

A Look at New Resident Workers

Jobs and wages of nonresidents who stay in Alaska

Alaska is one of the most remote states and it has the nation's most transient population — as a proportion of the state total, more people move in and out than in any other state. This highly migratory population is closely linked to the state's labor market, since many migrants are part of Alaska's workforce.

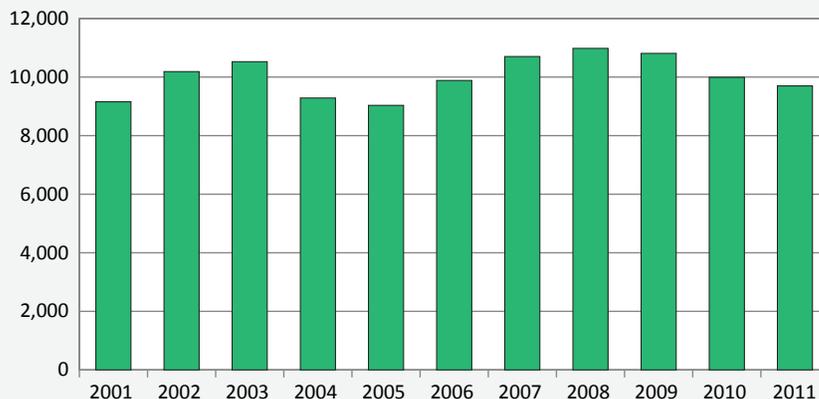
Many things lure people to Alaska, including jobs, the military, adventure, or friends and family. One way to understand what draws new people to Alaska is to examine the kind of work they do when they get here. Identifying all workers who are new Alaskans is impossible, but it is possible to capture a subset of new Alaska workers by examining those who were classified as nonresidents in one year and became residents the next.

Since 2001, around 10,000 nonresident workers a year became resident workers in the next year. (See Exhibit 1.) These new residents accounted for about 14 percent of the previous year's nonresident worker population.

Throughout the past decade, the number of new resident workers has remained fairly constant, with changes in the level correlated to the health of Alaska's economy and labor market.

Comparing the number of new resident workers to a two-year lag of Alaska's average annual unemployment rate reveals a relationship between Alaska's economy and the new workers who make their home here. Although some workers may be nonresidents for many years before deciding to settle in Alaska, most workers who become residents begin living and working in the state with the intention of staying — but they typically have to wait two years before qualifying for a PFD.

1 Nonresident Workers Who Became Residents Alaska, 2001 to 2011



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

Because of this lag, the number of new resident workers increases two years after periods of low or declining unemployment in Alaska. Similarly, the number of new resident workers typically declines two years after periods of rising unemployment.

This trend suggests new residents are drawn to Alaska while its economy is faring well and demand for labor is stronger. Conversely, when Alaska's economy softens and the number unemployed increases, workers from Outside are less likely to move to the state and stay.

What new residents do

New residents work in all of Alaska's major industry groups, but they are more heavily concentrated in some industries. (See Exhibit 2.) For the most part, new residents and all residents are distributed across industries in similar proportions.

In 2011, the highest concentration of new

residents was in the trade, transportation, and utilities industry, followed by private education and health.

Exhibits 3 and 4 show the numbers and percentages by industry of nonresident workers in 2010 who became residents in 2011. State government had the highest rate of conversion to residency followed by local government; finance, insurance, information, and real estate; and private education and health care. Although the level of new resident workers wasn't as high in these industries, these jobs tend to be less seasonal and higher-paying. (See Exhibit 6.)

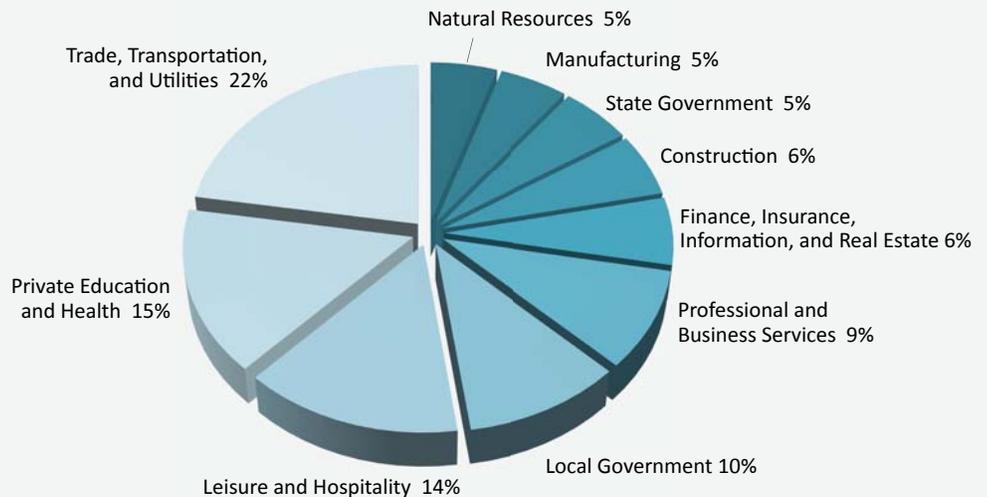
New resident workers are young

New resident workers are younger on average than all resident workers. The largest age group among new residents in 2011 was 25 to 29, and the number of new resident workers visibly tapers with age. (See Exhibit 5.)

Younger workers are typically more mobile, and many are looking for work after completing college or job training.

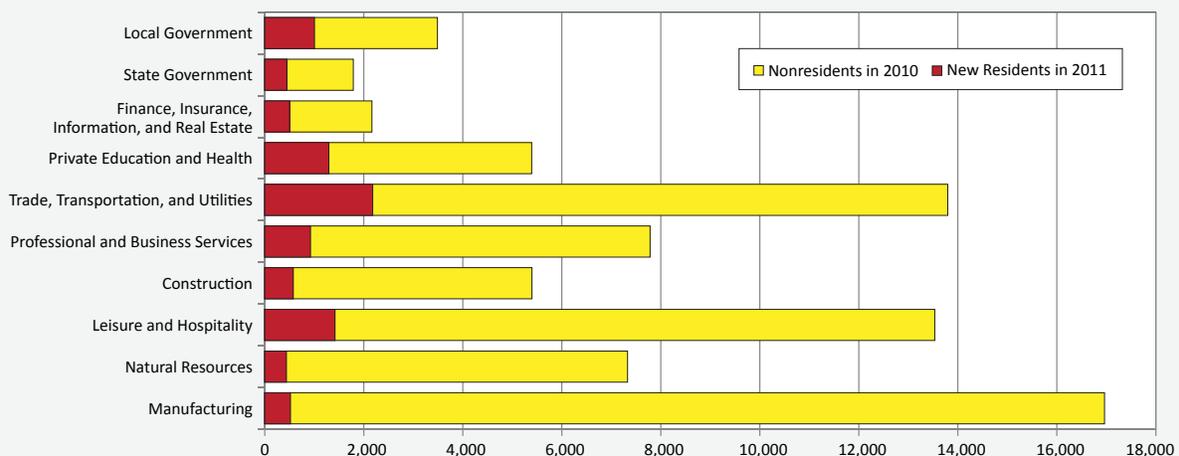
The population of all resident workers, on the other hand, has a bulge of younger workers ages 20 to 29, and a bulge of working baby boomers between 45 and 59. The average age in 2011 for all resident workers was 39, and the average for new resident workers was 35.

2 New Resident Workers by Industry Alaska, 2011



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

3 Nonresident Conversion by Industry, Number of Workers Alaska, 2010 to 2011



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

About the data

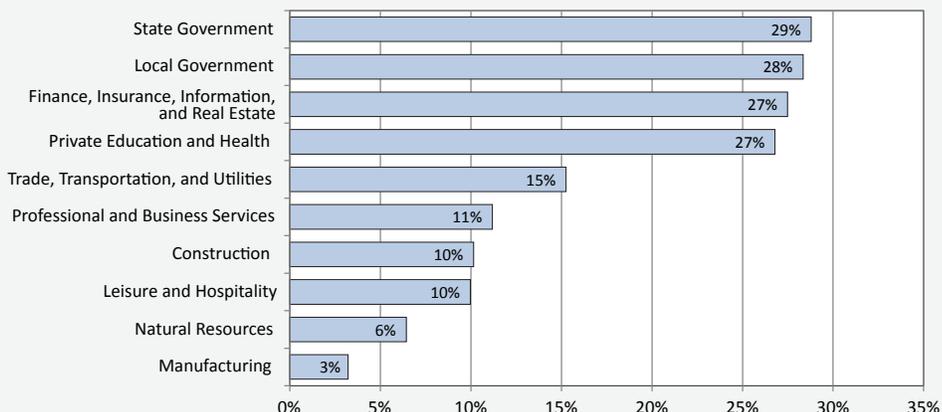
Alaska has a unique set of databases that can track workers by industry, occupation, and region as well as identify their Alaska residency status as determined by Permanent Fund Dividend eligibility. Because at least one complete calendar year of living in Alaska is required to qualify for a PFD, many workers who move to Alaska and weren't previously residents spend at least two years classified as nonresidents.

There are likely other new workers who were not classified as nonresidents the prior year. These could include college graduates who did not relinquish their Alaska residency while attending college out of state and ex-military workers who kept their Alaska residency while stationed elsewhere, then returned to Alaska after retirement. There may also be new residents who did not work in Alaska while they were establishing residency, so were never classified as a non-resident Alaska worker.

Qualification to apply for a PFD is not the only measure of residency in Alaska, but it has been determined to be the most comprehensive. Voter registration, motor vehicle registration, driver's licenses, and fishing/hunting licenses have significant definitional weaknesses in residency eligibility requirements, quality of data, or percent of the working population contained in the respective files. The PFD provides the applicant with a monetary incentive to complete the form and a penalty for providing false information and is, overall, an excellent measure of residency.

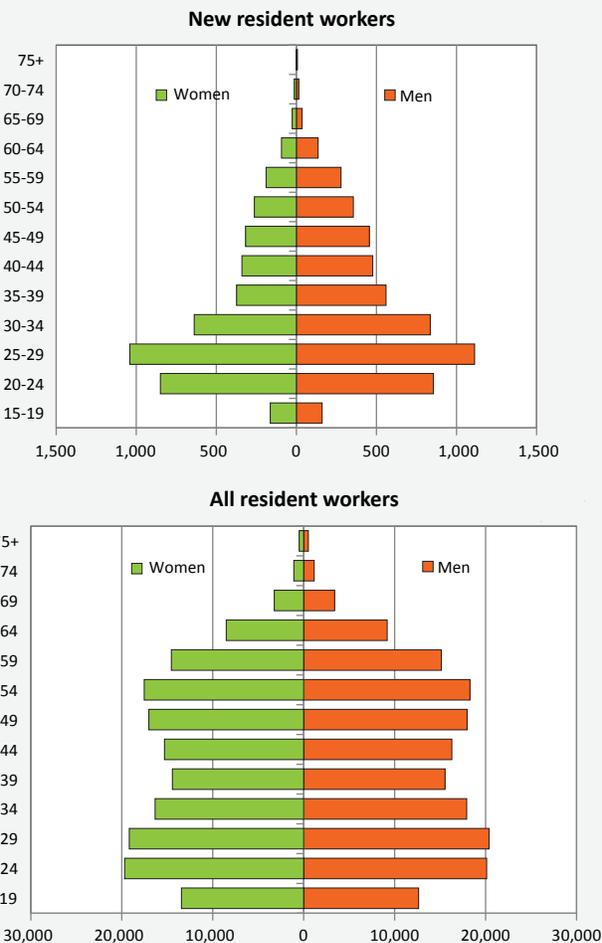
It is also important to note these data don't include federal employees and the self-employed. Although federal employees will not appear in this study, they likely make up a considerable share of new resident workers because federal jobs recruit nationally.

4 Percent By Industry Who Became Residents Alaska, 2010 to 2011



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

5 New Resident Workers Young Alaska, age and sex distribution, 2011



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

6 Top Occupations for New Residents

Alaska, 2011

Occupation Title	Resident Workers	Nonresident Workers	New Resident Workers	Average Quarterly Resident Earnings
Retail Salespersons	11,672	2,587	428	\$5,388
Seafood Processing Workers, Except Surimi and Fish Roe	3,252	13,045	284	\$5,339
Cashiers	9,285	1,652	273	\$4,760
Waiters and Waitresses	3,829	1,568	223	\$4,981
Registered Nurses	4,672	1,068	183	\$15,577
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	5,565	1,316	178	\$3,842
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	6,726	833	164	\$8,967
Construction Laborers	5,929	1,292	156	\$9,490
Office Clerks, General	6,421	987	149	\$7,497
Food Preparation Workers	3,869	1,126	133	\$3,938
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,717	944	128	\$5,767
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	3,502	1,702	128	\$5,200
Sales and Related Workers, All Other	2,830	531	120	\$7,994
Personal Care Aides	4,285	487	114	\$6,036
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	3,018	237	113	\$13,407
Cooks, Restaurant	1,912	1,117	113	\$5,361
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,737	1,146	113	\$6,885
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	2,839	165	99	\$13,972
Teacher Assistants	4,051	350	96	\$4,711
Carpenters	3,688	932	95	\$11,882
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	3,865	298	90	\$9,926
General and Operations Managers	4,139	528	88	\$21,526
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	4,501	350	87	\$9,355
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,979	261	86	\$10,805
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,811	504	82	\$14,036
Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	2,284	698	81	\$4,426
Receptionists and Information Clerks	3,042	352	80	\$6,663
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	2,247	399	76	\$9,937
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	2,742	413	76	\$6,165
Tellers	1,293	166	72	\$6,891
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	1,535	250	67	\$12,953
Customer Service Representatives	2,645	431	66	\$8,086
Security Guards	2,192	430	65	\$9,175
Home Health Aides	1,905	264	64	\$7,117
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	3,032	516	64	\$10,909
Dishwashers	1,410	641	62	\$3,380
Lawyers	1,068	85	60	\$23,125
Electricians	2,217	696	58	\$17,883
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	2,812	168	53	\$8,377
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	3,350	868	48	\$16,345
Child Care Workers	1,787	345	46	\$4,052
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	1,004	476	46	\$5,183
Accountants and Auditors	1,749	175	45	\$15,661
Engineers, All Other	1,059	344	44	\$27,972
Managers, All Other	2,734	437	42	\$20,395
Personal Care and Service Workers, All Other	1,144	130	42	\$5,653
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	1,293	242	42	\$9,669
Counter and Rental Clerks	1,261	223	41	\$5,655
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1,658	388	41	\$16,887
Bartenders	1,519	466	40	\$4,702
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,769	275	40	\$10,809
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	882	910	40	\$22,805

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