

About Our Homes

Alaska Pioneer Homes

Mission: Providing elder Alaskans a home and community, celebrating life through its final breath.



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Alaska Department of Health & Social Services

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Alaska Pioneer Homes System

The Alaska Pioneer Homes have a proud history of service to Alaskans that predates statehood. A contingent of the U. S. Marines was stationed in Sitka in 1879, and until 1892 the men were quartered in a log barracks built by the Russians. The base was closed in March 1912 and the building stood idle. The people of Sitka were anxious to have them put to use and proposed using them as a home for pioneer prospectors and others who were no longer able to care for themselves.

Alaska became a territory in August 1912 and when the first legislature met, a bill was introduced the following March by Sitka Representative, Arthur G. Shoup, to appropriate \$10,000 and establish the Alaska Pioneers' Home in Sitka. The Naval Department gave permission to use the buildings for that purpose and the home opened in September 1913.

Arthur G. Shoup was appointed the first superintendent and because funds were so scarce, served the first two years without pay. By the early 1930s, in addition to being something of a firetrap, the buildings were becoming dilapidated and expensive to maintain. Congress enacted a law granting the former Naval Reserve to the Territory of Alaska. The present concrete building was then constructed, partly with a federal grant and partly with funds appropriated by the Territorial Legislature. It was completed December 1934. The 1949 legislature provided funds for a Women's Home and a former church adjoining the Pioneer's Home was purchased for that purpose. The arrangement was not wholly satisfactory and in 1956 the new north wing was added to the main building.

In subsequent years five more homes were built throughout the state and admission criteria continued to evolve, reflecting the demographics and needs of the elders. The homes progressed in the following order:

- 1913: The territory established the use of a Marine barracks in Sitka as a home for indigent men.
- 1915: The age requirement of 65 years was instituted.
- 1934: A new building was built in Sitka to replace the Marine barracks. Sitka Pioneer Home currently has accommodations to care for 65 elders.
- 1950: Women were first admitted and housed in a nearby apartment building.
- 1967: The Fairbanks Pioneer Home opened. It currently has accommodations to care for 91 elders.
- 1971: The Palmer Pioneer Home opened.
- 1977: The Anchorage Pioneer Home opened. It currently has accommodations to care for 168 elders.

- 1981: The Ketchikan Pioneer Home opened. It currently has accommodations to care for 45 elders.
- 1988: The Juneau Pioneer Home opened. It currently has accommodations to care for 49 elders
- 2007: The Palmer Home became the first federally certified state Veterans Home in Alaska. It was renamed the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home and currently has accommodations to care for 79 elders.
- 2020: The age requirement was lowered to 60 years

The Alaska Pioneer Homes are licensed to serve 497 elders at any time.

Our Mission

Alaska Pioneer Homes: Providing elder Alaskans a home and community, celebrating life through its final breath.

Since the Alaska Pioneer Homes system began, the mission of the Alaska Pioneer Homes has continued to evolve to best serve the needs of the growing Alaska senior population. Today, many seniors who require assistance choose home and community-based services, and those who enter the Alaska Pioneer Homes do so later in their lives. As of 2020, the average age of residents in the Alaska Pioneer Homes is 86. Some residents have few needs for assistance, while others need extensive care. Many current applicants and residents seek care related to degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

“Eden Alternative[®]” Philosophy of Caring

The Eden Alternative[®] philosophy is learned and practiced[®] by all Alaska Pioneer Homes employees. This philosophy, developed by Dr. William Thomas, seeks to eliminate loneliness, boredom and helplessness as the three major “plagues” of life in a long term care facility. This is accomplished by enhancing the work environment of all employees, while surrounding residents with the best possible human habitat. This habitat includes many plants, animals and children. In this supportive atmosphere, spontaneous and positive experiences occur for our residents.

Memory Care

Many current applicants and residents seek care related to degenerative brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. The physical and behavioral challenges of individuals with dementia often make it impossible for family members to provide necessary care on a 24 hour basis.

Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia disorders tends to strike older individuals, and the number of persons entering the Alaska Pioneer Homes with these illnesses is continuing to increase. Due to the advanced age of the residents, memory care is a primary part of the services provided at the Alaska Pioneer Homes. Approximately 58% of Alaska Pioneer Home residents have some form of dementia.

Alaska Pioneer Home Locations

There are six Alaska Pioneer Homes. The locations are shown on the map below. Alaska Pioneer Homes are licensed assisted living homes owned and operated by the State of Alaska. They operate in accordance with all Alaska statutes and regulations pertaining to assisted living home licensure. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes is located in Juneau and administers all six Alaska Pioneer Homes. Individual Pioneer Homes are managed onsite by assisted living administrators and licensed nurses who provide nursing oversight and consultation. Professional staff provides health-related services to all residents who require them. Other staff members include social service, activity, food service, housekeeping, and maintenance personnel.



Alaska Pioneer Homes Services

What services are available to Alaska Pioneer Home residents?

Services available to residents of the homes include:

- Meal preparation
- Dietary assessment; medically prescribed diets
- Laundry/housekeeping
- Emergency call systems/assistance
- Assistance with activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, dressing, etc.
- Assistance with medications
- Health assessment
- Nursing services
- Recreational opportunities/programs
- Social work services
- Opportunities for spiritual devotion
- Care during periods of illness not requiring hospitalization
- Care especially suited to the needs of persons with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.
- Pharmacy services

The Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program provides pharmaceuticals and pharmacist consultation for the residents of the Alaska Pioneer Homes. The pharmacy and staff are located in the Anchorage Pioneer Home. Staff members include licensed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and billing personnel.

Anyone who resides in an Alaska Pioneer Home may purchase medications through the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program. The pharmacy may or may not provide medications to residents who administer their medications independently without any intervention, reminders, or follow up by staff.

However, all residents whose medications are administered to them by Alaska Pioneer Homes' staff members or who are on the Payment Assistance Program are required to participate in the program. A single-source pharmacy is considered to be the safest and most efficient basis for medication administration throughout the Alaska Pioneer Homes.

For further information on the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program, please refer to the Pharmacy Program booklet.

Levels of Service

The Alaska Pioneer Homes offers five levels of service. Each resident receives a comprehensive assessment to identify her or his appropriate service level.

Level I services include housing, meals, emergency assistance, opportunities for recreation, and required transportation for recreation;

Level II services include level I services, medication management, and assistance with up to two activities of daily living; for assistance with activities of daily living, the resident performs the majority of the effort; during the night shift, the resident is independent in performing activities of daily living and capable of self-supervision;

Level III services are services where the resident provides the majority of the effort for assistance with activities of daily living; during the night shift, the resident is generally independent, with occasional assistance with activities of daily living, limited to an average of two times per week. The level III services include level I services, medication management, and any one of the following:

- (A) assistance with up to four activities of daily living;
- (B) level II and behavior management, excluding complex behaviors; or
- (C) level II and nursing services as described in AS 47.33.020;

Level IV services are services in which assistance provided by a staff member includes hands-on assistance, with the staff member performing the majority of the effort; services will be provided 24 hours a day. The level IV services include level I services, assistance with five or more activities of daily living, medication management, and one of the following:

- (A) behavior management, excluding complex behaviors; or
- (B) nursing services as described in AS 47.33.020;

Level V services include all services that exceed level IV services.

Anchorage Pioneer Home



The Anchorage Pioneer Home was established in 1977 and is a five-story building occupying one third of a city block overlooking an area known as the Park Strip. This greenbelt in the center of the metropolitan Anchorage area divides the business district from the oldest residential area of the city. The Anchorage Pioneer Home sits like a jewel in the crown of this historical community core. Behind the Pioneer Home the city of Anchorage extends to the south and the Chugach Mountains rise majestically to the east, easily visible from most floors of the home. Denali peeks out over the skyscrapers of the downtown area to the north and Cook Inlet lies to the west. The home has accommodations for 168 residents.

Population of Municipality of Anchorage: 291, 845*

Average temperatures: winter ranges from 6° to 20°F and summer ranges from 50° to 70°

Annual precipitation: 16.57 inches of rainfall and 74 inches of snow.

*Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2019 population estimate

Fairbanks Pioneer Home



The Fairbanks Pioneer Home is the second of the six Alaska Pioneer Homes to open. It began serving the community in 1967 shortly before the infamous Chena River flood. The home weathered the flood without major damage and peaceful life for the elders returned shortly afterward. The home is located on 16 quiet acres of birch trees and blueberry patches that displays its beauty all year long, whether under the midnight sun of summer or a quiet blanket of snow in winter. The property is also home to a wide variety of wildlife including moose, fox, eagles, song birds and even a bobcat or two! In all, the Fairbanks Home has accommodations for 91 elders.

Population of Fairbanks North Star Borough: 95,898*

Average temperatures: winter ranges from -19° to 12°F and summer ranges from 27° to 73°F

Annual precipitation: 10.83 inches of rainfall and 65 inches of snow

*Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2019 population estimate

Juneau Pioneer Home



The Juneau Pioneer Home was completed in 1988. The home is nestled in the wetlands along Juneau's Egan Drive and has breathtaking views of nearby mountains and Gastineau Channel that divides the mainland from Douglas Island. Living on the boundary of a true wilderness provides residents the opportunity to view wildlife such as black bears, eagles, ravens, blue herons, kingfishers, porcupines, deer, and squirrels. The Juneau Home has accommodations for 49 elders.

Population of the City and Borough of Juneau: 31,986*

Average temperature: winter ranges from 25° to 35°F and summer ranges from 44° to 65°F

Annual precipitation: 62.24 inches of rainfall and 88 inches of snow.

Note: Juneau is accessible only by boat or plane.

*Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2019 population estimate

Ketchikan Pioneer Home



The Ketchikan Pioneer Home opened its doors to elders in November 1981. Situated on a garden hillside that neighbors Alder Park, the home is on the bus line across the street from the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal and close to the airport ferry terminal. Resident rooms are located on the two upper floors of the three-story building and are divided into three neighborhoods based on each individual's care needs. The convenient central location means the home is a natural hub for family and friends to congregate and visit. The Ketchikan Home has accommodations for 45 elders.

Population of Ketchikan Gateway Borough: 13,739*

Average temperatures: winter ranges from 20° to 29°F and summer ranges from 51° to 65°F

Annual precipitation: 141.2 inches of rainfall.

Note: Ketchikan is located on an island, accessible only by boat or plane.

*Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2019 population estimate

Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home (Palmer)



The originally named Palmer Pioneer Home first opened in 1971 on the former site of the Alaska State Fairgrounds. Nestled in the heart of downtown Palmer, the home is surrounded by beautiful views of the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountain Ranges, as well as, the massive Knik Glacier. In May 2004, the Alaska Legislature approved development of the state's first veterans home. After extensive remodeling and program development to meet U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs requirements, the facility was renamed the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home in 2007. Seventy five percent of the 79 beds in the home are designated for veterans, and 25 percent are available for non-veterans.

Population of Matanuska-Susitna Borough: 106,438*

Average temperatures: winter ranges from 9° to 27°F and summer ranges from 47° to 65°F

Annual precipitation: 16.01 inches of rainfall and 54 inches of snow

*Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2019 population estimate

Sitka Pioneer Home



The Sitka Pioneer Home is the original Alaska Pioneer Home with a history stretching back to the late 1800s. The Pioneer Home program began in 1913 when a vacant U.S. Marine barrack was converted into the Sitka Pioneer Home. The program was created by the first territorial legislature to serve indigent elderly men. The home initially provided housing, meals and basic medical assistance. In the mid-1950s women and Native Alaskans also became eligible for admission. The Sitka Pioneer Home sits on a beautiful campus, renowned for its gorgeous and aromatic rose hedges. The home currently has accommodations to serve 65 elders.

Population of Sitka Borough: 8,532*

Average temperatures: winter ranges from 23° to 35°F and summer ranges from 48° to 61°F

Annual precipitation: 86.72 inches of rainfall and 33 inches of snow.

Note: Sitka is located on an island, accessible only by boat or plane.

*Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2019 population estimate

Fun Facts

Governor: Michael J. Dunleavy

State capital: Juneau

State motto: “North to the Future”

State nickname: “The Last Frontier”

State mineral: Gold

State sport: Dog mushing

State dog: Malamute

State bird: Willow Ptarmigan

State tree: Sitka Spruce

State flower: Forget-me-not

49th State: Became a state January 3, 1959

Land area: 570,373.6 square miles—largest in the U.S.; one-fifth the size of the “Lower 48”

Extreme temperatures: 100°F at Fort Yukon in 1915; - 80°F at Prospect Creek Camp in 1971

Heaviest annual snowfall: 974.5 inches at Thompson Pass near Valdez during the winter of 1952-53

Tallest mountain: Denali, 20,310 feet; tallest in North America

More than half of the world’s glaciers are located in Alaska.

Alaska's name is based on the Eskimo word *Alakshak* meaning “great lands” or “peninsula”.

Contact Information

For further information, please contact the Pioneer Homes Central Office at:

Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes – Central Office

PO Box 110690

Juneau, AK 99811-0690

Phone: Toll free at 1-888-355-3117 or 907-465-4416

Fax: 907-465-4108

Email: alaskapioneerhomes@alaska.gov

Contact information for specific homes

Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home

250 E. Fireweed Ave.

Palmer, AK 99645

907-745-4241

Anchorage Pioneer Home

923 W. 11th Ave.

Anchorage, AK 99501

907-276-3414

Fairbanks Pioneer Home

2221 Egan Ave.

Fairbanks, AK 99701

907-456-4372

Juneau Pioneer Home

4675 Glacier Hwy.

Juneau, AK 99801

907-780-6422

Ketchikan Pioneer Home

141 Bryant St.

Ketchikan, AK 99901

907-225-4111

Sitka Pioneer Home

120 Katlian St.

Sitka, AK 99835

907-747-3213

Other important numbers

Pioneer Home Pharmacy: 1-888-546-7294 (toll free)

This booklet is one of five providing information about Alaska Pioneer Homes.

Other booklets in the series:

Admissions and Discharge

A Matter of Rights

Payment Assistance

Pharmacy Program

www.dhss.alaska.gov/daph