

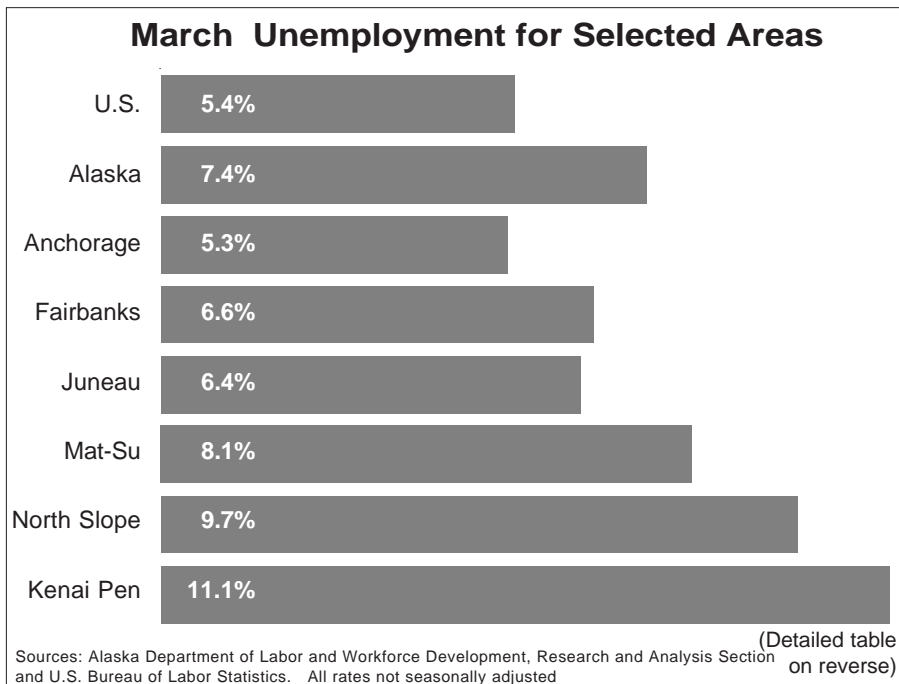
# News Release

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## Unemployment Rate Drops Sharply



Alaska's unemployment rate fell to 7.4 percent in March, a decline of nine-tenths of a percentage point from February's revised rate. The seasonally adjusted rate also fell sharply, dropping from 7.2 percent to 6.7 percent, its lowest level since February 2002.

Anchorage's unemployment rate fell six-tenths of a percentage point to 5.3 percent, the second lowest rate in the state. Fairbanks and Juneau also saw marked declines to 6.6 and 6.4 percent, respectively. March unemployment rates for Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau were all noticeably lower than the statewide rate of 7.4 percent.

All areas of the state recorded March unemployment rate declines and nearly all recorded rates significantly lower than year ago levels. Only two areas, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon and Wade Hampton, recorded higher unemployment rates than in March 2004.

### Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment

	preliminary 03/05	revised 02/05	revised 03/04	changes from 02/05	03/04
Total Nonfarm Employment	294,800	291,500	291,100	3,300	3,700
Natural Resources & Mining	10,100	10,100	9,900	0	200
Construction	14,600	14,300	14,100	300	500
Manufacturing	11,400	11,400	11,600	0	-200
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	59,000	58,100	58,000	900	1,000
Information	6,800	6,700	6,800	100	0
Financial Activities	14,400	14,300	14,100	100	300
Professional & Business Services	22,500	22,100	22,300	400	200
Education & Health Services	35,600	35,200	34,500	400	1,100
Leisure & Hospitality	26,400	25,900	25,900	500	500
Other Services	11,000	11,200	10,900	-200	100
Government	83,000	82,200	83,000	800	0

Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 3,300 in March to 294,800. The biggest over-the-month gain came in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector, which added 900 jobs. Most of the increase came from seasonal hiring in the retail trade and transportation industries.

Payroll employment has increased by 3,700 since March 2004, a moderate growth rate of 1.3 percent. Continued growth in the health care industry has helped lift employment by 1,100 in the education and health services sector. The retail trade industry employed about 800 more people than it did last March, accounting for most of the increase of 1,000 jobs in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector. The only sector to show an over-the-year decline was manufacturing, where seafood processing numbers were down slightly compared to a year earlier.

Government includes employees of public schools, the University of Alaska, and certain federally-recognized tribal entities. Benchmark date: March 2004  
Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

#### Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

March 2005:	Alaska 6.7%	U.S. 5.2%
February 2005:	Alaska 7.2%	U.S. 5.4%
March 2004:	Alaska 7.5%	U.S. 5.7%

URL Address: <http://almis.labor.state.ak.us>

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## Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate (not seasonally adjusted)			Employment		
	03/05	02/05	03/04	03/05	02/05	03/04	03/05	02/05	03/04	03/05	02/05	03/04
	Alaska Statewide	332,910	333,102	329,048	24,694	27,789	28,502	7.4	8.3	8.7	308,216	305,313
Anchorage/Mat-Su MSA*	189,334	189,523	186,436	11,089	12,292	12,958	5.9	6.5	7.0	178,245	177,231	173,478
Municipality of Anchorage	154,372	154,423	151,839	8,251	9,134	9,626	5.3	5.9	6.3	146,121	145,289	142,213
Mat-Su Borough	34,962	35,100	34,597	2,838	3,158	3,332	8.1	9.0	9.6	32,124	31,942	31,265
Gulf Coast Region												
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,980	21,841	21,798	2,449	2,763	2,897	11.1	12.7	13.3	19,531	19,078	18,901
Kodiak Island Borough	5,984	6,090	5,829	426	483	468	7.1	7.9	8.0	5,558	5,607	5,361
Valdez-Cordova CA	4,729	4,760	4,724	592	701	677	12.5	14.7	14.3	4,137	4,059	4,047
Interior Region												
Denali Borough	864	812	826	133	159	178	15.4	19.6	21.5	731	653	648
Fairbanks MSA*	42,462	42,162	41,001	2,821	3,227	3,327	6.6	7.7	8.1	39,641	38,935	37,674
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,566	2,506	2,381	416	442	404	16.2	17.6	17.0	2,150	2,064	1,977
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	3,287	3,287	3,136	399	453	475	12.1	13.8	15.1	2,888	2,834	2,661
Northern Region												
Nome Census Area	3,828	3,851	3,822	465	529	510	12.1	13.7	13.3	3,363	3,322	3,312
North Slope Borough	3,514	3,516	3,526	342	368	406	9.7	10.5	11.5	3,172	3,148	3,120
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,530	2,531	2,791	367	387	424	14.5	15.3	15.2	2,163	2,144	2,367
Southeast Region												
Haines Borough	1,036	998	1,000	160	185	185	15.4	18.5	18.5	876	813	815
Juneau Borough	16,465	16,454	16,900	1,052	1,191	1,199	6.4	7.2	7.1	15,413	15,263	15,701
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	6,924	6,878	6,878	604	711	712	8.7	10.3	10.4	6,320	6,167	6,166
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,331	2,338	2,342	357	468	444	15.3	20.0	19.0	1,974	1,870	1,898
Sitka Borough	4,156	4,019	4,205	283	343	330	6.8	8.5	7.8	3,873	3,676	3,875
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	1,264	1,331	1,357	299	366	289	23.7	27.5	21.3	965	965	1,068
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	2,432	2,384	2,582	343	429	423	14.1	18.0	16.4	2,089	1,955	2,159
Yakutat Borough	294	291	280	49	57	47	16.7	19.6	16.8	245	234	233
Southwest Region												
Aleutians East Borough	1,191	1,248	1,134	94	110	96	7.9	8.8	8.5	1,097	1,138	1,038
Aleutians West Census Area	3,792	4,154	3,721	159	185	170	4.2	4.5	4.6	3,633	3,969	3,551
Bethel Census Area	6,445	6,474	6,662	865	946	915	13.4	14.6	13.7	5,580	5,528	5,747
Bristol Bay Borough	640	635	584	69	72	83	10.8	11.3	14.2	571	563	501
Dillingham Census Area	2,008	2,121	1,942	231	257	243	11.5	12.1	12.5	1,777	1,864	1,699
Lake & Peninsula Borough	589	621	667	87	99	115	14.8	15.9	17.2	502	522	552
Wade Hampton CA	2,265	2,279	2,524	543	567	529	24.0	24.9	21.0	1,722	1,712	1,995

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section. \* Metropolitan Statistical Area • Benchmark: March 2004  
 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.