

News Release

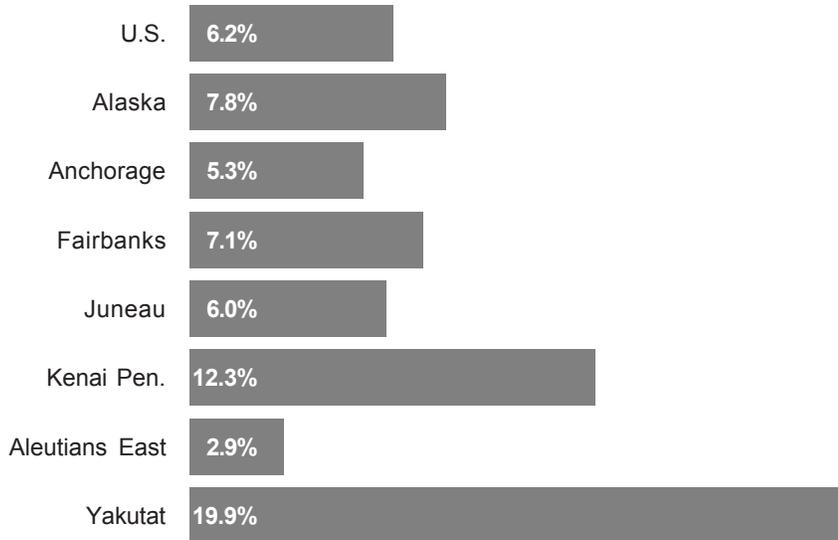
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March Unemployment Begins Seasonal Decline

March Unemployment for Selected Areas



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section
CA indicates census area; other areas are boroughs. All rates not seasonally adjusted (Detailed table on reverse)

Alaska's unemployment rate fell nine-tenths of a percentage point in March to 7.8 percent, according to Dan Robinson, a labor economist with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Alaska typically sees a moderate to large decrease in its unemployment rate in March as seasonal industries begin to add jobs. The rate is now six-tenths of a percentage point lower than a year ago. Nationally, the comparable March rate was 6.2 percent.

The number of unemployed Alaskans dropped by more than 3,200 in March to 26,144. That number is down slightly from March 2002. Alaska's labor force—the combination of employed and unemployed persons—fell by approximately 2,500 in March, as the decline in unemployment exceeded a slight increase in employment.

All six of the state's economic regions shared in March's lower rates. All but two boroughs and census areas also saw declines in March. In the Aleutians West Census Area the rate rose from 7.0 percent to 7.1 percent, and in Kodiak the rate jumped from 6.4 percent to 11.4 percent, due mostly to the groundfish quota being taken earlier than usual. Yakutat Borough recorded the state's highest unemployment rate in March at 19.9 percent, while the Aleutians East Borough had the lowest rate at 2.9 percent.

Wage and salary jobs increased by 1,500 in March and have increased by 2,500 over the year. The Anchorage and Mat-Su areas have contributed the lion's share of the growth, although Fairbanks and the surrounding Interior Region have also added a modest number of jobs.

Growth in wage and salary jobs is scattered over most categories, the exceptions being natural resources & mining, and manufacturing. Lower employment in the oil and gas industry and a slight reduction in seafood processing jobs account for over-the-year losses in those categories.

Alaska Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

	preliminary 03/03	revised 02/03		Changes from 03/02 02/03	03/02
Total Nonfarm	286,000	284,500	283,500	1,500	2,500
Natural Resources & Mining	10,100	10,000	10,800	100	-700
Construction	13,000	12,600	12,800	400	200
Manufacturing	11,600	11,800	11,700	-200	-100
Retail Trade	32,500	32,400	32,200	100	300
Information	6,900	6,900	6,900	0	0
Financial Activities	13,400	13,200	13,300	200	100
Leisure and Hospitality	25,500	25,200	25,000	300	500
Government	82,800	82,500	81,400	300	1,400

Government includes employees of public schools, the University of Alaska, and certain federally-recognized tribal entities.
Benchmark date: March 2002

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

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

March 2003:	Alaska 6.8%	U.S. 5.8%
February 2003:	Alaska 7.0%	U.S. 5.8%
March 2002:	Alaska 7.4%	U.S. 5.7%

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Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	03/03	02/03	03/02	03/03	02/03	03/02	03/03	02/03	03/02	03/03	02/03	03/02
Alaska Statewide	334,562	337,019	316,137	26,144	29,402	26,590	7.8	8.7	8.4	308,418	307,617	289,547
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	186,798	188,578	174,489	11,408	12,898	11,306	6.1	6.8	6.5	175,390	175,680	163,183
Municipality of Anchorage	152,325	153,108	142,942	8,131	9,080	8,163	5.3	5.9	5.7	144,194	144,028	134,779
Mat-Su Borough	34,473	35,470	31,547	3,277	3,818	3,143	9.5	10.8	10.0	31,196	31,652	28,404
Gulf Coast Region	33,364	33,478	31,882	4,039	4,470	4,027	12.1	13.4	12.6	29,325	29,008	27,855
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,820	22,195	21,108	2,685	3,266	2,932	12.3	14.7	13.9	19,135	18,929	18,176
Kodiak Island Borough	6,571	6,149	5,983	750	391	454	11.4	6.4	7.6	5,821	5,758	5,529
Valdez-Cordova CA	4,972	5,135	4,790	603	813	640	12.1	15.8	13.4	4,369	4,322	4,150
Interior Region	50,795	50,815	48,080	4,126	4,714	4,151	8.1	9.3	8.6	46,669	46,101	43,929
Denali Borough	1,254	1,276	1,183	167	202	160	13.3	15.8	13.5	1,087	1,074	1,023
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	44,542	44,453	42,057	3,171	3,585	3,115	7.1	8.1	7.4	41,371	40,868	38,942
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,653	2,711	2,575	359	445	415	13.5	16.4	16.1	2,294	2,266	2,160
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	2,345	2,374	2,265	429	481	461	18.3	20.3	20.4	1,916	1,893	1,804
Northern Region	9,402	9,451	9,482	1,250	1,330	1,279	13.3	14.1	13.5	8,152	8,121	8,203
Nome Census Area	3,491	3,515	3,540	459	495	489	13.1	14.1	13.8	3,032	3,020	3,051
North Slope Borough	3,435	3,433	3,464	349	359	359	10.2	10.5	10.4	3,086	3,074	3,105
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,476	2,503	2,479	442	476	432	17.9	19.0	17.4	2,034	2,027	2,047
Southeast Region	37,007	37,052	35,846	3,313	3,823	3,898	9.0	10.3	10.9	33,694	33,229	31,948
Haines Borough	1,227	1,237	1,197	186	210	210	15.2	17.0	17.5	1,041	1,027	987
Juneau Borough	16,126	16,046	15,410	961	1,090	1,031	6.0	6.8	6.7	15,165	14,956	14,379
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,009	7,030	6,938	665	774	923	9.5	11.0	13.3	6,344	6,256	6,015
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,675	2,745	2,656	434	535	531	16.2	19.5	20.0	2,241	2,210	2,125
Sitka Borough	4,314	4,288	4,126	307	336	327	7.1	7.8	7.9	4,007	3,952	3,799
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	2,006	2,030	2,015	258	306	357	12.9	15.1	17.7	1,748	1,724	1,658
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,324	3,339	3,186	437	492	449	13.1	14.7	14.1	2,887	2,847	2,737
Yakutat Borough	326	339	317	65	81	69	19.9	23.9	21.8	261	258	248
Southwest Region	17,196	17,645	16,358	2,009	2,167	1,929	11.7	12.3	11.8	15,187	15,478	14,429
Aleutians East Borough	1,867	1,912	1,780	54	64	57	2.9	3.3	3.2	1,813	1,848	1,723
Aleutians West Census Area	2,849	2,900	2,667	203	203	153	7.1	7.0	5.7	2,646	2,697	2,514
Bethel Census Area	6,783	6,956	6,412	895	956	818	13.2	13.7	12.8	5,888	6,000	5,594
Bristol Bay Borough	573	597	582	53	67	88	9.2	11.2	15.1	520	530	494
Dillingham Census Area	2,073	2,131	1,976	234	257	229	11.3	12.1	11.6	1,839	1,874	1,747
Lake & Peninsula Borough	654	682	618	106	123	97	16.2	18.0	15.7	548	559	521
Wade Hampton CA	2,395	2,466	2,322	463	497	486	19.3	20.2	20.9	1,932	1,969	1,836

Benchmark: March 2002 *Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section.* *• Comparisons between different time periods are not as meaningful as other time series produced by Research and Analysis.* *• The official definition of unemployment currently in place excludes anyone who has not made an active attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of the reference month. Due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in rural Alaska locations, many individuals do not meet the official definition of unemployed because they have not conducted an active job search. These individuals are considered not in the labor force.*