

Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) Senior Snapshot Older Alaskans in 2022

The Alaska Commission on Aging gathers data annually to provide a snapshot in time of the health and well-being of Alaskan residents, age 60 years and older. The Senior Snapshot incorporates the latest data available. However, due to data source limitations, some senior statistics are tracked for ages 60+ and others are tracked for ages 65+.

Below are highlights from the 2022 Senior Snapshot as well as the data sources compiled to complete this report. Thank you to the people and organizations who provided data for this Snapshot.

Population Growth

- In 2022, Alaskans age 60+ represent more than 20% of the State’s total population.
- Alaska’s 60+ population increased by 62% between April 2010 and July of 2021.
- Alaska’s 70+ population increased by 84% between April 2010 and July of 2021.
- Alaska’s 85+ population increased by 87% between April 2010 and July of 2021.
- Alaska’s 85+ population is expected to increase by 500% between 2022 and 2050 to 30,000 seniors, of which, 1/3 will experience Alzheimer’s and Related Dementia.
- Alaska’s senior population has increased in all regions across the state from 2010 to 2021.
- Southeast Alaska continues to have the highest concentration of seniors where almost one in four residents in the region is an adult age 60+

Population by Age Group	Percentage of Senior Population	Seniors in CY2021	Seniors in CY2020	Seniors in CY2019	Seniors in CY2010	Senior Population Change 2010-2021
Age 60-64	32.1%	47,363	46,854	47,404	35,938	24%
Age 65-74	46.1%	67,920	64,484	62,062	35,350	47%
Age 75-84	17.0%	25,097	23,829	22,702	14,877	41%
Age 85+	4.8%	7,127	6,932	6,709	4,711	34%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Workforce and Development, Research and Analysis. Senior Population Growth: Age 65+.

Senior Population by Region and Age Group

Population Age 60+ By Region	Percentage of Total Population CY2021	Seniors in CY2021	Seniors in CY2020	Seniors in CY2019	Seniors in CY2010	Change in Population 2010-2021	Communities in Regions
Statewide	20.1%	147,507	142,099	138,897	90,876	63%	
I. Bethel Area	12.4%	3,299	3,169	3,105	2,266	46%	Bethel, Kusilvak Census Area
II. Interior	19.4%	21,577	20,940	20,164	13,177	64%	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon- Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fairbanks
III. North Slope	11.4%	1,249	1,179	1,137	856	46%	North Slope Borough
IV. Anchorage	19.0%	54,872	52,755	51,904	35,079	56%	Municipality of Anchorage
V. Southcentral	22.2%	40,832	39,310	38,153	22,762	79%	Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, Copper River, Chugach
VI. Northwest	13.7%	2,356	2,270	2,243	1,681	40%	Nome, Northwest Arctic
VII. Southwest	7.8%	3,832	3,754	3,721	2,444	57%	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula
VIII. Aleutians	16.0%	1,395	1,329	1,318	847	65%	Aleutians East, Aleutians West
IX. Southeast	25.0%	18,135	17,393	17,152	11,764	54%	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway-Hoonah- Angoon, Wrangell-Petersburg, Yakutat

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's 2021 population estimates. Regions are those used by the Alaska Department of Health.

Issues Impacting the Lives of Alaskan Seniors

Poverty

The percentage of seniors in the Alaska (age 65+) living below poverty levels is estimated to be 8% to 9.9%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates; Current Population Survey, 2021 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

Mortality Rates

While mortality rates for Alaskan seniors are lower than most of the leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, chronic lower respiratory diseases, and others, Alaskan seniors have a higher mortality rate due to causes linked to behavioral health conditions.

Mortality rates for senior suicide, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, fatal falls, and alcohol-induced deaths are higher for the Alaska senior population than national averages. These figures suggest that behavioral health programs targeted to seniors with depression, other mental illness, and substance abuse problems could have a positive impact on the quality of life for older Alaskans.

Alzheimer's Disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States. More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. With projected growth in the 85+ population in Alaska, ADRD should be a priority for the State in future decades.

Source: Alaska Healthy Analytics & Vital Records, 2020, National Alzheimer's Disease Information, <https://www.alz.org>

Veteran Population in Alaska

Veteran Population	Alaska 2022	Alaska 2021	Alaska 2020	Alaska 2019
Number of Alaskan Veterans Aged 65+	22,569	22,675	22,775	20,421
Percent of Alaskan Veterans Aged 65+	32.3%	32.1%	31.9%	29.7%

Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp

Senior Economic Indicators

Alaska Economic Status Indicators	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Estimated Average Monthly Social Security Benefits	\$1,593	\$1,563	\$1,463	\$1,461	\$1,404
Average Monthly Public Employee Retirement Payments	\$2,133	\$2,022	\$1,966	\$1,946	\$1,872
Number of Seniors Receiving Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) Payments	19,814	19,454	18,949	18,276	17,882
Average Monthly Teachers Retirement System Payment	\$3,176	\$3,065	\$3,051	\$3,017	\$2,965
Number of seniors receiving Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Payments	6,374	6,393	6,228	6,124	6,059

Sources: Fact Sheet Social Security, <https://moneywise.com/managing-money/retirement-planning/states-best-worst-social-security-2022> - Average payment per person for retirement PERS payments. Alaska Dept. of Administration, Division of Retirement & Benefits - figures on PERS benefits include PERS retirees aged 60+ who currently reside in Alaska. AK Dept. of Administration, Div. of Retirement & Benefits - figures on TRS benefits include TRS retirees age 60+ who currently reside in Alaska.

Number of Seniors Age 65+ Receiving Senior Benefits, by Region

Region	October 2022	October 2021	October 2020	October 2019	October 2018	Communities by Regions
I. Bethel Area	549	675	689	678	741	Bethel, Kusilvak Census Area
II. Interior	1,199	1,377	1,358	1,300	1,359	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon-Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fairbanks
III. North Slope	18	25	26	25	30	North Slope Borough
IV. Anchorage	3,836	4,365	4,281	4,097	4,268	Municipality of Anchorage
V. Southcentral	5,388	3,071	2,951	2,790	3,007	Kenai Peninsula, Mat- Su, Copper River, Chugach
VI. Northwest	261	338	334	316	388	Nome, Northwest Arctic
VII. Southwest	288	322	324	319	393	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula
VIII. Aleutians	27	35	40	43	49	Aleutians East, Aleutians West
IX. Southeast	1,103	1,276	1,201	1,155	1,257	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway- Hoonah-Angoon, Wrangell- Petersburg, Yakutat
Statewide Total	12,669	11,484	11,20	10,723	11,492	

Source: Alaska Division of Public Assistance. The Senior Benefits Program pays cash benefits to Alaskan seniors who are age 65 or older and have low to moderate income. Cash payments are \$76, \$175, or \$250 each month depending on income.

Food Stamps and Other Senior Assistance Programs

	FY2021	FY2020	FY2019
Alaskan Seniors 65+ Receiving Alaska Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	7,420	7,125	6,804
Average Dollar Monthly Benefit for Alaskan Seniors 65+ on SNAP	\$258	\$258	\$184
Alaskan Seniors 65+ Receiving Adult Public Assistance	7,584 \$295	9,166 \$236	9,154 \$226
Households With a Senior Member 65+ Receiving Heating Assistance (LIHEAP)	1,740	2,116	2,148

The SNAP program, previously referred to as the Food Stamp Program, provides food benefits to low-income households. Eligible applicants must pass income and assets tests. The gross monthly income test is based on 130% of the current Alaska poverty standard. Information from the Alaska Division of Public Assistance.

Adult Public Assistance is a supplement to SSI, so recipients must be either certified as disabled by the Social Security Administration (with severe long-term disabilities that impose mental or physical limitations on their day-to-day functioning) or be age 65 and older.

The federally funded Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides heating assistance to households below 151% FPL. Source: Alaska Division of Public Assistance.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) and Senior Housing

Housing Statewide	2022	2021	2020	2019
AHFC Total Units of Senior/Disabled Housing	610 units (December)	610 units (December)	610 units (December)	610 units (December)
AHFC Wait List for Senior/Disabled Housing	1,271 (December)	1,239 (November)	1,018 (November)	1,491 (November)
AHFC Wait List for Housing Vouchers	4,050 families (November)	5,390 families (November)	6,636 families (November)	5,791 families (November)

Total AHFC units include HUD properties only. Wait list for senior/disabled housing includes individuals age 62+. All families, regardless of age, are on the housing voucher wait list. Source: Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), December 2022.

Housing Development	FY2022	FY2021	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018
AHFC Senior Housing Units Funded for Development	100 Units	96 Units	73 Units	95 Units	40 Units

Source: Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), December 2022.

Senior Health: Alzheimer’s Disease & Related Dementia (ADRD)

	2025 Alaska Projected	2020 Alaska	2019 Alaska	2010 Alaska	2000 Alaska	2022 US
Number with Alzheimer’s Disease & Related Dementia (Estimate)	11,000	8,500	8,000	5,000	3,400	6,500,000

An estimated 10% of Alaska seniors age 65+ have Alzheimer’s disease.

Source: Alzheimer’s Association: 2022 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures.

<https://www.alz.org/media/Documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

Unpaid Care	2021 Alaska Number of Caregivers	Hours of Unpaid Care in Alaska	Value of Unpaid Care in Alaska	2021 US Number of Caregivers
Caregivers of People with Alzheimer’s or Other Dementias	12,000	21,000,000	\$409,000,000	11,343,000

Source: Alzheimer’s Association: 2022 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures.

<https://www.alz.org/media/Documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

Senior Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health Alaska Seniors Age 65+	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Heavy Drinkers	7.0%	7.9%	8.6%	5.1%	6.7%	3.4%
Daily Smokers	9.3%	7.4%	7.7%	8.4%	6.6%	6.6%
Binge Drinkers	6.8%	8.0%	6.3%	6.3%	7.1%	5.8%
Frequent Mental Distress	7.5%	6.1%	7.5%	8.9%	4.8%	5.4%
Obese Seniors	32.4%	32.3%	30.0%	27.9%	34.6%	36.2%

“Heavy drinking” is defined as adult men having more than two drinks per day and adult women having more than one drink per day. “Smokers” are defined as current smokers. “Obese” individuals are defined as those with a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or greater.

Source: Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; 2016 - 2021

Senior Health

Leading Causes of Death 65+	Alaska 2021 Age 65+ Deaths	Alaska 2021 Age 65+ (per 100,000)	Alaska 2020 Age 65+ Deaths	Alaska 2020 Age 65+ (per 100,000)	Alaska 2019 Age 65+ Deaths	Alaska 2019 Age 65+ (per 100,000)
Suicides	25	25	28	29.8	18	19.7*
Fatal Falls (Accidental)	54	53.9	52	55.3	51	55.9
Other Accidental Deaths	66	65.9	70	74.4	57	62.4
Alcohol-Induced Deaths	63	62.9	30	31.5	37	40.5
Drug-Induced Deaths	15	15.0*	8	8.4*	11	12.1*
Cancer	806	804.8	707	751.9	720	788.8
Heart Diseases	679	678.0	618	657.2	571	625.6
Stroke	206	205.7	165	175.5	162	177.5
Influenza & Pneumonia	31	31.0	37	39.3	30	32.9
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	187	186.7	149	158.5	156	170.9
Alzheimer's Disease	131	130.8	136	144.6	124	138.0
Diabetes Mellitus	122	121.8	112	119.1	74	81.1
Chronic Liver Disease	38	37.9	23	24.5	26	28.5
Parkinson's Disease	43	42.9	46	48.9	31	34.0
Accident/Unintentional Injuries	120	119.8	122	129.7	108	118.3
COVID-19	466	465.3	181	192.5	N/A	N/A

**Rates based on fewer than 20 occurrences are statistically unreliable and should be used with caution. Source: Alaska Division of Public Health, Health Analytics and Vital Records Section via email 12/13/2022. Crude rates are per 100,000 U.S. population, Age 65+.*

2021 COVID-19 - Case and Death Counts by Age, AK Residents

	60 – 69 Yrs.	70 – 79 Yrs.	80+ Yrs.	Total 60+	Percentage of people 60+
COVID-19 Cases	8,595	3,747	1,484	13,826	9.68%
COVID-19 Deaths	188	189	167	544	0.38%

Source: Alaska Department of Health Coronavirus Response Hub, <https://covid-19-csv-files-database-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/> and Alaska Division of Public Health, Health Analytics and Vital Records Section via email 12/14/2022

Senior Safety

Long-Term Care Ombudsman	2021	2020	2019	2018
Unannounced Visits to Senior Assisted Living Homes	269	403	1,049	1,085
Complaints	292	379	583	-
Opened Cases	215	282	367	-
Active Volunteer Ombudsmen	21	70	60	62

Source: Alaska Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the 2021 Annual Report.

Adult Protective Services	FY2022	FY2021	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018
Reports of Harm	*	*	5,962	6,373	6,350
Referred to APS Investigators	*	*	1,250	1,306	1,622
Screened In For Investigation	*	*	2,136	2,136	1,858

Intakes age 60+. Adult Protective Services (APS) APS responds to reports of harm within 10 days.

Source: Adult Protective Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services.

* Data unavailable at publication. Check for most current version of this publication here:
https://health.alaska.gov/acoa/Documents/ACoA_seniorsnapshot_2023.pdf

Eligible Medicare Beneficiaries

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Alaskans on Medicare	106,905	103,646	102,361	98,002	93,987	90,229

Source for 2020-2022: Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/MCRAAdvPartDEnrolData/Monthly-Enrollment-by-State>

Home and Community Based Grant Services for Seniors

Home and community-based grant services provide low-cost evidence-based services that allow seniors to remain independent longer and delay need for nursing home care. Grant funded services include meals, transportation, homemaker, chore, legal assistance, health promotion & disease prevention, adult day, respite, family caregiver support, Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementia education & support, case management, legal assistance, Medicare counseling & outreach, and information and referral.

	FY2022	FY2021
State and Federal Funding for Senior Grant Services	\$17,602,273	\$16,196,197
Number of Individuals 60+ Served	19,022	18,577
Average Cost per Individual 60+	\$925.36	\$871.84

Source: SDS Grants Unit, SAMS data. Prior fiscal years are not included due to a change in how the data is collected and reported. Prior Senior Snapshots can be used to access previous data.

Assisted Living and Long-Term Care: Alaska Pioneer Homes

The State of Alaska owns and operates six licensed assisted living homes, including a state veterans' home, known collectively as the Alaska Pioneer Homes. These homes are in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Palmer, and Sitka. The six Alaska Pioneer Homes are licensed for 506 beds in total. Approximately 59.6% of Alaska Pioneer Home residents have some form of dementia.

To be eligible for the Pioneer Homes, one must be 60 years or older, be a resident for at least one year, and complete an application and qualify for the active wait list. To qualify for the active wait list, the senior must be willing and ready to move into a Pioneer Home within 30 days of an offer.

Source: Alaska Pioneer Homes, December 2022

Pioneer Home	Alaska 2022	Alaska 2021	Alaska 2020	Alaska 2019	Alaska 2018	Alaska 2017	Alaska 2016	Alaska Baseline
Residents at Level III & IV care	70%	68%	66.3%	48.3%	56.8%	58.0%	54.3%	46.1%
Applicants on Active Wait List	248	186	238	201	242	266	361	374
Resident Average Age	83.5	84.8	84.7	86.3	86.3	86.5	86.2	76

The Cost of Long-Term Care

Long-Term care involves a variety of services designed to meet a person’s health or personal care needs. These services help people live as independently and safely as possible when they can no longer perform everyday activities on their own. The cost of long-term care costs varies based on the amount and types of care provided. Examples of long-term care provided in the community are personal care, adult day care, assisted living, transportation, and home delivered meals. Long term care can also be provided in a nursing home and is much more expensive.

Source: State of Alaska Automated Budget system, Final Auth 20 Report, Harmony, and COGNOS.

Long Term Care: Daily and Annual Costs – Private Pay

Long Term Care	Alaska 2021	Alaska 2020	Alaska 2019	U.S. 2020
Nursing home costs – private room, median daily rate	\$1,036/day	\$1,196/day	\$907/day	\$290/day
Nursing home costs – private room, median yearly rate, private pay	\$378,140/year	\$436,540/year	\$330,148/year	\$105,850/year
Assisted Living Home costs – average median daily rate	\$225/day	\$218/day	\$207/day	\$141/day
Assisted Living Home costs – average annual median rate	\$81,960/year	\$79,590/year	\$72,000/year	\$51,600/year
Home Health Care Costs: Home Health Aide – median daily rate	\$188/day	\$176/day	\$169/day	\$150/day
Home Health Care Costs: Home Health Aide – annual median rate	\$68,640/year	\$64,156/year	\$61,776/year	\$51,600/year

Source: Genworth Long Term Care Cost Survey Across the United States, 2021. <https://www.genworth.com/about-us/industry-expertise/cost-of-care.html>. Nursing home cost is based on a private room. Alaska has the highest cost of skilled nursing facility care in the country, and costs almost four times as much as the national average. Alaska has the 2nd highest median cost per year for Assisted Living Home costs, The District of Columbia has this highest cost at \$83,730 and the lowest annual cost is Missouri at \$36,000. Data source: <https://pro.genworth.com/riiproweb/productinfo/pdf/298701.pdf>

Medicaid LTSS Supports	FY2021	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
Alaskans Living Independently Waiver, Age 65+	*	1,598	1,532	1,355	1,356
Personal Care Services and Community First Choice Age 60 +	*	2,506	3,178	2,626	3,179

*To qualify for services under the Alaskans Living Independently Waiver, individuals must be age 65 years or older, income-eligible, and must meet nursing home level-of-care requirements.

** Data unavailable at publication. Check for most current version of this publication here:
https://health.alaska.gov/acoa/Documents/ACoA_seniorsnapshot_2023.pdf*

This report was prepared by the Alaska Commission on Aging. Call 907-465-3250 for more information.