State and local estimates

Alaska’s 2009 Population

Alaska’s population increased 10.3 percent, or 64,781 people, from 2000 to 2009, bringing the state’s population to 692,314, based on estimates released in January by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

With only a year left in the decade, Alaska’s population has so far been growing at a slower average annual rate in the 2000s (1.1 percent) than in the 1990s (1.3 percent). Despite the trend of slow growth, Alaska’s population grew at an above-average rate from 2008 to 2009, increasing about 1.5 percent or 10,337 people.

Compared to the United States as a whole, however, Alaska has grown at a significantly faster rate since 2000. The U.S. population increased 8.8 percent during the 2000 to 2009 period, versus Alaska’s 10.3 percent. Alaska is still the 47th most populous state. It has more population than North Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming and the District of Columbia.

The Alaska Department of Labor creates its estimates using the U.S. Census Bureau’s annual state level estimates and decennial census numbers, Alaska Permanent Fund dividend applications, vital statistics, as well as military and other surveys. Using those population indicators, the Alaska Department of Labor creates a detailed account of Alaska’s population by size, composition and geographical distribution.

The 2009 estimates are provisional. All population estimates in this article are as of July 1 of a particular year – the average annual population for that year – unless indicated otherwise.

The state as a whole

Population change is measured by natural increase and net migration. These two measures are made up of four main components: births, deaths, in-migration and out-migration. The impact these components have on Alaska’s growth vary by year and decade, depending on certain economic and social factors.

Alaska’s growth from 2000 to 2009 came from natural increase (births minus deaths), which added 66,149 people. The state lost 1,368 people through net-migration (in-migration minus out-migration). On average, 92,000 people migrate to and from Alaska each year, with nearly equal in-migration and out-migration.

Natural increase was also the main contributor to Alaska’s population growth from 2008 to 2009, adding 8,076 people. The state lost 1,368 people through net-migration (in-migration minus out-migration). On average, 92,000 people migrate to and from Alaska each year, with nearly equal in-migration and out-migration.

When breaking down net migration into international and domestic migration, the gain of 2,261 migrants between 2008 and 2009 comes out to be a gain of 1,239 domestic migrants and 1,022 international migrants. (See Exhibit 1.)

The net in-migration that occurred in 2008 to 2009 hasn’t occurred since 2003 to 2004.

The increase in migrants can be explained by the increase in military movement into Alaska. Due to the fact that Alaska Department of Labor population estimates capture the resident population, all troops are counted as living in the state regardless of their deployment status. Therefore, boroughs and census areas with a
large military presence may have populations lower than the estimates, depending on current deployments. The Fairbanks North Star Borough and the Municipality of Anchorage are the most affected by this method of estimation.

Economic regions, boroughs and census areas

Between the 2000 Census and the 2009 estimate, only 11 of Alaska’s 29 boroughs and census areas gained population. Seven of those 11 areas had significant population increases: the Municipality of Anchorage (+30,305), Matanuska-Susitna Borough (+24,992), Fairbanks North Star Borough (+10,939), Kenai Peninsula Borough (+3,887), Southeast Fairbanks Census Area (+1,069), Bethel Census Area (+951) and Wade Hampton Census Area (+666). (See Exhibits 2 and 3.)

While 11 of the 29 boroughs increased in number of people from 2000 to 2009, only three of the 11 had increases in the proportion of Alaska’s total population. The three – the Mat-Su Borough, Anchorage Municipality and Fairbanks North Star Borough – accounted for 90.3 percent of the growth in the 11 boroughs and census areas. The Municipality of Anchorage made up 41.3 percent of the growth, and the Mat-Su Borough and Fairbanks North Star Borough made up 34.1 percent and 14.9 percent, respectively.

Migration had a major impact on Alaska’s boroughs and census areas from 2000 to 2009, with most losing population through net out-migration. However, the Mat-Su Borough (+18,571), Municipality of Anchorage (+1,203), Kenai Peninsula Borough (+831) and Southeast Fairbanks Census Area (+471) were areas where in-migration markedly surpassed out-migration. (See Exhibit 4.)

Natural increase characterized the growth in Alaska’s Northern economic region. The region’s two boroughs and one census area had average annual rates of natural increase greater than 1.5 percent. (See Exhibit 5.)

All the regions in the state had growth at least partly due to natural increase, however, some boroughs in the Southeast region, along with the Aleutians in the Southwest region, had average annual rates of natural increase less than 0.5 percent.
As expected, the fastest-growing region in Alaska from 2000 to 2009 was Anchorage/Mat-Su, which gained 55,297 people, a 17.3 percent increase. Both areas within the region grew – the Mat-Su Borough (+42.1 percent) and the Municipality of Anchorage (+11.6 percent).

However, annual growth in the Mat-Su Borough from 2008 to 2009 slowed to 2.3 percent, which was down from the average annual growth of 3.8 percent from 2000 to 2009. From 2008 to 2009, Anchorage gained 6,676 people (primarily through natural increase) and Mat-Su gained 1,885 people (mainly through net in-migration). The Interior region gained 11,046 people from 2000 to 2009, an 11.3 percent increase. The Southeast Fairbanks Census Area (+17.3 percent)
and Fairbanks North Star Borough (+13.2 percent) both had major increases in population largely due to natural increase, while the Denali Borough (-2.9 percent) and Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area (-13.9 percent) had population losses due to out-migration.

Yet, for the Interior from 2008 to 2009, only the Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area lost population (-70 people), while the Fairbanks North Star Borough (+1,017), Southeast Fairbanks Census Area (+84) and Denali Borough (+32) all gained population.

The Gulf Coast region’s population as a whole grew by 2,887 people from 2000 to 2009, a 3.9 percent increase. The increase was due to natural increase outpacing net out-migration in the
Population Growth Rates
Average annual growth rates, Alaska 2000 to 2009

Average Annual Rate of Growth

- Less than 0.0%
- 0.0% to 1.0%
- 1.0% to 2.0%
- 2.0% and up

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

Migration Rates
Average annual net migration, Alaska 2000 to 2009

Average Annual Rate of Net Migration

- Less than -2.0%
- -2.0% to 0.0%
- 0.0% to 2.0%
- 2.0% and up

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

Kenai Peninsula Borough. The Valdez-Cordova Census Area (-9.3 percent) and Kodiak Island Borough (-0.4 percent) declined in population and only the Kenai Peninsula Borough (+7.8 percent) grew.

That trend held true from 2008 to 2009, with the Valdez-Cordova Census Area (-247 people) and Kodiak Island Borough (-94) losing population and the Kenai Peninsula Borough (+619) growing.

The Southwest region experienced nearly stagnant growth from 2000 to 2009, gaining only 22 people, a 0.1 percent increase, with natural increase (+5,889) just surpassing net out-migration (-5,867). Only three of Southwest’s seven boroughs and census areas grew – the Wade Hampton Census Area (+9.5 percent), Bethel Census Area (+5.9 percent) and Aleutians East Borough (+3.0 percent) – and the growth was due to natural increase.

That trend was similar during the 2008 to 2009 period, with the Aleutians West Census Area (+113 people), Aleutians East Borough (+80), Bethel Census Area (+73) and Wade Hampton Census Area (+30) growing. The remainder of the region declined in population due to net-out migration.

The Northern region declined slightly from 2000 to 2009, losing 125 people, a 0.5 percent decrease, due to out-migration overtaking natural increase. The region’s Nome Census Area (+3.3 percent) and Northwest Arctic Borough (+2.2 percent) increased in population.

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The North Slope Borough lost a significant portion of its population (-7.9 percent) through out-migration.

That trend changed in 2008 to 2009, with the North Slope Borough gaining the most people (+95) due to natural increase. The Nome Census Area only gained seven people; the Northwest Arctic Borough lost 35 people due to net out-migration.

Finally, the region with the greatest decline as a whole from 2000 to 2009 was Southeast. It lost 3,744 people, a 5.1 percent decline, due to net out-migration. Only the Skagway Municipality gained population (+0.3 percent), though not...
enough to be considered significant.

However, from 2008 to 2009, Juneau (+256 people), Yakutat (+36), the Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area (+34), Skagway (+19) and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (+4) had population gains. Out-migration was the driver behind the declining population throughout the remainder of the region, partly due to an aging population.

Places

The lowest level of population estimates released by the Alaska Department of Labor for 2009 is place estimates. A place is an incorporated city (municipalities and city-boroughs fall into this category), Census Designated Place (a closely settled unincorporated population center) or an Alaska Native Village Statistical Area (the settled area associated with each Alaska Native Village).

Looking at the number of places with populations of more than 2,000, there were five more on the list in 2009 (41 total) than in 2000 (36 total). Twenty-three were incorporated as of 2009. (See Exhibit 6.)

In 2009, 54.2 percent of the state’s population was in the Anchorage/Mat-Su region (374,902), up from 51.0 percent in 2000. Not surprisingly, half the state’s dozen most-populous places were in the Anchorage-Mat-Su region – the Municipality of Anchorage (290,588), Knik-Fairview CDP (13,824), Lakes CDP (8,388), Tanaina CDP (7,407), Meadow Lakes CDP (7,319) and Wasilla city (7,245). If they were incorporated, four places in the Mat-Su Borough would be larger than Wasilla city, and Knik-Fairview would become the fourth-largest city in the state.

Fourteen places with populations of more than 2,000 had average annual growth rates above 2.0 percent for the 2000 to 2009 period: the Knik-Fairview CDP (+6.0 percent), Fishhook CDP (+4.5 percent), Meadow Lakes CDP (+3.8 percent), Deltana CDP (+3.7 percent), Tanaina CDP (+3.6 percent), Homer city (+3.1 percent), North Pole city (+3.1 percent), Gateway CDP (+2.9 percent), Willow CDP (+2.7 percent), Wasilla city (+2.6 percent), Kalifornsky CDP (+2.3 percent), Butte CDP (+2.2 percent), Big Lake CDP (+2.2 percent) and Lakes CDP (+2.1 percent).

All but four of the 14 rapidly growing places are in the Mat-Su Borough. The remaining four are throughout the state – the Kalifornsky CDP and Homer city are in the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the Deltana CDP is in the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area and North Pole city is in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. While most of the four are growing due to natural increase, net migration or both, Homer experienced a large increase in population mostly due to the 2002 annexation of significant portions of the Diamond Ridge CDP and Miller Landing CDP.

Thirteen places with populations greater than 2,000 had either stagnant or negative average annual growth rates for the 2000 to 2009 period. They include Eielson Air Force Base CDP (-5.6 percent), Wrangell City and Borough (-1.6 percent), Unalaska city (-1.5 percent), Valdez city (-1.4 percent), Cordova city (-1.3 percent), Barrow city (-1.0 percent), Dillingham city (-0.8 percent), Seward city (-0.8 percent), Petersburg city (-0.7 percent), Ketchikan city (-0.5 percent), Sitka City.

Average annual rates of natural increase, Alaska 2000 to 2009

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit
## 6 Places with More than 2,000 People
### Alaska, 2000 to 2009

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1. Alaska Native Village Statistical Area
2. Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; Demographics Unit; U.S. Census Bureau (Census 2000)


and Borough (-0.2 percent), Nome city (-0.1 percent) and Juneau City and Borough (0.0 percent).

When studying all of Alaska’s 352 places, especially those outside of the Anchorage/Mat-Su region, the majority aren’t experiencing any growth or are declining. Of the 352 places, 192 (54.5 percent) had either no growth from 2000 to 2009 or declined in population.