

Alaska Population Trends

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Area projections to year 2018

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If population trends of the 1990s continue for the next two decades, Alaska's total population will grow to 776,488 by 2018. Regional distribution of population will shift and the state's demographic character will differ from that of today.

Projected trends

Based on recent trends, mid-range projections indicate the Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna region should continue to grow more rapidly than the state as a whole. In 2018, this region is expected to comprise 51.7% of the state's population and account for 56.9% of the total population growth through 2018. The Northern and Southwestern regions should grow faster than the statewide average of 1.1%, while the Gulf Coast, Interior and Southeast regions will probably grow more slowly.

The largest increase in population share is expected in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, which should increase from 8.8% of the state's population in 1998 to 13.2% in 2018. Mat-Su's annual average growth rate of about 3.3% will be nearly three times higher than the statewide rate. Other areas expected to grow faster than the state as a whole include the Wade Hampton Census Area, North Slope Borough and Yakutat Borough. (See Exhibit 4.)

Areas expected to have a net loss of population between 1998 and 2018 are the Valdez-Cordova Census Area, Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area, Sitka Borough, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area, Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area and Aleutians East Borough.

School age population will grow

If Alaska follows the trend of the 1990s, the number of children ages five through 17 is expected to increase by 12.9% by 2018. Numerically, the greatest growth should occur in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (+10,032), Kenai Peninsula Borough (+2,913), Bethel Census Area (+2,241), Wade Hampton Census Area (+1,812), Fairbanks North Star Borough (+1,191), Nome Census Area (+1,134), and North Slope Borough (+1,106). Declines in the school age population are anticipated in the Municipality of Anchorage, Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area, Sitka Borough, Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area, Valdez-Cordova Census Area, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area, Aleutians West Census Area, Aleutians East Borough, Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area and Kodiak Island Borough.

The Northern and Southwestern regions of the state should increase their shares of the statewide school age population, while the Southeast, Interior and Anchorage/Mat-Su shares are expected to shrink. The largest percentage increase in school age population over the next 20 years should occur in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (+70.3%), while the school age population in the Municipality of Anchorage should decline by 2.8%.

Older Alaskans

Over the next 20 years, the number and percentage of older Alaskans in the state will increase dramatically. By 2018, Alaska's population age 65

1 Population Projections for Alaska to 2018

Middle series by labor market area

Labor Market Area	July 1 1998 Estimate	July 1 2003	July 1 2008	July 1 2013	July 1 2018
ALASKA	621,400	656,150	693,018	733,852	776,488
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	313,308	333,042	353,770	376,779	401,631
Municipality of Anchorage	258,782	269,567	279,707	289,528	298,875
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	54,526	63,475	74,063	87,251	102,756
Gulf Coast Region	73,028	76,771	80,553	84,737	88,837
Kenai Peninsula Borough	48,815	52,382	56,110	60,234	64,305
Kodiak Island Borough	13,848	14,030	14,159	14,277	14,416
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	10,365	10,359	10,284	10,226	10,116
Interior Region	98,647	102,931	106,963	110,915	114,459
Denali Borough	1,864	1,993	2,129	2,303	2,495
Fairbanks North Star Borough	83,928	88,012	91,773	95,367	98,585
Southeast Fairbanks C.A.	6,402	6,814	7,270	7,753	8,203
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	6,453	6,112	5,791	5,492	5,176
Northern Region	23,649	25,627	28,098	31,027	34,236
Nome Census Area	9,402	9,986	10,725	11,591	12,527
North Slope Borough	7,403	8,301	9,421	10,741	12,211
Northwest Arctic Borough	6,844	7,340	7,952	8,695	9,498
Southeast Region	74,285	76,298	78,687	81,462	83,976
Haines Borough	2,476	2,606	2,776	2,961	3,146
Juneau Borough	30,236	31,388	32,413	33,475	34,447
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	14,231	15,119	16,428	18,075	19,774
Prince/Wales-Outer Ketchikan	6,884	7,067	7,281	7,485	7,611
Sitka Borough	8,779	8,590	8,409	8,226	7,978
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon C.A.	3,664	3,563	3,459	3,328	3,140
Wrangell-Petersburg C.A.	7,205	7,045	6,866	6,706	6,502
Yakutat Borough	810	920	1,055	1,206	1,378
Southwest Region	38,483	41,481	44,947	48,932	53,349
Aleutians East Borough	2,177	2,040	1,918	1,784	1,738
Aleutians West Census Area	5,389	5,665	5,908	6,097	6,242
Bethel Census Area	15,997	17,438	19,092	21,043	23,192
Bristol Bay Borough	1,297	1,405	1,506	1,621	1,734
Dillingham Census Area	4,708	5,027	5,394	5,842	6,327
Lake & Peninsula Borough	1,852	1,962	2,128	2,282	2,439
Wade Hampton Census Area	7,063	7,944	9,000	10,263	11,677

C.A. = Census Area

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit

and older is expected to have leapt to 92,356, up from 32,729 in 1998. Older Alaskans will comprise almost 12 percent of the total population in 2018, up from 5.3% in 1998.

The Municipality of Anchorage should see the largest increase in older Alaskans (+23,412) followed by Matanuska-Susitna Borough (+7,498), Fairbanks North Star Borough (+6,246), Kenai Peninsula Borough (+6,089), Juneau Borough (+3,319), Ketchikan Borough (+2,077), Valdez-Cordova Census Area (+1,143), and Kodiak Island Borough (+1,006). Together, these areas should account for 85 percent of the growth in the senior population in the next 20 years.

About these projections

Projections usually are prepared for low, middle and high scenarios. This article presents the middle, or most likely, series projections. The low and high series not presented here define the +/- 95% confidence intervals for historical birth and migration trends, the range within which future data can reasonably be expected to fall. Of course, the occurrence of a single historical event, such as emergence or loss of a major industry, cannot be foreseen and can dramatically impact the growth or decline of an area at any time.

Variables affecting population change — mortality, fertility and migration

A summary of the assumptions used to produce these projections follows. The middle series of projections answers the question, "What would Alaska's population look like if people are born, move and die according to the patterns they have followed over the recent historical past?" The projections presented here are not intended to be a short term forecast and are better viewed as the underlying population trend for an area, assuming the general economic activity of an area during the last couple of decades remains unchanged. The impact of changes in the economy is reserved for later sets of projections. The assumptions for mortality, fertility and migration are discussed in greater detail in the statewide projections article published in the September/October 1998 *Alaska Economic Trends*.

The rate of change in mortality as a component of population change is assumed to maintain the same pace as that of the nation overall. Changes in life expectancy, barring a catastrophic epidemic, generally have a limited impact on projections.

Population Projections Ages 5-17 Middle series by labor market area to year 2018

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Labor Market Area	July 1 1998 Estimate	July 1 2003	July 1 2008	July 1 2013	July 1 2018
ALASKA	144,767	149,307	147,811	151,044	163,411
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	70,900	74,948	73,696	74,066	79,328
Municipality of Anchorage	56,621	60,261	57,465	54,651	55,017
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	14,279	14,687	16,231	19,415	24,311
Gulf Coast Region	17,322	16,786	16,795	17,802	19,683
Kenai Peninsula Borough	11,729	11,307	11,691	12,876	14,642
Kodiak Island Borough	3,264	3,376	3,261	3,164	3,223
Valdez-Cordova C.A.	2,329	2,103	1,843	1,762	1,818
Interior Region	22,703	23,376	23,116	23,030	23,631
Denali Borough	393	348	353	357	395
Fairbanks North Star Borough	18,840	19,822	19,676	19,630	20,031
Southeast Fairbanks C.A.	1,593	1,599	1,702	1,828	1,999
Yukon-Koyukuk C.A.	1,877	1,607	1,385	1,215	1,206
Northern Region	7,163	7,422	7,742	8,542	10,152
Nome Census Area	2,731	2,858	3,021	3,311	3,865
North Slope Borough	2,232	2,306	2,399	2,715	3,338
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,200	2,258	2,322	2,516	2,949
Southeast Region	16,022	15,051	14,287	14,620	15,823
Haines Borough	503	451	452	483	518
Juneau Borough	6,313	6,040	5,881	6,111	6,578
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	2,998	3,100	3,144	3,447	4,060
Prince Of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	1,637	1,495	1,389	1,415	1,494
Sitka Borough	1,853	1,639	1,444	1,334	1,320
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon C.A.	839	659	544	481	462
Wrangell-Petersburg C.A.	1,682	1,467	1,239	1,156	1,170
Yakutat Borough	197	200	194	193	221
Southwest Region	10,657	11,724	12,175	12,984	14,794
Aleutians East Borough	500	429	315	257	244
Aleutians West C.A.	876	1,031	870	663	615
Bethel Census Area	4,693	5,215	5,585	6,083	6,934
Bristol Bay Borough	325	360	366	386	439
Dillingham Census Area	1,302	1,404	1,396	1,442	1,629
Lake & Peninsula Borough	542	517	537	605	702
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,419	2,768	3,106	3,548	4,231

C.A. = Census Area

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit

3 Population Projections Ages 65 and Over

Middle series by labor market area to year 2018

Labor Market Area	July 1 1998 Estimate	July 1 2003	July 1 2008	July 1 2013	July 1 2018
ALASKA	32,729	40,379	52,298	69,555	92,356
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	15,692	19,953	26,279	35,210	46,602
Municipality of Anchorage	12,703	16,146	21,134	28,056	36,115
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	2,989	3,807	5,145	7,154	10,487
Gulf Coast Region	4,447	5,362	6,913	9,347	12,685
Kenai Peninsula Borough	3,229	3,904	5,022	6,797	9,318
Kodiak Island Borough	609	723	913	1,215	1,615
Valdez-Cordova C.A.	609	735	978	1,335	1,752
Interior Region	4,400	5,305	6,914	9,074	12,337
Denali Borough	57	100	184	281	501
Fairbanks North Star Borough	3,520	4,224	5,472	7,195	9,766
Southeast Fairbanks C.A.	365	471	675	880	1,157
Yukon-Koyukuk C.A.	458	510	583	718	913
Northern Region	1,211	1,424	1,680	2,118	2,639
Nome Census Area	544	617	696	851	1,040
North Slope Borough	299	408	540	711	917
Northwest Arctic Borough	368	399	444	556	682
Southeast Region	5,189	6,201	7,930	10,598	13,869
Haines Borough	246	277	328	436	610
Juneau Borough	1,821	2,167	2,802	3,903	5,140
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	1,134	1,316	1,735	2,398	3,211
Prince Of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	354	501	715	919	1,242
Sitka Borough	700	868	1,053	1,295	1,609
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon C.A.	238	311	404	511	629
Wrangell-Petersburg C.A.	652	703	811	1,019	1,251
Yakutat Borough	44	58	82	117	177
Southwest Region	1,790	2,134	2,582	3,208	4,224
Aleutians East Borough	92	142	180	223	345
Aleutians West C.A.	108	160	266	451	665
Bethel Census Area	835	946	1,129	1,348	1,726
Bristol Bay Borough	46	56	84	104	144
Dillingham C.A.	247	282	343	424	575
Lake & Peninsula Borough	107	116	140	157	202
Wade Hampton C.A.	355	432	440	501	567

C.A. = Census Area

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit

Fertility, the childbearing performance of individuals, couples, groups or a population, is trended through the use of age/race-specific birth rates for each borough or census area. Alaska's fertility is not assumed to converge toward the national average, nor is it likely to follow the national pattern into the future. Fertility historically has had the greatest impact on Alaska's population growth, and will continue to do so.

Migration occurs as people move to or from a permanent residence. While much movement is influenced by employment and the economy, the relationships and the timing of migration relative to economic and life cycle events are complex. Migration trends reflect the experience of the 1990's. A special effort was made to filter out the influence of the impact of recent military base downsizing and closures and the impact of timber mill closures on the long term migration for census areas. However, the Ketchikan pulp mill closure was so recent that it may not have been possible to adequately reflect its impact on the projections for Ketchikan Gateway Borough. The result may be overly optimistic projections for the borough. The impact of sudden surges or declines due to migration is best addressed in the alternative high and low economic projections series not presented here.

