

Heidi Drygas  
Commissioner

P.O. Box 111149  
Juneau, AK 99811-1149

[www.labor.alaska.gov](http://www.labor.alaska.gov)



Beth Leschper  
Communications Director

907.465.2700  
cell: 907.723.1321

[beth.leschper@alaska.gov](mailto:beth.leschper@alaska.gov)

## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

January 23, 2015

No. 15-04

### Unemployment rate at 6.3 percent in December

Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.3 percent in December, down from November's 6.5 percent. The comparable national rate was 5.6 percent.

Coincidentally, the unadjusted December rate was also 6.3 percent, up one-tenth of a percentage point from the prior month. The unadjusted rate typically reaches its annual high point in January or February.

Around the state, rates increased over the month in all areas but Anchorage and the North Slope Borough. Urban Anchorage is less subject to the state's seasonal pattern, and North Slope has a winter construction season because of the relative ease of traveling on ice roads rather than spongy tundra.

#### Job numbers

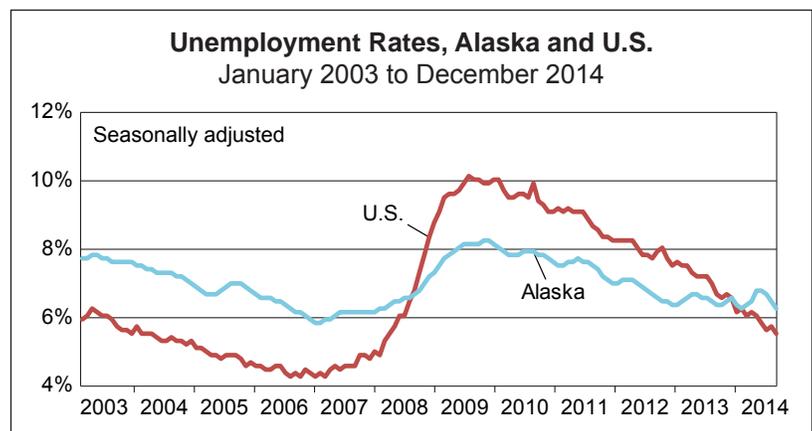
December's increase in the unadjusted unemployment rate mirrored a dip in employment in most parts of the state.

December employment fell slightly in the Municipality of Anchorage. Some industries, like construction, continued seasonal declines while the holidays boosted retail trade and leisure and hospitality.

The Gulf Coast region, which includes the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island boroughs and the Valdez-Cordova Census Area, lost jobs from November to December, driven by losses in seasonal industries such as construction, seafood processing and hospitality. Southeast Alaska's pattern of loss was similar in industries that depend heavily on summer fishing and tourism.

The Interior region — which includes the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area, Southeast Fairbanks Census Area and Denali Borough — lost jobs over the month. The industries losing jobs in December were construction, mining and manufacturing.

Southwest's December job levels are consistently the lowest of the year, as summer processing employment has ended and the large winter fisheries haven't yet begun. The region's seasonal changes largely depend on seafood processing, and the industry's year-to-year variation explains most of the over-the-year changes in total jobs. Government, the region's other major employer, has sustained



Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	12/14	11/14	12/13
Alaska	6.3%	6.5%	6.4%
U.S.	5.6%	5.8%	6.7%

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

For detailed employment estimates, see <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/ces/>. The estimates are preliminary and subject to potentially large revisions.

mild losses throughout the year but remained fairly steady.

The Northern region, the only region to add jobs over the month, is countercyclical to the rest of the state during winter because of increased North Slope activity during the winter construction season.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics produces monthly estimates for Alaska employment that are subject to large revisions. The December estimate indicates Alaska added 2,200 jobs compared to December 2013, which will likely be revised downward.

For more information on regional employment estimates, please visit <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/ces/>.

Contact: Neal Fried, Economist  
(907) 269-4861 or [neal.fried@alaska.gov](mailto:neal.fried@alaska.gov)

Research and Analysis Web site: [laborstats.alaska.gov](http://laborstats.alaska.gov)

## Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted<sup>1</sup>

	Civilian Labor Force			Unemployed					
	12/14 <sup>P</sup>	11/14	12/13	Number			Rate		
				12/14 <sup>P</sup>	11/14	12/13	12/14 <sup>P</sup>	11/14	12/13
<b>Alaska</b>	<b>361,734</b>	<b>362,443</b>	<b>360,565</b>	<b>22,964</b>	<b>22,318</b>	<b>23,340</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	<b>203,378</b>	<b>202,450</b>	<b>202,275</b>	<b>10,592</b>	<b>10,472</b>	<b>10,460</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>
Anchorage, Municipality of	158,716	158,182	157,807	7,416	7,516	7,269	4.7	4.8	4.6
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	44,662	44,268	44,468	3,176	2,956	3,191	7.1	6.7	7.2
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	<b>39,172</b>	<b>39,721</b>	<b>38,448</b>	<b>2,982</b>	<b>2,790</b>	<b>3,127</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8.1</b>
Kenai Peninsula Borough	28,127	28,271	27,241	2,129	2,008	2,089	7.6	7.1	7.7
Kodiak Island Borough	6,368	6,731	6,618	393	348	549	6.2	5.2	8.3
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,677	4,719	4,589	460	434	489	9.8	9.2	10.7
<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>53,477</b>	<b>53,502</b>	<b>53,101</b>	<b>3,507</b>	<b>3,444</b>	<b>3,494</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>
Denali Borough	682	686	716	108	107	136	15.8	15.6	19.0
Fairbanks North Star Borough	46,665	46,641	45,785	2,602	2,585	2,482	5.6	5.5	5.4
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,128	3,160	3,335	342	330	382	10.9	10.4	11.5
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	3,002	3,015	3,265	455	422	494	15.2	14.0	15.1
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>13,002</b>	<b>12,878</b>	<b>13,245</b>	<b>1,063</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>
Nome Census Area	4,222	4,165	4,376	442	420	447	10.5	10.1	10.2
North Slope Borough	5,738	5,642	5,645	210	233	223	3.7	4.1	4.0
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,042	3,071	3,224	411	400	488	13.5	13.0	15.1
<b>Southeast Region</b>	<b>37,057</b>	<b>37,179</b>	<b>37,018</b>	<b>2,661</b>	<b>2,499</b>	<b>2,653</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>7.2</b>
Haines Borough	1,021	1,082	1,037	115	105	123	11.3	9.7	11.9
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	887	885	908	192	157	196	21.6	17.7	21.6
Juneau, City and Borough of	17,458	17,488	17,608	842	815	810	4.8	4.7	4.6
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,768	7,679	7,488	512	502	508	6.6	6.5	6.8
Petersburg Census Area	1,560	1,558	1,547	163	146	192	10.4	9.4	12.4
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,350	2,327	2,244	358	315	313	15.2	13.5	13.9
Sitka, City and Borough of	4,199	4,313	4,347	226	222	248	5.4	5.1	5.7
Skagway, Municipality of	566	577	574	120	111	118	21.2	19.2	20.6
Wrangell, City and Borough of	1,018	1,024	999	108	105	117	10.6	10.3	11.7
Yakutat, City and Borough of	230	246	266	25	21	28	10.9	8.5	10.5
<b>Southwest Region</b>	<b>15,651</b>	<b>16,713</b>	<b>16,477</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>2,059</b>	<b>2,447</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>14.9</b>
Aleutians East Borough	734	912	717	90	92	139	12.3	10.1	19.4
Aleutians West Census Area	1,925	2,524	2,151	191	192	308	9.9	7.6	14.3
Bethel Census Area	7,030	7,176	7,419	999	957	1,080	14.2	13.3	14.6
Bristol Bay Borough	566	501	518	43	33	42	7.6	6.6	8.1
Dillingham Census Area	1,711	1,776	1,696	182	177	187	10.6	10.0	11.0
Lake and Peninsula Borough	918	995	1,008	76	74	82	8.3	7.4	8.1
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,767	2,829	2,968	580	534	609	21.0	18.9	20.5

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

Note: The official definition of unemployment excludes anyone who has not made an active attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of the reference month. Many in rural Alaska do not meet the definition because they have not conducted an active job search due to the scarcity of employment opportunities.

<sup>1</sup>Unemployment rates that are not seasonally adjusted should not be compared with those that are.

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