ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

MARCH 202

School-age children

ALSO INSIDE

Third quarter wages up 4.7% over the year

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT • **RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

ON THE COVER:

The cover image shows Kassie (Kasiyuk) Avessuk Walluk, on the left, and Flora (Seakeena) Walluk in Nome in the early 1920s. The same girls are pictured here together and with another child.

The cover photo is from the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

These photos are from the Alaska State Library Historical Collections. The photos above and at right are part of the Lomen Brothers Photograph Collection, and the photo at left is by Dr. Daniel S. Neuman.

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ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

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Trends is a nonpartisan, data-driven magazine that covers a range of economic topics in Alaska.

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ON THIS SPREAD: The background image for 2020 is the aurora borealis in the arctic in Alaska, taken by Noel Bauza.

Trends in the school-age population

How Alaska's 5-to-17 age group has grown and changed over time

By ERIC SANDBERG

School-age children make up about 18 percent of Alaska today, down from a peak of 29.2 percent in 1970.

The growth pattern for the population ages 5 to 17 changed markedly at the turn of this century after 50 years of strong growth, stalling due to lower birth rates, smaller successive generations, and negative net migration. From 1950 to 2000, the age group grew by more than 500 percent as the state transformed from a small population that was disproportionately unmarried young men to a larger state with more families.

It's important to note that this analysis is based on age rather than school enrollment, and while this article refers to "kids" or "children" for simplicity, it does not include children younger than 5.

How Alaska's school-age population changed with time

In the first half of the 20th century, the total and school-age populations in Alaska were both relatively small. Before the 1950s, Alaska had fewer than 20,000 kids, although in 1930 that represented nearly a quarter of the population.

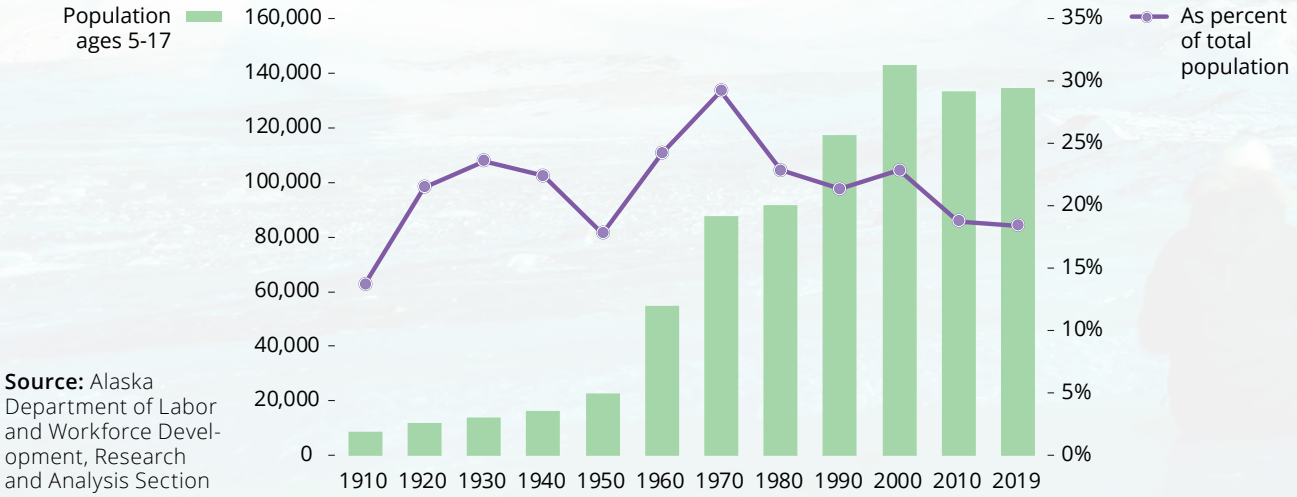
After World War II, the number of children began to climb as the baby boomers entered that age demographic. Between 1950 and 1970, the number of Alaskans between 5 and 17 rose from fewer than 23,000 to nearly 88,000, reaching a peak of just over 29 percent of the state's population.

At that point, as the number of adults began to grow, the school-age group declined as a share of the total

Children aren't always in school

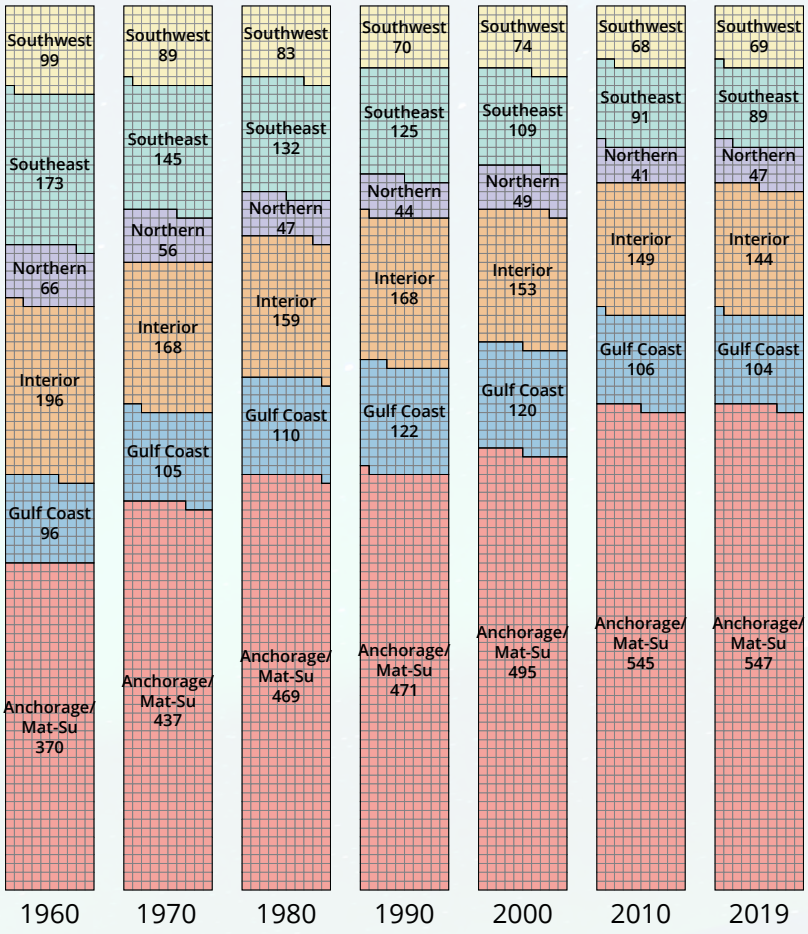
This article focuses on age, not school enrollment. While most kids between 5 and 17 are in school, this is not always the case — especially historically. In more remote parts of Alaska, educational access has at times been limited or restricted, and in the early 20th century, it was common even for those with access to education to discontinue after eighth grade. Today, some children in this age range are homeschooled or drop out before age 18.

School-age children have become a smaller share of the population



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

Where school-age children have lived, per 1,000, since 1960



The numbers show how many of every 1,000 school-age kids in Alaska that year lived in that region.

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

population but continued to increase in number through the 1980s and 1990s. Much of that growth was the large cohort of "echo boomers": baby boomers' children born during Alaska's birth surge in the early-to-mid-1980s. Numerically, the school-age population peaked in 1998 at more than 143,000.

After 1998, the large group of echo boomers aged out of the bracket, and the subsequent group of children was smaller. The school-age population declined each successive year throughout the 2000s, bottoming out at around 133,000 in 2009.

While the group's numbers ticked up slightly during the first half of the 2010s, peaking at 136,331 in 2017, they have been on the decline since, along with the total population. In 2019, the age group dropped below 135,000.

Regionally, Anchorage/Mat-Su's share has been on a long rise

The geographic distribution of Alaska's kids has mirrored that of the rest of the population, with the Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna Region growing disproportionately since statehood.

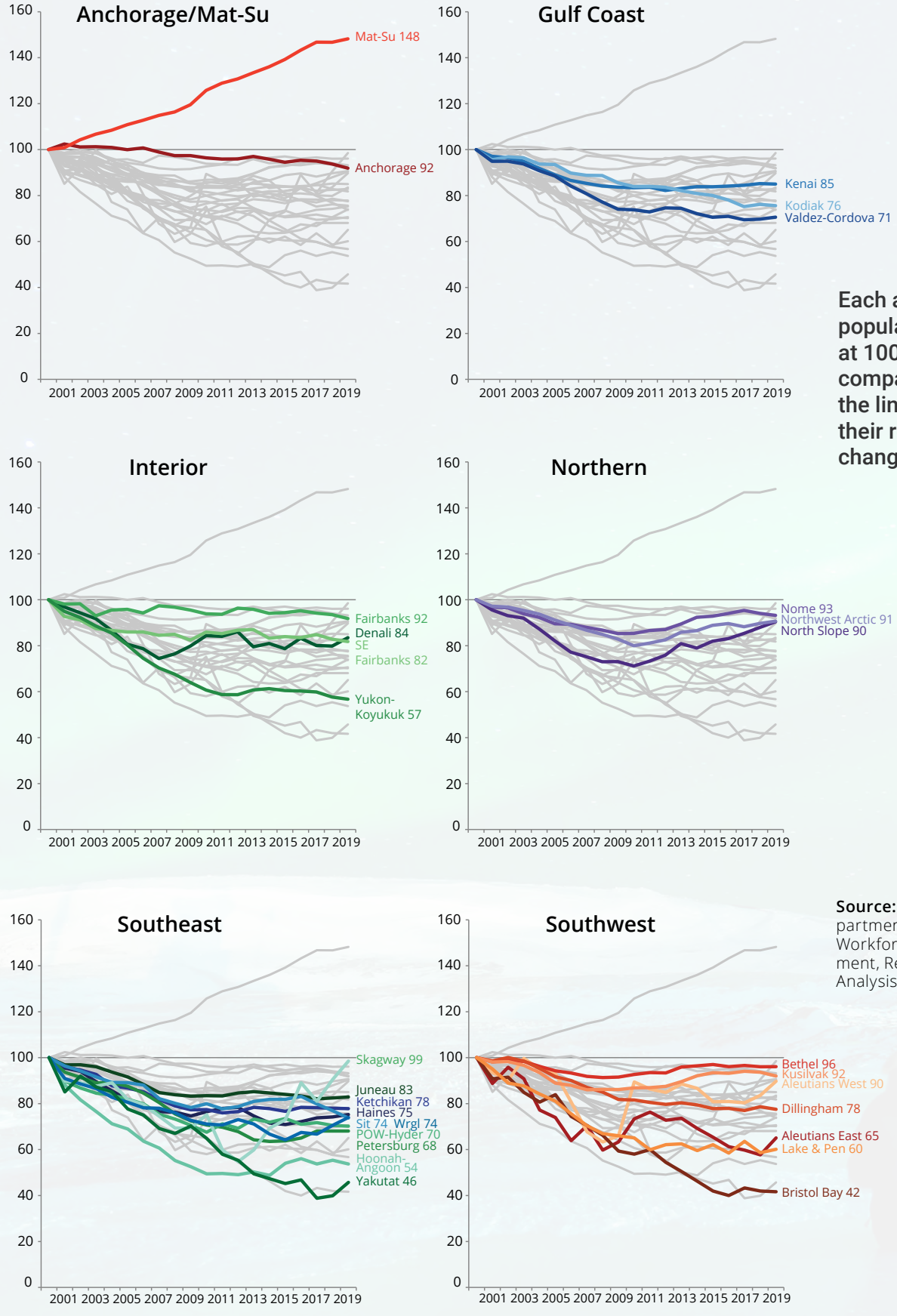
The chart above shows the regions where Alaska's school-age kids have lived, per 1,000, since 1960. That year, 370 out of every 1,000 kids lived in Anchorage/Mat-Su, a number that shot up to 469 by 1980 and passed the 500 mark in the first decade of the 2000s.

During the second half of the 20th century, Anchorage/Mat-Su had a smaller share of the state's school-age population than it did the total population, but that flipped during the 2000s. This was because the numbers of school-age kids declined in every part of the state while continuing to grow, albeit slowly, in Anchorage and Mat-Su.

The other regions have shrunk proportionately, with the largest decline in Southeast. In 1960, 173 out of every 1,000 school-age kids in Alaska lived in Southeast. That has declined every decade since, to 89.

The decline in the Interior has been slower and less steady. The Interior's share fell from 196 out of every

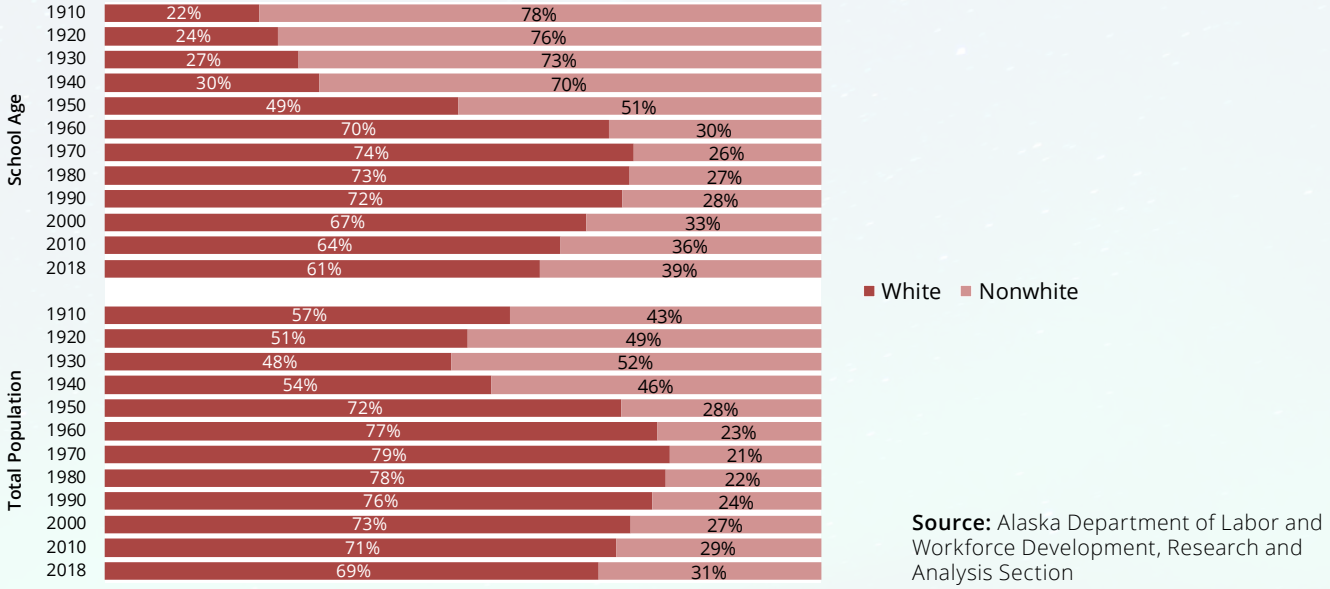
How school-age populations have changed by area since 2000



Each area's 2000 population is set at 100 to allow comparison, and the lines show their relative change.

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

The white/nonwhite gap in Alaska has been closing in recent decades



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

1,000 to 159 between 1960 and 1980, grew to 168 by 1990, then dropped below 150 in the past decade.

The Gulf Coast is the only region besides Mat-Su with a higher share of Alaska's kids now than in 1960, but it too has seen declines since the 1990s, when it surpassed Southeast as the third-largest region.

The Southwest and Northern regions' numbers have dropped steadily throughout the decades, but their higher birth rates and younger populations have kept these regions' shares of children above the statewide percentage.

Nearly all boroughs or census areas have seen declines since 2000

Looking closer geographically shows most boroughs and census areas have lost school-age kids since 2000. The graphs on the previous page show borough-level change over time by setting each area's 2000 population at 100, to allow comparison. Because the 2000 Census came soon after the peak in 1998, all but one area has seen loss since then.

Only the Matanuska-Susitna Borough had a larger school-age population in 2019 than in 2000, with 48 percent growth over that time.

In Anchorage, the child population grew slightly in the early 2000s before dropping below its 2000 level in 2007. After that, Anchorage's school-age group hovered around 96 percent of its 2000 level until the last two years, when it dropped to 92 percent.

Within the Gulf Coast, the school age populations in the Kenai Peninsula Borough and Valdez-Cordova Census Area both dropped quickly in the early 2000s before leveling off at around 85 and 71 percent of their 2000 Census numbers, respectively. Kodiak's decline was slower but continued through the 2010s, reaching a 2019 school-age population that was 76 percent of its 2000 level.

Fairbanks is the only part of the Interior whose school-age population remains over 90 percent of what it was in 2000. The Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area is at just 57 percent.

Seven out of 10 boroughs in Southeast have school-age populations that are 75 percent or less of their 2000 size. For several, the declines came in the first decade of the 2000s and the numbers have risen slightly since. The outlier is Skagway, where the child population has nearly recovered its 2000 level.

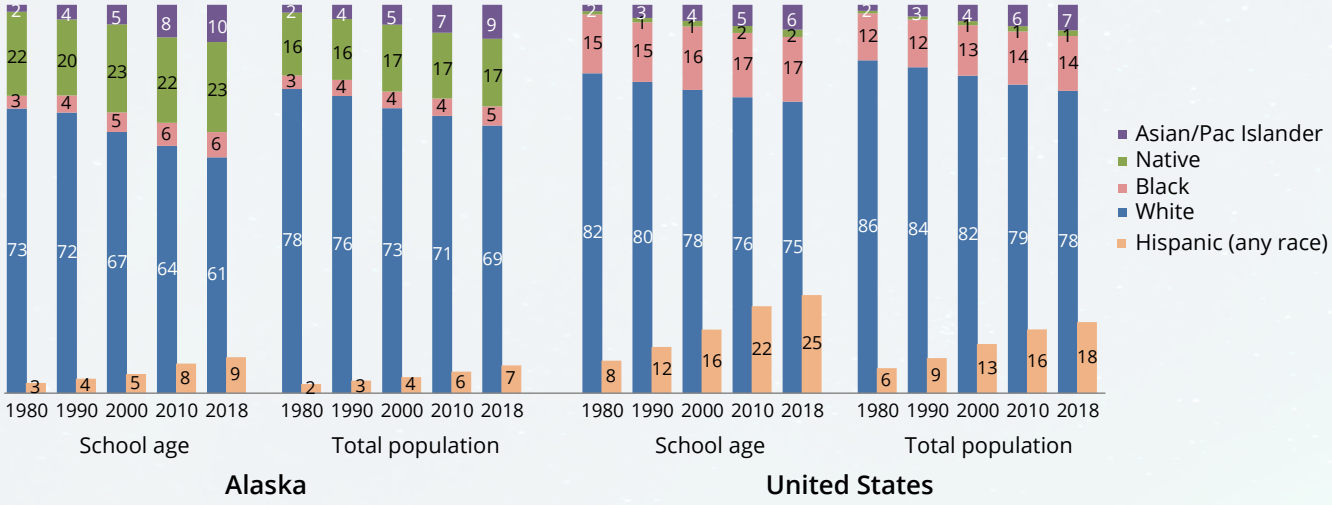
In Southwest, several areas have recovered to 90 percent of more of their 2000 levels, but other parts of the region are way down. Bristol Bay Borough's loss has been steepest; it has just 42 percent of the kids it had 19 years ago.

All three northern boroughs now have growing school-age populations after dropping from 2000 to around 2010.

Diversity is increasing among kids

Race data clearly show increasing diversity among

How Alaska's racial makeup compares to the U.S., for kids and overall



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

school-age kids in Alaska and in the overall population, but the way people self-report their race and the available categories have changed over time, making the data harder to interpret. To make data more comparable, the graphs on the previous page show "bridged race estimates" of what people would have picked if they'd had only four categories to choose from. Before 2000, census forms only allowed respondents to pick one race.

During the first half of the 20th century, Alaska's school-age population was over 70 percent nonwhite — mainly Alaska Native — although many weren't enrolled in school because of a lack of opportunity or discrimination. Alaska's non-Native population at that time was mainly adult men, so there was a large gap between the racial makeups of kids and adults.

World War II, the beginning of the Cold War, increased military spending, and the surrounding population growth reshaped the population. Many newcomers brought children or started families in Alaska, which reversed the ratio between 1940 and 1960 from 30 percent white to 70 percent white. In the 1970 Census, before the pipeline was built, Alaska's total and school-age populations peaked at 74 percent and 79 percent white, respectively.

The white share has declined somewhat among children in recent decades after remaining about the same throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1990 and 2018, the percentage of kids who were not white rose from 28 percent to 39 percent. That change was larger than for the total population, which shifted from 24 percent nonwhite to 31 percent. The racial gap between kids and adults, now 8 percent, is the largest it's been since the 1950s.

The chart above shows more detailed race data, using bridged estimates, and comparable U.S. numbers to show how we compare. The Hispanic shares are shown separately because on census forms, Hispanic is an ethnicity rather than a race. People of any race can be Hispanic.

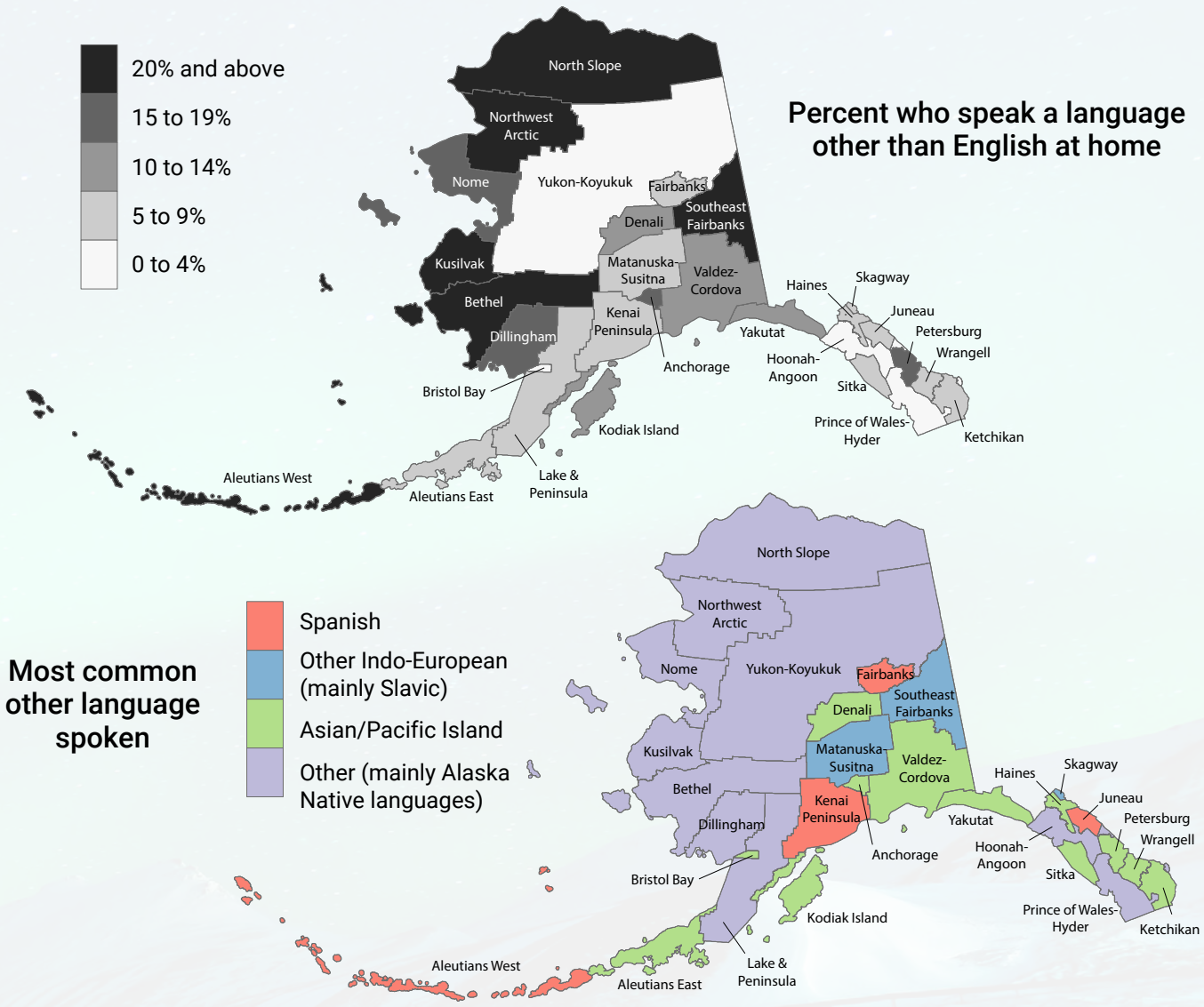
Alaska's school-age population is considerably less white than that of the nation. As mentioned earlier, Alaska's school age population is now about 61 percent white, and for the nation it's 75 percent. The gap has grown over time, from 9 percent to 14 percent between 1980 and 2018.

The percentage of kids who are Alaska Native has remained about the same since 1980 (22 percent to 23 percent). Because Natives tend to be younger and have larger families than other racial groups, their percentage of the school-age population is higher than their total percentage of 17 percent. Nationally, Native Americans make up only about 2 percent of this age group.

The percentage of Asians/Pacific Islanders has grown the most in Alaska since 1980, from about 2 percent of school-age kids to 10 percent. Asians and Pacific Islanders make up a larger share in Alaska than they do nationwide (6 percent in 2018).

The percentage of children who are black has doubled in Alaska since 1980, from 3 to 6 percent, but is far smaller than it is nationally (17 percent). It's a similar story with Hispanic kids in Alaska, whose

Where Alaska's children speak other languages at home



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

share has tripled from 3 to 9 percent, but they make up a quarter of school-age kids nationwide.

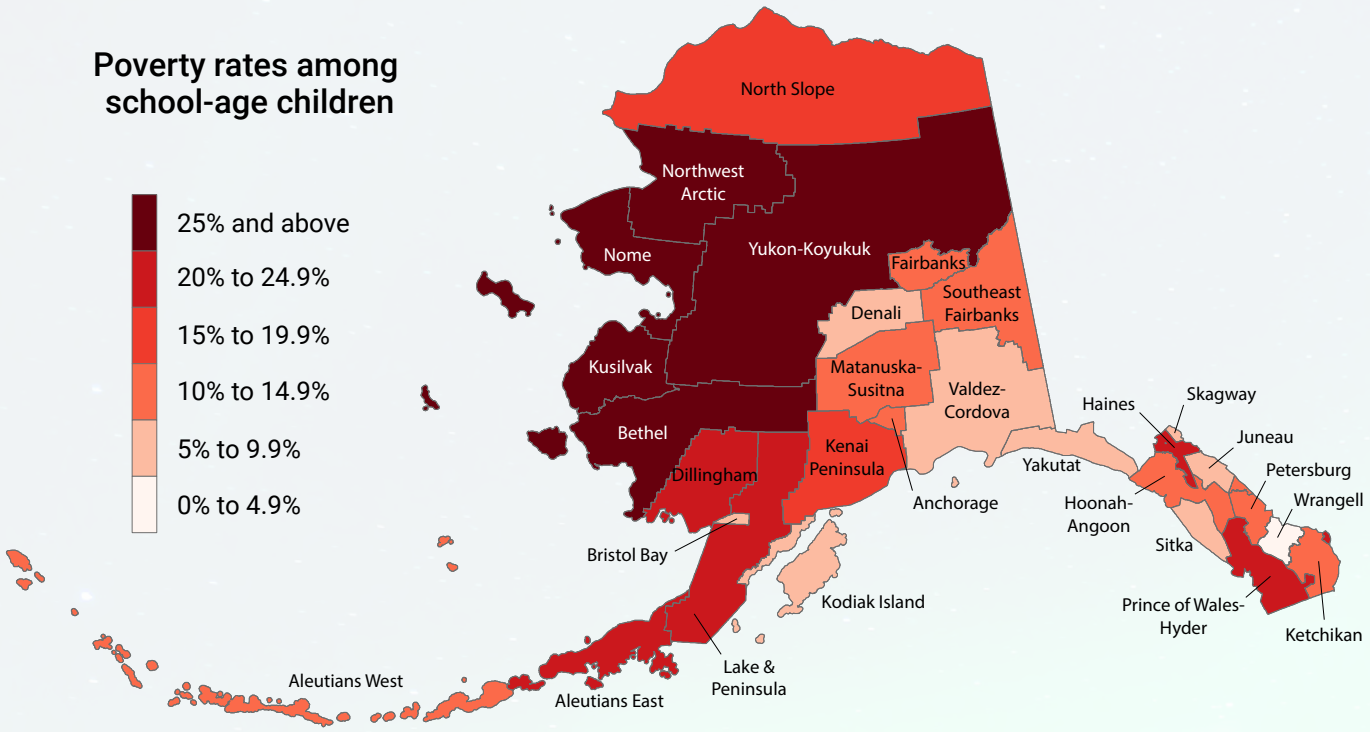
About 14 percent of Alaska kids speak a different language at home

Around 14 percent of school-age children speak a language other than English at home. The maps above show the percentages of kids in each borough and census area who mainly speak another language at home and their most common language family. Alaska Native languages are classified as "other" in the Census Bureau's four-category breakdown.

The highest rates are mostly in western Alaska, and only the Bethel Census Area has a majority who speak another language at home (53 percent). Other areas with high percentages include Aleutians West (42 percent), North Slope (25 percent), Northwest Arctic (25 percent), and Kusilvak (20 percent). Outside western Alaska, the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area has the highest rate, at 29 percent.

In areas that are majority Alaska Native, the "other" category is by far the largest, but it's mixed in the rest of the state. Spanish is most common in three of the five most populous boroughs and in Aleutians West. Asian or Pacific Island languages are most common in Anchorage and 11 other boroughs and

School-age children's poverty rates vary by Alaska area



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

census areas. In Southeast Fairbanks and Mat-Su, large Slavic populations account for "Other Indo-European" as the largest category.

Most of these children speak English, too, and at a much higher rate than the rest of the population. Of the kids who don't primarily speak English at home, 93 percent speak English "well" or "very well." It's 91 percent for the comparable 18-to-64-year-old population and 74 percent for those 65 and older.

Just 0.5 percent of these kids don't speak any English, versus 1 percent for the corresponding working-age population and 7 percent for seniors.

Poverty rates vary widely, are highest in western Alaska

Measuring poverty among school-age children is tricky because the group typically isn't earning income. The U.S. Census Bureau releases poverty statistics for kids who are in families that fall below the poverty line. That determination is based on the family's total income, size, and number of children under 18.

Another limitation of poverty thresholds is they don't vary geographically, so they don't take living costs or other regional factors into account. This means the poverty line is the same in Alaska as in Missouri, for example, and poverty in higher-cost areas like Alaska is likely higher in reality than it appears.

In Alaska, about 15 percent of school-age children live in a home that falls below the federal poverty level, which is lower than the national average of 19 percent. However, kids' poverty levels are higher than for the total population, both in Alaska and nationwide.

Child poverty is highest in rural and western Alaska, as the map above shows. In the Kusilvak Census Area, 45 percent of school age children live below the poverty line. Bethel and Yukon-Koyukuk are at 33 and 31 percent, respectively, and Nome and the Northwest Arctic are also above 25 percent. Many of the lowest child poverty levels are in small boroughs. Wrangell and Skagway are both around 5 percent, and the Bristol Bay Borough is just under 7 percent.

Eric Sandberg is a demographer in Juneau. Reach him at (907) 465-2437 or eric.sandberg@alaska.gov.

Total wages up 4.7% in third quarter

Growth is from same quarter in 2018; average wages are also up

By DAN ROBINSON

Alaska employers paid $4.9 billion in wages during the third quarter of 2019, an increase of 4.7 percent from the same quarter the year before. Private sector wages grew 5.4 percent over the year and government wages increased 2.5 percent.

In Alaska's seasonal economy, wages and job levels are at their highest levels in the third quarter of each year, making third quarter data especially relevant to assessing the state's economic direction.

Oil, seafood processing lead wage growth

Oil and gas wages rose from $309.3 million to $335.5 million, an increase of 8.5 percent. Seafood processing wages grew from $199.3 million to nearly $228 million, a jump of 14.4 percent.

Alaska's large leisure and hospitality sector, which includes many tourism-related companies, paid out 4.7 percent more in third quarter wages in 2019, totaling $302.6 million. Health care wages continued a long stretch of growth as well, increasing 4.8 percent to $594.7 million.

Total wages by industry for third quarters of 2018 and 2019

Industry	Q3 2018 total wages	Q3 2019 total wages	Change	Percent change
Total, All Industries	$4,706,592,771	$4,929,127,692	$222,534,921	4.7%
Total Private Sector	$3,648,413,202	$3,844,631,726	$196,218,524	5.4%
Natural Resources and Mining	$424,885,821	$455,862,103	$30,976,282	7.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	$21,478,429	$23,926,635	$2,448,206	11.4%
Mining	$403,407,392	$431,935,468	$28,528,076	7.1%
Oil and Gas Industry	$309,339,696	$335,503,562	$26,163,866	8.5%
Construction	$395,230,628	$405,461,910	$10,231,282	2.6%
Manufacturing	$251,479,667	$282,673,343	$31,193,676	12.4%
Seafood Processing	$199,303,532	$227,958,103	$28,654,571	14.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	$817,594,055	$862,376,388	$44,782,333	5.5%
Wholesale Trade	$95,700,268	$100,834,685	$5,134,417	5.4%
Retail Trade	$293,764,635	$302,503,177	$8,738,542	3.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	$376,155,585	$406,163,352	$30,007,767	8.0%
Utilities	$51,973,567	$52,875,173	$901,606	1.7%
Information	$93,880,907	$90,726,806	-$3,154,101	-3.4%
Financial Activities	$176,997,611	$189,342,635	$12,345,024	7.0%
Professional and Business Services	$437,688,573	$460,982,531	$23,293,958	5.3%
Educational and Health Services	$657,803,360	$687,427,679	$29,624,319	4.5%
Educational Services	$20,033,711	$21,230,083	$1,196,372	6.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	$637,769,649	$666,197,596	$28,427,947	4.5%
Health Care	$567,229,678	$594,732,911	$27,503,233	4.8%
Social Assistance	$70,539,970	$71,464,685	$924,715	1.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	$288,925,043	$302,556,375	$13,631,332	4.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	$248,020,066	$261,192,131	$13,172,065	5.3%
Accommodation	$104,367,275	$110,653,642	$6,286,367	6.0%
Food Services and Drinking Places	$143,652,791	$150,538,489	$6,885,698	4.8%
Other Services/Unclassified	$103,927,537	$107,221,956	$3,294,419	3.2%
Total Government	$1,058,179,570	$1,084,495,965	$26,316,395	2.5%
Federal	$321,295,784	$330,340,150	$9,044,366	2.8%
State, including University of Alaska	$347,587,998	$358,621,258	$11,033,260	3.2%
Local, including tribal	$389,295,788	$395,534,557	$6,238,769	1.6%

Note: Excludes the self-employed, uniformed military, most commercial fishermen, domestic workers, and unpaid family workers
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Total wages by area for third quarters of 2018 and 2019

Area	Q3 2018 total wages	Q3 2019 total wages	Change	Percent change
Statewide	$4,706,592,771	$4,929,127,692	$222,534,921	4.7%
Aleutians East Borough	$43,387,972	$52,982,836	$9,594,864	22.1%
Aleutians West Census Area	$59,375,214	$63,491,057	$4,115,843	6.9%
Anchorage, Municipality	$2,172,158,363	$2,253,654,647	$81,496,284	3.8%
Bethel Census Area	$80,910,089	$81,004,849	$94,760	0.1%
Bristol Bay Borough	$39,214,247	$39,532,583	$318,336	0.8%
Denali Borough	$41,170,647	$39,424,540	-$1,746,107	-4.2%
Dillingham Census Area	$38,951,161	$39,519,838	$568,677	1.5%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	$526,939,308	$544,793,368	$17,854,060	3.4%
Haines Borough	$15,751,825	$13,756,729	-$1,995,096	-12.7%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	$9,963,166	$10,487,870	$524,704	5.3%
Juneau, City and Borough	$248,436,966	$257,471,528	$9,034,562	3.6%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	$256,362,717	$271,746,167	$15,383,450	6.0%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	$99,005,109	$102,826,854	$3,821,745	3.9%
Kodiak Island Borough	$77,345,028	$84,793,005	$7,447,977	9.6%
Kusilvak Census Area	$17,482,614	$17,440,774	-$41,840	-0.2%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	$15,140,400	$15,060,807	-$79,593	-0.5%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	$266,434,710	$288,494,857	$22,060,147	8.3%
Nome Census Area	$52,242,900	$53,984,495	$1,741,595	3.3%
North Slope Borough	$281,573,914	$306,371,643	$24,797,729	8.8%
Northwest Arctic Borough	$54,638,834	$57,555,187	$2,916,353	5.3%
Petersburg Borough	$18,239,256	$18,981,201	$741,945	4.1%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	$25,699,131	$27,215,094	$1,515,963	5.9%
Sitka, City and Borough	$58,340,050	$64,605,623	$6,265,573	10.7%
Skagway, Municipality	$18,292,040	$19,574,185	$1,282,145	7.0%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	$43,850,667	$44,409,324	$558,657	1.3%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	$83,511,085	$91,214,650	$7,703,565	9.2%
Wrangell, City and Borough	$9,932,535	$9,884,826	-$47,709	-0.5%
Yakutat, City and Borough	$3,348,355	$4,006,416	$658,061	19.7%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	$23,852,156	$24,994,100	$1,141,944	4.8%

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

The only major sector whose total wages didn't grow over the period was information, which includes everything from telecommunications companies and television and radio stations to newspapers and book and software publishers. Ongoing job losses pushed total wages in information down 3.4 percent.

Inflation was low over the period

Inflation is always relevant when comparing wages or other prices over time. Inflation measures aren't precise enough to match the time period for the wage data shown here, but Alaska inflation rates were relatively low in 2019, averaging 1.3 percent — well below the total wage growth percentage.

Highest growth in fishing-dependent areas

Total wages grew in nearly all of the state's 29 boroughs and census areas over the period, with the biggest increases coming from parts of the state where fishing and seafood processing play central economic roles.

The numbers can be volatile and potentially misleading for areas with small populations because changes to a few key employers' wages, or a big

Continued on page 18

About the data

The wage data come from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program, one of several cooperative statistical programs between states and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics created to produce critical and objective labor market information.

These employment and wage data are particularly reliable because they are generated from quarterly reports nearly all Alaska employers are required to file under state and federal unemployment insurance laws.

Average wages and jobs by industry and area for third quarters 2018-19

Industry	Q3 2018 avg jobs	Q3 2019 avg jobs	Change in jobs	Q3 2018 avg wages	Q3 2019 avg wages	Change in avg wages	Pct chg in avg wages
Total, All Industries	342,128	345,733	3,605	$13,757	$14,257	$500	4%
Total Private Sector	270,498	274,715	4,217	$13,488	$13,995	$507	4%
Natural Resources and Mining	14,430	15,338	908	$29,445	$29,721	$276	1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	1,729	1,893	164	$12,422	$12,640	$217	2%
Mining	12,701	13,445	744	$31,762	$32,126	$364	1%
Oil and Gas Industry	9,333	9,929	596	$33,145	$33,790	$646	2%
Construction	18,392	18,846	454	$21,489	$21,514	$25	0%
Manufacturing	18,750	20,109	1,359	$13,412	$14,057	$645	5%
Seafood Processing	14,726	15,941	1,215	$13,534	$14,300	$766	6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	68,605	68,922	317	$11,917	$12,512	$595	5%
Wholesale Trade	6,584	6,655	71	$14,535	$15,152	$616	4%
Retail Trade	37,019	36,752	-267	$7,936	$8,231	$295	4%
Transportation and Warehousing	22,726	23,236	510	$16,552	$17,480	$928	6%
Utilities	2,275	2,278	3	$22,846	$23,211	$366	2%
Information	5,620	5,323	-297	$16,705	$17,044	$340	2%
Financial Activities	12,969	12,954	-15	$13,648	$14,617	$969	7%
Professional and Business Services	28,508	28,933	425	$15,353	$15,933	$580	4%
Educational and Health Services	49,338	49,711	373	$13,333	$13,828	$496	4%
Educational Services	2,347	2,249	-98	$8,536	$9,440	$904	11%
Health Care and Social Assistance	46,991	47,462	471	$13,572	$14,036	$464	3%
Health Care	37,973	38,452	479	$14,938	$15,467	$529	4%
Social Assistance	9,018	9,011	-7	$7,822	$7,931	$109	1%
Leisure and Hospitality	42,483	43,121	638	$6,801	$7,016	$215	3%
Accommodation and Food Services	36,146	36,741	595	$6,862	$7,109	$247	4%
Accommodation	12,181	12,551	370	$8,568	$8,816	$248	3%
Food Services and Drinking Places	23,966	24,189	223	$5,994	$6,223	$229	4%
Other Services/Unclassified	11,404	11,458	54	$9,113	$9,358	$245	3%
Total Government	71,630	71,018	-612	$14,773	$15,271	$498	3%
Federal	15,305	15,312	7	$20,993	$21,574	$581	3%
State, including University of Alaska	23,221	23,051	-170	$14,969	$15,558	$589	4%
Local, including tribal	33,104	32,655	-449	$11,760	$12,113	$353	3%

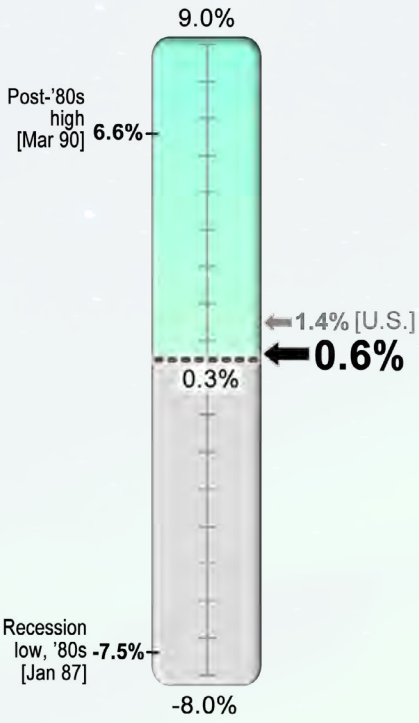
Area	Q3 2018 avg jobs	Q3 2019 avg jobs	Change in jobs	Q3 2018 avg wages	Q3 2019 avg wages	Change in avg wages	Pct chg in avg wages
Statewide	342,130	345,735	3,605	$13,757	$14,257	$500	4%
Aleutians East Borough	2,906	3,466	560	$14,930	$15,286	$356	2%
Aleutians West Census Area	3,631	3,785	154	$16,352	$16,774	$422	3%
Anchorage, Municipality	150,951	151,384	433	$14,390	$14,887	$497	3%
Bethel Census Area	7,184	6,992	-192	$11,263	$11,585	$323	3%
Bristol Bay Borough	2,467	2,481	14	$15,896	$15,934	$39	0%
Denali Borough	3,613	3,564	-49	$11,395	$11,062	-$333	-3%
Dillingham Census Area	3,042	3,027	-15	$12,804	$13,056	$251	2%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	39,119	39,251	132	$13,470	$13,880	$410	3%
Haines Borough	1,378	1,448	70	$11,431	$9,501	-$1,930	-17%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	1,071	1,125	54	$9,303	$9,323	$20	0%
Juneau, City and Borough	18,983	19,254	271	$13,087	$13,372	$285	2%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,554	21,809	255	$11,894	$12,460	$566	5%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	8,628	8,627	-1	$11,475	$11,919	$444	4%
Kodiak Island Borough	6,424	6,448	24	$12,040	$13,150	$1,110	9%
Kusilvak Census Area	2,446	2,521	75	$7,147	$6,918	-$229	-3%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,269	1,250	-19	$11,931	$12,049	$118	1%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	24,033	24,902	869	$11,086	$11,585	$499	5%
Nome Census Area	3,900	3,893	-7	$13,396	$13,867	$471	4%
North Slope Borough	11,899	12,439	540	$23,664	$24,630	$966	4%
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,995	3,022	27	$18,243	$19,045	$802	4%
Petersburg Borough	1,473	1,549	76	$12,382	$12,254	-$129	-1%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,430	2,404	-26	$10,576	$11,321	$745	7%
Sitka, City and Borough	4,922	5,020	98	$11,853	$12,870	$1,017	9%
Skagway, Municipality	1,698	1,683	-15	$10,773	$11,631	$858	8%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	2,660	2,591	-69	$16,485	$17,140	$655	4%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	6,323	6,524	201	$13,208	$13,981	$774	6%
Wrangell, City and Borough	923	889	-34	$10,761	$11,119	$358	3%
Yakutat, City and Borough	310	326	16	$10,801	$12,290	$1,488	14%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,402	2,342	-60	$9,930	$10,672	$742	7%

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

Gauging The Economy

Job Growth

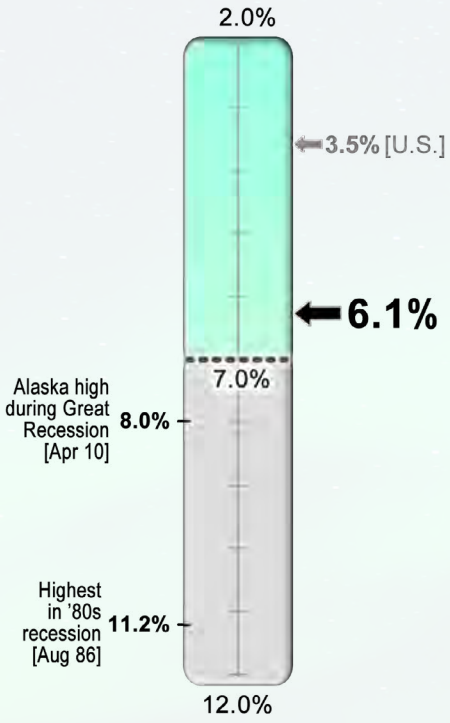
December 2019
Over-the-year percent change



- The state has registered over-the-year job gains for 15 straight months after losing jobs for the prior three years.
- The gains are small so far, hovering around half a percentage point.
- U.S. job growth remains stable and has been positive since 2010, with the strongest growth in 2015.

Unemployment Rate

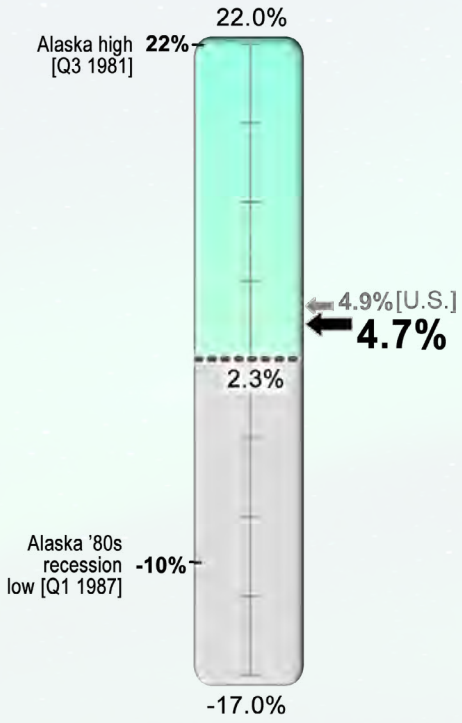
December 2019
Seasonally adjusted



- Until April, Alaska's seasonally adjusted rate had spent nearly a year at 6.5 percent.
- Unemployment rates are complicated economic measures and generally less telling than job or wage growth as indicators of broad economic health.

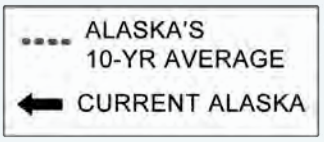
Wage Growth

3rd Quarter 2019
Over-the-year percent change



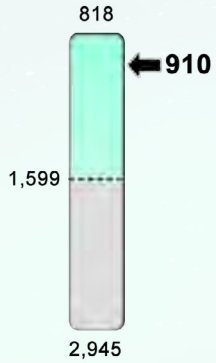
- Wages increased for the eighth straight quarter.
- Alaska's wage growth rate was slightly below the nation's, but both remained strong.

Gauging The Economy



Initial Claims

Unemployment, week ending Feb. 8, 2020**

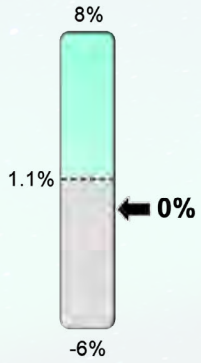


- For a variety of reasons, initial claims are well below the 10-year average.

**Four-week moving average ending with the specified week

GDP Growth

3rd Quarter 2019
Over-the-year percent change*

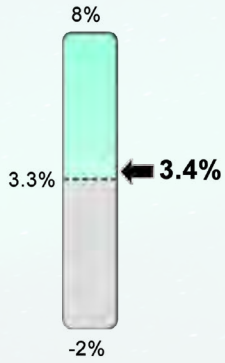


- Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. Prior to this quarter, which was flat compared to third quarter 2018, Alaska's GDP was up for 11 straight quarters.

*In current dollars

Personal Income Growth

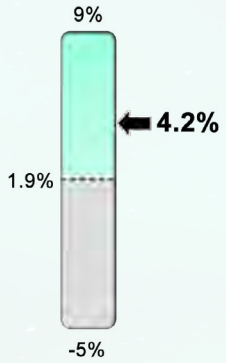
3rd Quarter 2019
Over-the-year percent change



- Personal income includes wages as well as transfer payments (such as Social Security, Medicaid, and the PFD) and investment income. After five quarters well above the 10-year average, growth has slowed to average.

Change in Home Prices

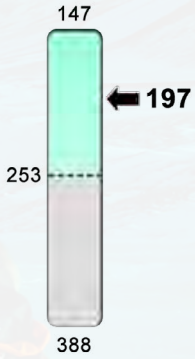
Single-family, 3rd Qtr 2019
Over-the-year percent change



- Home prices include only those for which a commercial loan was used. This indicator tends to be volatile from quarter to quarter.

Foreclosures

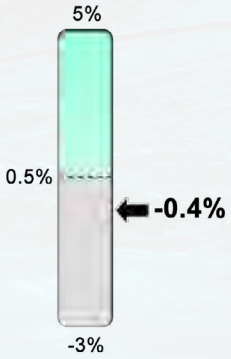
3rd Quarter 2019



- Foreclosure rates remain low, highlighting how different the state's recent recession was from the '80s recession when foreclosures exceeded 2,000 in some quarters.

Population Growth

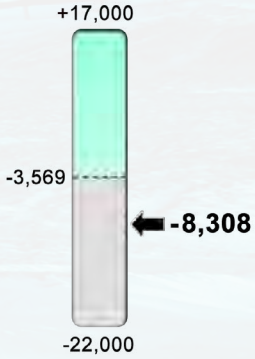
2018 to 2019



- This was the third straight year of population decline.

Net Migration

2018 to 2019

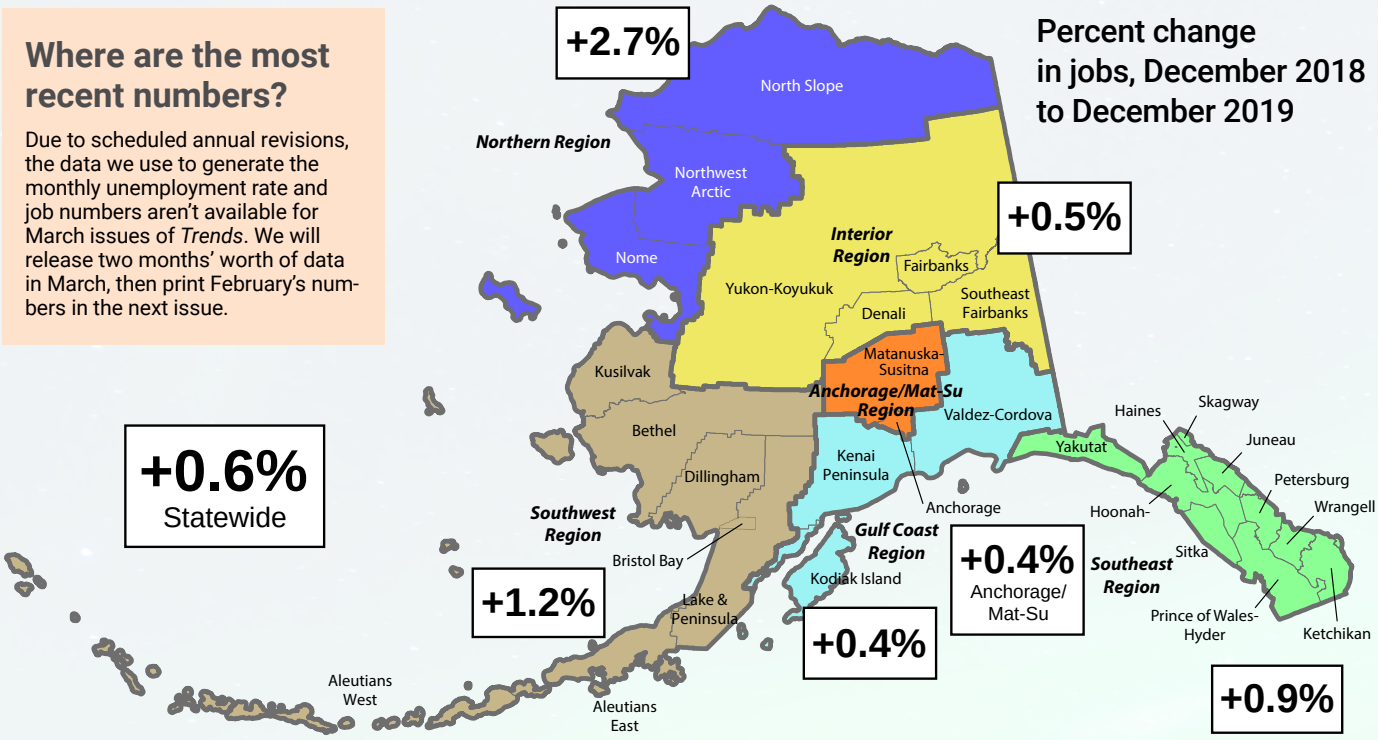


- The state had net migration losses for the seventh consecutive year in 2019. Net migration is the number who moved to Alaska minus the number who left.

Employment by Region

Where are the most recent numbers?

Due to scheduled annual revisions, the data we use to generate the monthly unemployment rate and job numbers aren't available for March issues of *Trends*. We will release two months' worth of data in March, then print February's numbers in the next issue.



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/19	11/19	12/18
United States	**3.5**	**3.5**	**3.9**
Alaska	**6.1**	**6.1**	**6.5**

Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/19	11/19	12/18
United States	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.7**
Alaska	**6.1**	**6.0**	**6.5**

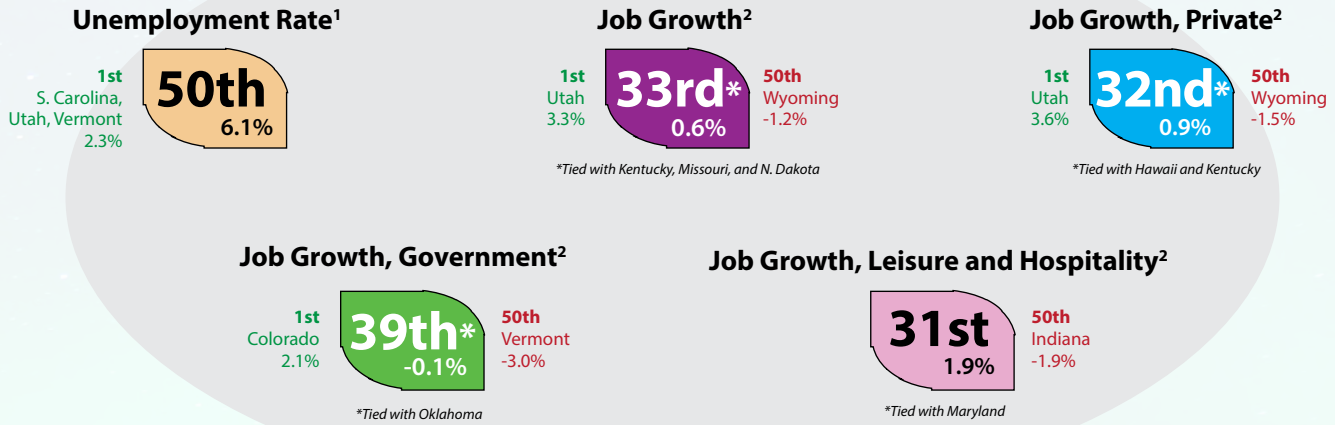
Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/19	11/19	12/18
Interior Region	**6.0**	**6.0**	**6.5**
Denali Borough	19.9	16.8	16.3
Fairbanks N Star Borough	5.3	5.3	5.8
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	9.0	8.2	9.7
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	11.5	12.3	14.1
Northern Region	**9.2**	**9.8**	**9.2**
Nome Census Area	9.2	9.4	10.3
North Slope Borough	5.8	6.5	6.1
Northwest Arctic Borough	13.0	14.0	11.3
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.6**
Anchorage, Municipality	4.8	4.8	5.1
Mat-Su Borough	6.7	6.5	7.1

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/19	11/19	12/18
Southwest Region	**10.3**	**9.9**	**11.0**
Aleutians East Borough	7.1	4.7	7.3
Aleutians West Census Area	5.8	5.0	5.4
Bethel Census Area	10.9	11.2	11.3
Bristol Bay Borough	11.8	12.4	14.3
Dillingham Census Area	8.3	7.9	8.8
Kusilvak Census Area	15.7	15.4	18.0
Lake and Peninsula Borough	10.1	8.8	12.7
Gulf Coast Region	**8.0**	**7.2**	**8.1**
Kenai Peninsula Borough	7.3	7.1	7.8
Kodiak Island Borough	9.5	5.6	9.0
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	9.6	10.2	8.8

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/19	11/19	12/18
Southeast Region	**6.3**	**6.3**	**6.7**
Haines Borough	14.1	13.4	13.0
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	14.5	14.2	16.0
Juneau, City and Borough	4.4	4.4	5.0
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	6.5	6.8	6.6
Petersburg Borough	8.5	8.9	9.0
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	8.8	8.9	10.3
Sitka, City and Borough	4.6	4.6	4.4
Skagway, Municipality	19.0	19.4	18.3
Wrangell, City and Borough	8.2	8.0	8.1
Yakutat, City and Borough	10.0	7.9	10.6

How Alaska Ranks



Note: Government employment includes federal, state, and local government plus public schools and universities.
[1]December seasonally adjusted unemployment rates
[2]December employment, over-the-year percent change

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

Other Economic Indicators

	Current		Year ago	Change
Urban Alaska Consumer Price Index (CPI-U, base yr 1982=100)	228.495	2nd half 2019	227.992	+0.22%
Commodity prices				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	$65.48	Jan 2020	$60.40	+8.41%
Natural gas, residential, per thousand cubic feet	$11.08	Nov 2019	$10.38	+6.74%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	$1,665.40	2/24/2020	$1,329.50	+25.27%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	$18.81	2/24/2020	$15.93	+18.08%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	$2.59	2/24/2020	$2.95	-12.31%
Zinc, per MT	$2,115.00	2/24/2020	$2,719.00	-22.21%
Lead, per lb.	$0.86	2/24/2020	$0.94	-8.51%
Bankruptcies	92	Q4 2019	114	-19.30%
Business	6	Q4 2019	10	-40.00%
Personal	86	Q4 2019	104	-17.31%
Unemployment insurance claims				
Initial filings	5,730	Jan 2020	6,799	-15.72%
Continued filings	41,861	Jan 2020	46,621	-10.21%
Claimant count	10,977	Jan 2020	12,063	-9.00%

*Department of Revenue estimate

Sources for this page and the preceding three pages include Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Energy Information Administration; Kitco; U.S. Census Bureau; COMEX; Bloomberg; Infomine; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

WAGES

Continued from page 12

project in one of the two years being compared, can make a large difference. A couple of examples are Haines (-12.7 percent) and Yakutat (19.7 percent). Comparing wages over a longer period would give a better sense of how wages are rising or falling in smaller places.

Average quarterly wages were also up

While comparing total wages over time reveals whether an economy as a whole is growing, looking at average wages helps determine whether the increase is due to job growth or people in existing jobs making more money. It's almost always some combination of the two.

The state's average quarterly wage was up 4 percent over the year, with most industries recording job growth as well as higher total wages. A few notable exceptions were retail trade, information, state government, and local government. All four of those sectors lost some employment, but their total wages went up. One likely explanation is that job losses in those sectors were disproportionately lower-wage positions. Another possibility is that higher-wage job holders received bigger pay bumps than those making less.

Statewide, average quarterly wages were up by $500 over the period, to $14,257 in the third quarter of 2019. North Slope jobs paid the most, at $24,630. The next highest quarterly wages were in the Northwest Arctic Borough, at $19,045.

Dan Robinson is chief of the Research and Analysis Section. Reach him in Juneau at (907) 465-6040 or at dan.robinson@alaska.gov.

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Eligible provider list gives details on proven programs

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development offers training designed to meet the needs of Alaska's high-growth industries and priority occupations. In addition to listing which training programs and providers are eligible for funding, the Eligible Training Provider List helps Alaskans identify those with a strong track record of helping trainees obtain nationally recognized credentials and secure quality employment.

To compete in today's global economy, businesses need a workforce with increasingly higher levels of skills and knowledge. In addition to listing providers, the EPTL provides details on their services and the quality of their programs. This helps job seekers make informed choices and prepares career planners to help consumers select programs that offer the skills required by local employers in high-demand fields.

For more information on list eligibility and how to apply, see Eligible Training Provider List.

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