

# Top Jobs Are in Health Care

## Alaska Occupational Forecast, 2010 to 2020

Alaskans will find opportunities in a range of occupations over the next decade, but a disproportionate share will be in the health care arena. Of the 50 highest-growth occupations, 47 are health care-related — and this growing demand is largely driven by an aging population.

The needs of an older population and more retirements will boost other categories as well. In all, Alaska will add almost 39,000 new jobs between 2010 and 2020, and more than 96,000 additional job opportunities will come from replacements — that is, positions vacated by workers who retire, change careers, or leave the job market.

### More need with aging population

Alaska, like the U.S. as a whole, is aging as a large group of baby boomers — those born be-

tween 1946 and 1964 — move into their senior years. The number of Alaskans age 65 to 79 is expected to almost double from 2010 to 2020, and the number of those 80 and older will grow by 46 percent. Higher demand for an array of health care services will follow.

The hundreds of individual occupations are grouped into 22 broad categories. Of that 22, the two broad categories of 1) health care practitioners and technical occupations and 2) health care support occupations are projected to add more than 6,500 jobs by 2020, growing by 27.4 and 30.9 percent, respectively. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.)

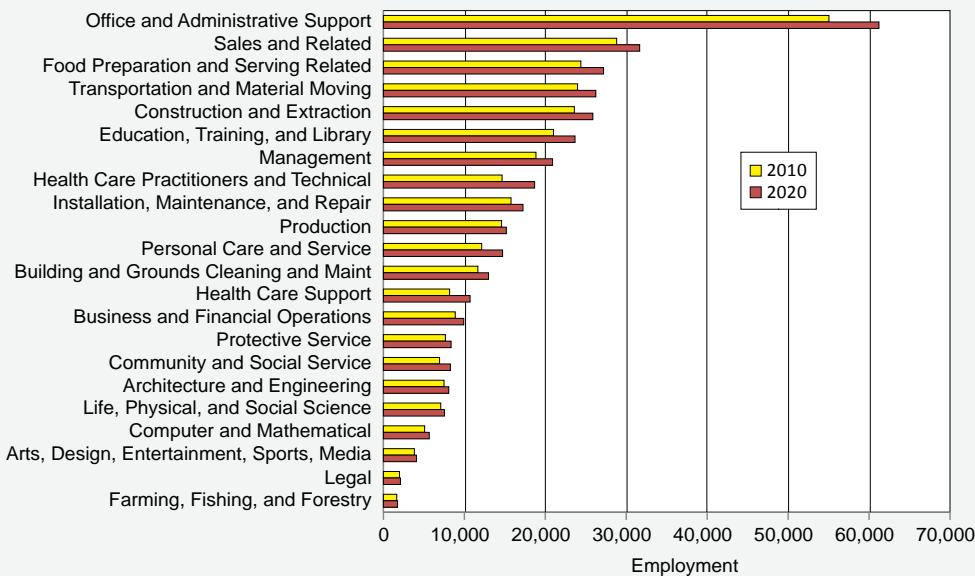
Besides the added jobs, the need for replacement workers in those categories is expected to generate around 5,000 openings — and this doesn't include a number of health care-related occupations in other categories, such as medical and health services managers, health care social workers, and nursing and health specialties instructors. (See Exhibit 3.)

Of the top 25 occupations for percentage growth, 21 fall under the broad umbrella of health care — but three of the four remaining occupations are also health-related: personal care aides, health care educators, and medical secretaries.

### Other categories will also benefit

The personal care and service category and community and social service category will also get a boost from the needs of the growing senior population. Together, these two broad

## 1 Projected Total Jobs by Occupational Category Alaska, 2010 and 2020



Note: Occupational categories are based on the federal Standard Occupational Classification Manual.  
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

categories will grow by over 20 percent, well above the 12 percent expected for all occupations combined. (See Exhibit 2.)

Personal care aides, often considered a health care-related occupation, fall into the category of personal care and service. They assist the elderly with general care and daily activities, a service that can often delay the need for a nursing home or other facility. Personal care aides are expected to grow by 40 percent, the highest growth rate for any single occupation. (See Exhibit 7, Table 1.)

In the community and social service category, occupations such as health care social workers, social and human service assistants, and community health workers also play a part in helping older Alaskans. In addition to their other clients, many social workers direct elderly clients to health services and support people and families dealing with chronic or terminal illness. Not surprisingly, these types of social service occupations are expected to grow at a faster rate than the whole.

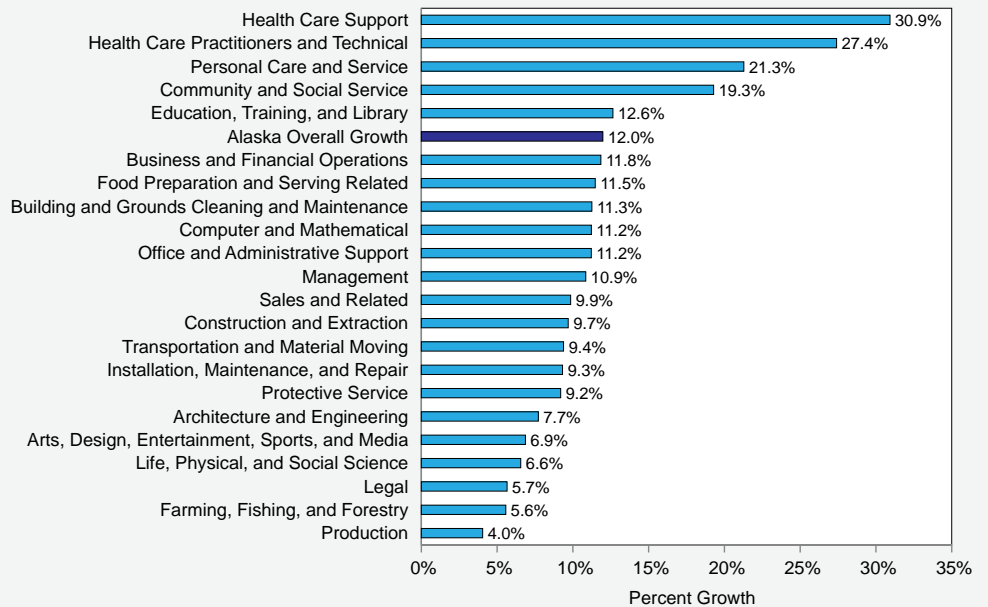
The only other broad category expected to grow at an above-average rate is education, training, and library, at 12.6 percent. That leaves 17 categories below the overall 12 percent growth rate, ranging from 4 percent for production to 11.8 percent for business and finance.

### Some outside health will also shine

When focusing on specific occupations, it's easy to lose sight of growing occupations in catego-

## Health Care Jobs to Lead Overall Growth **2**

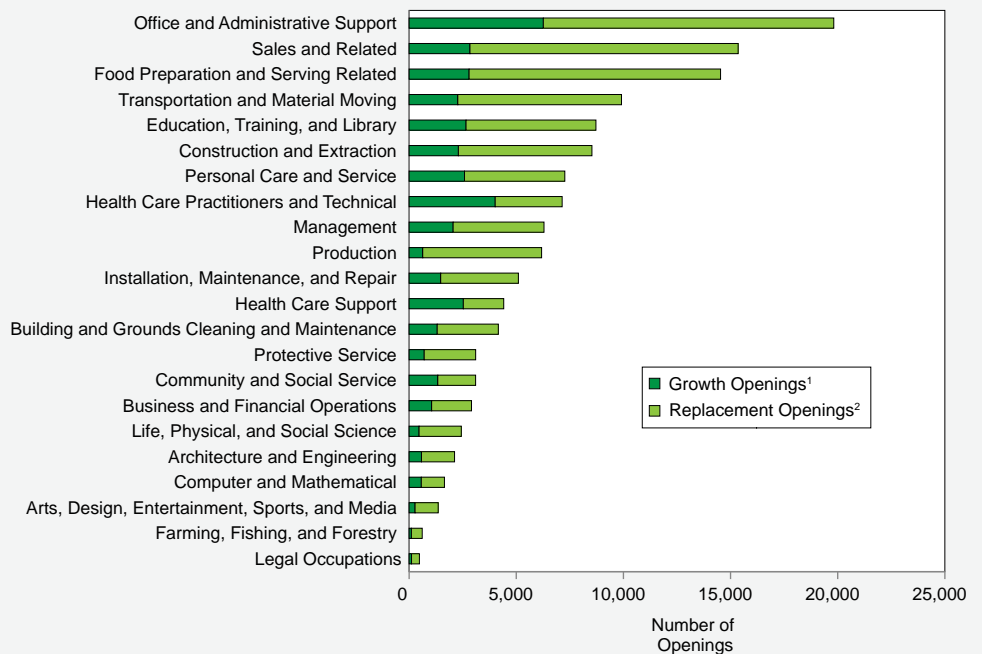
Alaska occupational categories, 2010 to 2020



Note: Occupational categories are based on the federal Standard Occupational Classification Manual. Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

## Administration, Retail to Have Highest Openings **3**

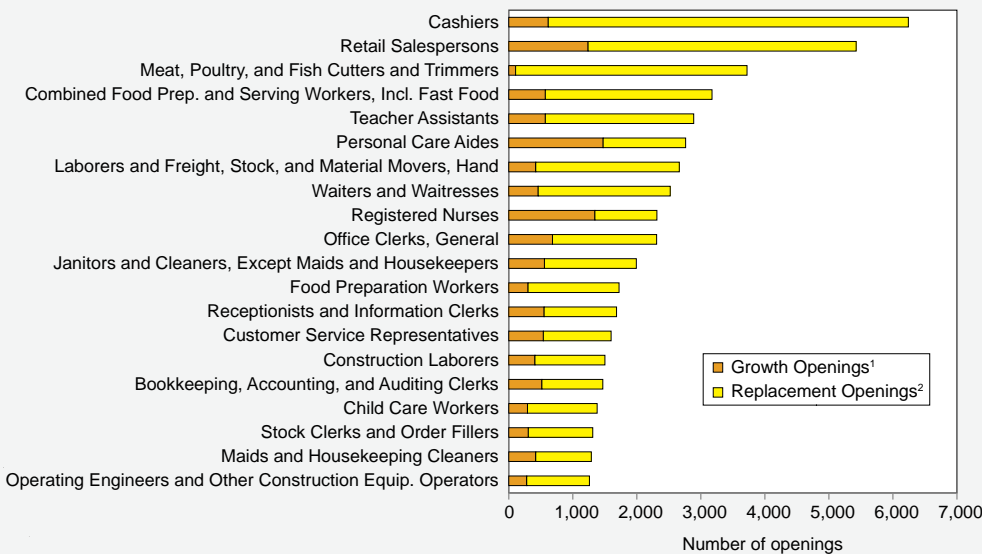
Alaska occupational categories, 2010 to 2020



Note: Occupational categories are based on the federal Standard Occupational Classification Manual. <sup>1</sup>Growth openings are new jobs. <sup>2</sup>Replacement openings result from vacancies left by workers who retire or leave an occupation. Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

## 4 Cashiers Have Highest Projected Job Openings

### Alaska occupations, 2010 and 2020



<sup>2</sup>Replacement openings result from vacancies left by workers who retire or leave an occupation.  
 Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

ries outside health care. Only one outlier made the top 25: personal and financial advisers. But, even outside the high-growth categories, many other occupations are expected to grow by 15 percent or more over the projection period.

The top 25 occupations outside health, personal care, and social services are shown in Exhibit 7,

table 2. These occupations run the gamut from teachers to business and finance occupations to billing clerks to computer systems analysts.

Three of the top 25 in this group are preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school teachers (except special education). These occupations will grow roughly in lock-step with the projected population growth for the relevant age groups.

Personal financial advisers will gain clients from the expanding number of retirees, and are expected to grow by over 35 percent. Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents could reap similar gains, at about 17.5 percent.

The three computer occupations in this group — applications software developers, systems software developers, and computer systems analysts — will be bolstered by increasing reliance on technological solutions to industry needs.

### A small number will be in decline

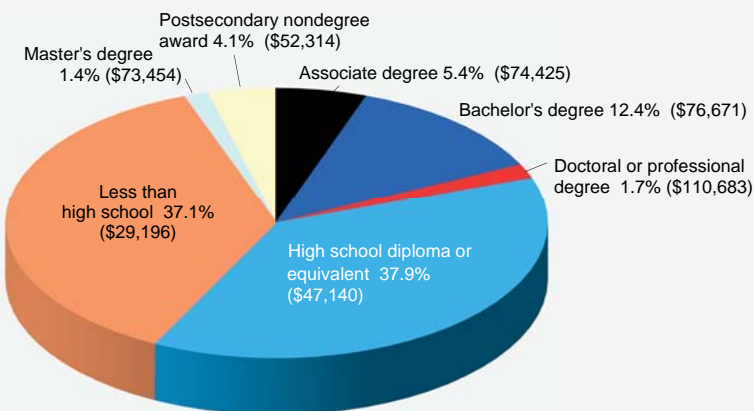
Out of more than 500 occupations with employment of at least 50 in 2010, only 18 are expected to decline over the 10-year forecast period. (See Exhibit 7, Table 3.)

The Alaska Railroad has hit hard times due to the loss of fuel hauls from the Flint Hills Refinery in North Pole and reductions in federal dollars. More than 50 positions were eliminated this summer, and unless the outlook improves, railroad workers could be vulnerable. Four of the 18 occupations projected to decline are in railroads.

Four U.S. Postal Service occupations and two logging occupations are also projected decliners, part of industries that are expected to lose ground. Other declining occupations, such as sewing machine operators and file clerks, are becoming obsolete.

## 5 Openings, Wages by Education Level

### Percentage of Alaska openings,<sup>1</sup> 2010 to 2020



Note: Annual wage estimates are based on employment-weighted averages of 2011 OES calculations.

<sup>1</sup>Includes job openings from growth and replacements  
 Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

## Replacements to eclipse new jobs

When determining the long-term outlook for occupations, it's important to consider replacement openings as well as new jobs. In fact, over the projection period, replacements are expected to generate more than 96,000 openings — more than 2.5 times the number of forecasted new jobs.

Replacement openings are vacancies left when a worker permanently leaves an occupation, commonly through retirement, leaving the labor force, leaving the state, or changing careers. They do not include turnover from workers changing jobs in the same occupation. For example, if a person left a job as a baker at Bob's bakery and went to work as a baker at Jane's bakery, that wouldn't count as a replacement opening.

Despite the exclusion of this type of job turnover, many of the occupations with high turnover also have the highest replacement openings (see Exhibit 4), as they often employ younger Alaskans who move on to other careers.

A good example is cashiering, where over 90 percent of the 5,600 projected openings will be from replacements. (See Exhibit 6.) Many of the workers in this occupation are young, and a high number of cashier jobs are also seasonal. Although not all cashier jobs are the same, for many young workers it isn't a lifelong career choice.

On the flip side, occupations with higher-paying jobs that offer stable, year-round employment tend to have more openings from job growth than replacement. For example, only 27 percent of openings among personal financial advisers will be from replacements. (See Exhibit 6.)

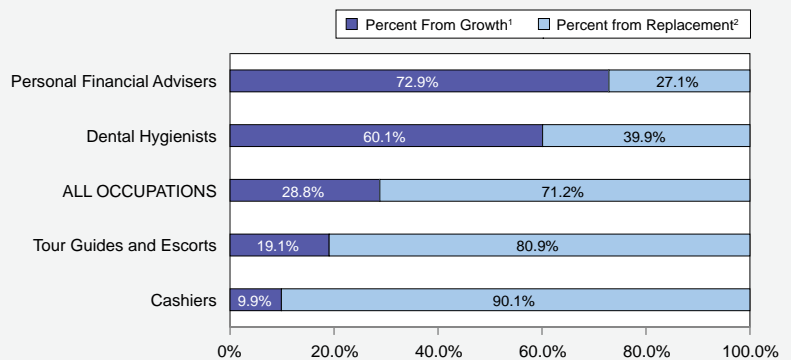
## High openings in office, sales

The three broad categories with the most projected total openings will be office and administrative support occupations, sales and related occupations, and food preparation and serving related occupations. (See Exhibit 3.)

The office and administrative occupations category will get about two-thirds of its openings from replacements while the other two categories will get over 80 percent. The difference is largely due to the dominance of lower-paying and seasonal jobs in sales and food service.

## New Jobs Vs. Replacement Openings **6**

Select Alaska occupations, 2010 to 2020



<sup>1</sup>Growth openings are new jobs.

<sup>2</sup>Replacement openings result from vacancies left by workers who retire or leave an occupation.

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

## Openings vary by education level

Three-quarters of all projected openings will come from occupations that typically require a high school diploma or less. (See Exhibit 5.) However, these will mostly be low-paying jobs.

On average, positions requiring a high school diploma paid about \$47,000 annually, and those requiring less than a high school diploma paid a little over \$29,000. However, these figures are based on a 40-hour work week year-round, and many of these jobs are part-time or seasonal.

The remaining 25 percent of openings will come from occupations that require at least an associate degree or other postsecondary nondegree award. The largest percentage of these openings are in occupations requiring at least a bachelor's degree. Openings in these occupations pay higher average wages, and more of them offer full-time, year-round employment.

## Alaska's Top Jobs, 2010 to 2020

Long-term occupation projections are a vital tool for workforce development agencies, job placement and counseling professionals, job seekers, and education and training providers — but it can be hard to determine which occupations should get the most attention.

# 7 Fastest and Slowest Growing Occupations and Wages

Alaska, 2010 to 2020

## Fastest Growing Occupations

Occupation	Percent Growth
Personal Care Aides	40.0%
Home Health Aides	37.7%
Personal Financial Advisers	35.2%
Dental Hygienists	34.2%
Recreational Therapists	34.1%
Dental Assistants	33.4%
Chiropractors	33.3%
Respiratory Therapists	33.3%
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	33.3%
Opticians, Dispensing	33.3%
Phlebotomists	33.3%
Physical Therapists	32.6%
Physical Therapist Aides	32.3%
Medical Secretaries	32.0%
Medical Assistants	31.9%
Massage Therapists	31.4%
Radiologic Technologists	30.9%
Nurse Practitioners	30.7%
Surgical Technologists	30.6%
Physician Assistants	30.5%
Family and General Practitioners	29.3%
Health Educators	28.6%
Registered Nurses	27.7%
Occupational Therapists	27.6%
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	27.5%

Note: This list considers occupations with at least 50 workers and a change of at least 20 jobs. It excludes residual occupations ending with "all other" and a small number with incomplete or unreliable data.

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

## Fastest Growing, excl. health care and similar\*

Occupation	Percent Growth
Personal Financial Advisers	35.2%
Insurance Sales Agents	22.3%
Billing and Posting Clerks	19.5%
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	18.3%
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	18.2%
Receptionists and Information Clerks	18.0%
Loan Officers	17.7%
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	17.5%
Software Developers, Applications	17.1%
Training and Development Managers	16.6%
Cargo and Freight Agents	16.5%
Computer Systems Analysts	16.3%
Bill and Account Collectors	16.0%
Management Analysts	15.6%
Mining and Geological Engineers, Including Mining Safety Engineers	15.6%
Helpers: Carpenters	15.6%
Millwrights	15.6%
Tellers	15.2%
Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	15.1%
Customer Service Representatives	15.1%
Software Developers, Systems Software	15.0%
Insurance Underwriters	14.8%
Parts Salespersons	14.8%
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	14.7%
Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education	14.6%

\*Excludes occupations in the four highest growth categories: Community and Social Service Occupations, Health Care Practitioners and Technical Occupations, Health Care Support Occupations, and Personal Care and Service Occupations. Also excludes management and support occupations directly related to health care.

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

To help answer this question, economists at the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development developed Alaska's Top Jobs list. (See Exhibit 8.)

The list focuses on occupations projected to fare well and pay well over the forecast period. Although there's no way to consider every angle in what makes one occupation a better prospect than another, the top jobs list is a good place to start.

To make the top jobs list, an occupation must meet two criteria. First, its average wages must rank in the top half of all occupations. Second, the occupation must either: 1) have projected growth of at least 75 jobs and percentage growth that is higher than the growth for all occupations combined, or 2) be among the 50 occupations with the most projected openings.

## Top jobs list includes wide range

The occupations on the top jobs list are an elite group. Out of more than 600 considered occupations, only 53 made the grade. Although health care is well represented, the majority of the top occupations are in other categories. Teachers, accountants, computer professionals, pilots, captains and mates, probation officers, lawyers, and wildlife biologists are just a sampling of what made the list.

The top jobs list is heavy on more stable, career-oriented occupations. Twenty-seven typically require at least a bachelor's degree, and another 10 require an associate degree or a nondegree post-secondary award such as a vocational certificate.

Many of the remaining occupations — those requiring no postsecondary education — are well-

# 7 Fastest and Slowest Growing Occupations and Wages, continued

## Alaska, 2010 to 2020

### Declining Occupations

Occupation	Percent Change
Railroad Brake, Signal, and Switch Operators	-13.7%
Locomotive Engineers	-12.5%
Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators	-12.4%
Logging Equipment Operators	-10.4%
Fallers	-9.1%
Sewing Machine Operators	-8.8%
Postal Service Mail Carriers	-7.8%
Postal Svc Mail Sorters, Processors, Proc Machine Operators	-7.8%
Reporters and Correspondents	-7.7%
Postmasters and Mail Superintendents	-7.4%
Print Binding and Finishing Workers	-6.2%
Postal Service Clerks	-6.0%
Rail Car Repairers	-5.6%
Printing Press Operators	-5.0%
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	-4.0%
Broadcast Technicians	-2.6%
Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, Tenders	-1.7%
File Clerks	-0.7%

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

paying construction trades and mechanics occupations such as carpenters, operating engineers and construction equipment operators, plumbers and pipefitters, and mobile heavy equipment mechanics. Although these occupations don't require postsecondary education, many require apprenticeships or considerable on-the-job training.

### Wages by Occupational Category

Category	Average Annual Wages <sup>1</sup>
Architecture and Engineering	\$90,073
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	\$44,463
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	\$30,041
Business and Financial Operations	\$70,833
Community and Social Service	\$48,376
Computer and Mathematical	\$76,762
Construction and Extraction	\$58,778
Education, Training, and Library	\$58,534
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	\$41,819
Food Preparation and Serving Related	\$24,163
Health Care Practitioners and Technical	\$84,283
Health Care Support	\$38,017
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	\$54,747
Legal	\$86,621
Life, Physical, and Social Science	\$64,753
Management	\$96,033
Office and Administrative Support	\$38,770
Personal Care and Service	\$29,062
Production	\$36,777
Protective Service	\$51,166
Sales and Related	\$32,027
Transportation and Material Moving	\$49,998

Note: Wages are based on 2011 OES occupation wage estimates for Alaska, weighted by base year (2010) employment.

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

# Alaska's Top Jobs

## 2010 and 2020

	Employment			Openings, 2010 to 2020			Wage Quartile <sup>2</sup>
	2010	2020	Change	Growth	Replacement	Total	
<b>Doctoral or Professional Degree</b>							
Physical Therapists	399	529	32.6%	130	52	182	\$\$\$\$
Family and General Practitioners	386	499	29.3%	113	85	198	\$\$\$\$
Pharmacists	367	459	25.1%	92	101	193	\$\$\$\$
Lawyers	993	1,048	5.5%	55	185	240	\$\$\$\$
<b>Master's Degree</b>							
Physician Assistants	338	441	30.5%	103	70	173	\$\$\$\$
Mental Health Counselors	332	419	26.2%	87	108	195	\$\$\$
Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary School	543	604	11.2%	61	155	216	\$\$\$\$
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>							
Medical and Health Services Managers	940	1,183	25.9%	243	250	493	\$\$\$\$
Computer Systems Analysts	624	726	16.3%	102	120	222	\$\$\$\$
Social and Community Service Managers	380	442	16.3%	62	126	188	\$\$\$
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,937	3,368	14.7%	431	671	1,102	\$\$\$\$
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	843	966	14.6%	123	192	315	\$\$\$
Sales Managers	670	757	13.0%	87	197	284	\$\$\$\$
Accountants and Auditors	1,945	2,195	12.9%	250	428	678	\$\$\$
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	639	720	12.7%	81	105	186	\$\$\$\$
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	1,625	1,812	11.5%	187	500	687	\$\$\$\$
Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists	712	793	11.4%	81	157	238	\$\$\$
Secondary School Teachers, Exc Special and Career/Tech Education	1,504	1,670	11.0%	166	420	586	\$\$\$\$
Computer and Information Systems Managers	580	644	11.0%	64	140	204	\$\$\$\$
Financial Managers	1,280	1,421	11.0%	141	234	375	\$\$\$\$
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	612	678	10.8%	66	232	298	\$\$\$
Chief Executives	1,331	1,451	9.0%	120	197	317	\$\$\$\$
Compliance Officers	714	774	8.4%	60	143	203	\$\$\$
Civil Engineers	736	796	8.2%	60	150	210	\$\$\$\$
Computer Programmers	731	786	7.5%	55	169	224	\$\$\$\$
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	899	961	6.9%	62	213	275	\$\$\$
Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists	937	965	3.0%	28	207	235	\$\$\$
<b>Associate Degree or Postsecondary Nondegree Award</b>							
Dental Hygienists	546	733	34.2%	187	124	311	\$\$\$\$
Massage Therapists	306	402	31.4%	96	53	149	\$\$\$\$
Radiologic Technologists	431	564	30.9%	133	75	208	\$\$\$
Registered Nurses	4,862	6,208	27.7%	1,346	968	2,314	\$\$\$\$
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	440	543	23.4%	103	94	197	\$\$\$
Commercial Pilots	876	987	12.7%	111	314	425	\$\$\$\$
Construction Managers	1,010	1,120	10.9%	110	254	364	\$\$\$\$
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	1,130	1,249	10.5%	119	290	409	\$\$\$
Geological and Petroleum Technicians	864	939	8.7%	75	253	328	\$\$\$
General and Operations Managers	3,519	3,735	6.1%	216	649	865	\$\$\$\$
<b>High school diploma or equivalent</b>							
Insurance Sales Agents	394	482	22.3%	88	95	183	\$\$\$
Loan Officers	436	513	17.7%	77	118	195	\$\$\$\$
Administrative Services Managers	1,968	2,252	14.4%	284	501	785	\$\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	2,382	2,697	13.2%	315	649	964	\$\$\$
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	774	865	11.8%	91	203	294	\$\$\$
Carpenters	2,770	3,089	11.5%	319	599	918	\$\$\$
Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	970	1,071	10.4%	101	225	326	\$\$\$\$
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	681	751	10.3%	70	180	250	\$\$\$\$
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	705	771	9.4%	66	151	217	\$\$\$
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	722	789	9.3%	67	190	257	\$\$\$\$
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1,595	1,741	9.2%	146	463	609	\$\$\$
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	3,233	3,514	8.7%	281	979	1,260	\$\$\$
Electricians	2,163	2,348	8.6%	185	586	771	\$\$\$
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,188	1,276	7.4%	88	321	409	\$\$\$
Correctional Officers and Jailers	900	960	6.7%	60	158	218	\$\$\$
<b>Less than high school</b>							
Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	842	899	6.8%	57	177	234	\$\$\$

<sup>1</sup>To rank as a top job, the occupation must 1) rank in the top two wage quartiles, and 2) have projected growth of at least 75 jobs and greater percentage growth than all occupations combined, OR be among the 50 occupations with the most projected openings (of those with wages in the top two quartiles).

<sup>2</sup>Earnings: \$\$\$ = \$54,675 to \$72,060 (\$26.28 to \$34.64 hourly), \$\$\$\$ = More than \$72,060 (\$34.64 hourly).

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