

ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

APRIL 2009

Youth Working in Alaska

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Alaska Career Ladder

A new tool for tracking career paths

Employment Scene

Alaska's unemployment rate rises to 8.0 percent



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Sarah Palin, Governor
Commissioner Click Bishop

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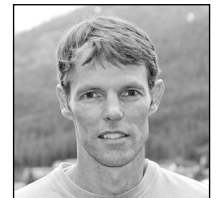
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Alaska's Youth Play a Significant Role in our Economy

By Governor Sarah Palin

Most of us remember our first job; whether good or bad, that experience helped introduce us to the working world. There's nothing like the thrill of a first paycheck – and also the sense of pride, accomplishment and purpose that comes with a job well done.

This month's *Trends* focuses on the contributions of young Alaskan workers and on a new online career service for all Alaskans.

Almost 8,000 young people graduate from Alaska high schools each year. We share a common interest in helping them begin their careers on the right foot, through effective career guidance, education and training through the state's public postsecondary school system, and work experiences. These opportunities are essential to helping build Alaska's future with productive, creative, involved workers, citizens, parents and taxpayers.

And our young Alaskans already contribute a lot to the state. About 15 percent of Alaska's workforce is 14 to 21 years old and collectively they earned more than \$408 million in 2007; the 18- to 21-year-olds earned the lion's share at \$358 million.

Most of these young people work in the private sector, often in seasonal jobs. More than 4,400 14- to 21-year-olds worked in retail sales jobs in 2007 – more than any other job category. Others were fast food workers, cashiers, laborers and construction laborers.

In addition to helping young workers and employers make connections through registered apprenticeship, career fairs, Alaska's online job bank ALEXsys and Hot Jobs publications that discuss high-demand, well-paying jobs, the Department of Labor also oversees youth employment and child labor laws.

The department also sponsors the Alaska Career Information System, a web-based career planning resource available to all Alaskans, and the Eligible Training Provider List directs students to dozens of apprenticeships and other occupational training.

Now we've added another important new tool to help all our workers look beyond that first or second job, to plan a career.

New Online Career Ladder

Created by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Research and Analysis section, the Alaska Career Ladder works two ways – for those with a specific career goal or for those who want to advance from a current occupation.

The ladder uses six years of history, following all of the state's workers through more than 350,000 job changes. This provides real history on the path many Alaskans have followed in advancing their careers.

Whether looking for a first or next job, Alaskans have a wealth of help and resources within our Department of Labor.

An important component of Alaska's workforce

Teenagers and young adults face many rites of passage: they get their driver's license, they register to vote, and they show up for work at their first part-time or summer job. Though that first job may put only a few dollars in their pockets, the experience and skills they learn can prepare them for successful long-term careers.

This profile looks at employment primarily for two groups of Alaska's young workers: 14- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 21-year-olds.

Since most 14- to 17-year-olds are still in high school and because of their age, their employment possibilities are limited. (See sidebar on child labor laws.) While they may be saving some of their money for the future, the money they make from their jobs is more often discretionary income.

Many 18- to 21-year-olds have entered the work force full-time, or are working while attending college or some other type of postsecondary educational institution.

Youth participation in the work force

Employers generally assume they'll need to train young workers for a first job. They're looking for dependable employees who learn new tasks quickly, show up for work on time and generally present a good "face" for the company. Employers who find good young workers want to keep them. Young workers who demonstrate good work habits are often offered further on-the-job training and chances for advancement. First jobs offer youth opportunities to build a solid basis for future employment.

In 2007, 5.0 percent of all Alaska resident workers¹ were ages 14 to 17 and 10 percent were ages 18 to 21. Five years before that in 2002, the percentage of 14- to 17-year-old workers was higher at 5.7 percent, while the percentage of 18- to 21-year-olds was nearly the same as 2007 at 9.9 percent. (See Exhibit 1.)

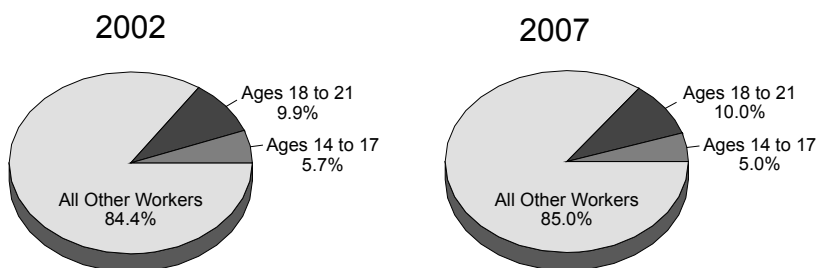
As one might expect, annual wages for Alaska youths are lower than average for older Alaska workers. Wages for younger workers tend to be lower, not only due to the entry level nature of their work, but also because younger workers tend to work part-time or seasonally. Alaska's 14- to 17-year-old workers earned more than \$50 million in 2007 while the 18- to 21-year-olds earned seven times as much at more than \$358 million. Nearly half of Alaska's total wages and the highest average wages occur in workers age 45 and over. (See Exhibit 2.)

The seasonal nature of youth employment

It's not surprising that employment for younger

¹"Workers" throughout this article (including the exhibits) refers to workers who are Alaska residents.

1 Workers by Age Alaska, 2002 and 2007



Note: "Workers" throughout this article refers to workers who are Alaska residents.
Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

workers peaks during the summer, especially for those in the 14 to 17 age group. Almost 77 percent of the 14- to 17-year-olds who worked in 2007 worked in the third quarter – July through September. (See Exhibit 3.) The trend begins to even out somewhat for 18- to 21-year-olds and is fairly flat for workers older than 21.

The private sector holds the most opportunities for young workers

The private sector clearly holds the most job opportunities for younger workers. That's understandable as more seasonal and part-time jobs tend to be in the private sector. Many of those jobs are also during the non-school time of the day, when students are available to do them.

A relatively high percentage of private-sector workers are young. Just over 3 percent were age 18 in 2007, while workers that age were relatively scarce in state and local government. (See Exhibit 4.)

More than 17 percent of the state's total private-sector jobs were held by youth ages 14 to 21. The private sector's percentage of workers peaked at age 18, then decreased until workers were in their early 30s, where the percentage of workers was about the same as those in the government sectors.

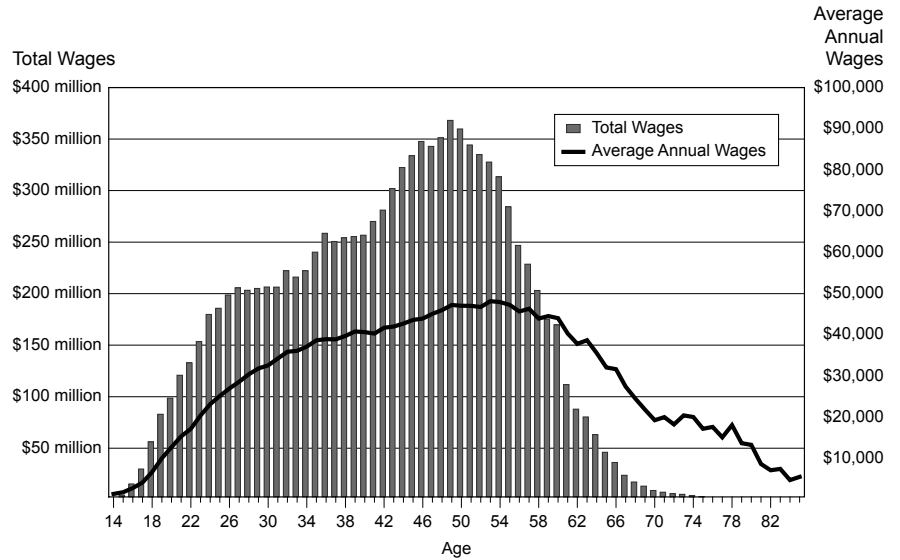
By the time workers reached their early 40s, it's clear that the percentage of government workers at each age was increasing at a significantly higher rate than workers in the private sector. The percentage of older private-sector workers began its final decline a few years ahead of the government sectors. It appears as though young workers enter the work force in the private sector and move into government positions later in their work life.

State government has very limited opportunities for youth until age 16. At that age, more flexible age requirements open up more job prospects. Also, high school and college internships are then more available.

Wage Distribution by Age

Total workers, Alaska 2007

2

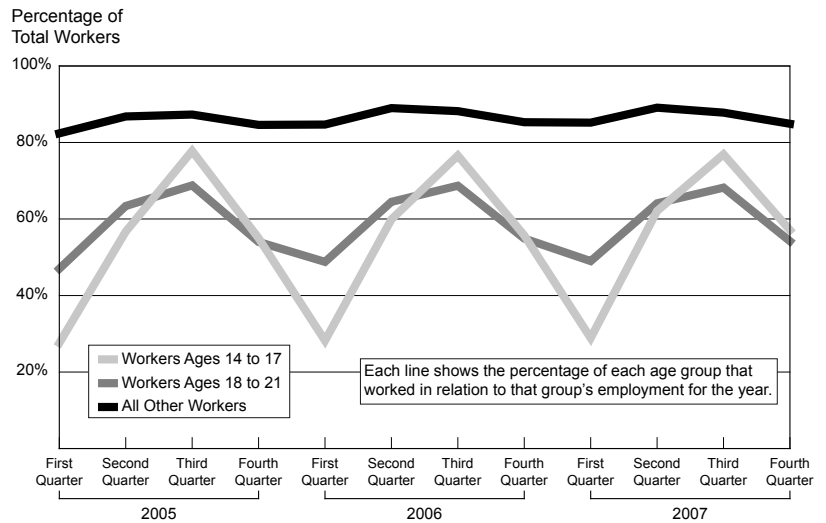


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Percentage Working by Age

By quarter, Alaska 2005 to 2007

3



Note: For example, 77 percent of working Alaskans ages 14 to 17 were employed during the third quarter of 2007.

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

Local government has more opportunities for younger workers, primarily due to jobs within the school system. Some of the top jobs for youth workers within local government were in the occupations of education, training and library workers, and teacher assistants. (See Exhibit 5.)

Where can workers go for information on finding a job?

Entering the world of work can be daunting, especially for youth entering for the first time. Help with this crucial transition is important and available.

For those still in school, many Alaska high schools offer technical training and advanced placement classes that allow students to get college and technical training school credits while attending high school. Many schools also have career centers and counselors to help students explore and make career decisions.

AKCIS, the Alaska Career Information System, is an interactive, Web-based career and education planning resource. It includes searchable information on occupations, colleges and programs of study for schools in Alaska and throughout the rest of the country.

The program offers guidance on choosing a career, interview techniques and creating resumes and cover letters. It has career assessment tools and information on colleges, universities, vocational schools and apprenticeship programs. The program has scholarship and financial aid information as well.

The full program, which includes class selection and guidance resources, is available in most middle and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and at some government agencies and vocational rehabilitation offices. Interested users who aren't associated with a school or agency or who don't have access to an Alaska Job Center can use a limited version of the system 24 hours a day using a zip code login. Some course planning and guidance information won't be accessible that way, but most features are.

The state's 23 **Alaska Job Centers** throughout the state offer services to help job seekers qualify for and get jobs and training. Job center staff provide apprenticeship, educational and various types of other training expertise. They hold workshops on interviewing skills, and resume and cover letter writing. They can access the latest labor market information for high-growth industries and occupations. Job seekers can take aptitude, interest

and skills assessment tests at the centers. They can also use the centers' computers, copiers and fax machines.

Youth First is an outreach program that focuses specifically on career development. It's designed to reach Alaska's in-school and out-of-school youth. Users get access to resources, especially in growth areas such as health care, construction and resource development.

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Employment Security Division and other organizations in the state support trained counselors who perform as **Career Guides**. Career Guides operate out of selected job centers and most travel to rural communities and visit their region's schools. They provide labor market, career and job training information to students, school counselors, teachers, parents and school boards.

To find out more about Youth First, Career Guides or other programs sponsored by the Department of Labor, contact a job center. For locations, go to jobs.alaska.gov/offices or call toll-free in Alaska (877) 724-2539.

The **Adult Basic Education** program's mission is to provide instruction in basic educational skills to adult learners. There are 13 regional ABE programs, four Voluntary Literacy Centers and a program in a state corrections facility. Each works to provide reading, writing and mathematics skills as well as other fundamental skills needed to prepare people for the labor market or higher academic or vocational training.

The purpose of the **Alaska Construction Academy** is for agencies to combine resources to attract and train young people and adults for their first jobs in construction and trade apprenticeship programs.

The academy has two components: one for high school students and one for adults. There are programs for both groups in Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan and the Kenai Penin-

sula. The Chugach School District has an additional one for high school students.

Almost 65 percent of the people employed in the seventh and 12th month after they graduated from an Alaska Construction Academy training program were working in an occupation related to their training. For more information, go to alaskaca.org or call (907) 222-0999.

The aging of Alaska's baby boomer generation will create opportunities for those interested in careers in health care. Jobs will range from those that require minimal education and training to those that need many years. There are a number of places in the state to get the training, but one good place to look is the **University of Alaska** system. Learn more at UA's Statewide Health Programs Web page at www.alaska.edu/health.

The **Eligible Training Provider List** is a complete list of schools, apprenticeship programs and other occupational training providers that are eligible to receive training funds under the federal Workforce Investment Act. The list provides prospective students with information to make training and career decisions.

The Program Description Report includes a performance evaluation of the providers (on Page 27 of the pdf), and detailed program descriptions covering the length of the programs, their cost and contact information (on Page 57 of the pdf).

The annual Training Program Performance report shows the performance of the training programs under the purview of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. The latest report is for 2007.

All three documents are on the Department of Labor's Research and Analysis Web site at laborstats.alaska.gov. Click on "Training Information" on the left, then "Training Provider/Performance." (Another way to get to the Research and Analysis site is to go to the Department of Labor Web site at labor.alaska.gov and click on "Researchers" in the gold ribbon at the top.)

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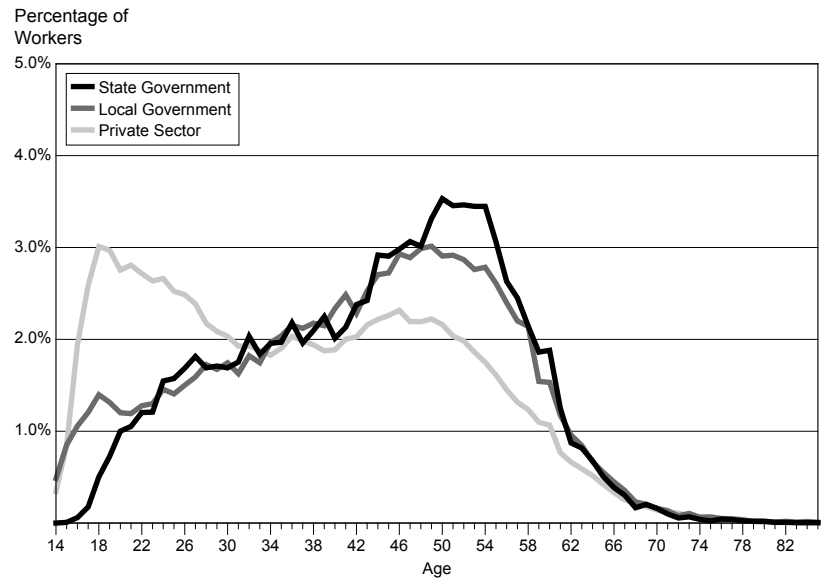
ALEXsys is Alaska's Job Bank. It offers job seekers an online way to search for occupational information and job openings in specific locations. It provides education and training as well as career and assessment information. Job seekers can use ALEXsys tools to create a skills-based resume and make arrangements to have job postings delivered to a message box or email address. Visit ALEXsys at jobs.alaska.gov.

Two other Department of Labor Web pages that offer links to other good sites:

The **Alaska Job Center Network** includes a Hot Topics section and Quick Links section to connect people to other programs and resources. Go to jobs.alaska.gov.

Youth Services is the Department of Labor's Web page meant specifically for Alaska's youth – it's a great place to start. Go to jobs.alaska.gov/youth.

Percentage Distribution by Age Private Sector and Government, Alaska 2007 **4**



Note: For example, 18-year-olds represented 3 percent of all private-sector workers in 2007.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Youth industries

The highest number and the highest percentage of workers in the 14 to 17 age group work in the accommodations and food services industry category. (See Exhibit 6.) Most of those workers will be 16- and 17-year-olds, as child labor laws don't allow 14- and 15-year-olds to work in businesses that serve alcohol. Many positions that require money handling are often off limits to 14- and 15-year-olds as well.

In 2007, 17 percent of all workers in accommodations and food services were ages 14 to 17. More than 7 percent of all workers in the industry were 17 years old – the single age of all workers with the highest percentage of workers.

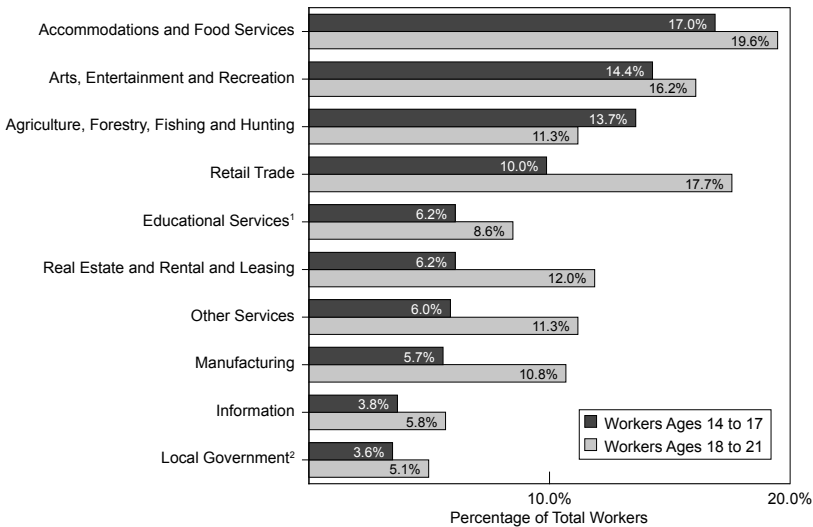
Accommodations and food services also had the highest number and percentage of workers in the 18- to 21-year-old category. More than one-third of all workers in the industry were 21 or younger; that distribution of workers was relatively unchanged from five years before. (See Exhibit 7.) Within accommodations and food services, top occupations for both groups of younger workers are clearly related to food services and restaurants.

Top Local Government Occupations Younger workers, Alaska 2007 **5**

Occupation	Number of Workers Ages 14 to 17	Number of Workers Ages 18 to 21
Education, training and library workers, all other	204	156
Teacher assistants	158	177
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	92	193
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and house-keeping cleaners	85	129
Office clerks, general	119	75
Recreation workers	107	82
Lifeguards, ski patrol, and other recreational protective service workers	86	75
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	42	88
Maintenance and repair workers, general	40	67
Office and administrative support workers, all other	51	32
Grounds maintenance workers, all other	54	26
Teachers and instructors, all other	18	55
Construction laborers	15	58
Secretaries, except legal, medical and executive	20	43
Refuse and recyclable material collectors	23	37
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	3	53
Cashiers	13	41
Food preparation workers	43	10
Business operations specialists, all other	24	26
Dishwashers	40	7
Stock clerks and order fillers	14	31
Gaming and sports book writers and runners	-	44
Executive secretaries and administrative assistants	11	30
Substitutes, teachers and instructors, multi-level except post-secondary	17	20
Receptionists and information clerks	10	25

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

6 Top Ten Industries for Young Workers Alaska, 2007



Note: For example, workers ages 14 to 17 represented 17 percent of the workers in accommodations and food services in 2007.

¹ Private education only

² Includes public school systems

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

The retail trade industry was second-highest in number of younger workers, but the industry was much more important for the 18- to 21-year-old group than the 14- to 17-year-old group. There were more 18-year-olds working in retail trade than any other age in 2007. (See Exhibit 8.)

The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry category is the only category where more 14- to 17-year-olds work than 18- to 21-year-olds. Many of those were working in landscaping-type jobs. (See Exhibit 6.)

Top occupations of young workers

When the two age groups are combined, there were more 14- to 21-year-olds working in retail sales jobs – more than 4,400 – than any other job in 2007. (See Exhibit 9.) That was followed by combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food workers, cashiers, laborers and freight, stock, and material

Child Labor Law in a Nutshell

Federal and state laws dictate when youth in Alaska are allowed to work and what they're allowed to do. Child labor laws fall into three camps: those that apply to 14- and 15-year-olds, those that apply to 16- and 17-year olds and those that apply to all workers under age 18.

All minors 16 and younger must have a work permit approved by the Wage and Hour Administration, which is part of the Labor and Standards Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The work permit lists the duties of the job, the tools, the pay and the hours the minor will work. Both the employer and Wage and Hour keep copies.

Workers under age 18 must have work permits to work in establishments where alcohol is served.

Youth work hours

Federal statutes under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 are generally stricter than state statutes for the hours

minors may work. When state and federal rules conflict, it's up to the employer to follow the more stringent laws.

Most employers in Alaska must comply with both state and federal hourly restrictions.

Alaska child labor laws require that when school is in session, 14- and 15-year-olds may not work more than 23 hours in a week and they may not work and go to school more than nine hours total in a day. They may not work before 5 a.m. or after 9 p.m. During school vacations, the 14- and 15-year-olds are limited to the same hours of the day, and they may not work more than eight hours in a day or 40 hours in a week. (These restrictions also apply to students being home schooled.)

Under federal restrictions, 14- and 15-year-olds are limited to three hours of work per day, 18 hours per week during a school week, and they may only work from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the school year. When school's out, they may not work past 9 p.m.

For 16- and 17-year-olds, there's no hour limit, but they may not work more than six days a week under state law.¹

Breaks and overtime

All minors ages 14 to 17 must have a 30-minute break after they work five consecutive hours or if they're scheduled to work six consecutive hours. For the latter, the break can't be in the first 1½ hours or in the last hour. Employers must keep records of the breaks that occurred; they're liable for back pay and fines if breaks aren't provided and documented.

Just like adults, minors must be paid overtime for working more than eight hours in a day and more than 40 straight-time hours in a week.

What minors are allowed to do

All minors under 18 are prohibited from being a motor vehicle driver or helper, operating a power-driven hoisting apparatus or woodworking machine or tak-

¹ Without a written exception from the Department of Labor

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

ing part in roofing, excavation or demolition. They can't do canvassing, peddling or door-to-door solicitation or sales.

Minors ages 14 and 15 are prohibited from using ladders or their substitutes, operating power-driven machinery other than office machines (including food slicers and bakery-type mixers), and working in seafood plants and warehouses (other than in a plant office doing clerical work). They may not work in walk-in freezers or in construction. They may not load or unload trucks, or work in an establishment that sells alcohol, among other things.

Minors ages 16 and 17 may work at restaurants licensed for alcohol if the liquor license allows for 16- and 17-year-olds, but they may never serve alcohol.

For a complete list of state restrictions and other information, visit the Wage and Hour Web site at labor.alaska.gov/lss/whhome.htm or contact the nearest Wage and Hour Office at (907) 465-4842 for Juneau, (907) 269-4900 for Anchorage and (907) 451-2886 for Fairbanks. Other helpful Wage and Hour Web pages give a summary of child labor law (labor.alaska.gov/lss/childlaw.htm), cover the statutes (labor.alaska.gov/lss/forms/pam200.pdf) and review minors' rights (labor.alaska.gov/lss/rights.htm). The work permit is at labor.alaska.gov/lss/forms/workpmit.pdf.

For federal restrictions, contact the U.S. Department of Labor at (866) 487-9243 or visit www.dol.gov/esa/whd/childlabor.htm.

movers (hand), food preparation workers and construction laborers.

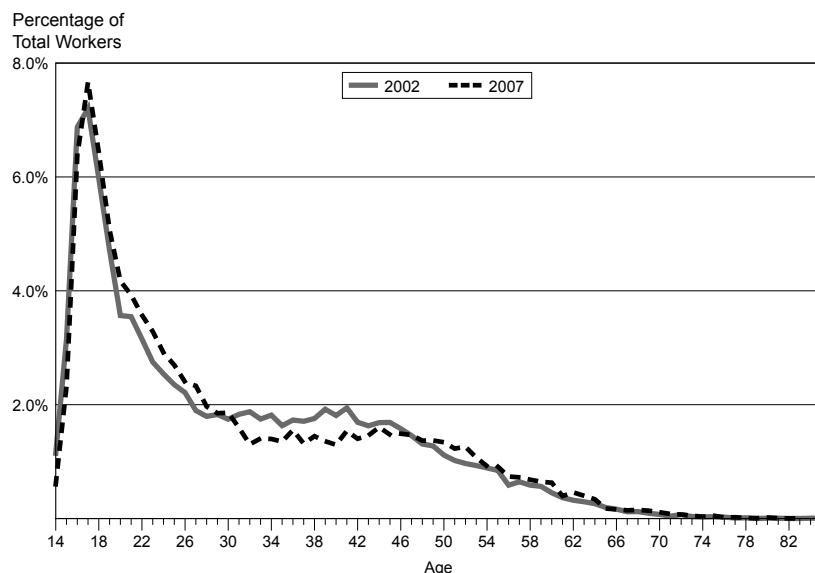
There were more than 1,950 14- to 17-year-olds working as combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food workers, in 2007. That's more than any other occupation for the age group. Fast food establishments are a primary place of employment for youth.

Retail salespersons and cashiers combined for just over 2,700 jobs. There were nearly 700 food preparation workers. Those jobs are generally in places that provide more table service than is available in fast food restaurants.

Packers and packagers jobs are important to these younger workers. The 540 14- to 17-year-olds in those jobs are largely grocery baggers.

Accommodations and Food Services **7**

By age, Alaska 2002 and 2007

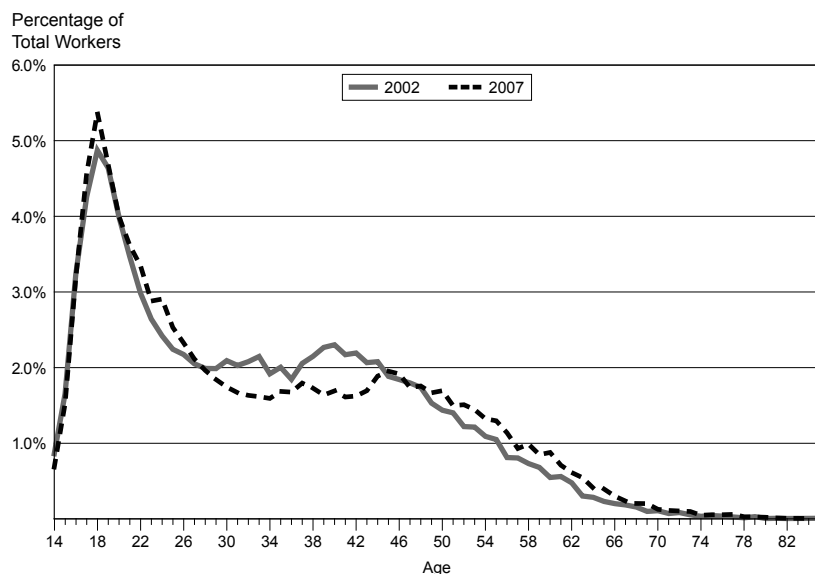


Note: For example, 17-year-olds represented 7.7 percent of the workers in the accommodations and food services category in 2007.

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

The Retail Trade Industry **8**

By age, Alaska 2002 to 2007



Note: For example, 18-year-olds represented 5.4 percent of the workers in Alaska's retail trade industry in 2007.

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

More than 40 percent of all hand packers and packagers fall in the 14 to 17 age group.

Retail salespersons and cashiers combined for more than 4,600 jobs for the 18 to 21 age group.

9

The Top 50 Occupations for Younger Workers All industries, Alaska 2007

Occupation	Total Workers	Number of Workers Ages 14 to 17	Number of Workers Ages 18 to 21	Percentage of Workers Ages 14 to 17	Percentage of Workers Ages 18 to 21
Retail salespersons	12,396	1,713	2,701	13.8%	21.8%
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	5,914	1,953	1,665	33.0%	28.2%
Cashiers	8,750	1,007	1,927	11.5%	22.0%
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	5,217	335	944	6.4%	18.1%
Food preparation workers	2,870	684	592	23.8%	20.6%
Construction laborers	6,496	212	1,026	3.3%	15.8%
Office clerks, general	7,415	396	807	5.3%	10.9%
Waiters and waitresses	4,144	321	615	7.7%	14.8%
Office and administrative support workers, all other	5,754	279	619	4.8%	10.8%
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	3,734	252	554	6.7%	14.8%
Stock clerks and order fillers	2,638	339	462	12.9%	17.5%
Packers and packagers, hand	1,244	540	225	43.4%	18.1%
Child care workers	2,036	177	586	8.7%	28.8%
Counter attendants, cafeteria, food concession and coffee shop	1,320	322	439	24.4%	33.3%
Food preparation and serving-related workers, all other	1,773	392	365	22.1%	20.6%
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	5,359	213	472	4.0%	8.8%
Receptionists and information clerks	3,230	200	483	6.2%	15.0%
Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge and coffee shop	924	297	370	32.1%	40.0%
Dishwashers	1,419	321	319	22.6%	22.5%
Counter and rental clerks	1,614	216	378	13.4%	23.4%
Seafood processing workers, except surimi and fish roe	3,203	232	312	7.2%	9.7%
Sales and related workers, all other	2,303	164	370	7.1%	16.1%
Customer service representatives	2,665	84	405	3.2%	15.2%
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	1,125	184	286	16.4%	25.4%
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers	702	206	234	29.3%	33.3%
Cooks, restaurant	2,019	111	321	5.5%	15.9%
Teacher assistants	3,639	181	231	5.0%	6.3%
Education, training, and library workers, all other	1,073	221	185	20.6%	17.2%
Maintenance and repair workers, general	3,614	120	283	3.3%	7.8%
Tour guides and escorts	994	146	226	14.7%	22.7%
Recreation workers	756	173	151	22.9%	20.0%
Tellers	1,119	13	311	1.2%	27.8%
Executive secretaries and administrative assistants	4,266	53	248	1.2%	5.8%
Carpenters	4,100	31	260	0.8%	6.3%
Meat, poultry and fish cutters and trimmers	727	90	197	12.4%	27.1%
Hotel, motel and resort desk clerks	966	52	233	5.4%	24.1%
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	710	90	187	12.7%	26.3%
Roustabouts, oil and gas	1,579	1	274	0.1%	17.4%
Transportation workers, all other	1,404	16	253	1.1%	18.0%
Grounds maintenance workers, all other	798	140	116	17.5%	14.5%
Sales representatives, services, all other	1,380	50	202	3.6%	14.6%
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	1,855	47	198	2.5%	10.7%
Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks	4,570	48	193	1.1%	4.2%
Helpers for installation, maintenance and repair workers	913	77	160	8.4%	17.5%
Lifeguards, ski patrol, and other recreational protective service workers	392	127	107	32.4%	27.3%
Nursing aides, orderlies and attendants	1,926	8	222	0.4%	11.5%
Farmworkers and laborers (crop, nursery and greenhouse)	504	124	99	24.6%	19.6%
Personal and home care aides	2,235	9	213	0.4%	9.5%
Home health aides	1,858	11	197	0.6%	10.6%
File clerks	698	60	136	8.6%	19.5%

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

Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food workers, accounted for 1,665 jobs and construction laborers added more than 1,000. Construction isn't an area that offers many jobs for the 14 to 17 group mostly due to child labor restrictions for the younger workers.

Though there are more total workers in the 18- to 21-year-old group than in the 14 to 17 group, there are some jobs that have a higher number of the younger workers. Those include umpires and referees, fast food workers, hand packers and packagers (grocery baggers), life

guards and ski patrol workers, food preparation workers, recreation workers and dishwashers.

Likewise, there are some jobs that are more often the territory of the 18- to 21-year-olds. Those include hosts and hostesses, child care workers, tellers, butchers, vehicle cleaners, service station attendants, and motel and hotel desk clerks.

Looking at the top employers of younger workers can put the occupational information into perspective. (See Exhibit 10.)

Regional differences in youth occupations

Young workers all over the state want jobs. Some areas offer more opportunities in terms of numbers of jobs and some areas offer a wider variety of jobs. The Anchorage/Mat-Su region has by far the highest number of both 14- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 21-year-olds working, with more than half of the state's workers under age 21 employed in that area.

The Gulf Coast region has the highest percentage of total workers in 14 to 17 group at 6.2 percent. Fourteen- to 17- year-olds make up 3 percent of the Northern region's total workers, the lowest among any region.

The highest percentage of 18- to 21-year-old workers occurs in the Interior region at 10.7 percent, while the lowest percentages occur in the Southeast and Northern regions at 8.6 percent and 8.7 percent respectively. (See Exhibit 11.)

This profile looks only at jobs that are covered by Alaska's unemployment insurance program and some regions have fewer of those types of jobs. Fishermen, self-employed workers and the uniformed military, for instance, aren't covered by unemployment insurance laws.

Obviously, opportunities for younger workers are more plentiful in more populated areas due to the diversity of occupations that require relatively unskilled labor. (See Exhibit 12.) Retail stores and

The Top 25 Employers Younger workers, Alaska 2007

10

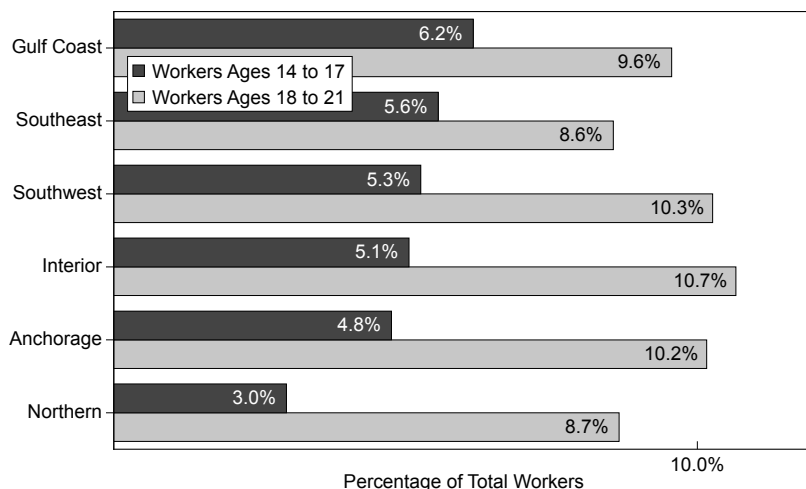
Employer	Number of Workers Ages 14 to 17 ¹	Number of Workers Ages 18 to 21 ¹
Carrs/Safeway	500 - 999	500 - 999
Fred Meyer	250 - 499	500 - 999
Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	100 - 249	500 - 999
McDonald's Restaurants of Alaska	250 - 499	250 - 499
Alaska Commercial Company	100 - 249	100 - 249
Denali Foods (Taco Bell)	100 - 249	100 - 249
Anchorage School District	100 - 249	100 - 249
Subway of Alaska	100 - 249	100 - 249
J&D Restaurants (Carl's Jr.)	100 - 249	100 - 249
Border Entertainment (Blockbuster Video)	100 - 249	100 - 249
Kurani Inc. (Pizza Hut)	50 - 99	100 - 249
The Alaska Club	50 - 99	100 - 249
Nordstrom	50 - 99	100 - 249
Sears	50 - 99	100 - 249
Southcentral Foundation	50 - 99	100 - 249
Zan Inc. (Arby's)	50 - 99	50 - 99
JCPenney	50 - 99	50 - 99
Gottschalks	50 - 99	50 - 99
Wendy's	50 - 99	50 - 99
Fairbanks North Star School District	50 - 99	20 - 49
Omni Enterprises (grocery and other stores in the Bush and rural areas)	50 - 99	20 - 49
Aurora Foods (Burger King)	50 - 99	50 - 99
Eastgate Theatre (movie theaters)	50 - 99	20 - 49
Wagstaff Atte Alaska (KFC, Long John Silver's)	50 - 99	20 - 49
Old Navy	50 - 99	20 - 49

¹ Each company's employment is expressed as a range as opposed to the exact number of employees due to confidentiality restrictions regarding the release of individual company employment data.

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

A Breakdown by Region Younger workers, Alaska 2007

11



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

12 The Top 10 Occupations by Region

Younger workers, Alaska 2007

	Number of Workers Ages 14 to 17	Number of Workers Ages 18 to 21		Number of Workers Ages 14 to 17	Number of Workers Ages 18 to 21
Northern			Gulf		
Cashiers	101	61	Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	192	118
Education, training, and library workers, all other	47	18	Food preparation workers	133	107
Retail salespersons	42	38	Retail salespersons	121	195
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	41	69	Cashiers	107	143
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	34	139	Seafood processing workers, except surimi and fish roe	103	130
Grounds maintenance workers, all other	33	18	Maids and housekeeping cleaners	100	91
Seafood processing workers, except surimi and fish roe	32	20	Packers and packagers, hand	79	24
Stock clerks and order fillers	31	33	Dishwashers	57	44
Office and administrative support workers, all other	28	36	Recreation workers	54	45
Maintenance and repair workers, general	24	29	Office clerks, general	50	82
Interior			Southeast		
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	353	327	Retail salespersons	332	299
Retail salespersons	231	451	Cashiers	158	189
Cashiers	132	330	Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	129	142
Teacher assistants	117	56	Stock clerks and order fillers	88	40
Dishwashers	94	52	Seafood processing workers, except surimi and fish roe	78	79
Packers and packagers, hand	67	47	Packers and packagers, hand	76	27
Office clerks, general	65	127	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	70	85
Food preparation workers	62	77	Tour guides and escorts	63	132
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	56	59	Sales and related workers, all other	61	42
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	54	127	Waiters and waitresses	54	72
Anchorage/Mat-Su			Southwest		
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	1,258	1,053	Cashiers	118	145
Retail salespersons	931	1,653	Office clerks, general	101	53
Food preparation workers	443	319	Stock clerks and order fillers	75	71
Cashiers	391	1,054	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	56	136
Packers and packagers, hand	290	119	Retail salespersons	56	62
Food preparation and serving-related workers, all other	253	219	Office and administrative support workers, all other	55	29
Counter attendants, cafeteria, food concession and coffee shop	242	300	Education, training, and library workers, all other	43	17
Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge and coffee shop	223	261	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	36	145
Waiters and waitresses	162	332	Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	30	49
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers	140	162	Food preparation and serving-related workers, all other	28	32

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

restaurants are areas where many young people get their first taste of the work force.

But what about youth in rural areas of Alaska? What employment opportunities exist for these younger workers in parts of the state where fast food restaurants don't exist and retail stores are limited?

In the Northern, Interior and Southwest regions, besides some of the usual jobs, there are more opportunities for education-related jobs. Local government to some extent takes the place of the private sector in the absence of private-sector businesses.

A new tool for workers, businesses and career counselors

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Research and Analysis Section recently developed a new online tool called the Alaska Career Ladder. This new tool was designed to help educators, school and career counselors, and job placement specialists identify the best pathways to help students and job seekers achieve their career goals.

The needs of individuals and businesses were also kept in mind. Individuals can use the career ladder to independently explore and develop their own career pathways. Businesses can identify previously overlooked occupations that may provide potential recruits for hard to fill positions.

Alaska's Career Ladder improves on previous career ladders because, unlike those career ladders, it's backed by a study of the actual occupation-to-occupation changes that Alaska workers made over a six-year period.

What's a career ladder and how's it used?

The term "career ladder" isn't new, but it's difficult to define. Most workers will hold several jobs throughout their working life, using their previous experiences and knowledge to land progressively more rewarding jobs. All are pursuing their own self-defined career ladder.

The term "ladder" conveys certain images. You climb up a ladder, one rung at a time, until you reach the top. However, when you climb a step ladder, there's little chance to change directions without climbing back down and starting over from the bottom. A career ladder doesn't really work that way.

Nevertheless, the concept of a career ladder can be a useful tool. A career ladder can help educators and school counselors show students how their interests and skills can be focused to pursue a rewarding career. Career counselors and job placement specialists can assess the experience and credentials their clients have already gained from previous steps up the ladder, identify opportunities for advancement, and then develop a plan to help their clients achieve their goals. Individuals can also independently explore options for advancing from their current job.

Business owners and hiring managers who are having trouble filling certain positions may need to broaden their search, and career ladders can be helpful in identifying additional occupations that have transferable skills and experience. Businesses can develop company-specific career ladders as well, identifying paths for worker promotion.

Previous limitations to creating effective career ladders

Previous career ladders have been helpful, but unfortunately, creating effective career ladders has been impeded by serious limitations. By far the most serious limitation has been the inability to track workers' occupation-to-occupation transitions over time. That has restricted assessment of career ladder relationships to comparisons of job characteristics, commonly held assumptions, and only the most obvious career links.

To be sure, obvious career links do exist. For example, dental hygienists often begin working as dental assistants. But many career ladder relationships aren't as obvious. For example, what are the best options for preparing a student or

1 Using the Alaska Career Ladder

A look at Business Analysts

	1,146 / 13.0%	Very Strong
	Financial Managers	
	Work experience plus bachelor's or higher degree	
+60%		
	n/a	Marginal
	Financial Examiners	
	Bachelor's degree	
+10%		

Target Occupation
Wage

\$27.00-\$29.99

Estimated Employment: 288 / Growth Rate: 5.2%	Wage Range: \$27.00-\$29.99
Budget Analysts	
Education/Training requirements: Bachelor's degree	

\$27.00-\$29.99 Target Occupation
Wage

1,878 / 16.7%	Moderate	
Accountants and Auditors		
Bachelor's degree		
		-5%
4,363 / 15.9%	Strong	
Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks		
Moderate-term on-the-job training (1 to 12 months)		
		-40%

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

worker for a move up a career ladder to become a budget analyst, or an EMT?

Likewise, job characteristics based on surveys – such as required skills, experience, and education and training – provide a legitimate way to identify *potential* occupational progressions. However, these tools for assessment don't provide any real-world evidence that workers are actually following those paths.

Moreover, many career ladders have been limited in scope to a certain industry or a certain occupational group that's currently of interest to legislators or program administrators. Because of the limitations on creating them, those career ladders typically only include obvious single-

path progressions based primarily on anecdotal knowledge. While they may still be useful for identifying some bona fide career ladder relationships, they can incorrectly assume some links that don't really exist in the real world and miss other legitimate links entirely.

All these limitations have been exacerbated by a changing labor market. When workers remained with a single employer for many years – some for their entire working lives – formulating career ladders was an easier task. Life-long employment is now the exception. Multiple pathways now exist for advancement, and many occupations now require a broader diversity of skills.

Alaska's improved career ladder

The recently developed Alaska Career Ladder improves on previous ones because, as mentioned earlier, it's backed by a six-year study of the actual occupation-to-occupation transitions that Alaska workers made.

Over the years 2001 to 2006, every worker transition from one occupation to another was tallied. The movements to and from each pair of occupations were then summed and analyzed. That provided hard evidence for identifying combinations of occupations that shared career ladder relationships.

However, the results of the analysis didn't exclusively replace the traditional tools for creating career ladders. On the contrary, comparisons

of wage estimates, job characteristics, required experience, and required education and training were used to corroborate potential links identified by our analysis of worker movements. By combining the best of both worlds, we were able to create a more comprehensive and substantiated career ladder than what was previously possible.¹

Using the career ladder

The Alaska Career Ladder is an interactive online tool designed with ease of use in mind. However, for any tool that contains as much information as the Alaska Career Ladder, taking a short tutorial is advised.

Each occupation on the career ladder has its own Web page. A user can select an occupation from a list and the career ladder page for the chosen occupation will appear. One example is the budget analyst occupation. (See Exhibit 1.) If you're sitting at your computer and have access to the Internet, you may want to go to the Alaska Career Ladder Web page at labor.alaska.gov/research/careerladder. Click on "Choose an Occupation" and select "Budget Analysts." The Web page has color-coding and additional information that couldn't be reproduced for this publication.

The occupation a user selects is called the "target" occupation (in this example, the target occupation is budget analysts). Occupations providing opportunities for advancement from the target occupation are positioned on the rungs above the target occupation (in this example, financial examiners and financial managers).

Occupations that may be good choices for advancement to the target occupation are positioned below it (in this example, bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks; and accountants and auditors).

All the occupations on the page are listed in the order of their estimated wages, starting with the lowest-paying occupation on the bottom rung and progressing upward to the high-

est-paying occupation on the topmost rung of the ladder.

The estimated wage range for the target occupation is listed in its box, and the scales next to the rungs above and below the target occupation show the approximate percentage difference in pay relative to the target occupation.

For example, estimated average wages for the target occupation, budget analysts, fall between \$27 and \$30 an hour. Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks (at the bottom of the ladder) earn about 40 percent less than budget analysts. Financial examiners, on the first rung up from the target occupation, make roughly 10 percent more than budget analysts.

Additional information can be found in each occupation's box. There's information on estimated employment and its projected growth rate (upper left of each box), the most typical education and/or training requirements (bottom), and how strong the link to the target occupation was, based on the evidence provided by our analysis (upper right).

For example, the budget analyst occupation had employment of 288 in 2006; its employment is projected to grow by 5.2 percent by 2016; and it typically requires a bachelor's degree.

The rating of "Strong" at the upper-right of the box for bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks indicates that, based on the evidence from the study of workers' occupation changes and other factors, the link between this occupation and budget analysts is strong.

If an Alaska Career Ladder user aspired to be a budget analyst he or she might consider a job as a bookkeeping, accounting or auditing clerk. Employment in that occupation is high and is projected to grow by more than 15 percent from 2006 to 2016 and typically only moderate on-the-job training is required.

Exploring Alaska's Career Ladder

If you're interested in exploring Alaska's Career Ladder further, go to Research and Analysis' Web site at laborstats.alaska.gov. Click on "Occupational Information" on the left, then "Career Ladder."

¹ For a more detailed overview of how the Alaska Career Ladder was created, see the sidebar on Page 16.

While that occupation makes roughly 40 percent less than a budget analyst and would most likely require a bachelor's degree and further experience in an intermediate occupation, the link between it and the target occupation is strong. The experience gained from a position as a bookkeeping, accounting or auditing clerk, together with a bachelor's degree, likely would provide a great foundation for advancement to a budget analyst position.

Similarly, a worker employed as a budget analyst might consider opportunities as a financial manager or financial examiner. To explore any

additional paths that may lead to employment in one of those occupations, a budget analyst could click on the occupation of interest and he or she would be taken to that occupation's Web page. There, other career path options would be displayed.

By exploring various options provided by the Alaska Career Ladder, users can formulate career ladder paths that meet their goals.

For more comprehensive guides on using the Alaska Career Ladder, go to labor.alaska.gov/research/careerladder/choice.htm.

How Alaska's Career Ladder Was Created

Alaska has a resource that's unusual for most states – Alaska's Occupational Database.

Each quarter, Alaska employers provide the occupations of their employees on their reports to the Alaska Department of Workforce Development that they're required to file under unemployment insurance laws.

With that information the Department of Labor's Research and Analysis Section was able to track the occupational progressions of workers and aggregate them over the six-year period from 2001 to 2006.

Each time a worker changed occupations, the transition was noted. Over the six-year period, there were more than 600,000 of those transitions and that provided the real-world data needed to develop a more comprehensive and substantiated career ladder.

More than 86,000 occupation-to-occupation combinations were found but most were clearly not a career ladder relationship.

About 75 percent of those had less than five workers making the transition over the entire six-year period. Many were transitions from a higher-level occupation to a lower-level occupation or transitions between occupations that were at about the same level. Some

represented a change in career or a second job. And many others were primarily the result of seasonal employment changes or transitions out of general entry-level jobs, such as retail salespersons, to unrelated occupations.

Only a small percentage of the occupation-to-occupation combinations were ultimately selected for inclusion. To determine whether a combination of occupations should be considered for inclusion in the career ladder, certain requirements had to be met.

The *direction* of movements between occupations was critical. Referring to the original job as the "predecessor" and the subsequent job as the "successor," the following requirements needed to be met to identify a *potential* career ladder link:

1. Transitions needed to be predominately in one direction, from the predecessor to the successor;
2. The predecessor had to account for a relatively high share of all transitions to the successor; and/or the successor had to account for a relatively high share of all transitions from the predecessor.

Once potential career ladder links were identified, additional tests were

applied. When one thinks of moving up the career ladder, there's normally an expectation of increased compensation. Wages for the two occupations were compared to verify a career ladder link.

One also expects the successor occupation to require at least equal or higher levels of education, training and/or experience, so comparisons were made for those attributes of the occupations as well.

Finally, for a career ladder relationship to truly exist, the occupations should clearly have at least some relevance to one another. The predecessor occupation should typically provide some of the duties, skills and experiences that are required for advancement to the successor occupation.

There may be an overlap in the job duties of the occupations, albeit at different levels of responsibility. The occupations may be in the same field or have at least some relevance to each other in some important aspect.

If a potential pairing passed all of the tests, it was included in the Alaska Career Ladder.

To see more specific details on the methodology behind the Alaska Career Ladder, go to labor.alaska.gov/research/careerladder/method.pdf.

Alaska's unemployment rate rises to 8.0 percent

Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose two-tenths of a percentage point in February to 8.0 percent, and the U.S. rate rose five-tenths of a percentage point to 8.1 percent.

U.S. rate now higher than Alaska's

It's unusual for the national rate to be higher than Alaska's, even by such a small margin. (See Exhibits 1 and 3.) The last time the U.S. rate was above Alaska's for any appreciable length of time was in 1982 and 1983 when the nation was in a deep recession and Alaska was enjoying its new oil wealth.

It's noteworthy, though, that even during those heady days, Alaska's unemployment rate was not particularly low, either by historical standards or compared to the U.S. rate. The most likely reason is that the state was absorbing large numbers of migrating job seekers and though the new arrivals were generally able to find work in Alaska's booming economy, their job searches – however brief – kept the unemployment rate relatively high.

In the current U.S. recession, the national unemployment rate began its steep climb in early 2008. Alaska's rate began rising at roughly the

same time, but the state's monthly increases have been smaller, on average, and the gap between the two rates steadily narrowed.

Payroll job growth has slowed

Payroll jobs increased by 4,000 from January to February, a seasonal increase that was a little smaller than in recent years. Over-the-year growth slowed to 0.8 percent after averaging 1.4 percent in 2008.

At the industry level, oil and gas jobs were up 700 over the year. Nearly all of that growth came during the early part of 2008, however. The industry's estimated 13,000 February jobs are still near historical highs, but the number has fallen by 300 since September.

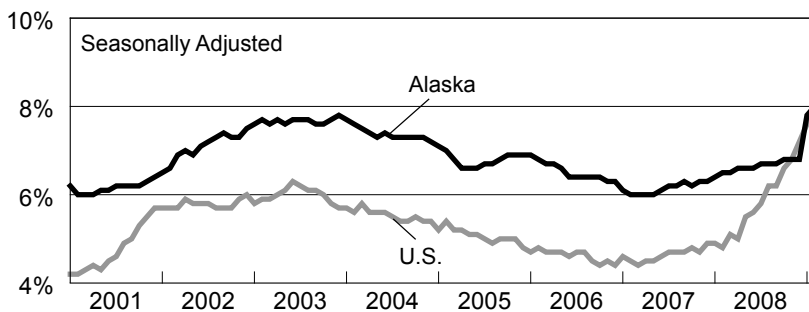
Health care jobs were also up 700 over the year and government jobs were up 800. Although federal government jobs were down 100 from February 2008 levels, state government jobs rose by 400 and local government by 500.

Industries with lower job counts in February than in February 2008 included construction, which was down 300, and seafood processing, which was down 100. Employment in food services and drinking places was also down 300 and the state's accommodations industry provided 100 fewer jobs than it did a year earlier.

The recession at our doorstep?

After escaping the job losses that afflicted most of the country in 2008, it appears increasingly likely that the story will be different for Alaska in 2009. Growth in the oil industry has dried up, at least temporarily, and with the country and much of the world stuck in economic doldrums, the state's other economic drivers are also expected to struggle in the near future.

1 Unemployment Rates, Alaska and U.S. January 2001 to February 2009



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

2 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes from:	
	2/09	1/09	2/08	1/09	2/08
Alaska					
Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary ¹	308,800	304,800	306,200	4,000	2,600
Goods-Producing ²	41,300	39,900	40,700	1,400	600
Service-Providing ³	267,500	264,900	265,500	2,600	2,000
Natural Resources and Mining	15,500	15,600	14,500	-100	1,000
Logging	200	200	100	0	100
Mining	15,300	15,400	14,400	-100	900
Oil and Gas	13,000	13,100	12,300	-100	700
Construction	13,800	13,600	14,100	200	-300
Manufacturing	12,000	10,700	12,100	1,300	-100
Wood Product Manufacturing	400	500	400	-100	0
Seafood Processing	8,400	6,900	8,500	1,500	-100
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	61,000	61,300	60,600	-300	400
Wholesale Trade	6,200	6,200	6,300	0	-100
Retail Trade	34,400	34,900	34,300	-500	100
Food and Beverage Stores	6,100	6,100	6,200	0	-100
General Merchandise Stores	9,400	9,800	9,300	-400	100
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	20,400	20,200	20,000	200	400
Air Transportation	6,100	6,000	6,200	100	-100
Truck Transportation	3,200	3,100	2,900	100	300
Information	7,100	7,000	6,900	100	200
Telecommunications	4,700	4,700	4,300	0	400
Financial Activities	14,400	14,300	14,500	100	-100
Professional and Business Services	24,600	24,300	24,600	300	0
Educational⁴ and Health Services	38,100	37,700	37,300	400	800
Health Care	27,600	27,300	26,900	300	700
Leisure and Hospitality	27,300	27,000	27,500	300	-200
Accommodations	6,200	6,200	6,300	0	-100
Food Services and Drinking Places	17,100	17,100	17,400	0	-300
Other Services	11,200	11,100	11,100	100	100
Government	83,800	82,200	83,000	1,600	800
Federal Government ⁵	16,100	16,100	16,200	0	-100
State Government	25,500	24,700	25,100	800	400
State Government Education ⁶	7,900	7,000	7,900	900	0
Local Government	42,200	41,400	41,700	800	500
Local Government Education ⁷	24,200	23,700	24,100	500	100
Tribal Government	3,500	3,500	3,300	0	200

Notes for Exhibits 2 and 4:

¹ Excludes the self-employed, fishermen and other agricultural workers, and private household workers; for estimates of fish harvesting employment, and other fisheries data, go to labor.alaska.gov/research/seafood/seafood.htm

² Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

³ Service-providing sectors include all others not listed as goods-producing sectors.

⁴ Private education only

⁵ Excludes uniformed military

⁶ Includes the University of Alaska

⁷ Includes public school systems

⁸ Fairbanks North Star Borough

Sources for Exhibits 2 and 3: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Sources for Exhibit 4: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; also the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Anchorage/Mat-Su

3 Unemployment Rates By borough and census area

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED	Prelim.	Revised	Revised
	2/09	1/09	2/08
United States	8.1	7.6	4.8
Alaska Statewide	8.0	7.8	6.5
NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
United States	8.9	8.5	5.2
Alaska Statewide	9.3	7.2	7.3
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	7.9	6.0	6.1
Municipality of Anchorage	7.1	5.4	5.5
Mat-Su Borough	11.2	8.2	8.6
Gulf Coast Region	12.0	9.6	9.7
Kenai Peninsula Borough	12.9	9.9	10.2
Kodiak Island Borough	6.9	7.4	6.1
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	13.8	11.6	11.7
Interior Region	9.7	7.4	7.5
Denali Borough	18.3	15.7	15.5
Fairbanks North Star Borough	8.7	6.5	6.5
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	13.0	10.6	11.1
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	17.5	16.4	16.6
Northern Region	9.6	8.1	8.5
Nome Census Area	12.9	10.5	10.7
North Slope Borough	4.8	4.2	4.5
Northwest Arctic Borough	13.5	11.3	12.3
Southeast Region	10.9	8.4	8.5
Haines Borough	18.1	14.7	14.6
Juneau Borough	7.2	5.1	5.1
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ¹	10.9	7.5	8.0
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan CA ¹	23.3	18.7	19.6
Sitka Borough	8.1	7.3	7.2
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA ¹	28.5	24.0	22.3
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ¹	16.1	15.6	14.8
Yakutat Borough	16.5	8.9	12.1
Southwest Region	14.1	12.1	11.5
Aleutians East Borough	7.8	8.5	6.8
Aleutians West Census Area	4.6	5.5	2.8
Bethel Census Area	17.1	13.8	14.3
Bristol Bay Borough	17.6	12.2	14.0
Dillingham Census Area	13.6	10.5	10.8
Lake and Peninsula Borough	14.4	10.9	10.2
Wade Hampton Census Area	24.4	20.7	21.1

¹ Because of the creation of new boroughs, this borough or census area has been changed or no longer exists. Data for the new borough and census areas will be available in 2010. Until then, data will continue to be published for the old areas.

4 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment By region

	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes from:		Percent Change:	
	2/09	1/09	2/08	1/09	2/08	1/09	2/08
Anch/Mat-Su	167,700	166,900	165,300	800	2,400	0.5%	1.5%
Anchorage	149,600	148,900	147,800	700	1,800	0.5%	1.2%
Gulf Coast	26,550	25,750	26,350	800	200	3.1%	0.8%
Interior	41,900	40,600	41,700	1,300	200	3.2%	0.5%
Fairbanks ⁸	36,100	35,300	36,400	800	-300	2.3%	-0.8%
Northern	20,600	20,300	19,350	300	1,250	1.5%	6.5%
Southeast	33,100	32,500	33,250	600	-150	1.8%	-0.5%
Southwest	19,500	18,550	19,900	950	-400	5.1%	-2.0%

For more current state and regional employment and unemployment data, visit our Web site. We have a new address:

laborstats.alaska.gov

Employer Resources

WorkKeys® Job Profiling Takes the Guesswork Out of Hiring

WorkKeys® ACT WorkKeys®, the nation's leading Job Skills Assessment System, is an effective and reliable tool for employers as they face challenges identifying applicants with the career skills needed to succeed, while also helping to lower the rate of attrition for incumbents. The WorkKeys system ensures that individuals have the right levels of "real world" workplace skills critical to job success. Alaska Job Centers offer KeyTrain and WIN, skill building courseware to search occupations and to prepare for WorkKeys Assessments. WorkKeys Assessments are proctored in nine Alaska Job Centers.

WorkKeys Job Profiling or "job analysis" is a vital part of the three-pronged WorkKeys System (Job Analysis, Assessment and Education/Training). Profiling is the analysis process used to identify critical tasks, and to set skills and skill levels required for entry level and effective performance in a job, occupation or formal training program. Skills profiled include Applied Mathematics (AM), Reading for Information (RI), Locating Information (LI), Applied Technology, Writing, Business Writing, Observation, Listening and Teamwork.

WorkKeys Job Profiling offers many benefits:

- A detailed task list and skill requirements for the occupation.
- Improved employee selection.
- Reduce employee turnover and training costs.
- EEOC-compliant process to support hiring, promotion and training decisions.
- Provide career skill level information to Alaskan students and adult job-seekers.

WorkKeys Profiling uses focus groups and includes four key steps:

- Step 1: Creating an Initial Task List.
- Step 2: Analysis of the Tasks of the Position, Rating for Importance and Time Spent.
- Step 3: Analysis of the Skills and Skill Levels needed to perform the job.
- Step 4: Customized Report Documenting Profile Results.

A WorkKeys Profile of a formal training curriculum can be conducted to:

- Identify skills and skill levels needed to enter in and succeed at an existing training program.
- Estimate entry and exit skill levels of a training program during the initial development process.
- Reduce dropout and truancy rate in training programs or apprenticeships.
- Provide a common language for schools, businesses and unions.

For more information or to schedule a WorkKeys Job Profile, contact Laurie Fuglvog, Employment Security Division, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, at (907) 465-5926 or laurie.fuglvog@alaska.gov. Access ACT WorkKeys Job Profile Case Studies on the web to see how employers have benefited from WorkKeys Profiling: www.act.org/workkeys/case/.

A Safety Minute

April 28 is Workers' Memorial Day. Around the globe, the day is set aside in memory of workers who lost their lives on the job. Based on the latest statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, workplace fatalities in 2007 amounted to 5,488 nationwide and 30 in Alaska. The accidents are devastating to the families, co-workers and businesses involved. Many workplace deaths could be avoided through better workplace safety and health compliance.

For more information and to request a penalty-free assessment of your worksite, contact the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Consultation and Training program at (800) 656-4972. The program is part of the Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Section within the Labor Standards and Safety Division.