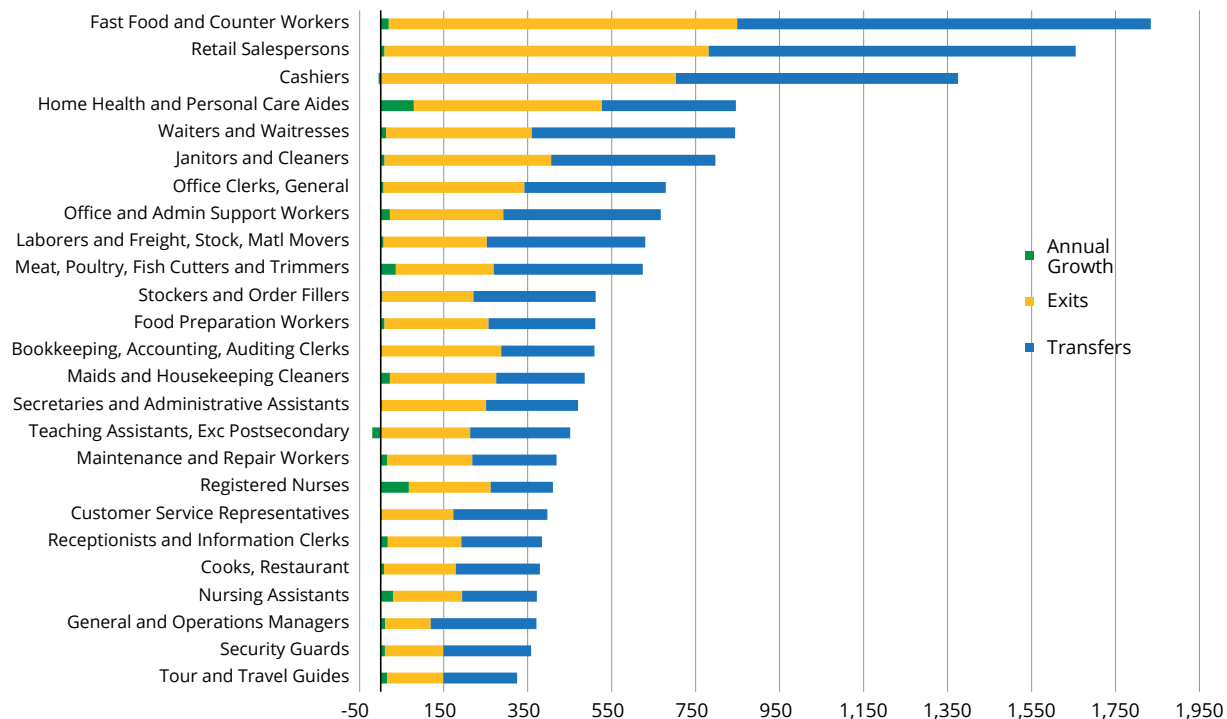
Annual separation openings by occupational category, 2024 to 2034



Notes: Occupational categories are based on the federal Standard Occupational Classification Manual. Occupations in decline will have no growth openings but may have openings from separations. Separations result from people leaving the labor force or transferring to a different occupations. Separations typically represent openings for new workers, but in declining occupations, not all separations result in openings (i.e. if the position is cut).

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

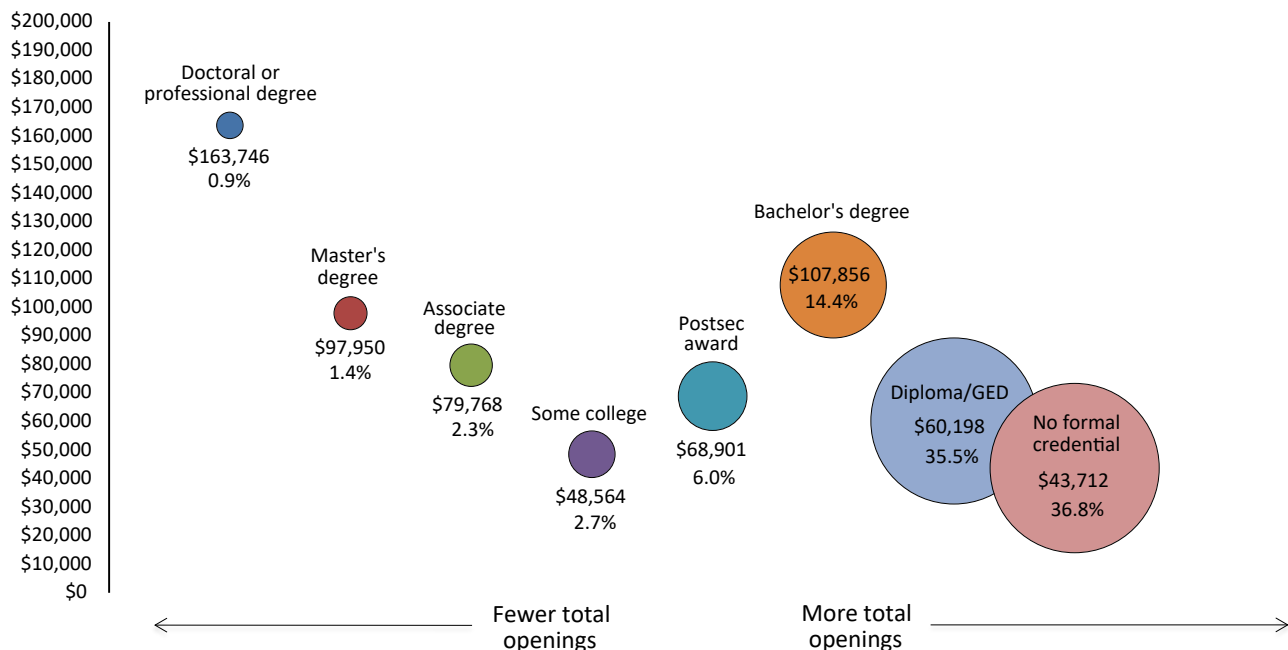
Most job openings will come from workers leaving an occupation



Notes: Annual openings for these projections are a combination of new jobs (growth), people permanently leaving the labor force (labor force exits), and people leaving an occupation for a different one (occupational transfers). Occupational separations are the sum of labor force exits and transfers. In declining occupations, not all separations result in job openings.

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

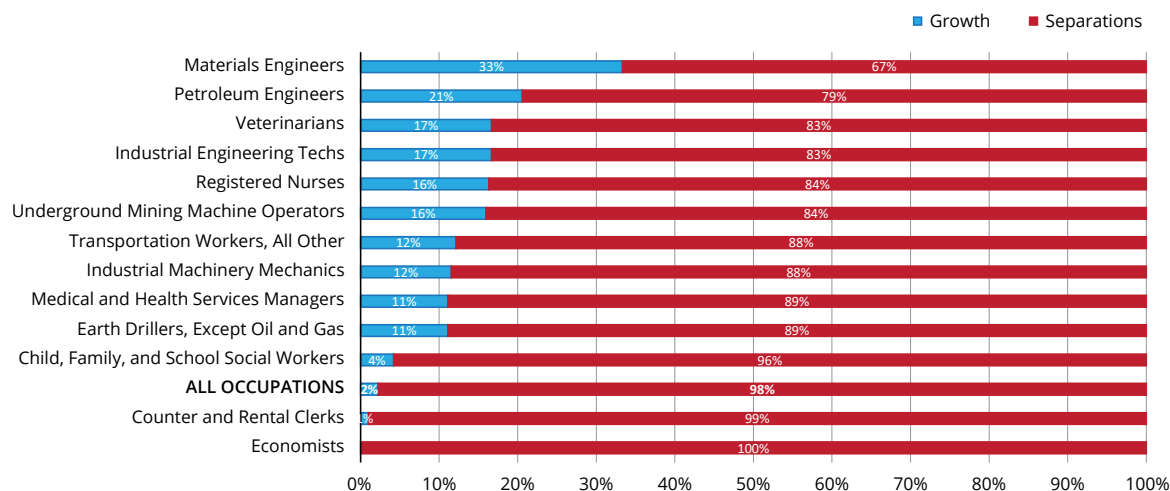
Percent of yearly openings by education level and wages, 2024-2034



Notes: Annual wage estimates are based on employment-weighted averages of 2024 Occupational Employment Statistics wage data. Occupational education levels are based on the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Public Use microdata. Openings include annual average growth and separations for occupations with a reported OES wage.

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

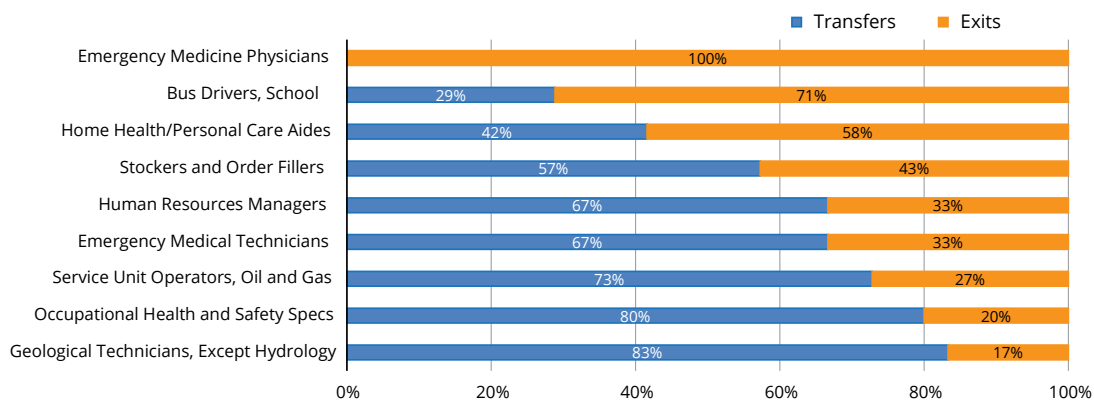
Projected growth and separation openings for select jobs



Notes: Growth openings are new jobs. Separations are the projected numbers of workers permanently leaving an occupation.

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

Openings from exits and transfers for select jobs



Notes: Occupational transfers are the projected number of workers leaving an occupation and transferring to a different occupation. Transfers represent permanent separations from an occupation, not temporary movements. Labor force exits are the projected number of workers leaving an occupation and exiting the labor force entirely. Labor force exits are more common as workers retire, but can occur at any age. Labor force exits are not necessarily permanent exits from the labor force, though they do represent permanent separations from an occupation.

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

The top and bottom 25 jobs for growth

The fastest-growing occupations are an eclectic mix. Production occupations round out half of the top 10, with growth in mining and oil and gas pushing these jobs to the top of the list.

Nursing assistants and home health and personal care aides also made the top 10. These represent just over half of all health care support jobs in the state, and demand will remain high as the health care industry grows.

A few tourism-linked occupations also made the list. Shuttle bus drivers and tour guides are projected to increase by 13 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively.

On the low end, journalists and broadcasters will decline by a projected 27 percent. Banking, finance, and insurance-related occupations are also in the bottom 25, with 9 to 10 percent projected declines among tellers, loan interviewers, and loan officers.

A few construction occupations also made the bottom list, partly because they grew so much in 2024 and will return to typical lower levels when large projects finish.

We project an 18.5 percent decline among structural metal fabricators and fitters, mainly because they are concentrated in the industrial construction industries we expect will shrink.

Openings from separations, growth in select occupations

As mentioned earlier, most job opportunities come from people leaving existing occupations.

High, low 25 jobs for growth* through 2034

25 highest-growth occupations		Growth, 2024-34
1	Crushing, Grinding, and Polishing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	23.1%
2	Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technologists and Technicians	22.5%
3	Mining and Geological Engineers, Including Mining Safety Engineers	17.8%
4	Petroleum Engineers	16.4%
5	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	16.3%
6	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	14.3%
7	Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	14.0%
8	Earth Drillers, Except Oil and Gas	13.2%
9	Nursing Assistants	13.0%
10	Shuttle Drivers and Chauffeurs	13.0%
11	Geological Technicians, Except Hydrologic Technicians	12.3%
12	Millwrights	12.1%
13	Psychiatric Technicians	12.0%
14	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	12.0%
15	Health Care Social Workers	11.3%
16	Chemical Technicians	11.1%
17	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	11.0%
18	Surgical Technologists	11.0%
19	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	11.0%
20	Family Medicine Physicians	10.8%
21	Tour and Travel Guides	10.8%
22	Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers	10.6%
22	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	10.5%
24	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	10.5%
25	Physical Therapists	10.3%

25 occupations projected to decline most		Loss, 2024-34
1	News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists	-27.9%
2	Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys	-27.7%
3	Advertising Sales Agents	-20.7%
4	Producers and Directors	-18.5%
5	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	-13.7%
6	Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers	-11.5%
7	Tellers	-10.7%
8	Loan Interviewers and Clerks	-10.2%
9	Insurance Underwriters	-9.4%
10	Loan Officers	-9.2%
11	Helpers: Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	-8.7%
12	Floral Designers	-8.6%
13	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	-8.3%
14	Packers and Packagers, Hand	-7.5%
15	Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other	-7.4%
16	Printing Press Operators	-7.4%
17	Pile Driver Operators	-6.9%
18	Postal Service Mail Carriers	-6.8%
19	Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators	-6.7%
20	Postal Service Clerks	-6.6%
21	Postmasters and Mail Superintendents	-6.5%
22	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Exc Line Installers	-6.1%
23	Insurance Sales Agents	-6.0%
24	Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	-5.9%
25	Financial Specialists, All Other	-5.8%

*Small numeric gains or losses can create large percent changes in smaller occupations.

Note: The top 25 list includes only the occupations that have at least 50 workers and projected growth of at least 20 jobs. It excludes residual occupations ending with "all other" and jobs with a high ratio of self-employment to covered employment. The bottom 25 list covers only occupations with at least 50 workers.

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

The occupations with the largest numbers of exits and transfers — people moving to a different type of work or leaving the workforce entirely — tend to have the lowest wages and fewest prerequisites.

For example, the three occupations with the most separation openings are fast food workers, retail salespeople, and cashiers. These three occupations are also the largest in the state, with a combined 26,726 jobs.

Even among occupations with high percentages of projected growth openings, most opportunities still arise from separations.

Among registered nurses, for example, 84 percent of yearly openings will come from separations, and 16 percent will come from growth (67 new jobs per year).

All economist openings, on the other hand, will come from separations.

Declining occupations will also have separation openings, although some will be canceled out by job losses.

Separations and the role education level plays

Within separations, looking at the breakdown of exits and transfers can show additional trends for an occupation.

Fast food workers, retail salespeople, and cashiers all have about a 50/50 split of exits and transfer openings, meaning it's as likely someone will quit the workforce entirely from one of those jobs as it is they'll move to another type of work.

Geological technicians, however, favor transfers (83 percent) to exits (17 percent).

Emergency medicine physicians have 100 percent labor force exits, meaning those doctors never move to another occupation before retiring or leaving the state, something common for jobs that require immense amounts of education and expense.

The education required to get a certain job is a

Average annual wage by job category in 2024

Occupational category		2024 wages
1	Management Occupations	\$132,448
2	Health Care Practitioners and Technical Occupations	\$121,157
3	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	\$109,403
4	Legal Occupations	\$107,743
5	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	\$90,510
6	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	\$90,424
7	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	\$86,159
8	Construction and Extraction Occupations	\$75,604
9	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	\$73,446
10	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$71,407
11	Protective Service Occupations	\$70,559
12	Community and Social Service Occupations	\$68,927
13	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	\$65,675
14	Production Occupations	\$55,861
15	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	\$54,504
16	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$51,996
17	Health Care Support Occupations	\$51,597
18	Sales and Related Occupations	\$45,983
19	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	\$45,727
20	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	\$43,629
21	Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$42,691
22	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	\$37,108

Note: Wages are based on 2024 Occupational Employment Statistics wage estimates for Alaska, weighted by base year (2024) employment.

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

major factor in its number of openings and its wages. Jobs requiring a high school diploma or less will represent over 72 percent of all job openings over the 10 years and have some of the lowest wages in the state.

Not every occupation in this category is low-wage, however, and some require other types of training or experience, such as apprenticeships. Earning higher-than-average wages in this educational category almost always requires apprenticeships or long-term on-the-job training.

On the opposite end of the scale, jobs that require doctorates, master's degrees, or other professional degrees will only represent about 2 percent of the state's job opportunities, and their wages are highest.

The bachelor's degree category is an outlier, as it will represent 14.4 percent of all openings but pay the second-highest average wage.

Looking at wages by occupational category provides additional context. On the low end, we see food preparation and serving related occupations earning \$37,108 a year on average, with 95 percent of these jobs requiring no formal education, 13 percent requiring moderate on-the-job training, and 2 percent needing five or more years of experience.

In contrast, construction and extraction occupations pay approximately double at \$75,604, and 60 percent require a diploma or GED. Even among the 40 percent of construction jobs that don't require any formal education, 42 percent still require moderate on-the-job training.

Alaska's top jobs over the decade

Long-term occupation projections are a vital planning tool for workforce development agencies, job placement and counseling professionals, job seekers, and education and training providers. To help them determine which occupations to focus on, we publish Alaska's Top Jobs list, which ranks the occupations we expect to fare well and pay well over the projection period. The list begins on the next page.

To make the top jobs list, an occupation must essentially pay higher-than-average wages plus have higher-than-average growth or many openings.

Out of 798 occupations in Alaska, 50 made the list this round. Twenty-three require a bachelor's degree, and six require an associate degree or some type of postsecondary education, such as a vocational certification or some college attendance.

Of the 20 top jobs that require a high school diploma or less, 15 require additional on-the-job training or an apprenticeship.

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BY INDUSTRY

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We project local government, which excludes public schools in these projections (discussed separately above) but includes tribal governments, will dip by 0.3 percent through 2034, which is about 62 fewer jobs.

As state revenues shrank with falling oil prices in 2014 and 2015, state support for local governments declined. Local governments slowly added jobs from 2015 to 2019 as they took over those services. Then, employment jumped by 1,173 between 2020 and 2025 as federal money flooded in for pandemic relief and then Infrastructure Act spending.

The Infrastructure Act buoyed job levels as pandemic funding waned, but much of the continued growth has come from federal funding for tribal governments through the BIA and Indian Health Service.

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Alaska's top jobs, 2024 to 2034

	Average annual openings, 2024-2034			Pct chg 2024-34	Total openings	Training* required	Work exp required	Wage** quartile	
	2024	2034	2024-34						
Bachelor's degree									
Registered Nurses	6,580	7,252	10.2%	67	343	410	None	None	\$\$\$
General and Operations Managers	4,623	4,728	2.3%	11	360	371	None	5+ years	\$\$\$
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	2,329	2,537	8.9%	21	269	290	Moderate OJT	<5 years	\$\$\$
Accountants and Auditors	2,364	2,394	1.3%	3	172	175	None	None	\$\$\$
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,113	2,003	-5.2%	-11	137	126	None	None	\$\$\$
Chief Executives	1,844	1,907	3.4%	6	124	130	None	5+ years	\$\$\$
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,665	1,577	-5.3%	-9	102	93	None	None	\$\$\$
Administrative Services Managers	1,496	1,542	3.1%	5	120	125	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Medical and Health Services Managers	1,323	1,444	9.2%	12	96	108	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Construction Managers	1,252	1,218	-2.7%	-3	90	87	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Civil Engineers	1,198	1,203	0.4%	1	69	70	None	None	\$\$\$
Financial Managers	1,086	1,084	-0.2%	0	72	72	None	5+ years	\$\$\$
Computer and Information Systems Managers	1,020	1,013	-0.7%	-1	64	63	None	5+ years	\$\$\$
Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists	925	913	-1.3%	-1	68	67	None	None	\$\$\$
Compliance Officers	806	813	0.9%	1	61	62	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Human Resources Specialists	748	765	2.3%	2	58	60	None	None	\$\$\$
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	698	726	4.0%	3	62	65	None	None	\$\$\$
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	645	716	11.0%	7	42	49	None	None	\$\$\$
Social and Community Service Managers	690	710	2.9%	2	53	55	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Buyers and Purchasing Agents	667	691	3.6%	2	62	64	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Sales Managers	676	673	-0.4%	0	49	49	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Human Resources Managers	640	660	3.1%	2	48	50	None	5+ years	\$\$\$
Training and Development Specialists	576	596	3.5%	2	48	50	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Associate degree									
Air Traffic Controllers	494	480	-2.8%	-1	44	43	Long OJT	None	\$\$\$
Postsecondary nondegree award or some college, no degree									
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	1,568	1,687	7.6%	12	124	136	None	None	\$\$\$
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	798	850	6.5%	5	87	92	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Commercial Pilots	614	658	7.2%	4	70	74	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	562	528	-6.1%	-3	49	46	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Massage Therapists	475	520	9.5%	5	61	66	None	None	\$\$\$
High school diploma or equivalent									
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	3,324	3,272	-1.6%	-5	266	261	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Carpenters	2,406	2,291	-4.8%	-12	167	156	Apprenticeship	None	\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,972	2,027	2.8%	6	186	192	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Electricians	1,816	1,854	2.1%	4	157	161	Apprenticeship	None	\$\$\$
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,471	1,465	-0.4%	-1	107	106	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Correctional Officers and Jailers	1,272	1,265	-0.6%	-1	112	111	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1,261	1,252	-0.7%	-1	101	100	Apprenticeship	None	\$\$\$
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	1,084	1,159	6.9%	8	89	97	Long OJT	None	\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	995	1,008	1.3%	1	74	75	None	5+ years	\$\$\$

Alaska's top jobs, 2024 to 2034, continued

	Pct chg			Average annual openings, 2024-2034					
	2024	2034	2024-34	Growth	Sepa- rations	Total openings	Training* required	Work exp required	Wage** quartile
High school diploma or equivalent, continued									
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	855	836	-2.2%	-2	81	79	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	752	737	-2.0%	-2	60	59	Long OJT	None	\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	680	711	4.6%	3	66	69	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	645	662	2.6%	2	51	53	Short OJT	<5 years	\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	631	661	4.8%	3	52	55	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	611	647	5.9%	4	59	63	None	<5 years	\$\$\$
Food Service Managers	596	612	2.7%	2	66	68	Short OJT	<5 years	\$\$\$
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	541	557	3.0%	2	49	51	Long OJT	None	\$\$\$
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	490	490	0%	0	57	57	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers	426	471	10.6%	5	43	48	Moderate OJT	None	\$\$\$
Power Plant Operators	444	449	1.1%	1	42	43	Long OJT	None	\$\$\$
No formal educational credential									
Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	1,410	1,612	14.3%	20	136	156	Moderate OJT	<5 years	\$\$\$

Notes: To rank as a "top job," an occupation must: 1) rank in the top two wage quartiles; AND 2) have total 10-year projected growth of at least 75 jobs and greater percentage growth than all occupations combined, OR be among the 50 occupations with the most projected average annual openings (of those with wages in the top two quartiles). Residual "all other" occupations are excluded.

*OJT = on-the-job training. Moderate-term is one to 12 months and long-term is more than 12 months.

**Wages: \$\$\$ = \$70,040 to \$92,900 annually (\$33.67 to \$44.66 hourly). \$\$\$\$ = More than \$92,900 annually (\$44.66 hourly), based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics' May 2024 Estimates for Alaska

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