

Population overview of Alaska

Alaska's name is derived from the Aleut word Alyeska, meaning "great land." Alaska is the largest state, encompassing about one fifth of the total land mass of the contiguous United States. Because of its size, there are huge variations in topography and climate from one part of the state to the other.

Population

The estimated 1999 population of Alaska was 622,000¹. As of April 1, 2000, the population of Alaska numbered 626,932 persons.² Alaska currently ranks 48th in population out of the 50 states; only Wyoming and Vermont have fewer people. Alaska's population density is 1.06 persons per square mile.

Race/Ethnicity

In 1999, the distribution of racial and ethnic groups in Alaska was as follows¹:

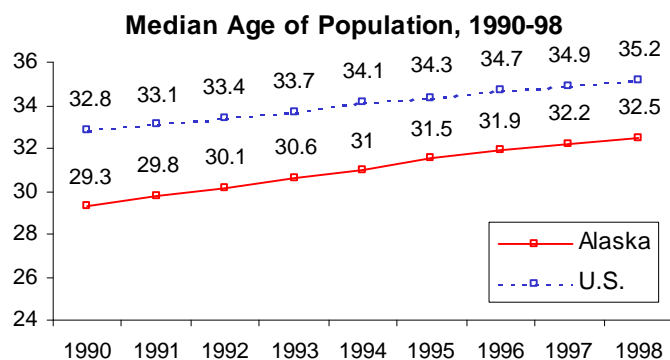
- White: 73.7%
- Alaska Native: 16.8%
- African-American: 4.4%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 5.0%
- Hispanic origin (all races): 4.7%

Area of Residence

Approximately 42 percent of Alaska's population live in Anchorage. Among African-Americans, 69 percent live in Anchorage. Of those with Hispanic origin, 58 percent live in Anchorage. Seventy-nine percent of Alaska's population is concentrated in six census areas: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, and Matanuska-Susitna. On the other hand, only 39 percent of the Alaska Native population live in those six census areas.¹ Alaska Natives are distributed widely throughout Alaska; many live in over 200 communities delineated as Alaska Native Villages.

Age of the Population

Although the population in Alaska is younger than the national average, the median age has been steadily increasing.¹ The 1999 estimate of persons aged 65 years and older is 33,641, comprising 5.4% of the population. The estimate represents a 50% increase since 1990 in the number of persons aged 65 years and older in Alaska.



Data Source: AK Population Overview 1999 Estimates; Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit

References

1. Alaska Department of Labor, Research & Analysis Section, Demographics Unit, Alaska Population Overview, 1999 Estimates
2. <http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/tab02.pdf> or www.labor.state.ak.us/research/cgin/cen.htm