

Young Adults in ALASKA

A snapshot of workers between ages 20 and 34

By **ALYSSA RODRIGUES**

While people between ages 20 and 34 make up just 22.5 percent of the state's population, they are 32 percent of Alaska's workforce.

In many ways, Alaskans in this age group mirror their national counterparts — they are more racially diverse than older age groups (see Exhibit 1) and they earn less on average. In other ways, younger Alaskans stand out from their age group nationally and from previous generations in Alaska.

Where they live

People between ages 20 and 34 make up more than 24 percent of the population in cities with large university and military populations, such as Anchorage and Fairbanks, and also in the North Slope Borough and the Kusilvak Census Area. (See Exhibit 2.)

Majority Alaska Native areas such as Kusilvak and North Slope have historically higher birth rates and a lower median age than the rest of the state, plus smaller populations over age 65.

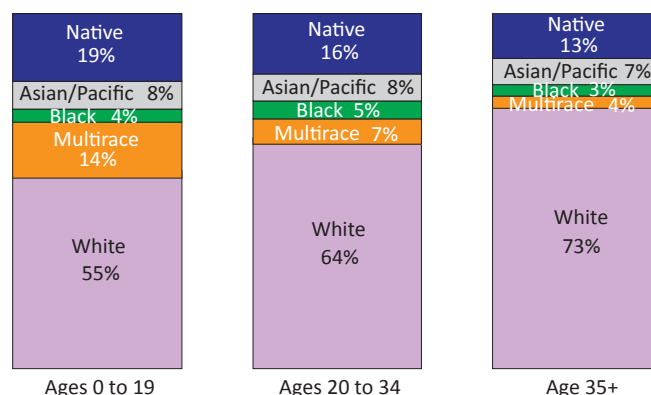
Areas with the lowest concentrations of young adults are all in Southeast Alaska, the region with the highest median age in the state.

They are more racially diverse

The biggest difference between Alaskans from 20 to 34 and older Alaskans is their racial and ethnic diversity, as 36 percent identify as nonwhite compared to 27 percent of those over age 35. They're also twice as likely to identify as multiracial, a trend that's likely to continue.

1 More Racially Diverse

ALASKA AGE GROUPS BY RACE, 2016



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

Alaskans who are 19 and younger are even more racially diverse, and twice as likely as the 20-to-34 group to identify as multiracial.

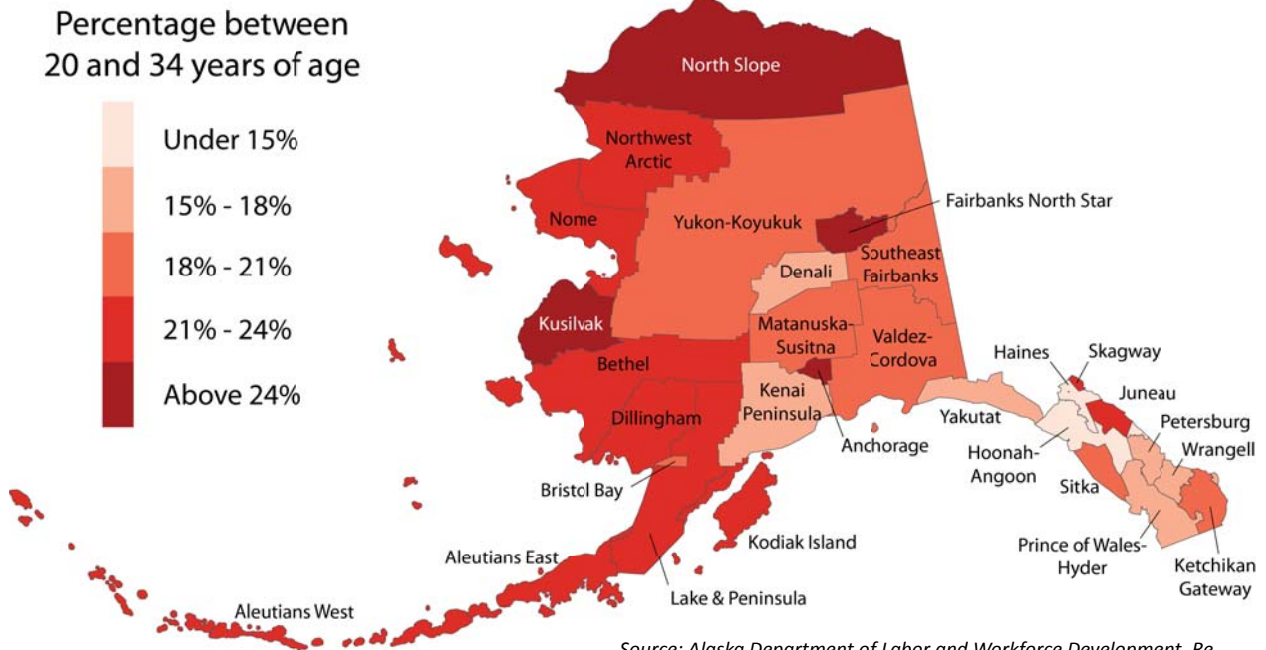
Common jobs and earnings

Wages tend to grow with age (see Exhibit 3), and younger Alaska workers earn less than their older counterparts in every industry and occupation, and in every part of the state.

Young workers earn the most in the North Slope Borough, where the oil and gas industry dominates. (See Exhibit 4 on page 14.) Oil and gas was the industry where young adults earned the most on average in 2016, with an average annual wage of \$75,000 — nearly two-and-a-half times the statewide average of \$30,725

2 Share of Area Populations Between Ages 20 and 34

ALASKA BOROUGHES AND CENSUS AREAS, 2016



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

for this age group.

Earnings are lowest in the Kuskilvak Census Area, where young workers earned less than half the statewide average for their age group in 2016 and five times less than those on the North Slope. This follows the overall trend of low wages and fewer employment opportunities in the Kuskilvak Census Area.

While the typical occupational mix is similar between young and older Alaskans, the most common occupation among people between 20 and 34 is retail sales worker (see Exhibit 5), and they are slightly more likely than older people to work in retail. Retail sales is a common entry-level job for young workers because it doesn't require much experience or education.

While construction trades worker is the most common occupation among older age groups, it's second for those between 20 and 34.

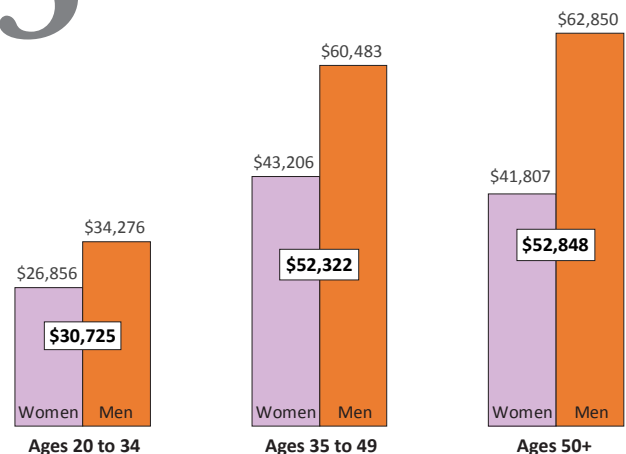
Food and beverage server is the third most common occupation for young adults, as it also requires little experience or education and often offers flexible hours. Accommodation and food services was also one of the lowest wage sectors for this group in 2016. (See Exhibit 6.)

More married than U.S. age group

Compared to their national counterparts, younger Alas-

3 Wages Increase With Age

ALASKA, BY AGE AND GENDER, 2016



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

kans are more likely to be married and to have given birth recently.

In 2016, 29 percent of Alaska's 20-to-34-year-olds were married compared to 27 percent nationwide. Fewer Alaskans had never been married, at 62 percent versus 65 percent nationally. And although young Alaskans are more likely to be married or have been married before,

Continued on page 14

4 Average Wages by Area

ALASKA, AGES 20 TO 34, 2016

Borough or Census Area	20-to-34-year-olds	
	Workers*	Avg wages
North Slope Borough	4,839	\$57,931
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	843	\$39,741
Aleutians West Census Area	670	\$37,589
Juneau, City and Borough	5,668	\$32,798
Denali Borough	401	\$32,592
Anchorage, Municipality	52,766	\$31,868
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	1,484	\$31,202
Northwest Arctic Borough	1,565	\$30,966
Fairbanks North Star Borough	15,188	\$29,615
Kenai Peninsula Borough	7,320	\$28,126
Aleutians East Borough	303	\$27,081
Kodiak Island Borough	1,796	\$26,793
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	2,055	\$26,310
Skagway, Municipality	195	\$26,022
Sitka, City and Borough	1,248	\$25,822
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	9,549	\$25,803
Nome Census Area	2,027	\$25,307
Petersburg Census Area	367	\$23,530
Dillingham Census area	939	\$23,308
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	1,007	\$22,323
Wrangell, City and Borough	290	\$21,926
Yakutat, City and Borough	97	\$21,790
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	777	\$21,699
Bristol Bay Borough	313	\$21,462
Bethel Census Area	3,572	\$20,910
Haines Borough	253	\$20,729
Lake and Peninsula Borough	354	\$20,617
Hoonah-Angoon Census area	236	\$16,281
Kusilvak Census Area	1,435	\$12,395

*By place of work. Includes all workers with age data, including nonresidents.

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

YOUNG ADULTS

Continued from page 9

their divorce rate is the same as that of the national age group, at 4 percent.

In Alaska, 9.4 percent had given birth in the last year compared to 8.9 percent of similarly aged U.S. women, a difference that's even more pronounced at the younger end of the age group.

Lower poverty rates in Alaska

Just 11 percent of 20-to-34-year-olds in Alaska fall below the federal poverty line, well below the national average of 17 percent.

Part of the difference is due to Alaska's higher incomes overall. Alaska incomes have exceeded U.S. incomes throughout its modern history, and while the gap has narrowed, Alaska's per capita income of \$55,300 remains above the national average of \$49,570. Federal poverty standards aren't adjusted for the cost of living, though, which is higher in Alaska.

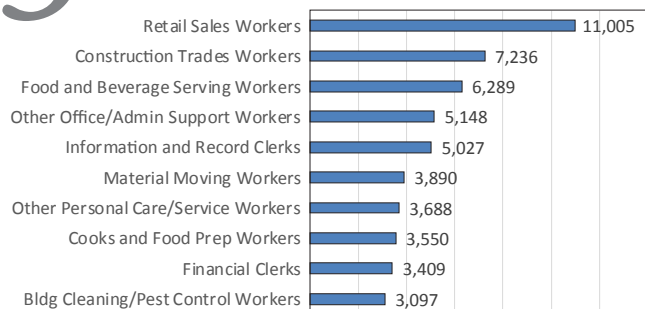
More mobile than U.S. age group

Alaska's young adults are more likely to move than Americans of the same age. As of 2016, about two-thirds of young Alaskans resided in the same house where they lived the year before, compared to nearly three-quarters for the U.S. Among those who did move in the past year, young Alaskans were twice as likely as the national group to have moved in from another state.

Alyssa Rodrigues is an economist in Anchorage. Reach her at (907) 269-4863 or alyssa.rodrigues@alaska.gov.

5 Most Common Occupations

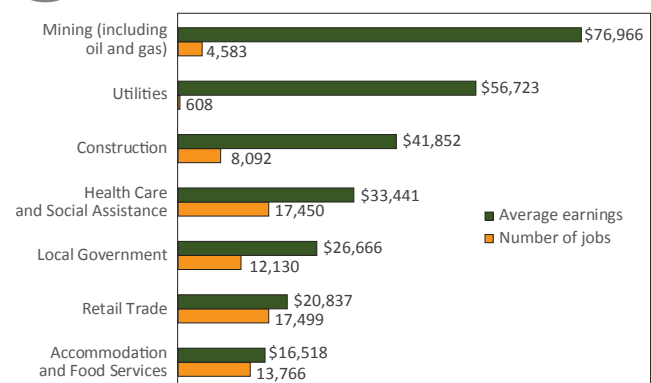
ALASKA, AGES 20 TO 34, 2016



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

6 Wages and Workers

BY INDUSTRY, AGES 20 TO 34, 2016



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