



ALASKA ECONOMIC
TRENDS

MARCH 2015

FOREIGN-BORN ALASKANS

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Per-capita income tops \$50,000

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

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DEVELOPMENT**

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ON THE COVER:

These Filipino men worked at the Alaska-Juneau mine in 1937. They are, from left to right, Frank Belarde, Joe Fulgencio, and Joe Alimarong. Photo courtesy of the Alaska Digital Archives

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Diversification of population, economy strengthen our state



By Heidi Drygas
Commissioner



Follow the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development on Facebook ([facebook.com/alaskalabor](https://www.facebook.com/alaskalabor)) and Twitter (twitter.com/alaskalabor) for the latest news about jobs, workplace safety, and workforce development.

March *Trends* examines Alaska's immigration history and wage growth, with a focus on demographic characteristics of foreign-born residents. Growing ethnic and cultural diversity has accompanied and fostered economic diversity, which reduces our state's exposure to fluctuating oil prices.

We have benefitted from an influx of new Alaskans partly because so many immigrants stay here permanently. Alaska has the fourth-highest rate of naturalized immigrants of any state, and many immigrants become our permanent neighbors.

With migration of Alaska Natives away from villages, our urban centers are becoming more diverse partly because of migration within the state.

Most immigrants have moved to Anchorage, which maintained a strong economy despite the recent national recession. While home prices cratered in the Lower 48, Anchorage home values continued to climb despite the 2008/2009 recession. Resilient home values mean more jobs in the construction industry and skilled trades, and it means homeowners preserve and build equity. Homeowners' economic security translates into greater consumer spending, which plays a key role in the diversification of Anchorage's economy.

New stores and restaurants continue to open across Anchorage, from outdoors stores in Midtown to innovative fusion restaurants in Muldoon. Anchorage has a growing "creative class" of highly educated software engineers, designers, and other young professionals. This explosion of entrepreneurship doesn't just make Anchorage a better place to live; it diversifies and strengthens our economy.

As this month's *Trends* illustrates, our wages are growing as Alaska's popu-

lation and economy are becoming more diverse. Alaska has the highest median wages in the country. While the oil price drop is a challenge, our healthy wages and increasingly diversified economy mean that Alaska is well-positioned to weather resource price fluctuations. Many of us have lived through low oil price cycles before, including in the 1980s and 1990s.

While I am proud of our healthy median wages, we can't rest on our laurels. Our economy would be even stronger if we could ensure that more Alaskans get jobs currently occupied by nonresidents. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development recently completed a report entitled "Nonresidents Working in Alaska," which found that in 2013 nonresidents earned \$2.4 billion in wages for jobs in Alaska. Even more troubling, the percentage of nonresident workers in the oil and seafood processing industries grew in 2013, which is a trend we should work to reverse.

Our economy will be stronger when these jobs are filled by Alaskans, and their wages reinvested here in Alaska. The Walker-Mallott administration strongly supports Alaska Hire, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is committed to bringing jobs home. Right now the state government is cutting spending, the federal government is considering significant reductions in Alaska troop levels, and some oil companies are cutting employment in response to low oil prices. As we work through these economic challenges, I believe that Alaskans should be at the front of the line for jobs here in Alaska.

With a renewed commitment to Alaska Hire and continued diversification of our economy, we will overcome the drop in oil prices and emerge with an economy that is stronger and more resilient than ever.

Foreign-Born Alaskans

Where they originated and how immigration has shaped the state

By **ERIC SANDBERG**

More than 60 percent of Alaskans were born outside the state — that’s more than all other states except retiree-heavy Florida, Arizona, and Nevada. While many Alaskans were born elsewhere in the country, an increasing number were born outside the United States.

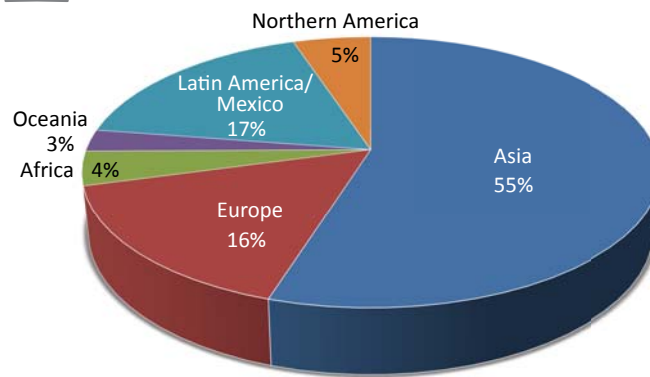
More than 50,000 Alaskans were born abroad, representing around 7 percent of the total population. Of those, 55 percent were born in Asia. (See Exhibit 1.) Asia became the largest source of foreign-born Alaskans in 1980 and the majority in 2000. Only Hawaii has a higher percentage of Asian immigrants.

Latin America and Mexico, the largest source of immigrants nationwide, recently moved into second place in Alaska at 17 percent, surpassing Europe at 16 percent. Northern America, which is almost entirely Canada, is fourth at 5 percent. Africa comes in last at 4 percent, but its numbers have grown dramatically in the last decade.

1

Most Foreign-Born Alaskans from Asia

PERCENT BY CONTINENT OF ORIGIN



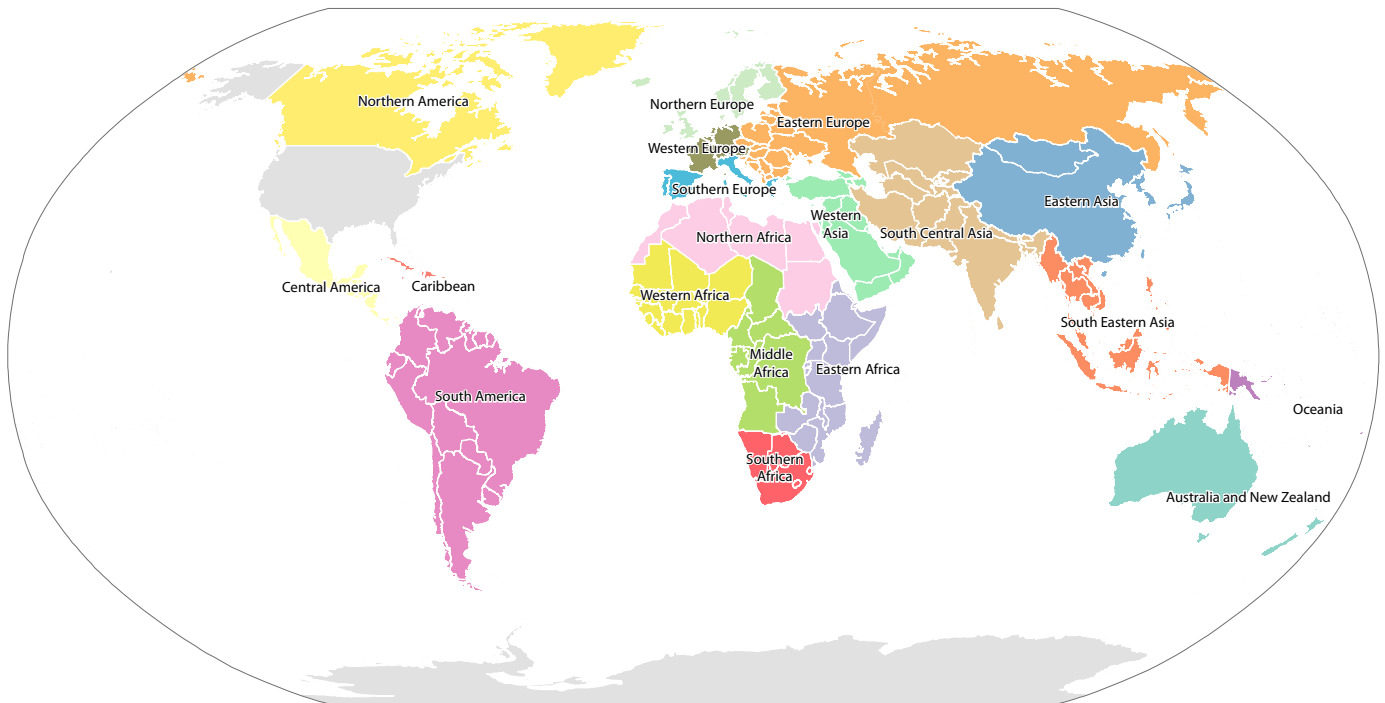
The geographic labels used in this article are from the U.S. Census Bureau and United Nations Statistics Division. “Northern America” includes Canada, Greenland, and Bermuda.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

The history of immigration

The proportion of Alaska’s population that’s foreign-born and its composition have changed greatly over the state’s history. (See exhibits 2 and 3.) Few outsiders ventured into the territory in the early years of Ameri-

Census Bureau Geographic Labeling



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

can possession. The 1880 Census counted just 430 people who weren't Alaska Native or Alaska-born descendants of Russian settlers, or a little over 1 percent of the population.

That shifted over the next 20 years as huge numbers of foreigners and residents of other states moved to Alaska. Many were Europeans involved in the mining boom that started in Juneau in the 1880s and took off with gold strikes on the Klondike and the Seward Peninsula. In addition, many workers from China and other Asian countries were hired to work in salmon canneries. By 1900, about 20 percent of people in the territory were foreign-born, a share that continued to rise until the start of World War I.

The foreign-born percentage peaked for both Alaska (32 percent) and the U.S. (15 percent) in the 1910 Census, but both declined after the war. Tighter immigration restrictions enacted in the 1920s limited immigration from Europe and essentially barred migrants from anywhere else.

Though many foreign-born residents of Alaska remained — the territory had a higher percentage than the rest of the U.S. up until World War II — their numbers dwindled. In 1950, despite the growth in the territory's population, the number of immigrants fell to about 35 percent of what it had been in 1910. By statehood in 1959, Alaska's foreign-born share had dropped below 4 percent.

Who qualifies as 'foreign-born'

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term "foreign-born" to refer to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants (such as foreign students), humanitarian migrants (such as refugees), and undocumented migrants. The term "native-born" refers to anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or a U.S. island area, or those born abroad of at least one American parent. This article uses the terms "foreign-born" and "immigrant" interchangeably.

In the 1960s, two developments turned a half-century of decline for foreign-born Alaskans into a half-century of growth. The first was a change in law spurred by the 1965 Immigration Act. The act repealed the proportional immigration quotas from the 1920s that favored Europeans and opened the doors to people from more regions. Then, discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 ushered in economic growth with construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline and arrival of the oil economy.

In the 1970 Census, taken just five years after the new immigration laws were passed, foreign-born residency reached its lowest recorded point for both Alaska and the U.S. at 3 percent and 5 percent respectively. These numbers have climbed steadily since, with every subsequent census documenting an increase, albeit smaller increases for Alaska.

Different countries of origin for Alaska

Throughout the 20th century, the largest immigrant groups in Alaska differed widely from the largest nationwide. (See Exhibit 3.)

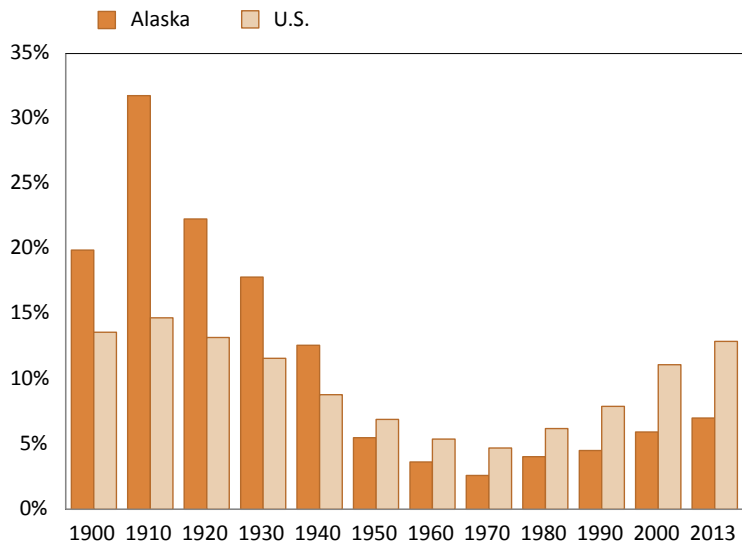
In the early decades, Scandinavian countries dominated in Alaska. From 1920 through the middle of the century, Norwegians were the most numerous foreign-born residents in the territory, even though they didn't crack the top 10 nationally over that period. Meanwhile, immigrants from Italy were the largest group nationally for much of the century, but only made the top 10 in Alaska in 1900.

With the removal of quotas in 1965, non-European countries began to dominate the top 10. The Philippines and Korea were first and second in Alaska during the 1990s and 2000s. Mexico, which has topped the national list since 1980 and also leads in 34 other states, has slowly moved up

2

Foreign-Born Share of Population

ALASKA AND U.S., 1900 TO 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

the Alaska list to overtake Korea as No. 2. People born in China or India, while forming a large cohort nationally, haven't ranked higher than ninth in Alaska in recent years.

3

Top 10 Countries of Origin by Decade

FOREIGN-BORN ALASKANS AND AMERICANS, 1900 TO 2013

	1900		1910		1920		1930		1940		1950	
	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.
1	China	Germany	Sweden	Germany	Norway	Germany	Norway	Italy	Norway	Italy	Norway	Italy
2	U.K.	Ireland	Norway	Russia	Canada	Italy	Canada	Germany	Sweden	Germany	Canada	Canada
3	Canada	Canada	Canada	Ireland	Sweden	Russia	Sweden	Canada	Canada	Canada	Sweden	Germany
4	Sweden	U.K.	U.K.	Italy	U.K.	Poland	U.K.	Poland	Finland	Russia	U.K.	Russia
5	Norway	Sweden	Germany	U.K.	Germany	Canada	Germany	U.K.	U.K.	Poland	Germany	Poland
6	Germany	Italy	Ireland	Canada	Finland	U.K.	Ireland	Russia	Germany	U.K.	Finland	U.K.
7	Finland	Russia	China	Poland	Ireland	Ireland	Finland	Ireland	Denmark	Ireland	Russia	Ireland
8	Italy	Poland	Finland	Austria	Yugoslavia	Sweden	Denmark	Mexico	Russia	Austria	Denmark	Mexico
9	Japan	Norway	Austria	Sweden	Russia	Austria	Russia	Sweden	Yugoslavia	Sweden	Yugoslavia	Austria
10	Denmark	Austria	Japan	Hungary	Denmark	Mexico	Austria	Czech	Austria	Mexico	Ireland	Sweden
	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000		2013	
	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.
1	Canada	Italy	Canada	Italy	Canada	Mexico	Philippines	Mexico	Philippines	Mexico	Philippines	Mexico
2	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Philippines	Germany	Korea	Philippines	Korea	Philippines	Mexico	India
3	Norway	Canada	U.K.	Canada	Germany	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	India	Korea	Philippines
4	U.K.	U.K.	Philippines	Mexico	Korea	Italy	Germany	Cuba	Mexico	China	Canada	China
5	Philippines	Poland	Norway	U.K.	U.K.	U.K.	Mexico	Germany	Germany	Vietnam	Thailand	Vietnam
6	Sweden	Russia	Japan	Poland	Japan	Cuba	U.K.	U.K.	U.K.	Cuba	Laos	El Salvador
7	Japan	Mexico	Sweden	Russia	Mexico	Philippines	Japan	Italy	Laos	Korea	Germany	Cuba
8	Finland	Ireland	Mexico	Cuba	Norway	Poland	Yugoslavia	Korea	Thailand	Canada	Russia	Korea
9	Denmark	Austria	Korea	Ireland	Vietnam	Russia	China	China	Russia	El Salvador	China	Dominican R
10	Russia	Hungary	France	Austria	France	Korea	Vietnam	El Salvador	China	Germany	Ukraine	Guatemala

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

4

Numbers of Foreign-Born by Country

TO ALASKA AND THE U.S., 2009 TO 2013

	Alaska	United States		Alaska	United States
Total Foreign-Born	50,367 (±1,264)	40,341,744 (±95,590)	Asia	27,628 (±940)	11,624,956 (±33,250)
Europe	8,007 (±878)	4,820,496 (±18,143)	Eastern Asia	6,215 (±725)	3,662,914 (±14,532)
Northern Europe	1,549 (±232)	941,327 (±8,027)	China	1,633 (±400)	2,241,422 (±10,879)
United Kingdom	842 (±159)	688,624 (±6,825)	China	1,207 (±294)	1,659,141 (±9,671)
Ireland	154 (±76)	127,401 (±2,375)	Hong Kong	84 (±47)	215,467 (±4,050)
Denmark	88 (±57)	29,374 (±1,178)	Taiwan	342 (±239)	366,814 (±5,725)
Norway	187 (±112)	26,813 (±1,282)	Japan	914 (±239)	332,299 (±5,605)
Sweden	121 (±50)	45,189 (±1,844)	Korea	3,616 (±612)	1,078,279 (±9,806)
Other Northern Europe	157 (±118)	23,926 (±1,211)	Other Eastern Asia	52 (±74)	10,914 (±1,247)
Western Europe	2,240 (±339)	971,186 (±7,638)	South Central Asia	1,472 (±430)	3,046,004 (±20,543)
Austria	103 (±69)	47,871 (±1,462)	Afghanistan	0 (±22)	60,922 (±2,947)
Belgium	18 (±19)	31,694 (±1,386)	Bangladesh	77 (±87)	179,166 (±4,564)
France	166 (±66)	160,579 (±3,102)	India	531 (±196)	1,896,642 (±13,048)
Germany	1,549 (±288)	604,346 (±5,698)	Iran	78 (±65)	358,176 (±6,779)
Netherlands	99 (±55)	84,679 (±1,935)	Kazakhstan	28 (±25)	24,371 (±1,465)
Switzerland	293 (±99)	39,698 (±1,238)	Nepal	121 (±129)	72,141 (±3,564)
Other Western Europe	12 (±14)	2,319 (±333)	Pakistan	297 (±251)	313,415 (±7,502)
Southern Europe	303 (±105)	785,523 (±8,094)	Sri Lanka	75 (±72)	46,301 (±2,221)
Greece	49 (±41)	136,047 (±3,353)	Uzbekistan	56 (±43)	50,555 (±2,566)
Italy	146 (±82)	362,256 (±4,814)	Other South Central Asia	209 (±177)	44,315 (±2,510)
Portugal	3 (±6)	189,072 (±3,775)	South Eastern Asia	19,658 (±1,072)	3,947,167 (±18,855)
Spain	98 (±58)	90,884 (±3,050)	Cambodia	74 (±47)	160,878 (±4,689)
Other Southern Europe	7 (±13)	7,264 (±510)	Indonesia	96 (±57)	93,166 (±3,175)
Eastern Europe	3,890 (±733)	2,112,531 (±16,436)	Laos	1,741 (±409)	193,036 (±4,168)
Albania	136 (±135)	78,201 (±4,162)	Malaysia	110 (±72)	61,222 (±2,154)
Belarus	41 (±32)	54,610 (±2,513)	Burma	25 (±50)	99,481 (±3,517)
Bulgaria	44 (±37)	62,786 (±2,371)	Philippines	14,704 (±1,131)	1,826,090 (±13,188)
Croatia	0 (±22)	42,953 (±1,755)	Singapore	7 (±10)	30,148 (±1,361)
Czechoslovakia	137 (±67)	68,301 (±2,344)	Thailand	1,886 (±502)	227,468 (±4,373)
Hungary	88 (±52)	74,805 (±2,346)	Vietnam	1,015 (±265)	1,254,810 (±12,648)
Latvia	23 (±24)	23,734 (±1,106)	Other South Eastern Asia	0 (±22)	868 (±231)
Lithuania	34 (±35)	35,368 (±1,851)	Western Asia	221 (±116)	926,332 (±12,962)
Macedonia	222 (±193)	24,383 (±1,650)	Iraq	1 (±3)	169,090 (±5,969)
Moldova	82 (±75)	36,107 (±1,794)	Israel	4 (±8)	130,948 (±3,034)
Poland	432 (±154)	446,626 (±6,320)	Jordan	27 (±40)	62,476 (±2,983)
Romania	208 (±114)	160,970 (±3,658)	Kuwait	23 (±35)	24,496 (±1,499)
Russia	1,246 (±320)	387,724 (±6,333)	Lebanon	30 (±32)	118,788 (±3,748)
Ukraine	1,034 (±543)	333,028 (±6,580)	Saudi Arabia	0 (±22)	60,191 (±3,269)
Bosnia	16 (±22)	117,683 (±4,133)	Syria	3 (±4)	66,897 (±2,952)
Serbia	28 (±42)	32,366 (±1,830)	Yemen	18 (±29)	39,354 (±2,741)
Other Eastern Europe	119 (±64)	132,886 (±3,722)	Turkey	81 (±76)	103,657 (±2,704)
Europe Unknown	25 (±28)	9,929 (±981)	Armenia	11 (±16)	81,820 (±2,903)
			Other Western Asia	23 (±27)	68,615 (±2,726)
			Asia Unknown	62 (±102)	42,539 (±2,171)
North America	9,476 (±808)	19,276,316 (±64,138)	Africa	2,048 (±385)	1,663,907 (±15,730)
Northern America	2,572 (±357)	818,984 (±6,969)	Eastern Africa	881 (±232)	487,375 (±7,208)
Canada	2,569 (±358)	811,109 (±6,834)	Eritrea	72 (±74)	29,188 (±1,800)
Other Northern America	3 (±4)	7,875 (±895)	Ethiopia	299 (±135)	177,234 (±5,493)
Caribbean	1,675 (±433)	3,771,342 (±18,023)	Kenya	4 (±7)	101,577 (±3,124)
Bahamas	2 (±4)	32,377 (±1,499)	Other Eastern Africa	506 (±165)	179,376 (±4,233)
Barbados	0 (±22)	52,760 (±2,165)	Middle Africa	162 (±140)	86,475 (±3,632)
Cuba	93 (±84)	1,089,553 (±9,776)	Cameroon	124 (±133)	39,721 (±2,454)
Dominica	172 (±134)	28,488 (±1,816)	Other Middle Africa	38 (±36)	46,754 (±2,641)
Dominican Republic	943 (±348)	906,167 (±9,390)	Northern Africa	231 (±120)	289,995 (±5,882)
Grenada	77 (±68)	31,263 (±1,769)	Egypt	39 (±44)	153,676 (±4,245)
Haiti	110 (±76)	581,724 (±8,710)	Morocco	12 (±12)	60,205 (±2,683)
Jamaica	135 (±85)	686,535 (±7,608)	Sudan	157 (±111)	40,746 (±2,265)
St. Vincent	0 (±22)	21,967 (±1,635)	Other Northern Africa	23 (±38)	35,368 (±1,657)
Trinidad and Tobago	63 (±68)	232,060 (±4,803)	Southern Africa	136 (±67)	88,682 (±2,645)
West Indies	46 (±69)	32,466 (±1,771)	South Africa	136 (±67)	85,628 (±2,677)
Other Caribbean	34 (±28)	75,982 (±3,018)			

4

Numbers of Foreign-Born by Country (continued)

TO ALASKA AND THE U.S., 2009 TO 2013

	Alaska	United States		Alaska	United States
North America, continued			Africa, continued		
Central America	5,229 (±582)	14,685,990 (±61,158)	Other Southern Africa	0 (±22)	3,054 (±429)
Mexico	3,854 (±497)	11,605,524 (±50,182)	Western Africa	563 (±227)	599,146 (±9,973)
Belize	68 (±63)	47,930 (±2,310)	Cape Verde	0 (±22)	33,929 (±1,890)
Costa Rica	15 (±15)	82,755 (±2,982)	Ghana	51 (±49)	129,383 (±4,430)
El Salvador	449 (±155)	1,229,402 (±14,951)	Liberia	4 (±8)	72,627 (±2,881)
Guatemala	412 (±238)	848,686 (±11,071)	Nigeria	275 (±126)	228,471 (±6,406)
Honduras	205 (±118)	511,071 (±10,732)	Sierra Leone	0 (±22)	35,213 (±2,654)
Nicaragua	72 (±66)	247,931 (±6,091)	Other Western Africa	233 (±206)	99,523 (±3,488)
Panama	154 (±87)	103,874 (±3,291)	Africa Unknown	75 (±85)	112,234 (±4,058)
Other Central America	0 (±22)	8,817 (±1,102)			
South America			Oceania		
	1,897 (±467)	2,730,598 (±16,894)	Australia and New Zealand	1,311 (±315)	225,471 (±4,725)
Argentina	230 (±258)	173,013 (±4,399)	Australia	359 (±96)	104,903 (±3,050)
Bolivia	29 (±23)	77,120 (±3,785)	Other Subregion	250 (±80)	74,974 (±2,364)
Brazil	271 (±99)	335,132 (±6,818)	Fiji	109 (±67)	29,929 (±1,320)
Chile	175 (±102)	94,290 (±3,176)	Oceania Unknown	0 (±22)	39,235 (±2,060)
Colombia	536 (±228)	662,328 (±9,543)		952 (±279)	81,333 (±3,408)
Ecuador	40 (±39)	426,363 (±8,358)			
Guyana	0 (±22)	259,827 (±5,345)			
Peru	457 (±199)	426,288 (±7,066)			
Uruguay	24 (±23)	45,906 (±2,464)			
Venezuela	81 (±65)	189,898 (±4,471)			
Other South America	54 (±38)	40,433 (±2,375)			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

Alaska's foreign-born population today

The most current statistics on the place of birth for foreign-born Alaskans give a more detailed breakdown by country and continental subregion. (See Exhibit 4.) South Eastern Asia is easily the largest subregion of origin for foreign-born Alaskans at about 39 percent, followed by Eastern Asia at 12 percent.

By country, the Philippines is by far the largest place of birth for immigrants in Alaska, higher than the next five largest national immigrant groups combined. Only four other states (Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New Jersey) have an Asian country as the largest country of origin, and Hawaii is the only other state where Filipinos form the largest immigrant group.

While Canadians and Mexicans have a large presence in Alaska, other groups that are less numerous nationwide also have fair-sized populations within the state. Though Alaska's total population is just 0.2 percent of the United States, Laotian and Thai-born Alaska residents represent about 1 percent of their groups' nationwide population.

German-born immigrants have been the largest European group in Alaska since around statehood, but

Eastern European groups have been growing, mostly in the last two decades since the fall of communism. Russian and Ukrainian immigrants now number more than 1,000. Russians are concentrated in Anchorage, and the largest numbers of Ukrainian immigrants live in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area.

Most live in urban areas

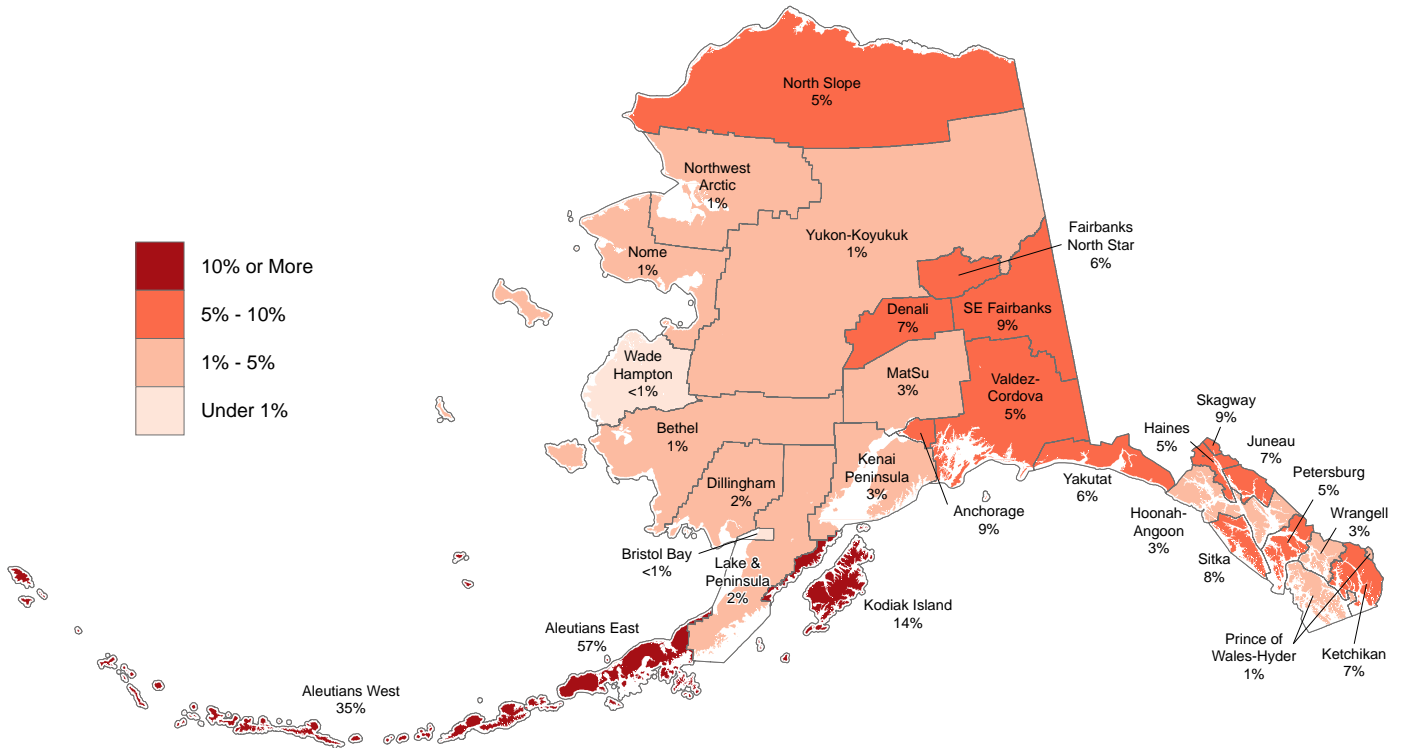
Over half (55 percent) of Alaska's foreign-born population lives in Anchorage, which is home to about 41 percent of the state's population. Anchorage's share of the immigrant population has remained about the same since 1980, and immigrants are about 9 percent of the city's population — highest among Alaska's five big population centers (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau). Exhibit 5 shows the percentage of immigrants by borough or census area.

The Aleutian Islands, with their large populations of seasonal seafood processing workers, have some of the highest foreign-born percentages in the U.S. Aleutians East Borough has the highest of any county-equivalent in the United States at 57 percent. (Miami-Dade County in Florida is the only other above 50 percent.) Aleutians West Census Area is 10th highest in the country at 35 percent.

5

Percent Foreign-Born Around the State

ALASKA



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

Kodiak Island Borough, which also has a large seafood processing industry, is Alaska's only other borough or census area whose population is over 10 percent foreign-born at 14 percent.

Nearly 40 percent have been here for more than 20 years

About 38 percent of immigrants in Alaska have been in the country for more than 20 years, 25 percent between 10 and 20 years, and 37 percent moved here in the last decade. (See Exhibit 6.) These numbers don't vary widely from the national rates.

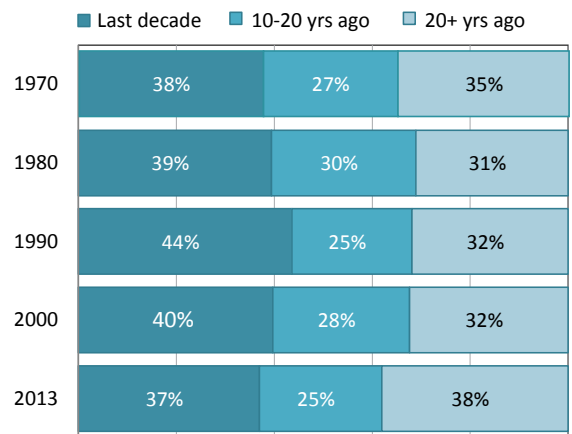
For the last four decades, the trend toward more recent immigrants rose and fell in Alaska as well as the country. In 1970, just after the 1965 Immigration Act, 35 percent of all foreign-born in Alaska had been in the country at least 20 years. After an increase in immigration over the next two decades, that number fell to 32 percent.

Alaskan immigrants who had been in the country less than a decade hit a peak in 1990 at 44 percent. That

6

When They Came to the U.S.

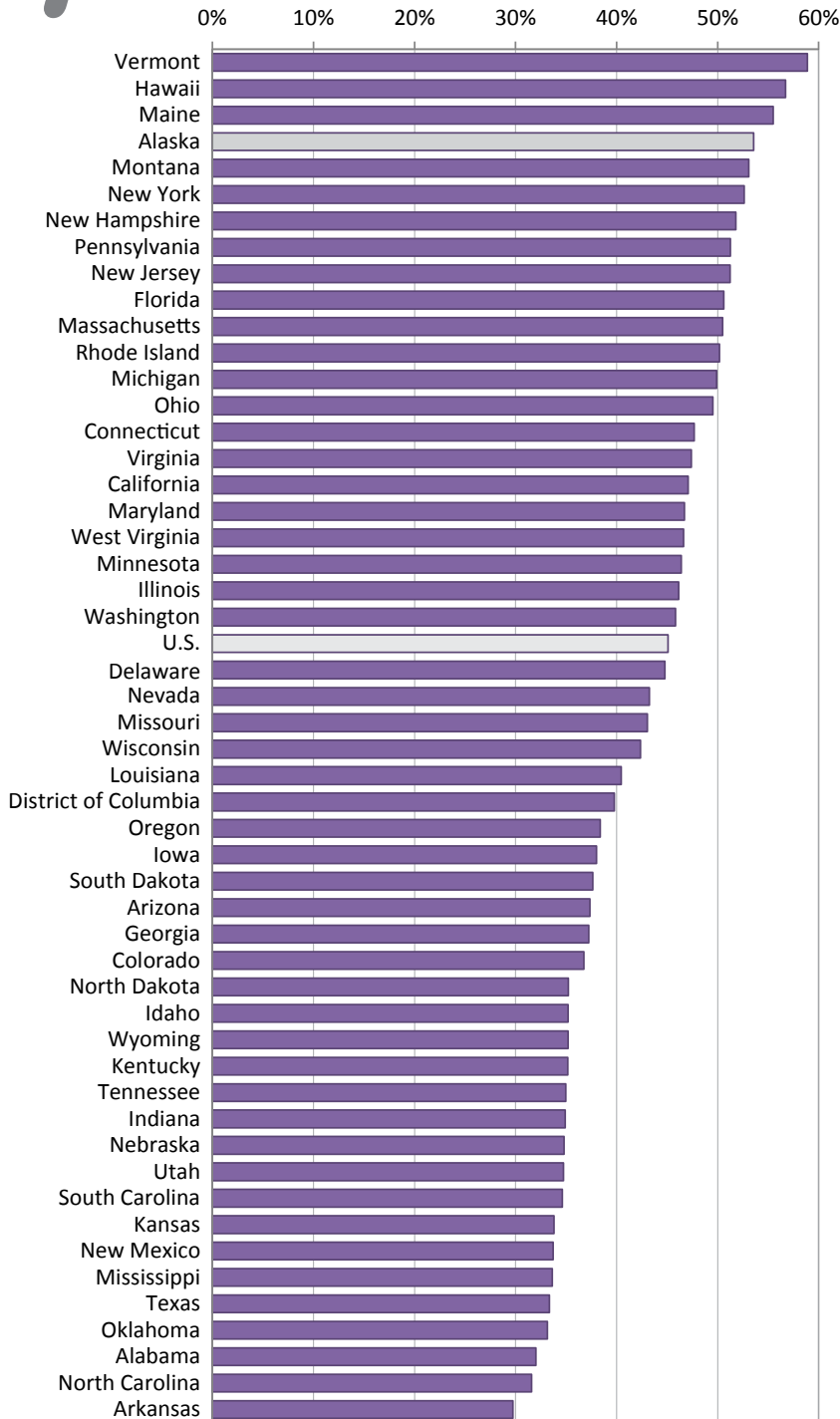
FOREIGN-BORN ALASKANS, 1970 TO 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

7 Percent Naturalized by State

UNITED STATES



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

number has fallen since, and now the period-of-entry breakdown is starting to resemble 1970.

The pattern varies in Alaska according to source region, though. Just under half of Alaskans from Mexico and Central America have been in the U.S. at least 20 years, the highest share among any group. Immigrants from Europe also trend toward earlier emigration, with 44 percent having moved at least 20 years ago. Asian immigrants tend to have moved more recently, with 38 percent settling in the U.S. within the last decade.

More Alaskans are naturalized

Alaska ranks fourth among all states for the percentage of foreign-born residents who have become citizens. (See Exhibit 7.) A majority (54 percent) of immigrants who now live in Alaska are U.S. citizens, considerably higher than the national rate of 45 percent. However, the Alaska percentage has declined slightly over the past 30 years, down from 58 percent in 1980, while the national percentage has risen from 40 percent in 1990.

The rates of naturalized citizens are generally higher in urban areas. In Anchorage, 56 percent have become American citizens. The highest rate is in the Kenai area at 64 percent, followed by Juneau (61 percent), Mat-Su (59 percent), and Fairbanks (49 percent). Outside these five urban areas, 46 percent have become citizens. In the Aleutians, where immigrants make up a large chunk of the population, only one-third are citizens.

Rates of marriage and education

Foreign-born Alaskans tend to have higher educational levels than U.S. immigrants overall. (See Exhibit 8.) Four out of five immigrants in Alaska have at least a high-school diploma, in contrast to 69 percent nationwide.

It's a different story for college, though. Slightly more than half of Alaskan immigrants attended college, but 24 percent



Social Characteristics of Immigrants

HOW ALASKA AND THE UNITED STATES COMPARE

	Alaska			United States		
	Total	Foreign-born	Native-born*	Total	Foreign-born	Native-born*
Marital Status						
Population age 15-plus	563,759 (±233)	47,857 (±1,116)	515,902 (±1,068)	250,402,813 (±7,374)	38,509,499 (±92,914)	211,893,314 (±98,722)
Never married	33% (±0)	23% (±2)	34% (±0)	32% (±0)	25% (±0)	34% (±0)
Married	50% (±1)	58% (±2)	49% (±1)	49% (±0)	59% (±0)	47% (±0)
Divorced or separated	14% (±0)	13% (±1)	14% (±0)	13% (±0)	11% (±0)	14% (±0)
Widowed	4% (±0)	6% (±1)	4% (±0)	6% (±0)	5% (±0)	6% (±0)
Educational Attainment						
Population age 25-plus	454,301 (±374)	41,770 (±1,101)	412,531 (±1,082)	206,587,852 (±15,585)	34,323,207 (±76,068)	172,264,645 (±88,885)
Less than HS grad	8% (±0)	21% (±2)	7% (±0)	14% (±0)	31% (±0)	11% (±0)
HS grad	27% (±1)	27% (±2)	27% (±1)	28% (±0)	22% (±0)	29% (±0)
Some college/associate	37% (±0)	27% (±1)	38% (±0)	29% (±0)	19% (±0)	31% (±0)
Bachelor's degree	18% (±0)	16% (±1)	18% (±0)	18% (±0)	16% (±0)	18% (±0)
Grad/professional degree	10% (±0)	8% (±1)	10% (±0)	11% (±0)	12% (±0)	11% (±0)
Language at home						
Population age 5-plus	665,954 (±168)	50,158 (±1,259)	615,796 (±1,239)	291,484,482 (±3,346)	40,094,100 (±95,211)	251,390,382 (±96,693)
Speak only English	84% (±0)	20% (±2)	89% (±0)	79% (±0)	16% (±0)	89% (±0)
Speak another language	16% (±0)	80% (±4)	11% (±0)	21% (±0)	84% (±0)	11% (±0)
Speak English "very well"	67% (±2)	44% (±3)	81% (±3)	58% (±0)	40% (±0)	82% (±0)
Speak English "well"	22% (±1)	34% (±3)	15% (±1)	19% (±0)	25% (±0)	12% (±0)
Speak English "not well"	9% (±1)	18% (±2)	4% (±0)	15% (±0)	23% (±0)	5% (±0)
Speak English "not at all"	2% (±0)	4% (±1)	0% (±0)	7% (±0)	12% (±0)	1% (±0)

*Native-born refers to those who were U.S. citizens at birth. For more information on how this is determined, see the sidebar on page 5.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

have college degrees compared to 28 percent nationally. Those who moved to Alaska more recently are more likely to have college degrees than those who came earlier. Of those who immigrated after 2000, about a third are college graduates. For those who came before 2000, it's 22 percent.

Immigrants nationwide are more likely than native-born adults to be married. Less than 50 percent of native-born Americans are married in Alaska and nationwide, but 58 percent of Alaskan immigrants and 59 percent of U.S. immigrants are married.

Alaskans more English-proficient

Immigrants also have higher English proficiency in Alaska than immigrants in the nation as a whole, though about four out of five over the age of five speak a language other than English at home. While this is lower than the national rate of 84 percent, it still represents more than 40,000 people statewide. Of this group, about 60 percent speak an Asian or Pacific Island language and around 18 percent speak Spanish.

Still, even those who speak a non-English language at home in Alaska are more proficient in English than im-

migrants nationally. In Alaska, around 82 percent say they speak English at least "well," while nationally the rate is around 70 percent. Only 4 percent of Alaskan immigrants speak no English, while 10 percent of immigrants nationally do not. Of the large statewide Asian and Pacific Island language group, about 76 percent speak English "well" or better, and only 4 percent speak no English at all.

More immigrants in the workforce

Among those 16 and older, more foreign-born in Alaska are part of the labor force than the native-born, and immigrants also have lower unemployment. About 78 percent of immigrant workers work in private industry compared to two-thirds of native-born workers. Though fewer foreign-born Alaskans work in government occupations (16 percent), this is double the national rate.

Three industries employ a lot of foreign-born workers: manufacturing (includes seafood processors), educational services and social assistance, and food services. (See Exhibit 9.) Nearly three-quarters of recent immigrants who have a job are in these industries.

Continued on page 18

THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

A look at those who draw unemployment benefits for longer than 26 weeks

By **TIFFANY SCHERRER**

When Alaska workers apply for unemployment insurance benefits, the amount of their weekly payment and the number of weeks they can collect depend on their earnings and how long they had worked.

During stable economic periods, the maximum number of weeks an unemployed worker can qualify for and collect benefits is 26. When the economy worsens, extended benefit programs kick in for some workers who

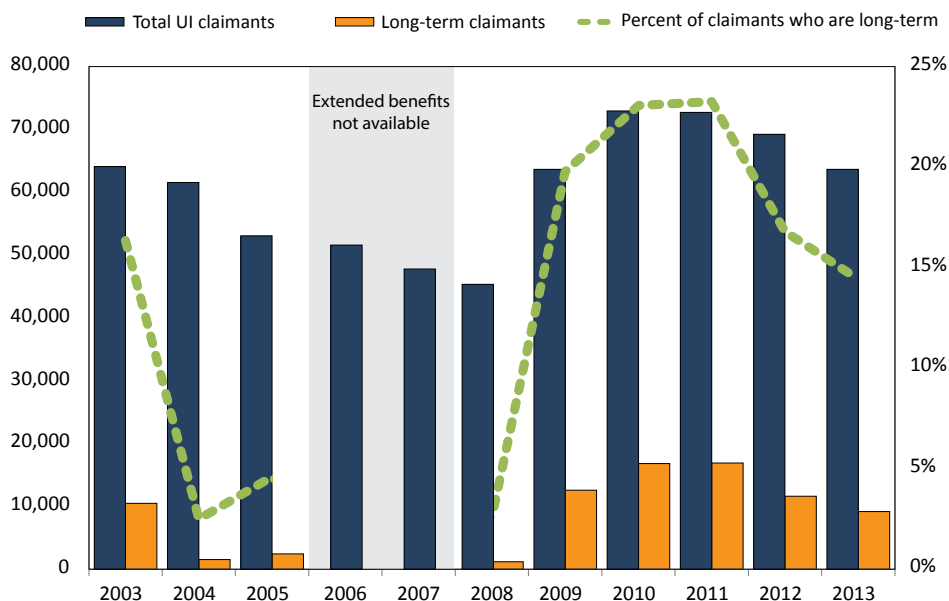
have exhausted their allowed weeks. For this article, the “long-term unemployed” are those who continue to collect benefits past 26 weeks. The long-term claimant rate, shown in Exhibit 1, is the percentage of all unemployment insurance claimants who are long-term unemployed.

Types of extended benefits

Two extension programs were available during the most recent recession. The standard extended benefits

1 Number and Rate of Long-Term Claimants

ALASKA, 2003 TO 2013

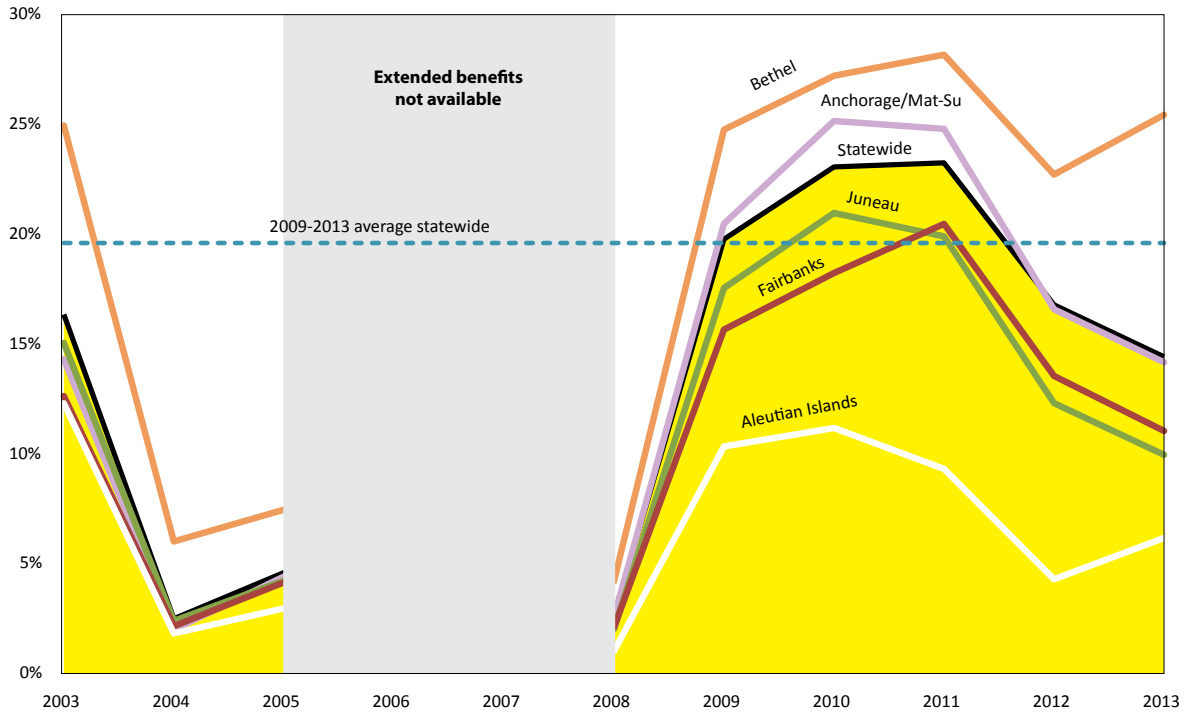


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

2

Long-Term Claimant Rate by Borough or Census Area

ALASKA, 2003 TO 2013



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

program turns on automatically when certain unemployment rates are reached and was available for much of the 2009-2013 period. This program provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits in most cases and up to 20 when unemployment rates warrant.

The second program was the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, or EUC08, a federal extension program Congress passed as part of the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008. This one-time, temporary program provided up to an additional 53 weeks of benefits to those who qualified.

Together, these two extension programs plus the 26 weeks of regular benefits allowed for up to 99 total benefit weeks.

It's important to note that by definition, long-term claimants only exist and can be measured when extended benefit programs are available. During years when extended benefits are not in place — 2006 and 2007, for example — the rate is automatically zero because no one can collect benefits longer than 26 weeks.

Long-term claimant rate:

The percentage of claimants who draw unemployment checks longer than 26 weeks when extended benefits are available.

The rate peaked in 2011

In May 2008, the three-month moving average total unemployment rate reached a level that triggered extended benefits through the regular program, with Congress first approving Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits for

that November.

Unemployment insurance claims increased by 60 percent from 2008 to 2011. During that period, the average time that claimants collected benefits increased from 12 weeks to 18 weeks, a 50 percent rise.

At the height of unemployment insurance claims in 2011, 23.3 percent of Alaska claimants collected benefits longer than 26 weeks, which was 3.7 percentage points higher than the 2009 to 2013 average of 19.6 percent. (See Exhibit 2.)

Regionally, 24.8 percent of claimants in the Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna area were long-term unemployed in 2011. That was higher than Juneau (20 percent) and Fairbanks (20.5 percent), but the highest rate was in

Bethel at 28 percent. Since 2011, the statewide long-term claimant rate has fallen to 14.4 percent.

Although the most recent recession technically ended in June 2009, the extended benefit program stayed in place until the end of 2013. From 2009 to 2013, the unemployment insurance program served 150,662 people and paid more than \$1.3 billion in benefits, 35 percent of which was federally funded.

In that same period, 47,751 claimants were long-term unemployed. They collected for an average of 37 weeks, in contrast to the 12-week average for the shorter-term claimants. Although the long-term unemployed collected longer, their average weekly benefit was 10 percent lower, at \$181. The lower benefit amount is mainly due to lower average income among long-term claimants when they were working.

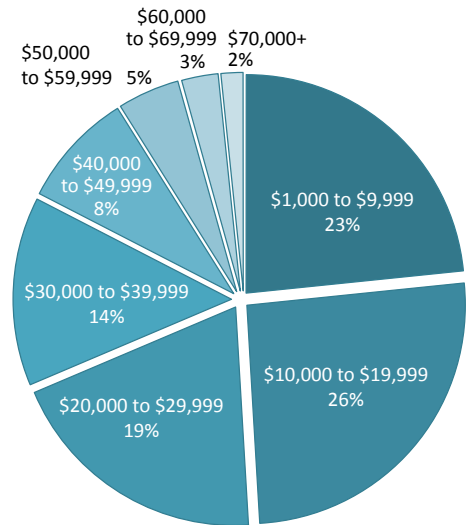
Income levels and age

Lower-income workers make up the largest portion of the long-term unemployed. (See Exhibit 3.) Between 2009 and 2013, 23 percent of all long-term unemployed claimants had annual incomes below \$10,000, and more than 80 percent made less than \$40,000.

Alaska's per capita personal income was \$50,150 in 2013. (See the article on page 16.) From 2009 to 2013, 89 percent of long-term claimants' income fell below that level.

No particular age group stands out for being long-term unemployed. (See Exhibit 4.) Between 2009 and 2013, 89 percent fell between the prime working ages of 20

3 Average Annual Income Low LONG-TERM CLAIMANTS, 2009 TO 2013



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

and 60, and they were almost evenly distributed between those ages.

Industries most affected

Among long-term claimants from 2009 to 2013, 13 percent had worked in the construction industry, 13 percent in retail trade, 11 percent in health care, and 9 percent in public administration, which encompasses most government jobs.

The recent recession disproportionately increased claims in the health care and social assistance and government sectors. By 2013, the claims levels for construction and retail trade had fallen well below 2009's levels, but health care and public administration hadn't yet recovered.

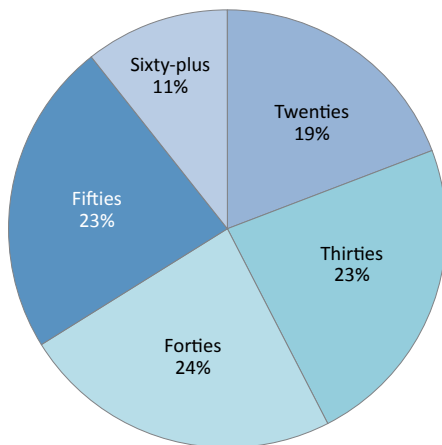
Health care and social assistance is primarily composed of jobs in doctors' offices, hospitals, and nursing care facilities, but also includes child and youth community food services and day care facilities.

Total claims for former health care and social assistance workers were 24 percent higher in 2013 than in 2009, and for public administration, claims were 10 percent higher.

Rural versus urban recovery

At the end of the emergency extended benefits period in 2013, 9,178 people statewide were still defined as

4 Long-Term Claimant Ages ALASKA, 2009 TO 2013



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

5

How Long-Term and Short-Term Claimants Compare

ALASKA, 2009 TO 2013

	Collected for ≤ 26 weeks	Collected for > 26 weeks
Average annual earnings	\$29,752	\$26,025
Average age	40	42
Average number of weeks collected	12	37
Average weekly benefit amount	\$200.00	\$180.51
Percent out-of-state	21%	22%
Percent female	37%	44%
Percent male	63%	56%

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

long-term unemployed, a 46 percent drop from the peak of 16,904 in 2011. About one-third lived in rural parts of the state and almost half had annual incomes under \$20,000.

Although the recession affected all areas in Alaska, the urban areas have recovered faster, as measured by long-term unemployment. These areas are Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Fairbanks North Star Borough, and Juneau. From its peak in 2011, the long-term claimant rate in urban centers fell by 10.3 percentage points, from 23.6 percent to 13.3 percent, in 2013 while the rate for rural areas only fell by seven percentage points, from 22.1 percent to 15.1 percent.

The Bethel Census Area consistently has the highest long-term claimant rate in the state. (See Exhibit 2.) It was 25.4 percent in 2013, not far below its peak of 28.2 percent in 2011.

Bethel was one of only two areas where the rate increased from 2012 to 2013 rather than falling. Residents tend to have strong family and cultural ties to the area, meaning job seekers are less likely to leave the area when work is scarce.

The Aleutian Islands are the exception to the typical rural-urban pattern. The Aleutians East Borough and Aleutians West Census Area typically have the lowest long-term claimant rates in Alaska, as fishing and seafood processing are their largest industries. These workers tend to be migratory, moving more frequently to find fishing job opportunities.

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Per Capita Income Tops \$50,000

Though Alaska's income is high overall, it varies widely around the state

By **NEAL FRIED**

According to recently released income data, Alaska residents received \$36.9 billion in income from all sources in 2013, which was \$420 million more than the year before. That figure divided by the total population puts per capita income at \$50,150.

Total personal income, released each year nationwide, statewide, and for all boroughs and census areas, is the most comprehensive way to measure how much money people bring in. It includes net earnings from employment, transfer payments that include government payments and noncash benefits, and Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend and interest income. It also looks at all Alaskans, from the youngest to the oldest, which bears special meaning in Alaska because PFDs are issued to eligible residents of all ages.

Because this calculation includes every person of every age, the age composition of a geographic area plays an important role in the numbers. Per capita incomes in areas with a high proportion of children, for example, tend to be lower because they have a smaller percentage of wage earners.

The rural-urban divide

Per capita income varies widely around the state, and income disparity is often split along rural and urban lines. Although there are some exceptions to this divide, in many of Alaska's rural areas, per capita income falls below both state and national averages — and if the cost-of-living were considered, disparities would be even larger. High unemployment and fewer economic opportunities in remote rural locations explain most of these differences, though demographics also play a

role. In many rural areas, a younger population with fewer working-age adults further depresses per-capita income.

Lowest in remote Alaska

The most dramatic example is the Wade Hampton Census Area, where per capita income is lowest in the state at less than half the statewide average and less than a third of Haines, which has the highest per capita income in Alaska.

Wade Hampton, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area of Southwest Alaska, is a good proxy for village Alaska. (See Exhibit 1.) This is because the area has no large regional hub, unlike the Bethel or Nome census areas, to distort the data for communities that surround these larger towns. The largest of the 13 villages in Wade Hampton is Hooper Bay, with a population of 1,134.

Both economic and demographic forces explain Wade Hampton's low per-capita income. It's home to the state's youngest population, with a median age of 22.9 and 44 percent of its population age 19 or younger. Statewide, the median is 34 years, with 28 percent of the population 19 or younger. Limited job opportunities also play a role.

... but highest areas are also rural

Though the rural-urban disparity is common, the top four areas for per capita income are also rural. They include the Haines, Bristol Bay, and Denali boroughs and the municipality of Skagway.

The Bristol Bay Borough isn't on the road system and none of these areas have a population greater than 2,600. However, they all have older populations and

1

Area Per Capita Income From Highest to Lowest

ALASKA, BOROUGHS AND CENSUS AREAS, AND THE U.S., 2010 TO 2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013 Percent of State	Median Age 2013	Percent 19 or under
Alaska	\$45,565	\$48,181	\$49,906	\$50,150	100%	34.3	29%
United States	\$40,144	\$42,332	\$44,200	\$44,765	89%	37.6	26%
Haines Borough	\$68,553	\$78,768	\$81,477	\$85,326	170%	48.0	20%
Skagway Municipality	\$57,841	\$65,121	\$65,404	\$70,065	140%	43.1	16%
Denali Borough	\$60,239	\$66,361	\$68,391	\$66,674	133%	43.1	24%
Bristol Bay Borough	\$50,772	\$52,145	\$56,143	\$60,210	120%	42.9	22%
Juneau, City and Borough	\$50,897	\$53,830	\$56,978	\$57,033	114%	37.9	25%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	\$52,272	\$54,824	\$56,045	\$56,591	113%	39.4	25%
Anchorage, Municipality	\$50,207	\$52,579	\$54,486	\$54,766	109%	33.5	28%
Sitka, City and Borough	\$44,932	\$49,466	\$50,737	\$52,608	105%	39.2	26%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	\$45,731	\$48,300	\$51,233	\$51,646	103%	39.2	27%
Petersburg Census Area	\$47,702	\$48,007	\$52,272	\$51,541	103%	42.2	26%
North Slope Borough	\$52,084	\$49,906	\$50,393	\$50,719	101%	33.8	28%
Yakutat, City and Borough	\$40,770	\$46,834	\$46,863	\$49,269	98%	43.5	23%
Kodiak Island Borough	\$43,795	\$46,041	\$48,579	\$48,804	97%	33.3	30%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$41,569	\$44,313	\$47,121	\$48,485	97%	41.4	26%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	\$38,525	\$42,736	\$48,366	\$47,492	95%	31.7	30%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	\$44,736	\$47,522	\$46,367	\$47,270	94%	37.5	29%
Dillingham Census Area	\$40,846	\$43,495	\$45,739	\$46,563	93%	29.4	35%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	\$41,556	\$44,731	\$45,950	\$46,149	92%	35.2	31%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	\$37,876	\$42,834	\$45,885	\$45,494	91%	35.5	31%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	\$41,999	\$45,087	\$46,033	\$45,313	90%	32.4	28%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	\$36,394	\$41,632	\$44,309	\$44,619	89%	46.8	23%
Nome Census Area	\$38,161	\$39,804	\$41,446	\$41,310	82%	27.7	39%
Wrangell, City and Borough	\$35,917	\$39,160	\$40,512	\$40,890	82%	47.0	25%
Northwest Arctic Borough	\$38,357	\$38,958	\$39,913	\$40,241	80%	26.3	40%
Aleutians West Census Area	\$29,855	\$33,400	\$35,409	\$36,673	73%	41.3	15%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	\$32,132	\$32,952	\$34,247	\$36,354	72%	40.1	28%
Bethel Census Area	\$34,113	\$36,424	\$36,941	\$36,195	72%	26.5	40%
Aleutians East Borough	\$26,801	\$29,722	\$30,471	\$33,430	67%	43.2	12%
Wade Hampton Census Area	\$24,177	\$25,891	\$26,117	\$25,066	50%	22.9	45%

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

far fewer children. For example, the four areas have a median age of 42.9 or older. Haines has the highest median age in the state at 48.

Other exceptions to the divide are the relatively urban Fairbanks North Star and Matanuska-Susitna boroughs, where per capita income falls below the state-wide figures.

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Unemployment rate delayed each February

Because of the annual benchmarking and revision process, the unemployment rate data the Department of Labor typically publishes in *Trends* were not available for this issue. We will release the data for January and February in March.

FOREIGN-BORN

Continued from page 11

Immigrants tend to branch out into other fields of employment as their time in the U.S. increases, and the percentage in these three industries drops below 50. For those who have been in the U.S. at least 10 years, employment in industries such as retail trade, public administration, and construction becomes increasingly common.

Immigrants' median earnings

Median earnings for Alaska's foreign-born are roughly equivalent to immigrant earnings nationally but trail Alaskans in general. For men, immigrants earn about 62 percent of what native-born men earn in Alaska (\$37,081 to \$60,261). The gap is smaller for foreign-born women at 77 percent (\$34,218 to \$44,276).

Newly arrived immigrants predictably earn far less

than more established immigrants. Around 73 percent earn less than \$35,000 a year, but only about 41 percent who have been in the U.S. more than 10 years earn that little.

The gap between naturalized citizens and noncitizens is evident in their poverty status, both in Alaska and nationwide. About 10 percent of all Alaskans live below the poverty line, which is not adjusted for local cost of living. It's slightly higher than that for all foreign-born Alaskans, but for those who have become U.S. citizens, it falls below 7 percent, even lower than the rate for U.S.-born Alaskans. Meanwhile, noncitizens' poverty rate is over 14 percent.

Naturalized Alaskans are also more likely than native citizens to live above 200 percent of the poverty line, the common threshold for what's considered "low income," at 78 percent to 74 percent. Just 61 percent of the nonnaturalized live at or above that level.

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Employer Resources

Alaska job fairs benefit employers and job seekers

The Alaska Job Center Network acts as a recruiting agency for Alaska businesses to connect skilled job seekers with employers. Employers and job centers host these recruitment events, sometimes for multiple employers in varying industries and occupations.

Job fairs provide a convenient, centralized location where job seekers can submit an application or resume directly to a hiring manager in person.

Employers may call or visit one of the 20 local job centers around the state or contact Business Connection staff, who can answer questions and explain the recruiting process. You may use a room, free of charge, at your local job center for mass recruitment or training.

Job center staff members throughout the state are trained to assist employers with programs that include recruitment and employment services, veteran services, job training, Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training, and work services. Job center staff can also connect employers with partner agencies that can

help them meet their employment goals.

Upcoming job fairs:

March 11: Mat-Su College in Palmer

March 21: Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport

March 24: Pioneer Park Civic Center in Fairbanks
The Plaza Mall in Ketchikan

March 25: Kenai Peninsula Job Center
Juneau Job & Career Expo
at Centennial Hall

April 7: AVTEC Student Service Center in Seward

Find out which job fairs are scheduled in the coming weeks and months by visiting jobs.alaska.gov/jobfairs/index.html. Contact the Business Connection staff for your area at jobs.alaska.gov/employer.htm.

Employer Resources is written by the Employment Security Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Safety Minute

Governor's Safety and Health Conference Mar. 24 to 26

The Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Section will present at the 34th Annual Governor's Safety and Health Conference in Anchorage March 24 to 26. This conference is presented by the Alaska Safety Advisory Council, which has assembled an experienced group of presenters to educate attendees about occupational safety, health, and wellness. During this conference, AKOSH's presentations will focus on workplace safety and regulatory requirements in the seafood industry.

The seafood industry provides one-fifth of all jobs in Alaska. By protecting these workers, we protect our economy. AKOSH provides free specialized safety training sessions for seafood processing. As a result, 235 frontline managers in the industry have become

familiar with OSHA regulations and the percentage of occupational injuries and illnesses have decreased. To learn more, please join us March 24 through 26 at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage. A detailed schedule of topics and presenters is available at akgshc.com.

For a confidential, cost-free evaluation of your work site or help developing your business' safety and health program, contact AKOSH Consultation and Training at 3301 Eagle Street, Suite 305, Anchorage AK 99503 or (800) 656-4972.

Safety Minute is written by the Labor Standards and Safety Division, Alaska Occupational Health and Safety Consultation and Training Program of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.