

# Alaska Population Projections

2012 to 2042



Alaska's population has expanded at a relatively fast pace over the past two decades, with typical growth of over 1 percent a year compared to less than three-quarters of a percent for the nation as a whole. Much of the state's recent growth has been due to its relatively young population and high birth rates.

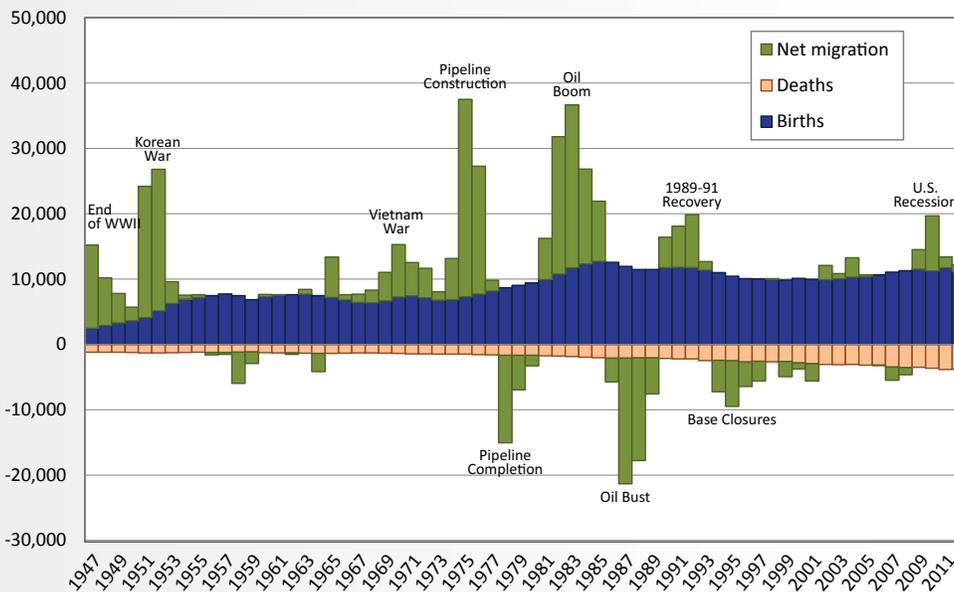
Based on Alaska's age structure and assuming little change in rates of fertility, mortality, and migration, the state is projected to continue to grow faster than the Lower 48 and add nearly 200,000 people between 2012 and 2042. Though these total projections are uncertain, three things about the future Alaska are fairly sure: it will be larger, older, and more heavily centered in the Railbelt region — Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Bor-

ough, Fairbanks North Star Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough.

## Less volatility in recent decades

While the first three decades of Alaska's statehood were punctuated by booms and busts due to the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and fluctuations in oil prices and oil revenue, the population has been much less volatile over the past two decades. In the early 1990s, between 35,000 and 50,000 people moved to the state each year, and 35,000 to 50,000 moved out. Though certain years had meaningful imbalances of in- and out-movers, they were on a small scale and none were due to any single event. (See Exhibit 1.)

### 1 Alaska's Population Changes 1947 to 2012



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

In considering Alaska migration, it's important to note the state gains young working-age people overall each year through moves, and loses older people. This reinforces population growth because young workers often bring children or will eventually have them.

Though net-migration's ups and downs have been relatively minor since the 1990s, even small, long-term differences can affect the projected numbers significantly. To account for this, the projections include three migration scenarios. The "baseline" scenario, considered most likely, uses a net migration rate of 0, meaning those moving in and out each year are equal. The "high" and "low" scenarios use net-migration rates of 1 and -0.5

percent. These scenarios use unchanged fertility and mortality rates. (See Exhibit 2.)

The projections don't account for any large economic projects or events that would change these trends, though major economic changes can happen unexpectedly, as the discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay demonstrated.

## Births to increase

Over the last 20 years, fertility rates stayed fairly steady at around 2.3 to 2.4 children per woman — higher than the national rate of 2 to 2.1. Along with the age structure of the population, this yielded around 10,000 to 11,000 births each year — a major factor in Alaska's population growth.

For the 2012 to 2042 period, projections held fertility rates at 2.3 children per woman. With age structure and migration, this produced an increase in annual births over time. In the baseline scenario, births would be less than 12,000 annually in the first years of the projections and close to 14,000 per year by 2042.

## Deaths to increase more

Though mortality rates have decreased for the state, the aging of Alaska's population means the numbers of annual deaths have increased regularly. Over the last 20 years, annual deaths have risen from less than 2,500 to nearly 4,000, which has slowed overall population growth.

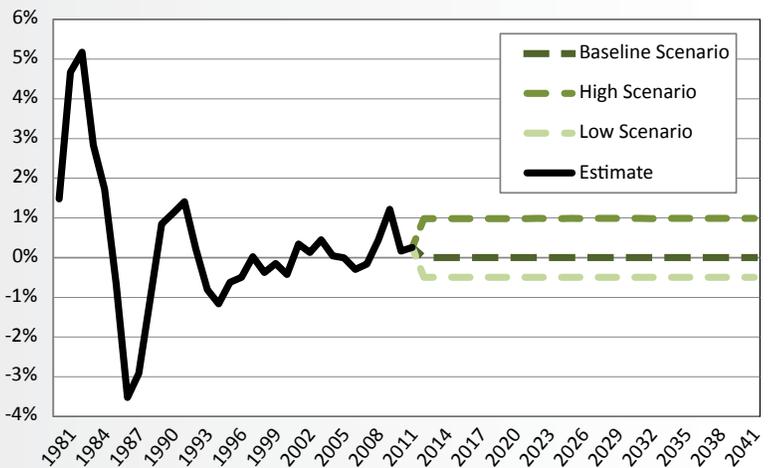
Mortality rates are projected to steadily decline, but due to further population aging, yearly deaths are projected to roughly double to more than 8,000 by 2042. Of the three components of population change — births, deaths, and migration — death rates are the most certain.

## Many more Alaskans

With an aging population and an increase in the ratio of deaths to births, Alaska's projected growth will slow somewhat; regardless, all three scenarios project population gains through natural increase alone (births minus deaths). (See Exhibit 3.) The baseline scenario puts Alaska's population at 806,479 in 2022, 868,902 in 2032, and 925,042 in 2042.

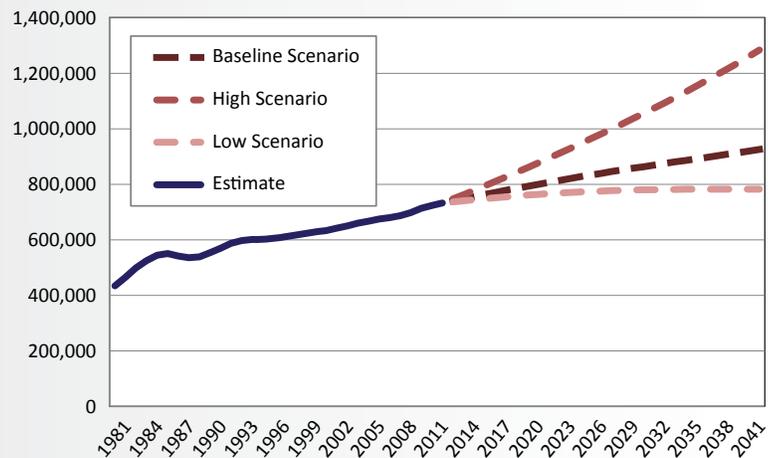
With time, though, the different scenarios for

## 2 Net Migration and Possible Scenarios Alaska, between 1980 and 2042



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

## 3 Alaska's Population Pattern Between 1980 and 2042



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

Alaska's net-migration lead to greater differences between projected populations. One thing is clear when looking at the three scenarios by age: as the "baby boomers" (born between 1946 and 1964) age, Alaska's senior population will grow at a faster rate. There's considerably more uncertainty about the population yet to be born, which is heavily affected by migration and fertility rates. (See Exhibit 4.)

Alaska's median age is projected to rise at a steady

pace, from 34.1 to 35.5, but to stay lower than that of the nation as a whole. The number of males per 100 females, which was around 130 at statehood, was 108 in 2012 and is expected to drop further, to 103 by 2042.

## More young and old

Alaska’s youngest population, ages 0 to 4, is projected to increase by 26 percent, or nearly 15,000 people, between 2012 and 2042. The population ages 5 to 17 is projected to add more than 35,000 people — an increase of 27 percent. With the last of the large “echo boom” cohort (the children of the baby boomers) moving into adulthood, increases in Alaska’s youth population are projected to be moderate at first, then accelerate as the echo boomers reach high-fertility ages. (See Exhibit 5.)

People between 18 and 64 represent the working-age population. This group numbered just under 480,000 in 2012 and is projected to reach approximately 545,000 in 2042, a 14 percent increase. As the baby boomers continue to pass age 65, the echo boomers will continue moving past 18, yielding little change in the size of the working-age population in the first half of the projections. In the latter half of the projections, though, growth for this group is expected to increase. (See Exhibit 6.)

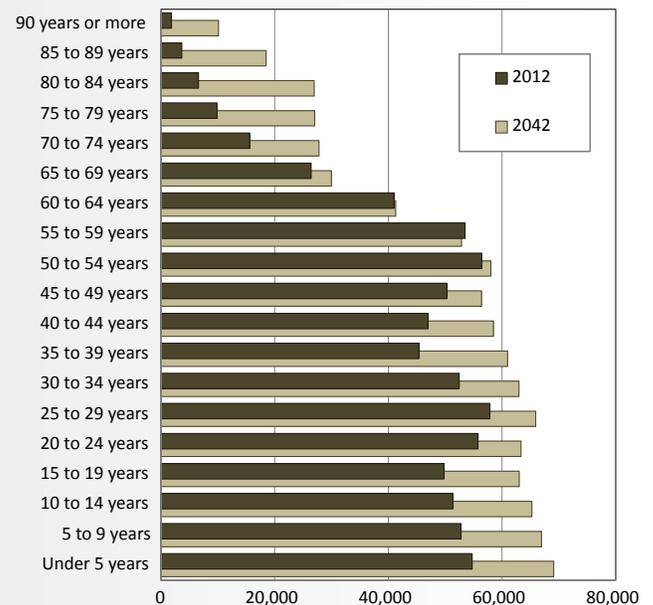
Fueled by the large cohort of aging baby boomers, the population aged 65 or more is projected to grow at a faster rate than any other age group. Largely made up of retirees, Alaska’s current 65+ population is around 65,000 and is projected to more than double by 2042, passing 140,000. That’s an increase of 120 percent. Near the end of the projection period, all of the baby boomers will be well past 65, causing some decline. (See Exhibit 7.)

## Higher dependency ratios

More young and old people will mean higher dependency ratios for Alaska. In 2012, for every 100 Alaskans ages 18 to 64, there were 40 people under 18 and 13 people age 65 and up. Both these figures are projected to increase over the next 30 years.

Alaska’s youth dependency ratio is projected to

## 4 Population by Age Group Alaska, 2012 and 2042



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

rise to 44 by 2022 and 46 by 2032, and then drop back to 44 in 2042. The aged dependency ratio is projected to reach 24 in 2022, then 29 in 2032 before declining to 26 in 2042.

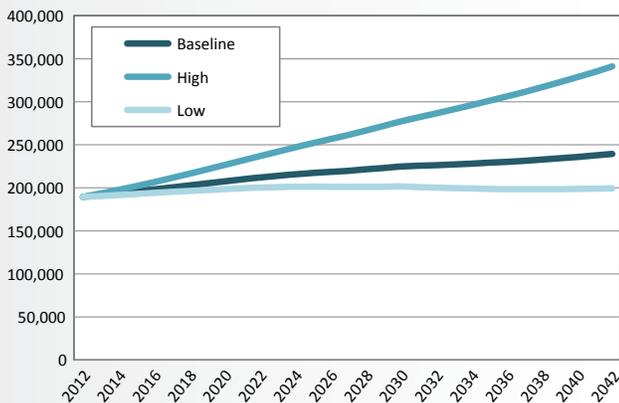
## Gains for Native population

The Alaska Native population is projected to grow by more than 38,000 people, or 31 percent, between 2012 and 2042 and to maintain roughly the same share of Alaska’s population over the period. (See Exhibit 9.) The Native population has consistently high birth rates, which contribute significantly to growth.

Annual births and deaths for Alaska Natives are both projected to increase over the projection period, but with births consistently higher. In contrast, migration is just a small part of Native population change, and the net migration rate is projected to be -0.5 percent annually over the period — easily overcome by population gains from natural increase.

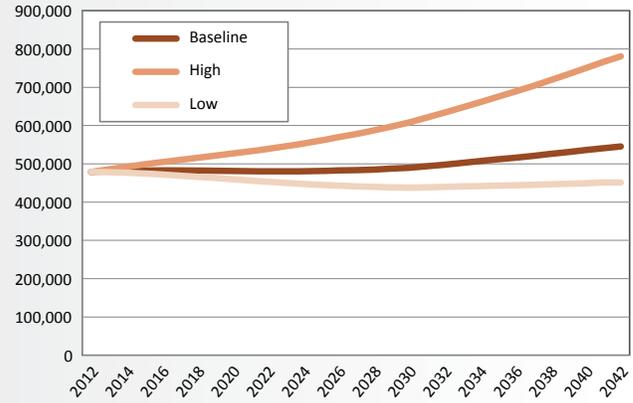
Similar to Alaska as a whole, the Alaska Native population aged 65 and older is projected to grow rapidly, increasing by nearly 140 percent over the projection period from about 8,600 (7 percent of

## 5 Population Ages 0 to 17 Alaska, 2012 to 2042



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

## 6 Population Ages 18 to 64 Alaska, 2012 to 2042



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

all ages) in 2012 to more than 20,000 in 2042 (13 percent of all ages).

### Regions are tough to predict

Projections vary greatly around the state based on differing rates of change over the past decade. Projections are particularly uncertain for regions, boroughs, and census areas, as smaller areas are more volatile and individual events can have a much larger effect on the numbers. These areas are also subject to an additional factor: in-state migration.

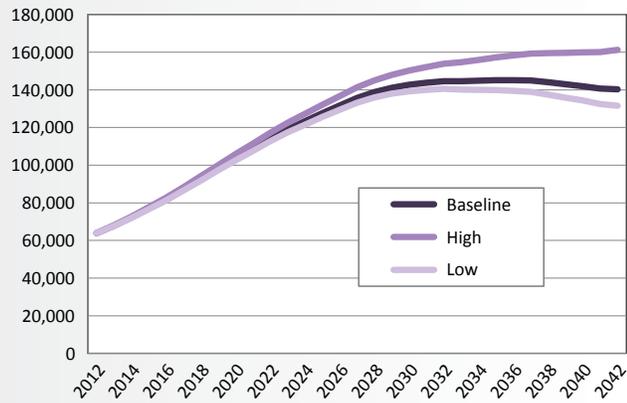
What's somewhat clear is that Alaska's population will become more heavily concentrated in the largest population centers, and the Railbelt region is expected to grow more than the rest of the state.

### Most growth in Anchorage, Mat-Su

While the projections show no change in the size-ordering of region populations over the projection period, the strongest growth by far is projected for Anchorage/Mat-Su. Altogether, projections show Anchorage/Mat-Su growing by nearly 140,000 people, a 35 percent increase, from roughly 390,000 in 2012 to more than 530,000 in 2042. Projected gains for the region are split pretty evenly between the two areas numerically, though the percent increase will be noticeably larger for Mat-Su. (See Exhibit 10.)

Projections for the Mat-Su Borough alone show an increase of more than 75 percent, starting at

## 7 Population Age 65-Plus Alaska, 2012 to 2042



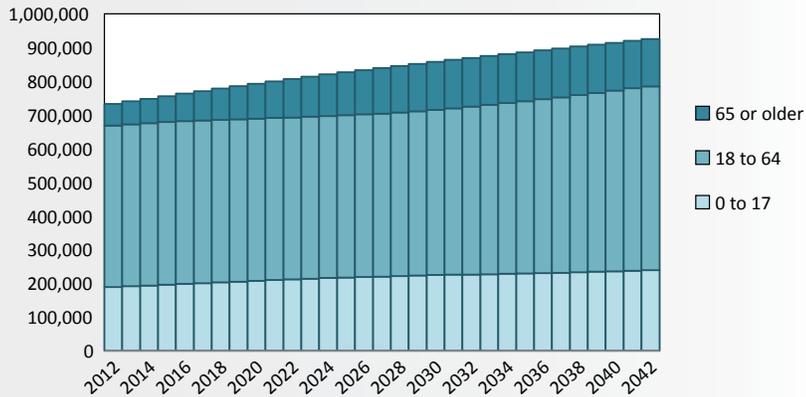
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

just over 93,000 in 2012 and reaching more than 165,000 people by 2042. Though net-migration gains have tapered some for the borough over the last decade, Mat-Su remains the one area with consistent gains through both natural increase and net-migration, and that's projected to continue.

### Gains for greater Fairbanks and Delta Junction areas

Driven by strong growth for the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the nearby Southeast Fairbanks Census Area, which includes communities near Delta Junction, the Interior region has grown

## 8 Population by Select Age Groups 2012 to 2042



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

steadily over recent years, and it is projected to grow more — by about 34,000 people between 2012 and 2042. It’s important to note that changes to the military population are unpredictable and can have a large effect on both of these areas.

The Interior Region also covers Denali Borough and Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area. These areas’ composition is projected to shift with population aging, but with little change in total population.

## Births lead Northern and Southwest growth

Through high birth rates, the Northern and Southwest regions of the state are projected

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## How we created these projections

Instead of forecasting economic conditions, these projections are based on population age structure and historical trends in each of the components of population change: birth rates, death rates, and migration.

Specifically, we aged the population forward in time, added projected births and in-migrants, then subtracted deaths and out-migrants. We carried out this process for each of the three migration scenarios — baseline, low, and high — and for the Alaska Native population and each borough and census area.

Further information and a full report are available at [laborstats.alaska.gov](http://laborstats.alaska.gov). Click “Population and Census,” then “Alaska Population Projections.”

## 9 Alaska Native Population by Age 2012 to 2042

Age	2012	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042
Birth to 4	12,603	14,090	14,023	13,939	14,330	15,222	16,195
5 to 9	11,696	11,991	13,476	13,411	13,329	13,721	14,612
10 to 14	11,387	12,554	12,849	14,333	14,269	14,188	14,581
15 to 19	10,799	10,332	11,496	11,793	13,272	13,211	13,133
20 to 24	10,558	8,676	8,217	9,375	9,676	11,147	11,091
25 to 29	9,496	9,969	8,124	7,679	8,826	9,131	10,587
30 to 34	7,914	10,372	10,846	9,039	8,608	9,742	10,050
35 to 39	6,746	7,537	9,959	10,434	8,663	8,245	9,368
40 to 44	6,503	6,507	7,286	9,661	10,137	8,410	8,009
45 to 49	7,705	6,291	6,302	7,068	9,393	9,867	8,189
50 to 54	7,576	7,454	6,107	6,127	6,874	9,129	9,601
55 to 59	6,476	7,491	7,387	6,115	6,145	6,871	9,045
60 to 64	4,894	6,044	7,013	6,930	5,743	5,783	6,483
65 to 69	3,171	4,490	5,561	6,470	6,410	5,328	5,379
70 to 74	2,227	2,762	3,919	4,870	5,687	5,654	4,724
75 to 79	1,556	1,804	2,246	3,191	3,980	4,668	4,662
80 to 84	947	1,119	1,301	1,629	2,318	2,907	3,427
85 to 89	468	534	639	749	947	1,356	1,714
90+	222	199	232	284	338	434	633
Total	122,944	130,216	136,983	143,097	148,945	155,014	161,483

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

# 10 Populations by Borough or Census Area

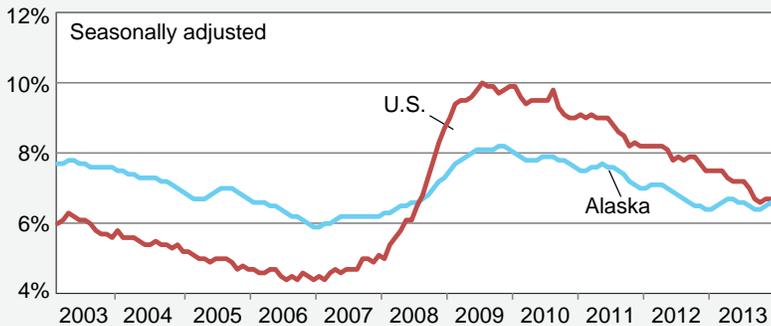
Alaska, 2012 to 2042

								2012 to 2042	
	2012	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042	Percent Change	Growth Rate
<b>Alaska</b>	<b>732,298</b>	<b>770,417</b>	<b>806,479</b>	<b>839,191</b>	<b>868,902</b>	<b>897,034</b>	<b>925,042</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	<b>392,643</b>	<b>418,965</b>	<b>444,457</b>	<b>468,313</b>	<b>490,485</b>	<b>511,276</b>	<b>531,209</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
Anchorage, Municipality	298,842	313,348	326,612	338,059	347,870	356,584	364,871	22%	0.7%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	93,801	105,617	117,845	130,254	142,615	154,692	166,338	77%	1.9%
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	<b>80,750</b>	<b>83,321</b>	<b>85,517</b>	<b>87,147</b>	<b>88,162</b>	<b>88,729</b>	<b>89,067</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
Kenai Peninsula Borough	56,756	59,225	61,391	63,116	64,321	65,098	65,647	16%	0.5%
Kodiak Island Borough	14,041	14,245	14,402	14,479	14,473	14,460	14,435	3%	0.1%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	9,953	9,851	9,724	9,552	9,368	9,171	8,985	-10%	-0.3%
<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>115,114</b>	<b>121,969</b>	<b>128,363</b>	<b>134,073</b>	<b>139,238</b>	<b>144,166</b>	<b>149,162</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Denali Borough	1,871	1,848	1,806	1,771	1,720	1,661	1,609	-14%	-0.5%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	100,343	106,822	112,843	118,191	123,018	127,560	132,030	32%	0.9%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	7,218	7,885	8,553	9,184	9,799	10,425	11,112	54%	1.4%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	5,682	5,414	5,161	4,927	4,701	4,520	4,411	-22%	-0.8%
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>27,312</b>	<b>27,953</b>	<b>28,565</b>	<b>29,193</b>	<b>30,006</b>	<b>31,143</b>	<b>32,680</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Nome Census Area	9,869	10,283	10,688	11,103	11,597	12,211	12,997	32%	0.9%
North Slope Borough	9,727	9,638	9,544	9,465	9,460	9,563	9,757	0%	0.0%
Northwest Arctic Borough	7,716	8,032	8,333	8,625	8,949	9,369	9,926	29%	0.8%
<b>Southeast Region</b>	<b>74,423</b>	<b>74,863</b>	<b>74,849</b>	<b>74,384</b>	<b>73,511</b>	<b>72,419</b>	<b>71,170</b>	<b>-4%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>
Haines Borough	2,620	2,679	2,716	2,736	2,735	2,707	2,649	1%	0.0%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	2,210	2,112	1,999	1,883	1,764	1,644	1,534	-31%	-1.2%
Juneau, City and Borough	32,832	33,419	33,839	34,045	34,042	33,879	33,617	2%	0.1%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	13,938	13,938	13,843	13,644	13,369	13,071	12,762	-8%	-0.3%
Petersburg Borough	3,269	3,197	3,097	2,989	2,850	2,709	2,574	-21%	-0.8%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	6,439	6,399	6,324	6,241	6,159	6,098	6,027	-6%	-0.2%
Sitka, City and Borough	9,084	9,084	9,020	8,893	8,724	8,520	8,300	-9%	-0.3%
Skagway Municipality	961	986	1,015	1,021	1,014	1,013	1,005	5%	0.1%
Wrangell, City and Borough	2,448	2,451	2,431	2,393	2,347	2,298	2,243	-8%	-0.3%
Yakutat, City and Borough	622	598	565	539	507	480	459	-26%	-1.0%
<b>Southwest Region</b>	<b>42,056</b>	<b>43,346</b>	<b>44,728</b>	<b>46,081</b>	<b>47,500</b>	<b>49,301</b>	<b>51,754</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Aleutians East Borough	3,227	3,213	3,201	3,187	3,169	3,140	3,120	-3%	-0.1%
Aleutians West Census Area	5,881	5,868	5,862	5,844	5,798	5,727	5,639	-4%	-0.1%
Bethel Census Area	17,600	18,404	19,246	20,103	21,040	22,200	23,696	35%	1.0%
Bristol Bay Borough	987	961	933	897	851	818	779	-21%	-0.8%
Dillingham Census Area	4,988	5,027	5,066	5,104	5,151	5,221	5,341	7%	0.2%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,673	1,703	1,732	1,742	1,746	1,751	1,779	6%	0.2%
Wade Hampton Census Area	7,700	8,170	8,688	9,204	9,745	10,444	11,400	48%	1.3%

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

# Employment Scene

## 1 Unemployment Rates January 2003 to April 2014



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

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Continued from page 8

to continue growing despite somewhat strong net losses through migration. The Northern region is projected to grow by more than 5,300, a 20 percent increase, while Southwest is projected to add 9,700 people from 2012 to 2042.

### Few gains for Gulf Coast and Southeast

The Gulf Coast region, which covers Kenai Peninsula as well as Kodiak Island, and the Prince William Sound and Copper River (Valdez-Cordova Census Area) areas are projected to add a little more than 8,300 people between 2012 and 2042 for a 10 percent gain. Most of the projected growth is for Kenai Peninsula Borough.

The only region projected to lose population is Southeast. Small migration losses and lower birth rates show a population drop of 3,250 people between 2012 and 2042. This could change, though, as Southeast has seen some gains from migration in recent years. Little change in total population is projected for Juneau, which is the region's hub and the state capital.

## 2 Unemployment Rates Boroughs and census areas

	Prelim.	Revised	
<b>SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>	<b>4/14</b>	<b>3/14</b>	<b>4/13</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Alaska Statewide</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>			
<b>United States</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>Alaska Statewide</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.6</b>
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.6</b>
Municipality of Anchorage	5.0	5.4	5.1
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	7.3	8.5	7.4
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Kenai Peninsula Borough	7.6	8.8	7.7
Kodiak Island Borough	4.9	5.2	5.2
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	9.2	11.5	9.5
<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Denali Borough	14.9	18.7	16.6
Fairbanks North Star Borough	5.5	6.2	5.9
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	11.5	13.5	11.0
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	15.6	17.2	14.6
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>9.4</b>
Nome Census Area	11.8	12.4	11.7
North Slope Borough	4.0	4.3	4.7
Northwest Arctic Borough	16.2	17.3	14.8
<b>Southeast Region</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Haines Borough	9.3	11.6	8.5
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	19.7	25.5	17.7
Juneau, City and Borough	4.6	5.3	4.6
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	6.8	8.1	6.9
Petersburg Census Area	10.0	12.2	9.1
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	13.5	18.2	12.4
Sitka, City and Borough	4.9	5.8	5.0
Skagway, Municipality	13.1	21.6	14.0
Wrangell, City and Borough	7.4	10.0	7.4
Yakutat, City and Borough	8.9	12.6	8.6
<b>Southwest Region</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>13.2</b>
Aleutians East Borough	6.5	8.0	7.2
Aleutians West Census Area	6.1	4.7	8.0
Bethel Census Area	16.3	16.6	15.8
Bristol Bay Borough	7.4	9.2	7.4
Dillingham Census Area	10.2	10.4	9.5
Lake and Peninsula Borough	10.1	11.2	8.8
Wade Hampton Census Area	24.0	25.4	21.9

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