

# Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) Senior Snapshot Older Alaskans in 2023

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 2023 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 2023, Alaskans aged 60+ (156,832) represent **more than 21%** of the State’s total population (736,812).
- Alaska’s 60+ population **increased by 73%** between April 2010 and July of 2023.
- Alaska’s 65+ population **increased by 101%** between April 2010 and July of 2023.
- Alaska’s 85+ population **is expected to increase by 500%** between 2023 and 2050 to 30,000+ seniors, of which, an estimated 1/3 will experience Alzheimer’s and Related Dementia.
- Alaska’s senior population **has increased in all regions** across the state from 2010 to 2023.
- Southeast Alaska continues to have the highest concentration of seniors: more than **one in four** residents in the region is age 60+

Population by Age Group	Percentage of Senior Population	Seniors in CY2023	Seniors in CY2022	Seniors in CY2021	Seniors in CY2020	Seniors in CY2010	Senior Population Change 2010-2023
Age 60-64	29.55%	46,342	47,363	47,473	47,225	35,938	29%
Age 65-74	46.73%	73,291	72,170	69,663	65,197	35,350	107%
Age 75-84	18.92%	29,667	28,101	25,536	23,469	14,877	99%
Age 85+	4.80%	7,532	7,305	7,065	6,519	4,711	60%

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

## Population (60+) by Region

Population Age 60+ By Region	Census Areas	Seniors in CY2023	Seniors in CY2022	Seniors in CY2021	Seniors in CY2010	Change 2010- 2023
<b>Statewide</b>		<b>156,832</b>	<b>154,939</b>	<b>149,809</b>	<b>90,876</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>I. Bethel Area</b>	Bethel, Kusilvak Census Area	3,543	3,406	3,318	2,266	56%
<b>II. Interior</b>	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon- Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fairbanks	21,245	21,334	21,297	13,177	61%
<b>III. North Slope</b>	North Slope Borough	1,288	1,317	1,306	856	50%
<b>IV. Anchorage</b>	Municipality of Anchorage	59,149	58,590	56,640	35,079	69%
<b>V. Southcentral</b>	Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, Copper River, Chugach	45,110	43,980	39,942	22,762	98%
<b>VI. Northwest</b>	Nome, Northwest Arcitc	2,447	2,383	2,332	1,681	46%
<b>VII. Southwest</b>	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula	4,006	3,948	3,815	2,444	64%
<b>VIII. Aleutians</b>	Aleutians East, Aleutians West	1,192	1,271	1,168	847	41%
<b>IX. Southeast</b>	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway-Hoonah- Angoon, Wrangell-Petersburg, Yakutat	18,852	18,710	19,991	11,764	60%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's 2022 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 8.3%.

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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 2023	Alaska 2022	Alaska 2021	Alaska 2020	Alaska 2019
Number of Alaskan Veterans Aged 65+	22,775	22,569	22,675	22,775	20,421
Percent of Alaskan Veterans Aged 65+	31.9%	32.3%	32.1%	31.9%	29.7%

Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics  
[https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran\\_Population.asp](https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp)

## Senior Economic Indicators

Alaska Economic Status Indicators	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Estimated Average Monthly Social Security Benefits	\$1,797	\$1,593	\$1,563	\$1,463	\$1,461
Average Monthly Public Employee Retirement Payments	\$2,292	\$2,133	\$2,022	\$1,966	\$1,946
Number of Seniors Receiving Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) Payments	19,999	19,814	19,454	18,949	18,276
Average Monthly Teachers Retirement System Payment	\$3,372	\$3,176	\$3,065	\$3,051	\$3,017
Number of seniors receiving Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Payments	6,364	6,374	6,393	6,228	6,124

Sources: Fact Sheet Social Security, [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/stat\\_snapshot/](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/stat_snapshot/)  
 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	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	Communities by Regions
I. Bethel Area	565	549	675	689	678	Bethel, Kusilvak Census Area
II. Interior	1,193	1,199	1,377	1,358	1,300	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon-Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fairbanks
III. North Slope	17	18	25	26	25	North Slope Borough
IV. Anchorage	3,923	3,836	4,365	4,281	4,097	Municipality of Anchorage
V. Southcentral	2,862	2,501	3,071	2,951	2,790	Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, Copper River, Chugach
VI. Northwest	259	261	338	334	316	Nome, Northwest Arctic
VII. Southwest	294	288	322	324	319	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula
VIII. Aleutians	29	27	35	40	43	Aleutians East, Aleutians West
IX. Southeast	1,121	1,103	1,276	1,201	1,155	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon, Wrangell- Petersburg, Yakutat
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>10,263</b>	<b>12,669</b>	<b>11,484</b>	<b>11,204</b>	<b>10,723</b>	

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
<b>Alaskan Seniors 65+ Receiving Alaska Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</b>	7,420	7,125	6,804
<b>Average Dollar Monthly Benefit for Alaskan Seniors 65+ on SNAP</b>	\$258	\$258	\$184
<b>Alaskan Seniors 65+ Receiving Adult Public Assistance</b>	7,584 \$295	9,166 \$236	9,154 \$226
<b>Households With a Senior Member 65+ Receiving Heating Assistance (LIHEAP)</b>	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	2023	2022	2021	2020
<b>AHFC Total Units of Senior/Disabled Housing</b>	610 units (December)	610 units (December)	610 units (December)	610 units (December)
<b>AHFC Wait List for Senior/Disabled Housing</b>	1,911 (December)	1,271 (December)	1,239 (November)	1,018 (November)
<b>AHFC Wait List for Housing Vouchers</b>	6,060 families (November)	4,050 families (November)	5,390 families (November)	6,636 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
<b>AHFC Senior Housing Units Funded for Development</b>	40 Units	96 Units	73 Units	95 Units	40 Units

*Source: Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), December 2023.*

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

	2025 Alaska (Projected)	2020 Alaska	2010 Alaska	2000 Alaska	2023 US
<b>Number with Alzheimer’s Disease &amp; Related Dementia (Estimate)</b>	11,000	8,500	5,000	3,400	6,700,000

*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
<b>Caregivers of People with Alzheimer’s or Other Dementias</b>	25,000	39,000,000	\$795,000,000

*Source: Alzheimer’s Association: 2023 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+	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>Heavy Drinkers</b>	7.1%	7.0%	7.9%	8.6%	5.1%	6.7%
<b>Daily Smokers</b>	9.6%	9.3%	7.4%	7.7%	8.4%	6.6%
<b>Binge Drinkers</b>	6.8%	6.8%	8.0%	6.3%	6.3%	7.1%
<b>Frequent Mental Distress</b>	8.5%	7.5%	6.1%	7.5%	8.9%	4.8%
<b>Obese Seniors</b>	27.8%	32.4%	32.3%	30.0%	27.9%	34.6%

*“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 – 2023*

*<https://alaska-dph.shinyapps.io/BRFSS/>*

## Senior Health

Leading Causes of Death 65+	Alaska 2022 Age 65+ Deaths	Alaska 2022 Age 65+ (per 100,000)	Alaska 2021 Age 65+ Deaths	Alaska 2021 Age 65+ (per 100,000)	Alaska 2020 Age 65+ Deaths	Alaska 2020 Age 65+ (per 100,000)
<b>Suicides</b>	24	22.7	25	25	28	29.8
<b>Fatal Falls (Accidental)</b>	54	51.1	54	53.9	52	55.3
<b>Other Accidental Deaths</b>	71	67.2	66	65.9	70	74.4
<b>Alcohol-Induced Deaths</b>	51	48.3	63	62.9	30	31.5
<b>Drug-Induced Deaths</b>	16	15.2	15	15.0*	8	8.4*
<b>Cancer</b>	751	711.1	806	804.8	707	751.9
<b>Heart Diseases</b>	678	642	679	678.0	618	657.2
<b>Stroke</b>	167	158.1	206	205.7	165	175.5
<b>Influenza &amp; Pneumonia</b>	41	38.8	31	31.0	37	39.3
<b>Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</b>	176	166.7	187	186.7	149	158.5
<b>Alzheimer's Disease</b>	173	163.8	131	130.8	136	144.6
<b>Diabetes Mellitus</b>	123	116.5	122	121.8	112	119.1
<b>Chronic Liver Disease</b>	34	32.2	38	37.9	23	24.5
<b>Parkinson's Disease</b>	61	57.8	43	42.9	46	48.9
<b>Accident/Unintentional Injuries</b>	125	118.4	120	119.8	122	129.7
<b>COVID-19</b>	200	189.4	466	465.3	181	192.5

*\*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+.*

## Senior Safety

Long-Term Care Ombudsman	2023	2022	2021	2020
Unannounced Visits to Senior Assisted Living Homes	827	620	269	403
Complaints	355	307	292	379
Opened Cases	248	218	215	282
Active Volunteer Ombudsmen	20	25	21	70

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

Adult Protective Services	FY2023	FY2022	FY2021	FY2020	FY2019
Reports of Harm	8,255	7,530	6,423	6,735	6,373
Referred to APS Investigators	1,557	1,826	1,561	1,428	1,306
Screened In For Investigation	1,761	1,997	1,905	1,968	2,136

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.

# Eligible Medicare Beneficiaries

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
<b>Alaskans on Medicare</b>	110,140	106,905	103,646	102,361	98,002	93,987

Source for 2020-2023: 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.

	FY2023
<b>State and Federal Funding for Senior Grant Services</b>	\$18,368,485
<b>Number of Individuals 60+ Served</b>	19,971
<b>Average Cost per Individual 60+</b>	\$685.88

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 59.5% 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 2023

Pioneer Home	Alaska 2023	Alaska 2022	Alaska 2021	Alaska 2020	Alaska 2019	Alaska 2018	Alaska 2017	Alaska Baseline
Residents at Level III & IV care	65%	70%	68%	66.3%	48.3%	56.8%	58.0%	46.1%
Applicants on Active Wait List	243	248	186	238	201	242	266	374
Resident Average Age	82.2	83.5	84.8	84.7	86.3	86.3	86.5	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. 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 \$88,829 and the lowest annual cost is Missouri at \$38,192

### Long Term Care: Daily and Annual Costs – Private Pay

Long Term Care	Alaska 2023	Alaska 2022	Alaska 2021	U.S. 2023
Nursing home costs – private room, median <b>daily</b> rate	\$1,099/day	\$1,067/day	\$1,036/day	\$297/day
Nursing home costs – private room, median <b>yearly</b> rate, private pay	\$401,169/year	\$389,484/year	\$378,140/year	\$108,405/year
Assisted Living Home costs – average median <b>daily</b> rate	\$238/day	\$231/day	\$225/day	\$148/day
Assisted Living Home costs – average <b>annual</b> median rate	\$86,951/year	\$84,419/year	\$81,960/year	\$54,000/year
Home Health Care Costs: Home Health Aide – median <b>daily</b> rate	\$200/day	\$194/day	\$188/day	\$169/day
Home Health Care Costs: Home Health Aide – <b>annual</b> median rate	\$72,820/year	\$70,699/year	\$68,640/year	\$61,776/year

Source: Genworth Long Term Care Cost Survey Across the United States, 2023.

<https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care/cost-of-care-trends-and-insights.html>. Nursing home cost is based on a private room.

Medicaid LTSS Supports	FY2023	FY2022	FY2021	FY2020	FY2019
Alaskans Living Independently Waiver, Age 65+	1,766	1,699	1,575	1,598	1,532
Personal Care Services and Community First Choice Age 60+	2,013	2,022	2,495	2,506	3,178

Source: State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, Harmony database.

\*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.

**Prepared by the Alaska Commission on Aging. For more information, call 907-465-3250.**