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Unemployment rate at 7.8 percent in September



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September inched up slightly to 7.8 percent. August's revised rate did not change, staying at 7.7 percent.

The comparable national jobless rate for September was 9.6 percent, unchanged from August. The unemployment rate in Alaska has recovered a bit faster than it has nationwide. Exactly a year ago, the U.S. rate was 9.8 percent, compared to 8.3 percent for Alaska. September was the 23rd consecutive month that Alaska's rate was lower than the nation's.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 9/10	Revised 8/10	Revised 9/09	Year-over-year change		
				9/09	90% confidence interval ²	
Total Nonfarm Employment ³	335,100	346,500	334,400	700	-6,683	8,083
Mining and Logging	17,900	17,900	15,000	2,900	2,107	3,693
Oil and Gas	11,700	12,000	12,400	-700	-	-
Construction	18,800	20,100	18,700	100	-2,483	2,683
Manufacturing	14,000	22,700	14,400	-400	-1,394	594
Seafood Processing	10,300	18,300	10,600	-300	-	-
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	64,600	67,500	66,100	-1,500	-3,872	872
Retail Trade	36,300	37,800	36,700	-400	-2,428	1,628
Information	6,400	6,400	6,500	-100	-681	481
Financial Activities	13,800	14,000	14,900	-1,100	-3,043	843
Professional and Business Services	25,500	25,600	26,900	-1,400	-3,193	393
Educational ⁴ and Health Services	40,700	40,000	39,500	1,200	-68	2,468
Health Care	29,100	28,700	28,400	700	-	-
Leisure and Hospitality	35,500	39,800	35,200	300	-1,737	2,337
Accommodations	9,800	11,700	9,700	100	-	-
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	20,600	22,500	20,400	200	-	-
Other Services	11,300	11,100	11,500	-200	-3,376	2,976
Government ⁵	86,600	81,400	85,700	900	-	-

Unemployment rates that were not seasonally adjusted increased slightly in all but one of the state's regions in September. This is typical as fishing and tourism drop off considerably and construction work tapers down. These unemployment numbers will continue to rise for the next five to six months as winter sets in.

In nearly all of the regions, unemployment rates came in slightly below year-ago levels. For example, Southeast's unemployment rate in September was 6.2 percent, versus 6.7 percent last year. The Northern region was the only area where the jobless rate came in higher, by three-tenths of a percent, than a year ago.

In September, like August, the areas with both the highest and lowest unemployment rates were unchanged. The Bristol Bay Borough and Skagway had the lowest unemployment rates, and the numbers were highest in the Wade Hampton and Bethel census areas. But some of these rankings will change with the onset of winter, and areas with higher rates will have more company.

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Research and Analysis' Web site: <http://laborstats.alaska.gov>

Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	9/10	8/10	9/09
Alaska	7.8%	7.7%	8.3%
U.S.	9.6%	9.6%	9.8%

Sources for graph and tables: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has implemented a change to the method used to produce statewide wage and salary employment estimates. That change has resulted in increased monthly volatility in the wage and salary estimates for many states, including Alaska. Therefore, one should be very cautious in interpreting any over-the-year or month-to-month change for these monthly estimates. The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages series may be a better source of information for trends analysis (<http://labor.alaska.gov/qcew.htm>).

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted¹

	Civilian Labor Force			Unemployed					
	9/10 ^P	8/10	9/09	Number			Rate		
				9/10 ^P	8/10	9/09	9/10 ^P	8/10	9/09
Alaska Statewide	364,506	369,559	362,669	26,772	25,890	27,768	7.3	7.0	7.7
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	196,740	196,279	195,137	13,788	13,235	14,294	7.0	6.7	7.3
Municipality of Anchorage	154,878	154,498	153,436	10,455	10,002	10,678	6.8	6.5	7.0
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	41,862	41,781	41,701	3,333	3,233	3,616	8.0	7.7	8.7
Gulf Coast Region	39,910	42,176	40,103	3,221	3,065	3,317	8.1	7.3	8.3
Kenai Peninsula Borough	26,996	28,150	27,168	2,437	2,286	2,516	9.0	8.1	9.3
Kodiak Island Borough	6,939	7,199	6,949	393	411	419	5.7	5.7	6.0
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	5,975	6,827	5,986	391	368	382	6.5	5.4	6.4
Interior Region	55,585	55,015	55,201	3,795	3,679	3,979	6.8	6.7	7.2
Denali Borough	2,127	2,376	2,076	86	81	86	4.0	3.4	4.1
Fairbanks North Star Borough	45,785	46,072	46,529	2,975	2,904	3,185	6.5	6.3	6.8
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	4,602	3,724	3,655	336	318	305	7.3	8.5	8.3
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	3,071	2,843	2,941	398	376	403	13.0	13.2	13.7
Northern Region	11,873	11,878	11,975	1,191	1,206	1,157	10.0	10.2	9.7
Nome Census Area	4,016	3,818	4,016	511	534	506	12.7	14.0	12.6
North Slope Borough	4,917	5,019	5,072	277	273	280	5.6	5.4	5.5
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,940	3,041	2,887	403	399	371	13.7	13.1	12.9
Southeast Region	41,983	44,338	41,991	2,615	2,600	2,799	6.2	5.9	6.7
Haines Borough	1,853	2,053	1,814	90	87	100	4.9	4.2	5.5
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ²	1,403	1,509	1,380	136	136	120	9.7	9.0	8.7
City and Borough of Juneau	18,369	18,309	18,525	985	978	1,092	5.4	5.3	5.9
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ²	9,006	9,882	8,936	538	523	524	6.0	5.3	5.9
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ²	2,428	2,514	2,415	314	323	340	12.9	12.8	14.1
City and Borough of Sitka	4,833	5,358	4,809	267	273	285	5.5	5.1	5.9
Skagway Municipality ²	771	824	781	29	21	44	3.8	2.5	5.6
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ²	2,975	3,535	2,981	233	233	263	7.8	6.6	8.8
Yakutat Borough	345	354	350	23	26	31	6.7	7.3	8.9
Southwest Region	18,414	19,873	18,259	2,163	2,105	2,222	11.7	10.6	12.2
Aleutians East Borough	1,143	1,374	1,144	89	83	104	7.8	6.0	9.1
Aleutians West Census Area	2,537	3,019	2,624	193	145	258	7.6	4.8	9.8
Bethel Census Area	7,110	6,943	6,997	1,049	1,036	994	14.8	14.9	14.2
Bristol Bay Borough	1,189	1,868	1,148	35	34	35	2.9	1.8	3.0
Dillingham Census Area	2,340	2,761	2,307	198	192	215	8.5	7.0	9.3
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,306	1,241	1,273	72	71	79	5.5	5.7	6.2
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,789	2,667	2,766	527	544	537	18.9	20.4	19.4

P = Preliminary. As more information becomes available, data are revised every month for the previous month and again at the end of every calendar year.

Note: The official definition of unemployment 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. Many individuals in rural Alaska do not meet the definition because they have not conducted an active job search due to the scarcity of employment opportunities.

¹ Unemployment rates that are not seasonally adjusted should not be compared with those that are.

² Because of the creation of new boroughs, this borough or census area has been changed or no longer exists. Data for the Skagway Municipality and Hoonah-Angoon Census Area (previously the Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area) became available in 2010. Data for the Wrangell Borough, and Petersburg and Prince of Wales-Hyder census areas will be available in 2011. Until then, data will continue to be published for the old areas.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics