

A sepia-toned illustration of a man with a mustache, wearing a dark jacket and pants, kneeling in a rocky stream. He is holding a large metal pan and pouring water over it, with a small amount of gold visible in the pan. The background shows a rocky, hilly landscape.

ALASKA ECONOMIC
TRENDS

MARCH 2023

The working-age population decline

ALSO INSIDE Population estimates for 2022

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Revenue, sustainable energy, and child care are priorities

By Catherine Muñoz, Acting Commissioner

One of the important trends tracked by the Research and Analysis Section of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is Alaska's population. In this issue of *Trends*, we track the decline in Alaska's working-age population and summarize the new population estimates, which are major themes in this legislative session.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy's legislative priorities include proposals to improve state revenues, initiatives to promote Alaska business and access to geothermal resources, and the creation of a pilot program to aid child care.

The Carbon Management and Monetization Bill package is a two-pronged approach that would put Alaska at the forefront in helping the world address climate change while adding an innovative revenue stream for the state. In SB 48 and HB 49, a state-wide carbon offset program would be administered through the Department of Natural Resources allowing private parties, and the state, to lease state lands for carbon offset projects. SB 49 and HB 50 would create new authorities for state agencies to license, lease, and administer carbon capture, utilization, and storage space in Alaska's older oil and gas basins. These basins have the capacity to sequester carbon underground, and Cook Inlet, specifically, has been identified as one of the best spots in the world.

The governor's budget proposes \$5 million to promote Alaska to national and international business. It also allocates funding for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute and the Alaska Travel Industry Association to support ongoing initiatives to promote and expand Alaska's seafood and tourism industries.

New legislation in HB 74 and SB 69 would increase access to Alaska's geothermal resources. The



bill removes obstacles to the exploration and development of geothermal resources and increases the time available for exploration from three to five years. "Geothermal resources could be an important component of a sustainable energy mix," said Gov. Dunleavy. "Our location on the Pacific Ring of Fire puts Alaska in a prime

position to benefit from geothermal energy. This bill makes geothermal exploration more viable for private industry."

Of note to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the governor's FY24 budget proposal includes \$620,000 for a pilot program for a new child care facility at the Mat-Su Regional Hospital, using the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's Business Enterprise Program.

The BEP provides employment opportunities to people with blindness and other disabilities by establishing businesses such as food service, gift shops, and vending machines. Part of the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act and the Chance Act, the proposed program would be the first of its kind in the country. Other states are looking to Alaska's experience as this new opportunity develops.

Read more about the FY24 budget proposal [here](#) and recently announced budget amendments [here](#). Legislators across the political spectrum are tackling these and other issues critical to the long-term economic health of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Muñoz".

Contact Acting Commissioner Catherine Muñoz at (907) 465-2700 or commissioner.labor@alaska.gov.



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ON THE COVER:

This 1897 drawing of a prospector comes from the book *Klondike: The Chicago record's book for gold seekers*. Public domain image, published by Monroe Book company and contributed by the University of California Libraries

ALASKA
DEPARTMENT of LABOR
and WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Governor
Mike Dunleavy
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Correction

In January's print edition, the bottom table on page 5 in the statewide forecast has incorrect numbers for mining and logging, professional and business services, and local government. We have corrected [the online version](#).

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

ON THIS SPREAD: The background image for 2023 is a flipped aerial view of tidal channels on the Copper River, taken by Flickr user Banco de Imágenes Geológicas. License: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/

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Decline in working-age Alaskans

The number of people aged 18 to 64 peaked in 2013

By ERIC SANDBERG

The size of Alaska's working-age population has been declining for nine years in a row. The number of people between 18 and 64 dropped from a high of 479,000 in 2013 to 449,000 in 2022.

The size of this group depends mainly on two factors: the number of Alaskans aging into and out of their working years and migration trends to and from the state. Both shifted over the past decade, reversing the historical growth pattern.

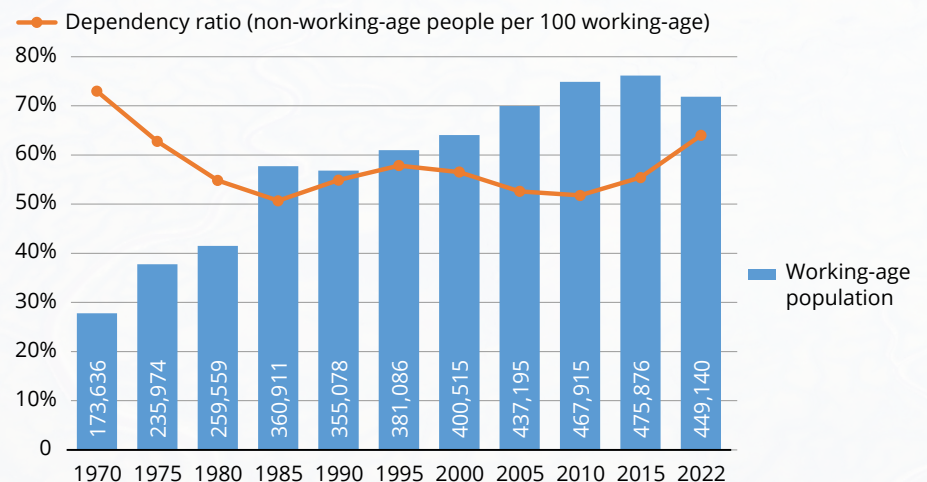
A decline in working-age adults is not uncommon in the developed world, where several generations of declining birth rates are the norm, but it has short-term and long-term economic consequences. Areas with a working-age decline have grappled with labor shortages, slow or stagnant economic growth, less consumer demand, increased dependency ratios, and difficulty funding social programs.

The working-age group and the dependency ratio back to 1970

The chart above shows Alaska's total working-age population from 1970 to 2022 along with the dependency ratio, which is the number of non-working-age Alaskans (children and seniors) per 100 working-age Alaskans. The dependency ratio shows the economic and social burden on those in their working years to support everyone else, based on general assumptions about when people begin working and retire.

Until 2013, aside from the late 1980s oil bust, the working-age population of Alaska had been on a

Alaska's dependency ratio has risen since 2010



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

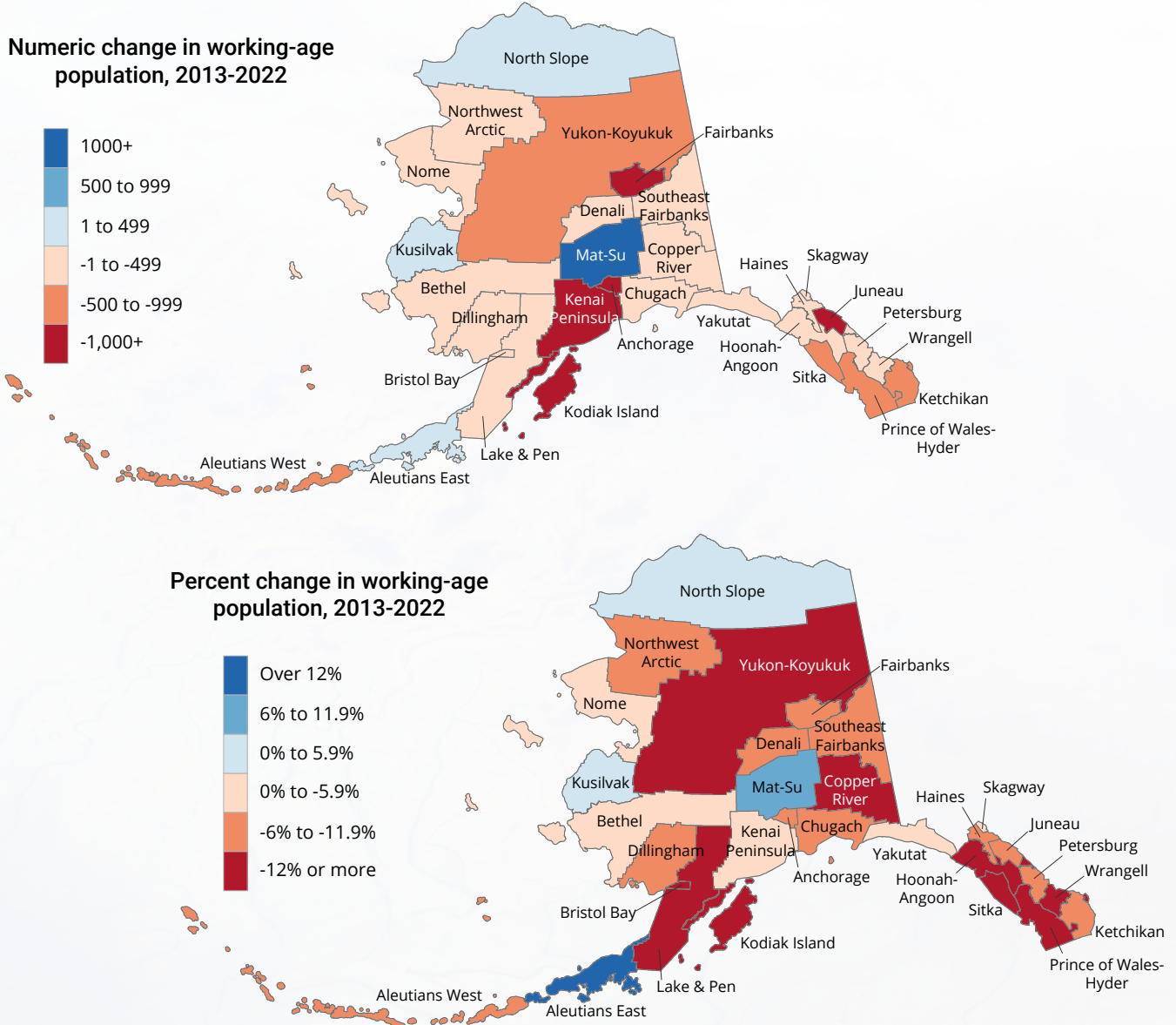
steady upswing with the arrival of the oil economy. Between 1970 and 1985, the number of 18-to-64-year-olds more than doubled, from 174,000 to 361,000, as migrants rushed in during the Trans-Alaska Pipeline construction and the early '80s oil boom.

Following the economic crash of the late '80s, growth picked back up. After 1990, working-age population increases tracked with Alaska's age structure rather than migration inflows. Large numbers born in the 1980s drove the totals higher as they entered adulthood. Then, after peaking in 2013, Alaska's working-age population began to decline, falling by around 3,350 people each year since.

Alaska's dependency ratio, meanwhile, has been rising. After starting at 73 per 100 in 1970, the ratio plunged during the pipeline and oil boom years to around 50 per 100. The ratio ticked up to around 57 in the mid-1990s but fell again over the next 15 years as the number of children in Alaska declined.

In 2022, the dependency ratio reached 64:100, a burden of support not seen since the mid-'70s. In

Growth or loss in the working-age population by area from 2013 to 2022



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

1970, however, 95 percent of non-working-age Alaskans were children. It's now 63 percent children and 37 percent senior citizens.

The decline spans the state

The working-age decline has spanned most of the state, with the 18-64 population down in 26 of the 30 boroughs and census areas between 2013 and 2022. (See the maps above.)

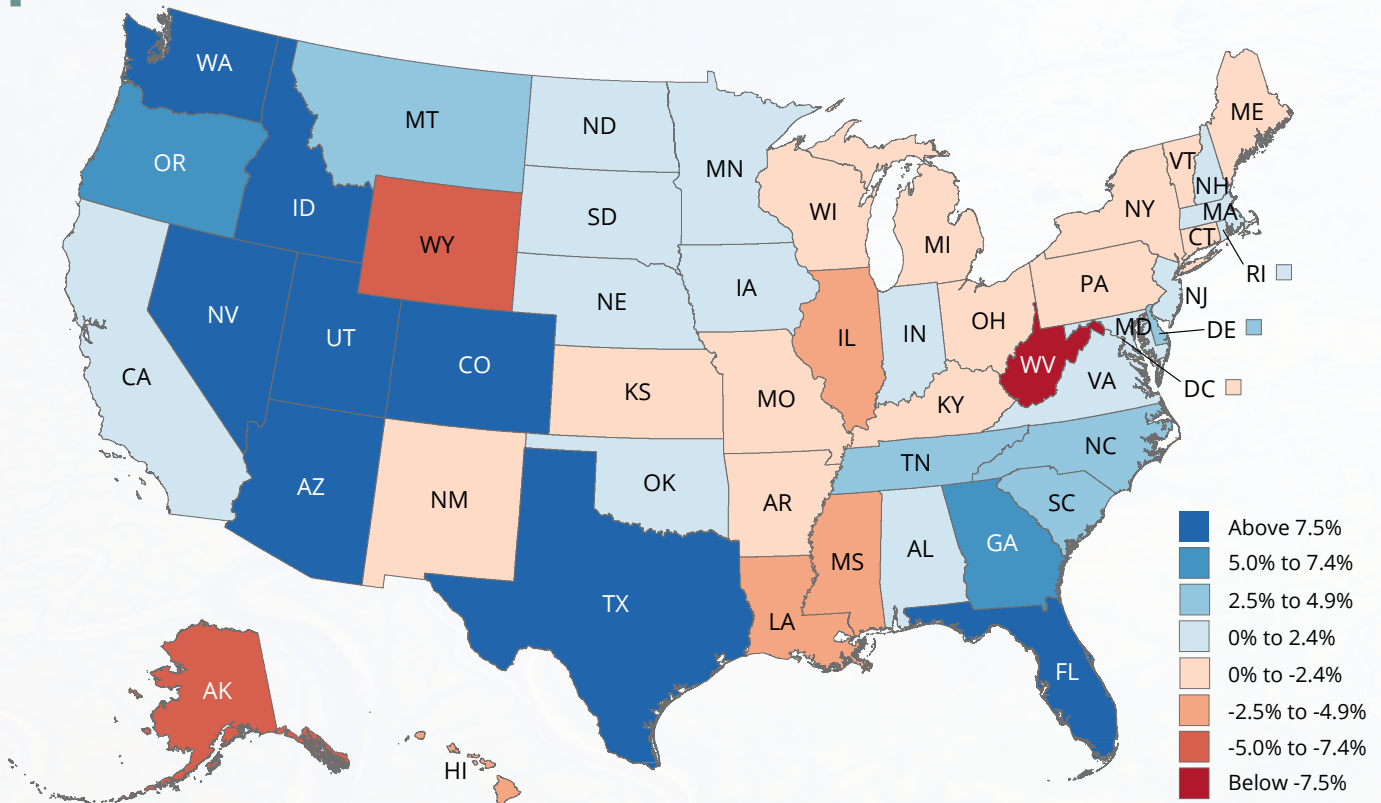
Anchorage's loss accounts for around 60 percent of the drop statewide (nearly -18,000). While some

moved to the nearby Matanuska-Susitna Borough, whose 18-to-64 population grew by more than 5,300, the overall working-age population of the Anchorage/Mat-Su Region fell by nearly 12,600.

The three other urban boroughs declined as well: Fairbanks North Star (-6,100), Juneau (-2,100), and Kenai Peninsula (-1,800). One other borough, Kodiak, lost more than 1,000 working-age people while the Prince of Wales-Hyder and Yukon-Koyuk census areas, Sitka, and Ketchikan lost more than 600 each.

Many of the rural losses stand out when looking at the percent change. Four areas saw their 18-to-64

Growth or loss in the working-age population by state from 2013 to 2021



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

populations decline by over 20 percent (Wrangell, the Lake and Peninsula Borough, the Bristol Bay Borough, and the Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area). The Copper River and Prince of Wales-Hyder census areas lost over 15 percent of their 18-64 populations.

The urban declines were roughly even percent-wise, at -9 percent for Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau and -5 percent for the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Mat-Su's working-age group, meanwhile, grew 9 percent.

Regionally, all six lost working-age population. Southeast's loss was largest at -11 percent, followed by the Interior (-10 percent), Gulf Coast (-7 percent), Anchorage/Mat-Su (-5 percent), Southwest (-4 percent), and Northern (-3 percent).

A look at the trend by state

Relative to the 2013 peak, Alaska's 5.4 percent decline in the working-age population through 2021 has been one of the largest among states. (See the map above.) Only two others, West Virginia (-8 percent) and Wyoming (-6 percent), lost relatively

more. (Nationwide data are not yet available for 2022.) Over the same period, the national working-age population grew by 2 percent.

West Virginia's decrease is part of a larger drop in the state's total population, and it has suffered from high working-age death rates along with a decline in coal industry employment that led to more out-migration.

Similar to Alaska, Wyoming had declining natural resource industry employment coupled with an aging workforce.

Other states with sizable declines include Illinois, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Mississippi, the result of overall population decline and out-migration. Smaller declines dotted many other states, mostly in the Northeast and Great Lakes regions.

At the opposite end, the Mountain West led for working-age growth. In Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona, large inflows of migrants from other states supercharged expansion of their working-age populations. In states with slightly lower total net migration rates — such as Washington, Colorado, and Texas — the large numbers of young people

moving in offset any out-migration of older people.

Why Alaska's working-age group is shrinking

Reason 1: Net migration losses

The downward shift in net migration is the main reason Alaska's working-age population has decreased. The difference is clear when comparing average annual net migration since 2013 (in-migrants minus out-migrants) by age group to the 1990-2013 period, shown at right.

Before 2013, Alaska's net migration was slightly positive overall and the state added more than 500 working-age people each year. Net migration dropped sharply after 2013; nearly 5,800 more people left the state each year than arrived. Around half of that net outflow was working-age people (-2,900 per year).

After wild net migration swings in the 1970s and 1980s, migration by age settled into a predictable pattern by the 1990s. High school graduates left in large numbers, but Alaska attracted young adults in their 20s and 30s. In an average year, nearly 2,000 more young adults moved in than left, with especially high net inflows of people in their late 20s.

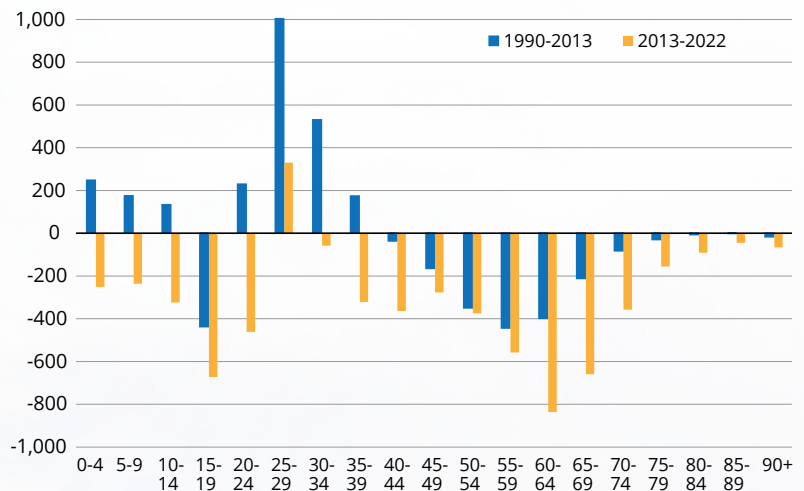
Net migration turned negative after age 40, but the number of older working-age adults leaving was less than the younger adults arriving.

As net migration turned into sharp losses after 2013, every age group's numbers shifted downward. The late 20s are the only remaining age group with more coming to Alaska than leaving. Despite this, the late-20s cohort's annual net inflow has become 670 people smaller each year than it was before 2013, second only to the loss of those in their early 20s (690 fewer per year).

Adults in their 20s and 30s used to be the main source of Alaska's working-age migration gains, but adults in those age groups now constitute a net outflow of more than 500 people per year — a drop of nearly 2,500 since the pre-2013 rise.

The net outflow has continued to increase numerically for working adults 40 and older, too, although their rate of outflow has held steady. That's because this age group has grown larger than it did in

Yearly net migration declines in all age groups



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

previous decades and the net outflow grew with it. But with no more large inflows of young adults, the growing numbers of older out-migrants have also put downward pressure on the working-age numbers.

Reason 2: An aging population

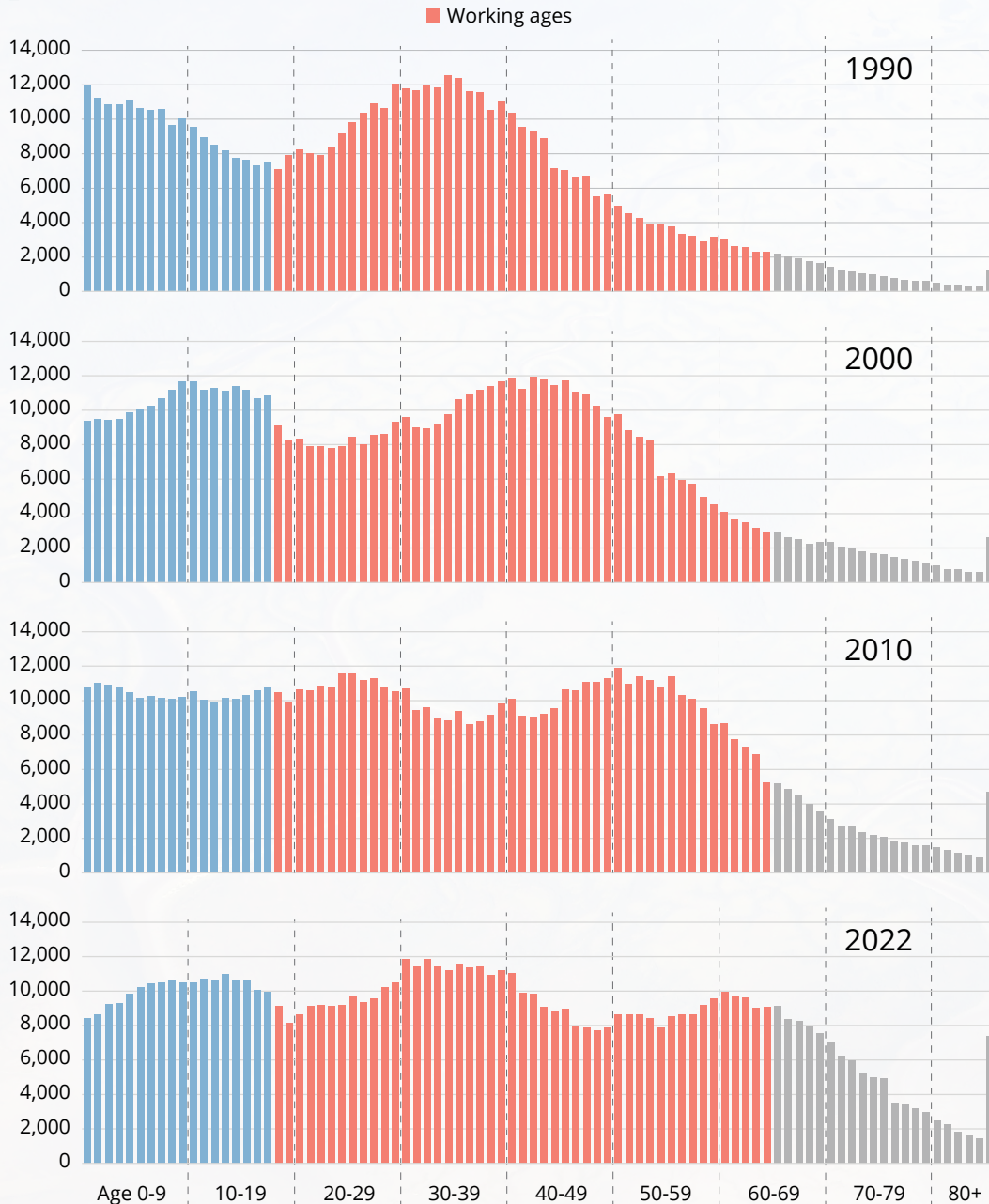
The second reason for Alaska's declining working-age population is aging. The state's 18-64 population kept growing for years because the number of retirement-age people was so much smaller than the number of young adults, but Alaska's age structure has shifted over the last three decades.

The exhibit on the next page shows Alaska's population by age, grouped into decades, for 1990 through 2022. The working-age population is red, children under 18 are blue, and seniors are gray.

Two large generations stand out like the crests of successive waves. Baby boomers, born between the end of World War II and the mid-1960s, were the largest working-age population until recently. Their children, who are now in their 30s and early 40s (millennials born from 1980 to the mid-1990s), entered their working ages starting around 2000 and are now its largest age group.

In 1990, the working-age population was dominated by baby boomers in their 30s and 40s. At the time, Alaska had relatively few elderly or older working-age people. Though the large millennial generation was not yet teenaged, the number of 18-year-olds entering their working years was 3.3 times the number reaching retirement age.

The change in Alaska's age structure since 1990



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

By 2000, when millennials began reaching adulthood, the ratio of working-age people to senior citizens remained 3 to 1, despite the growing number of seniors.

Alaska then enjoyed a brief period in the late 2000s and early 2010s where both of our largest generations were wholly within their working years. This pushed the 18-to-64 number toward its 2013 peak, coupled with a small net migration bump during

the Great Recession as the economy in the Lower 48 faltered. As late as 2010, the number of people entering their working years was twice the number exiting, but that was about to shift.

The older half of the baby boomers began to reach 65 in the 2010s, and the growth in the working-age population through aging alone began to narrow because the younger generation tailing millennials was smaller. That shift meant demographics could

no longer counteract the growing net migration losses.

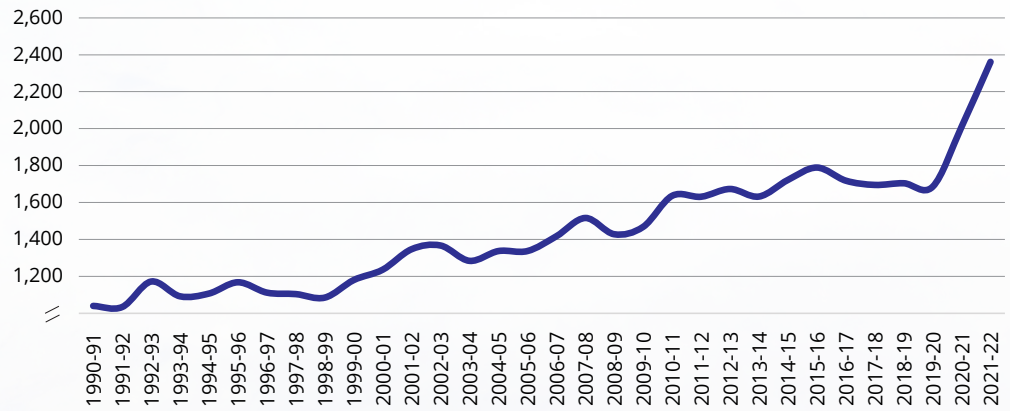
By the mid-2010s, the number reaching adulthood was only a little bigger than the number reaching retirement age (about 1.25 to 1). That ratio continued to narrow as the decade closed, and in 2020, for the first time, Alaska had more 65-year-olds than 18-year-olds. Although the number of 18-year-olds bumped up in 2021 and 2022, the two numbers remain almost even.

Given that the peak of the baby boomer wave hasn't yet reached the senior category, a working-age increase through aging alone will be unlikely in the near future.

Reason 3: Deaths during the pandemic

While deaths have been a smaller part of Alaska's working-age decline than the previous two factors, they put constant, predictable downward pressure on population totals. If net migration and age demographics produce little to no growth, yearly deaths can be enough to push the balance into the red.

Deaths among those 18-64 jumped during the pandemic

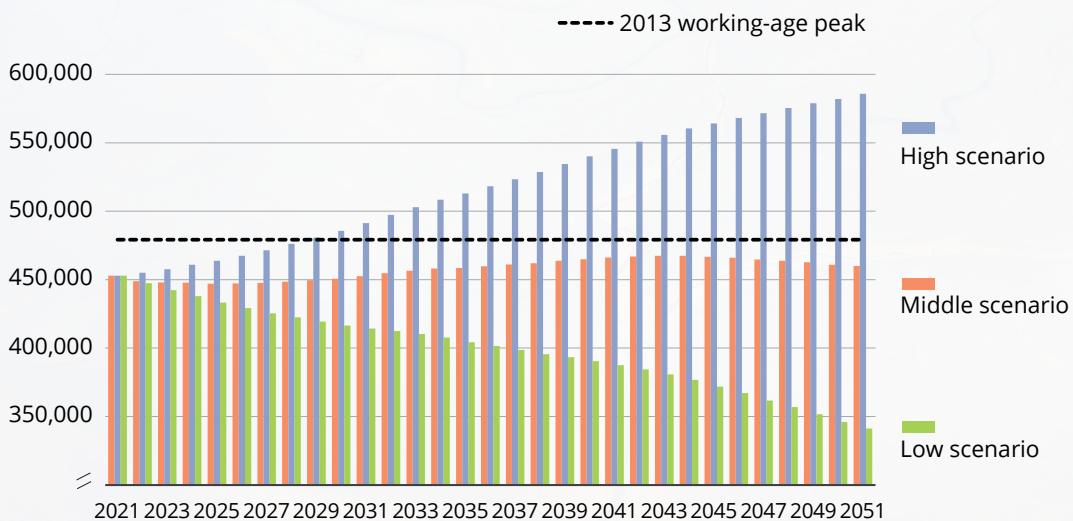


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

In the 1990s, just over 1,000 working-age Alaskans died each year, but those deaths never slowed growth because five times that number aged into the workforce. The number of deaths among 18-to-64-year-olds climbed above 1,500 per year in the 2000s and early 2010s as the population grew and got older, but net migration inflows and teens reaching adulthood kept the working-age group growing.

As net migration turned negative after 2013, though, and age-related growth narrowed, deaths became a bigger factor and even more so since the pandemic began in 2020. Working-age deaths jumped to around 2,000 in 2021 and 2,400 by 2022, putting deaths in this age group 40 percent above

3 scenarios for the size of the future working-age population



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

pre-pandemic levels. Not all deaths were from COVID-19 specifically, but the pandemic and its ripple effects raised total working-age mortality, at least temporarily.

Because Alaska's 18-to-64-year-old population dropped by nearly 4,300 people just from 2021 to 2022, the high number of deaths over that year became the biggest factor in last year's working-age decline.

What the future holds

Projections can help us understand what the coming years might look like for Alaska's working-age population. Last summer, we created new population projections extending to 2051. ([See the September 2022 issue of Trends.](#)) We aged Alaska's population forward over three decades, adding projected births and in-migrants and subtracting projected deaths and out-migrants along the way.

We then created three possible scenarios, shown on the previous page, that vary by the long-term yearly net migration rate (in-migrants minus out-migrants divided by total population).

The middle scenario, considered most likely, uses the previous 30 years' rate (-0.2 percent). The high scenario uses 0.5 percent and the low scenario uses -1.0 percent. The high scenario mimics Alaska's pattern from 2008-2012 and the low scenario's rate is roughly what the state's net migration has been since 2013.

The drop in the working-age population appears likely to continue through 2030, or at most, any growth will be slight. The younger and larger half

of the baby boomers will leave a demographic gap as they age out of their working years that will need more younger people to fill it.

In the middle scenario, Alaska's working-age decline bottoms out at around 447,000 people in 2025 before climbing back to more than 450,000 in 2030.

In the low scenario, the combined aging out of boomers plus net migration outflow quickly pushes the working-age population down to 416,000 by 2030.

Even the high scenario, with its large inflow of people, doesn't get Alaska's 18-to-64 population back to its 2013 peak until 2029.

After 2030, the scenarios diverge further. In the low and high scenarios, the effects of continuous net migration loss or gain overwhelm the effects of the underlying age structure. This leads the high scenario to a working-age population of 586,000 by 2051 while the low scenario drops it to 341,000 — a difference of 245,000 people.

In the middle scenario, with a slight net migration outflow, age structure plays a bigger role. After 2030, Alaska's working-age population slowly resumes growing through the mid-2040s, peaking at around 467,000. At that point, as the large millennial generation begins to turn 65, the working-age population will begin to shrink again in the middle scenario.

Unless the state's net migration rate is higher in the next 30 years than the previous 30, Alaska will likely struggle in the long term to regain its peak 2013 working-age population.

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

Population estimates for 2022

Alaska grew slightly for a second year after 4-year drop

By DAVID HOWELL

Alaska grew slightly during each of the last two years, with the population increasing by about 450 people in 2022. Although recent gains were small, any growth would be notable after four straight years of population loss.

Despite the resumed growth, Alaska's future population patterns remain uncertain. Trends have been blurred by the pandemic, and by the two new F-35 squadrons that arrived at Eielson Air Force Base between 2020 and 2022, which provided a one-time boost.

Ten years of net migration losses

Alaska's net migration has been negative for 10 straight years; we lost 53,400 more residents to migration than we gained during that period. The last time the state gained more

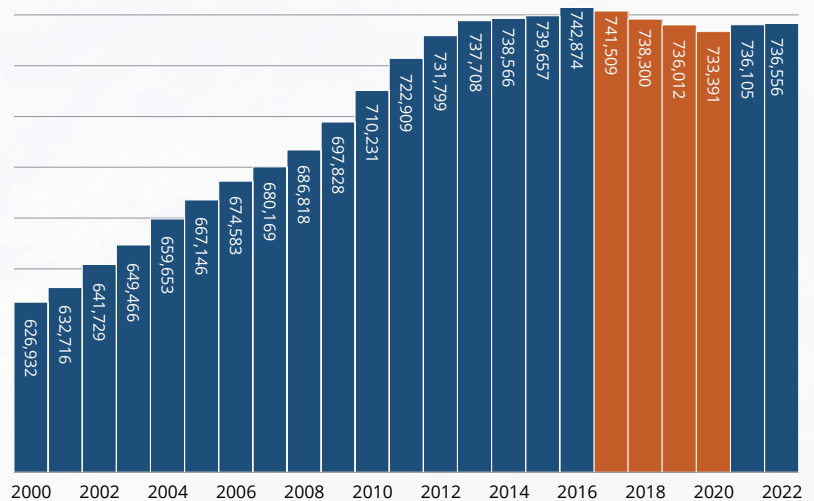
migrants than it lost was in 2012 when people from the Lower 48 were still escaping the aftermath of the Great Recession, which barely brushed Alaska. By 2013, the nation had recovered most of the jobs it lost during the recession, and people began leaving Alaska at a faster rate, shifting our net migration to loss.

The last two years' net migration

A note about dates

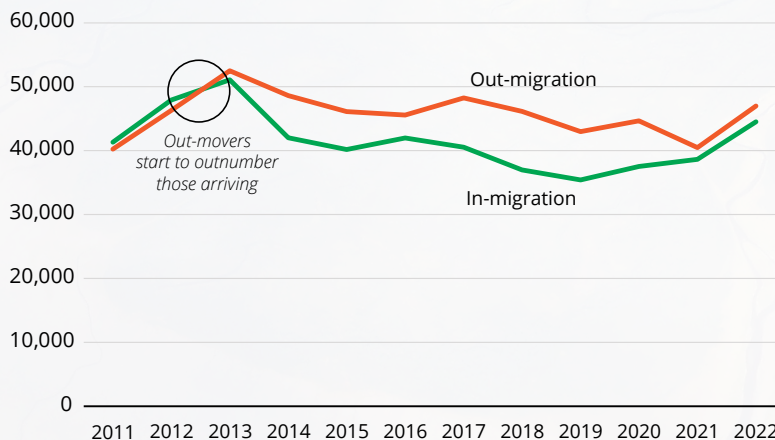
Births, deaths, and migration numbers are all measured from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next. For simplicity, all references in this article are to the end point year. For example, a reference to the number of deaths in 2022 is the number measured from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022.

Total Alaska population, 2000 to 2022



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

More out-movers than in-movers since 2013



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

declines were the smallest of the decade streak, although it's too early to tell whether Alaska's migration trend is changing or the pandemic temporarily shifted it.

In 2020 and 2021, COVID-19 mitigation put a hold on many of the reasons people move, slowing migration both out of and into Alaska. One move that wasn't delayed was the F-35s and personnel to Eielson. This influx shrank Alaska's migration loss in 2021, allowing the population to grow for the first time in four years.

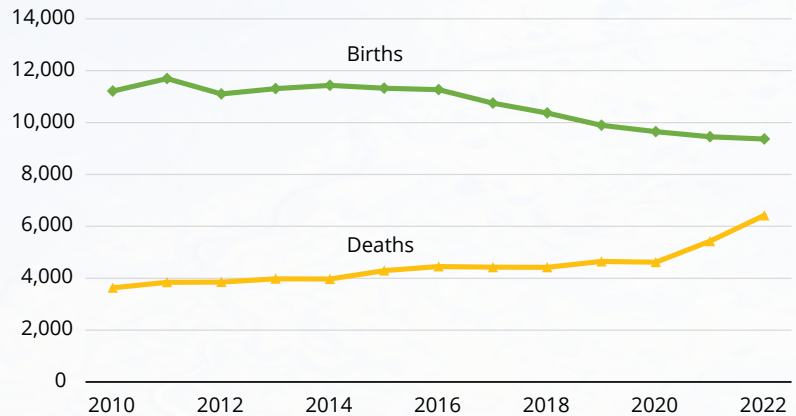
Migration increased all over the U.S. again as COVID restrictions lifted and life began to return to normal, and Alaska was no exception. More people moved to Alaska in 2022 than in any year since 2013, but it still wasn't enough to flip net migration positive; more people also *left* Alaska than in any year since 2017.

Natural increase was the lowest it has been since the 1950s

COVID-19 also drove up Alaska's mortality. Deaths rose 39 percent in 2022 from the pre-pandemic years. While deaths were elevated in 2020 and 2021 as well, the Delta variant wave that began in late 2021 drove a much larger increase than the first pandemic year.

From July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, 6,400 Alaskans died — 1,000 more than the previous year and 1,800 more than 2020.

Alaska births decline amid rise in deaths



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

Natural increase, which is births minus deaths, has fallen further with the decline in births. Births decreased recently for the eighth consecutive year, although the decline was much smaller than what we've seen in recent years. As with other components of population change, it's hard to tell whether births are leveling off or the decline wasn't as large as it would have been because pandemic uncertainty delayed births the year before.

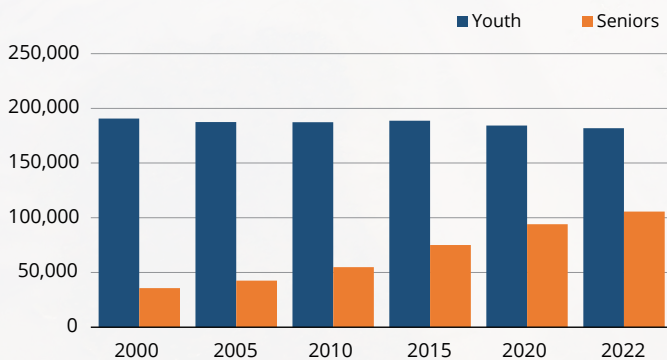
With deaths up and births down, Alaska netted just 2,900 new residents through natural increase last year (see the graph above), the smallest amount since 1951 when Alaska had 575,000 fewer people. Deaths aren't likely to stay at this elevated level, so we anticipate natural increase will go back up in the coming years.

The rise in deaths led to natural decrease — deaths outnumbering births — in eight of the state's 30 boroughs and census areas. Most have smaller and older populations with already-low birth rates, such as Southeast, where half of its boroughs and census areas recorded natural decrease.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough is also older but its pattern didn't quite fit the mold. Even though the borough is the state's fourth-largest, it recorded a natural decrease of just one person.

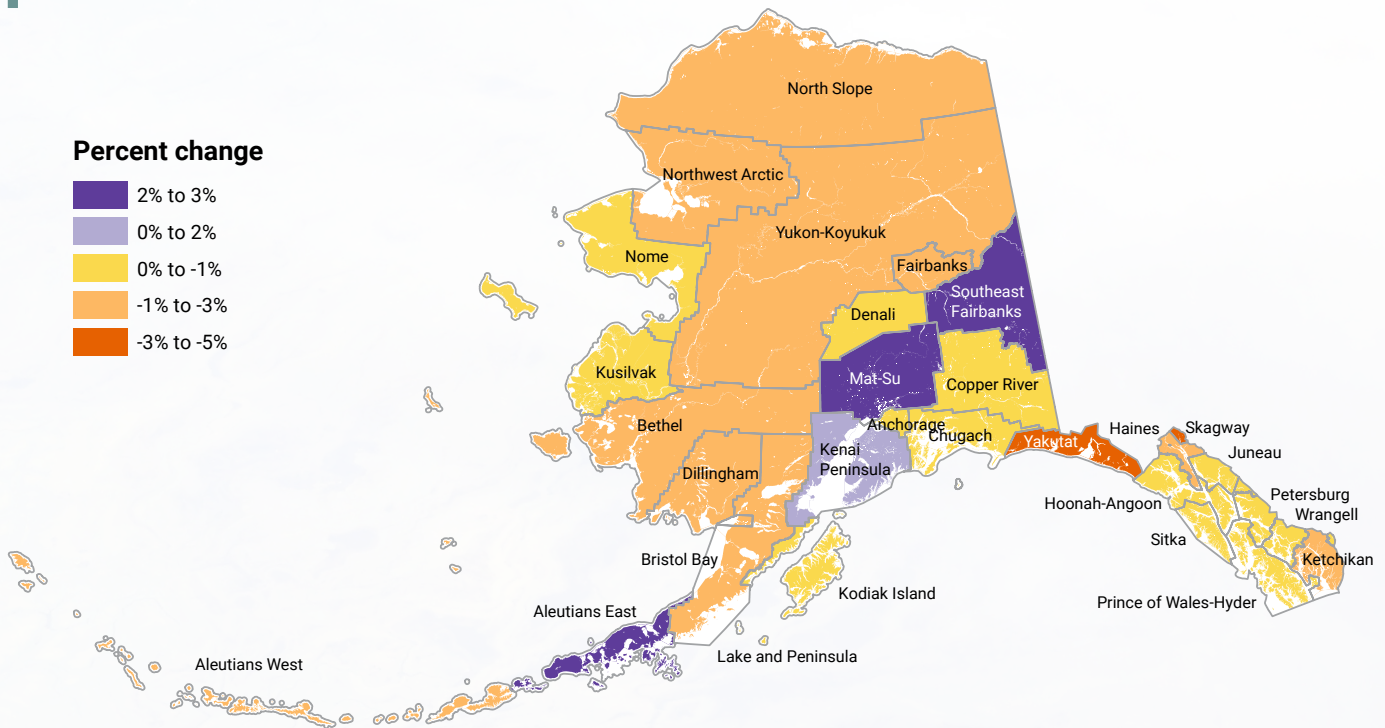
The other areas with natural decrease in 2022 were the Copper River Census Area, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Petersburg, the Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area, Wrangell, Yakutat, and the Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area.

Alaska has more seniors, fewer kids



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

Percent change in Alaska area populations from 2021 to 2022



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

Youth population decreasing

Before 2015, Alaska’s population from birth to age 17 had been about the same size for 10 years.

Births in Alaska have been declining since 2016, falling by 400 to 500 a year for several consecutive years before the declines began to slow in 2019. This steadily shrunk the youth population, and barring a change in migration patterns, the rate of decline will speed up in the coming years.

Alaska had 1,500 more 17-year-olds than newborns in 2022, and as these teens age into their working years, we will see steady and large declines in the 0-17 population as fewer babies replace them.

Right now, the size of the population entering school ages (5 to 17) isn’t much different from those aging out — in 2022, Alaska had 10,000 17-year-olds and 9,800 kids who will turn five in 2023. The school-age group will reflect this large decline in births in the coming years, though, and decreases in this group’s size will accelerate over the next five.

The biggest differences in population size were

at the youngest ages. In 2022, Alaska had 1,800 more 5-year-olds than newborns. When this group of infants begins entering school, we will see the elementary age group start to shrink and then the middle and high school cohorts decrease as they get older.

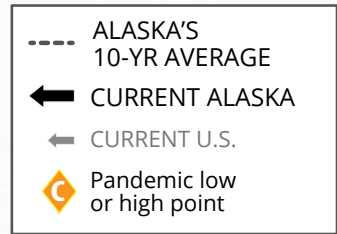
65+ population continues to rise

The biggest story of the last decade was baby boomers turning 65. Alaska’s senior population grew from 54,900 in 2010 to 94,000 in 2020, and this growth has not slowed. The senior population has grown 12 percent over the last two years alone, reaching 105,600 in 2022. The trend will continue for a while, as the youngest of the boomers will not turn 65 until 2029.

Over the next decade, we’ll see this same growth in the population 75 and older. Between 2020 and 2022, the number of elders rose 17 percent, from 30,100 to 35,100. The rise will accelerate in the coming years, and as it does, Alaska’s health care industry will have to ramp up to provide the needed services.

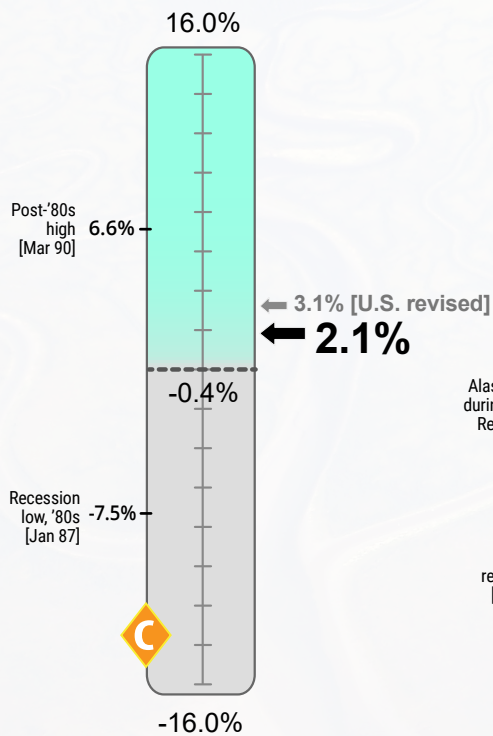
Continued on page 18

Gauging The Economy



Job Growth

December 2022
Over-the-year percent change

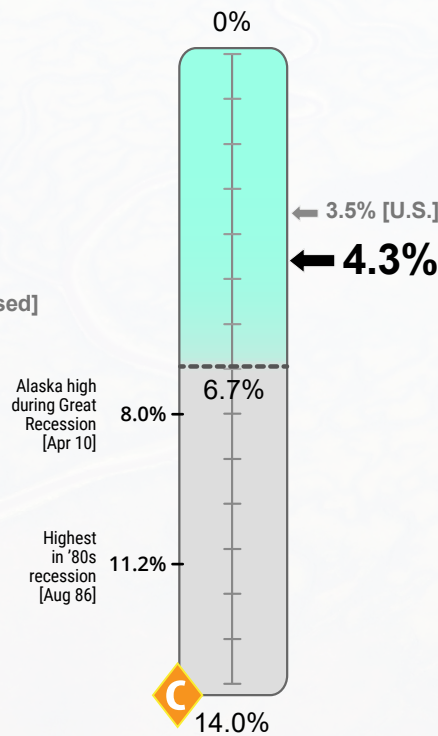


The spread of COVID-19 caused rapid job loss in early 2020. Although employment is up significantly from pandemic lows, it is still 1.6 percent below 2019.

U.S. employment, which was up 2.0 percent from December 2021, is now 1.3 percent above its 2019 level.

Unemployment Rate

December 2022
Seasonally adjusted



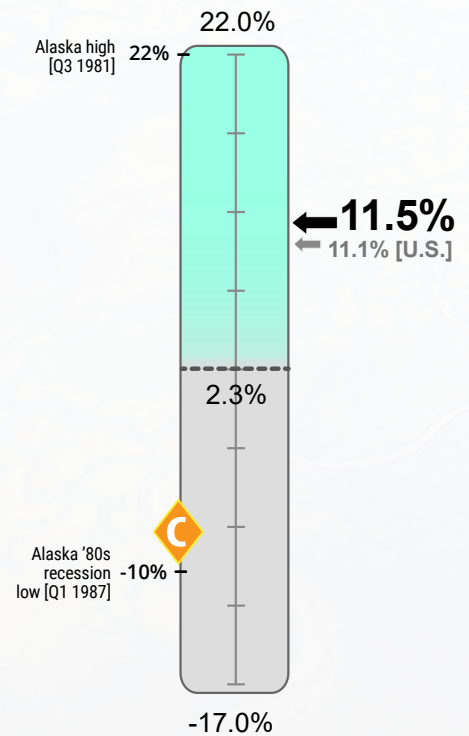
Alaska's unemployment rate has been less useful as an economic measure during the pandemic and its aftermath because of data collection difficulties.

Where are the new 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 and include data through February in the April issue.

Wage Growth

3rd Quarter 2022
Over-the-year percent change



After being well down during the second and third quarters of 2020, total wages paid by Alaska employers climbed back above year-ago levels in the fourth quarter of 2020.

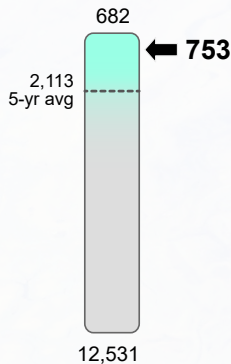
Wages were up 11.5 percent from year-ago levels in the third quarter of 2022 and 13.6 percent above third quarter 2019.

Gauging The Economy

----- ALASKA'S
10-YR AVERAGE
← CURRENT ALASKA

Initial Claims

Unemployment, week ending Feb.11, 2023*

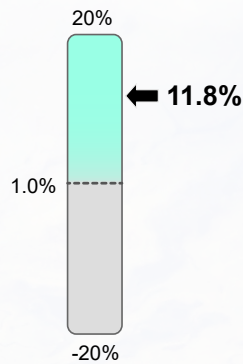


Unemployment claims jumped in the spring of 2020 with the pandemic as many businesses shut down or limited services. Pandemic-driven claims loads have fallen, and new claims for benefits are back below their long-term average.

*Four-week moving average ending with specified week

GDP Growth

3rd Quarter 2022
Over-the-year percent change*

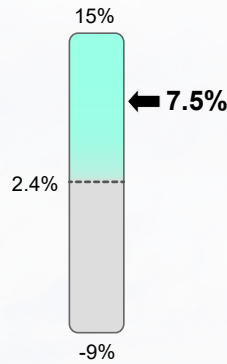


Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. Alaska's GDP fell hard in early 2020 but recovered most of those losses in 2021 and 2022.

*In current dollars

Personal Income Growth

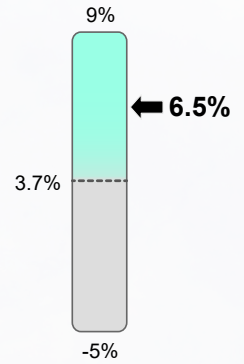
3rd Quarter 2022
Over-the-year percent change



Personal income consists of three main parts: 1) wages and salaries; 2) dividends, interest, and rents; and 3) transfer payments (payments from governments to individuals).

Change in Home Prices

Single-family, percent change from prior year, Q4 2022*

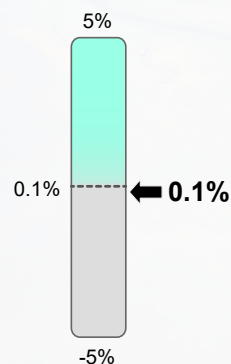


Home prices shown include only those for which a commercial loan was used. This indicator tends to be volatile from quarter to quarter.

*Four-quarter moving average ending with specified quarter

Population Growth

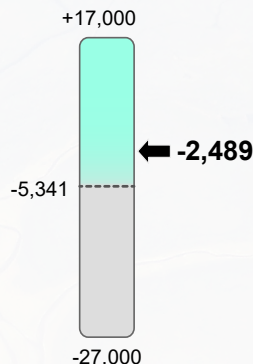
2021 to 2022



After four years of decline, Alaska's population grew slightly in 2021 and 2022, as natural increase (births minus deaths) slightly exceeded losses from migration.

Net Migration

2021 to 2022



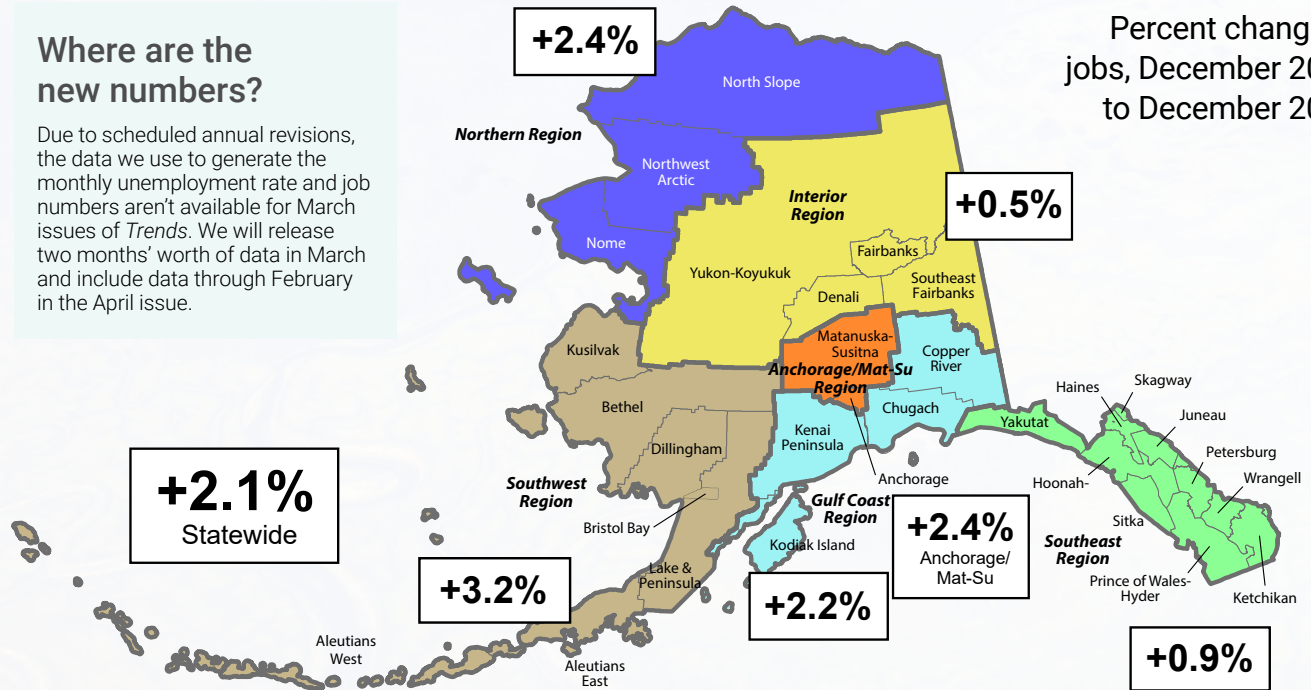
The state had net migration losses for the tenth consecutive year in 2022, although the losses have become smaller. Net migration is the number who moved to Alaska minus the number who left.

Employment by Region

Where are the new 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 and include data through February in the April issue.

Percent change in jobs, December 2021 to December 2022



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.		Revised
	12/22	11/22	12/21
United States	3.5	3.6	3.9
Alaska	4.3	4.5	5.5

Not seasonally adjusted

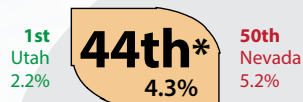
	Prelim.		Revised
	12/22	11/22	12/21
United States	3.3	3.4	3.7
Alaska	4.2	4.3	5.2

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.			Revised		
	12/22	11/22	12/21	12/22	11/22	12/21
Interior Region	4.1	4.2	4.7			
Denali Borough	13.6	13.6	10.8			
Fairbanks N Star Borough	3.6	3.8	4.3			
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	5.2	5.3	6.0			
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	8.7	8.8	10.5			
Northern Region	7.0	7.3	7.2			
Nome Census Area	6.7	7.0	7.6			
North Slope Borough	4.7	4.9	4.6			
Northwest Arctic Borough	9.6	10.3	9.2			
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	3.5	3.6	4.6			
Anchorage, Municipality	3.1	3.3	4.3			
Mat-Su Borough	4.7	4.7	5.7			
Southwest Region	7.9	8.0	9.0			
Aleutians East Borough	5.1	3.6	3.4			
Aleutians West Census Area	4.4	4.2	4.6			
Bethel Census Area	8.3	8.9	10.3			
Bristol Bay Borough	8.3	6.5	10.2			
Dillingham Census Area	5.5	6.4	6.3			
Kusilvak Census Area	13.1	13.9	16.0			
Lake and Peninsula Borough	7.6	7.6	7.2			
Gulf Coast Region	5.6	5.5	6.8			
Kenai Peninsula Borough	5.2	5.2	6.2			
Kodiak Island Borough	6.6	5.7	9.4			
Chugach Census Area	3.9	4.5	7.1			
Copper River Census Area	13.7	14.2	8.7			
Southeast Region	4.3	4.1	4.9			
Haines Borough	9.7	8.5	10.6			
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	10.1	8.2	8.8			
Juneau, City and Borough	2.9	2.9	3.4			
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.6	4.7	5.6			
Petersburg Borough	7.1	6.4	7.1			
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	5.9	5.9	6.8			
Sitka, City and Borough	2.8	2.9	3.5			
Skagway, Municipality	13.1	12.2	15.7			
Wrangell, City and Borough	5.9	6.0	6.9			
Yakutat, City and Borough	6.6	6.7	7.0			

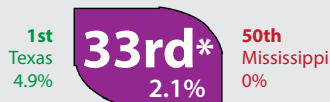
How Alaska Ranks

Unemployment Rate¹



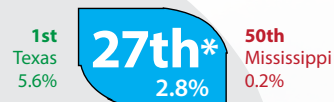
*Tied with Michigan and New York

Job Growth²



*Tied with New Hampshire

Job Growth, Private²

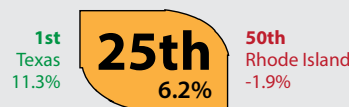


*Tied with Alabama and Idaho

Job Growth, State Government²



Job Growth, Leisure and Hospitality²



Note: Government employment includes federal, state, and local government plus public schools and universities.

¹December seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

²December 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)	252.271	1st half 2022	232.679	+8.4%
Commodity prices				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope, * per barrel	\$80.87	Jan 2023	\$86.50	-6.5%
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$3.42	Jan 2023	\$4.26	-18.7%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$1,817.10	2/26/2023	\$1,900.70	-4.4%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$20.94	2/26/2023	\$24.37	-14.1%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$3.95	2/26/2023	\$4.45	-11.2%
Zinc, per lb.	\$1.37	2/26/2023	\$1.86	-26.3%
Lead, per lb.	\$0.95	2/26/2023	\$1.12	-15.2%
Bankruptcies				
Business	44	Q4 2022	50	-12%
Personal	4	Q4 2022	5	-20%
Unemployment insurance claims				
Initial filings	4,699	Jan 2023	6,161	-23.7%
Continued filings	32,464	Jan 2023	40,445	-19.7%
Claimant count	7,404	Jan 2023	9,966	-25.7%

*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; NASDAQ; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

2022 POPULATION

Continued from page 13

Working-age group declining

The working-age population continues to decline for several reasons. As the article on page 4 details, Alaska is losing people ages 18 to 64 to migration. We're also not gaining workers through aging anymore, because the number of 18-year-olds is about the same as the number of 64-year-olds. (See the first article in this issue for more.)

Change around the state in 2022

The Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna Region grew the most by far, all in Mat-Su. Anchorage's population began declining in 2016, and while Anchorage lost people for a sixth straight year in 2022, the loss was much smaller. Mat-Su's growth accelerated, however, to nearly 2,700. That was the borough's biggest increase since 2010, and it offset Anchorage's losses for a net regional gain of around 2,000 people.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough grew enough through net migration to increase the larger Gulf Coast Region's population. Kenai is a popular retirement spot for people from Southcentral.

Aside from the Kenai Peninsula, all boroughs and census areas in the region lost people to migration and lost small numbers of people overall.

The Interior lost population over the year but remained above its 2020 Census count. The Southeast Fairbanks Census Area gained 150 people, but

losses in the Fairbanks North Star Borough lowered the regional population. That was a loss on paper only, though. The borough's decline came from the military, whose population was artificially inflated the year before because of survey timing. When we surveyed bases in 2021, it was between troop transfers; the in-transfers were already there but those set to leave hadn't departed yet.

The Northern Region lost population in both of the last two years. Historically, the region has grown through natural increase offsetting small net migration losses, but migration out of the region has risen since 2020 and births have fallen.

Southeast's population has been decreasing since 2014. The region typically loses residents to net migration, and with an older population, it doesn't gain as much through natural increase. Skagway was a big exception over the last decade, as it was one of the fastest-growing areas in Alaska. However, the pandemic's virtual shutdown of the cruise ship industry led to population losses there too.

The Southwest Region's pattern resembles the Northern Region, with bigger net migration losses during the last two years that led to an overall decline as natural increase couldn't offset the decreases. The Aleutians East Borough was an exception last year, as it had the highest net migration rate in the state. This was probably a one-off for Aleutians East, as most of the influx was seafood processing plants regaining their pre-pandemic staffing levels.

Full 2022 population estimates:
live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/index.cfm

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EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Eligible training provider list shows proven programs

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Eligible Training Provider List is a compilation of statewide education and training programs for Alaska's in-demand occupations and industries. The ETPL identifies which programs are of the highest quality with the best success rates so you can count on the training their graduates receive.

This list can help businesses looking for a skilled Alaskan workforce, training or apprenticeship providers who want to attract candidates, and workers and job seekers who want to know which programs are best for gaining valuable skills and credentials.

Our Alaska Job Center Network staff uses the ETPL to find the best training for their clients. Eligible students enrolled in a listed program also have access to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding, which can help pay for training and associated costs.

More information about the Division of Employment and Training Services' Eligible Training Provider List, including guidelines for joining and the Alaska Jobs Guide, [is available here](#).

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