

Figure 7. Job Centers, Regional Training Centers, and UA Campuses

#### Training Clearinghouse

DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section maintains the "Alaska Training Clearinghouse," which is a database of postsecondary providers and programs. It lists over 130 training providers offering several hundred training programs in a variety of industries, including the postsecondary programs listed above.

## Job Considerations to Stay in Alaska

### Description

*What are Meaningful Vocational Options for Alaskans?*

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# UA Campuses, Regional Training Centers, and Job Centers

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Alaska's economy is very specific about what human resources it needs. To be successful in this job market, training after receiving a high school diploma or GED must consider what have been identified as in-demand **priority occupations**.

Let's look back a few years and bring the needs of Alaska's economy forward to today.

### **Alaska Economy Reality before the Covid-19 Pandemic**

**The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD)** in July of 2017 issued its monthly *Economic Trends* magazine looking at the cost of living in Alaska. At that time Economist **Neal Fried** reported that inflation hovered near a record low for a third straight year during 2017, with the **Anchorage Consumer Price Index** increasing just 0.5 percent. *That rate has been lower just four other times since 1960, when the Bureau of Labor Statistics began producing inflation data for Anchorage*, according to this report.

[1]Alaska Labor Trends Publication, July 2018

The Anchorage rate of inflation was much higher than the national rate over prior years, due mostly to a cooling Anchorage housing market, with continuing recession. By contrast, the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017 increased at the end of July by 4.1 percent (April through June). This is the fastest growth in four years with Outside housing markets generally robust.

[2]USA Today, July 27, 2018

**A prosperous Outside economy provides incentive for young Alaskans to leave for better job opportunities elsewhere.**

*No other economic indicator has more daily ramifications for people than inflation. It's tied to bargaining agreements, wage negotiations, child support payments, real estate agreements, and minimum wage adjustments. Because inflation has been so low, Alaska raised its minimum wage by just a nickel in 2017 and four cents in 2018, explained Fried in that same article.*

### **Today's Inflation Rate**

**Further, Alaska's economy was rated worst in the United States in the third quarter of 2017, according to *Business Insider*: Alaska is among the top 10 state's GDP rates—with a per capita of \$70,574—while average weekly wage rate is \$1,012.09. Alaska's labor market was the weakest in the country with a December 2017 unemployment rate of 7.3 percent—one of only two states that lost nonfarm payroll jobs.**

[3]Business Insider Ranking of the States

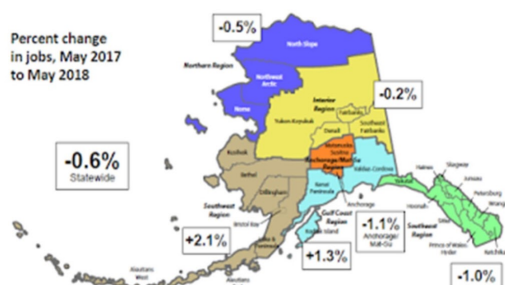
Good paying jobs in Alaska are reserved for people trained for them, but it costs more to live in Alaska—always has. That is the first reality of anyone expecting to make a living here. The second reality is that this state has been losing jobs; May 2018 was the 32<sup>nd</sup> consecutive month Alaska has recorded job losses—down -0.6 percent statewide.

I reference pre-pandemic status of the state economy so we can build a strategy from what we had before to what we need now.

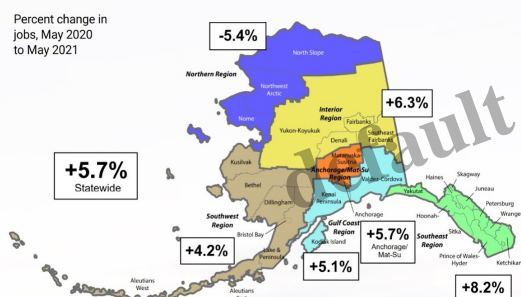
Given this reality, what are the possibilities for a young person determined to stay in Alaska expecting to enter a career that would provide long-term quality employment security? Let's look at the unemployment profile:

Unemployment is highest in rural Alaska, according to DOLWD: During May of 2018 the Interior Region was at 7.0% unemployment, Northern Region was 12.1%, Southwest Region was 11.8%, Gulf Coast Region was 7.3% and Southeast Region was 5.7%, bettering the Anchorage/Mat-Su rate of unemployment, which was 6.4%.

### Employment by Region



### Employment by Region



Information from the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Current Employment by Region shows increase of employment availability since 2017.

## Basic Skills are Necessary to Access Higher Level Training

An estimated 92 percent of Alaskans have a high school diploma or higher, compared to 86 percent nationally. This is good as far as it goes, but the academic outcomes of Alaska Government Schools makes this a meaningless statistic.

During the mid-2000s, **Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exams (HSGQE)** under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* initiative were given twice to high school sophomores, and twice again each successive year—11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades—until passed. HSGQE measured 10<sup>th</sup> grade skills. *Certificates of Graduation* were given in lieu of diplomas until the HSGQE test was passed, even allowing students to take the test when they were no longer in attendance.

When the *Alaska Legislature* revoked requirement to take the HSGQE in 2014—with passage of Gov. Bill Walker's HB 278—all students who could not pass it were given their diplomas retroactively, thus reducing the value of all public education graduation certifications for the past nearly two decades

[4]Anchorage Daily News story regarding conclusion of standards requirements for Alaska high school graduates, June 6, 2014

## But those former students still must find jobs.

Using The *Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Plan 2020-2023* we can **examine which** Alaska jobs have good potential for employment given targeted training. According to this report, Alaska enjoys a concentration of typically high-wage natural resource and mining jobs that are more than three times as concentrated here than in other parts of the nation.

### [5] *Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Plan 2020-2023*

See Figure 2 for a snapshot of statewide employment by industry. Maritime and mining are two important sectors of Alaska's economy that do not show up on a chart like this that uses standard government categories for employment. Though the numbers are not strictly comparable, Alaska's maritime sector has an estimated workforce of more than 70,000. Mining employment in Alaska, dominated by the state's six major producing mines, has been estimated at 4,600 direct jobs, which support thousands of additional indirect jobs.

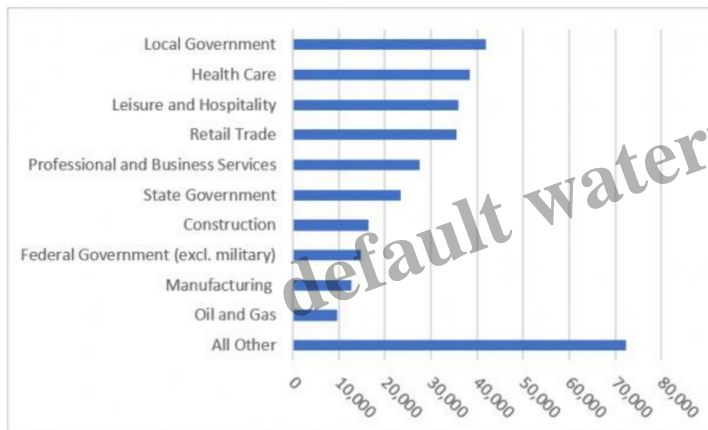


Figure 2. Alaska Employment by Industry (2019)

From the 230 page WIOA Report, these are Alaska job categories to consider:

## Employer Training to Supplement Public Education for “Priority Occupations”

Alaska hire—the prioritizing of Alaskans over bringing other skilled workers to the state—has always been a political challenge, so methods have been developed to measure it. Alaska has long been the only state that requires employers to report the occupations of their workers as part of mandatory unemployment insurance reporting.

## Figure 2. Alaska Employment

### (i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and

### Overall Growth

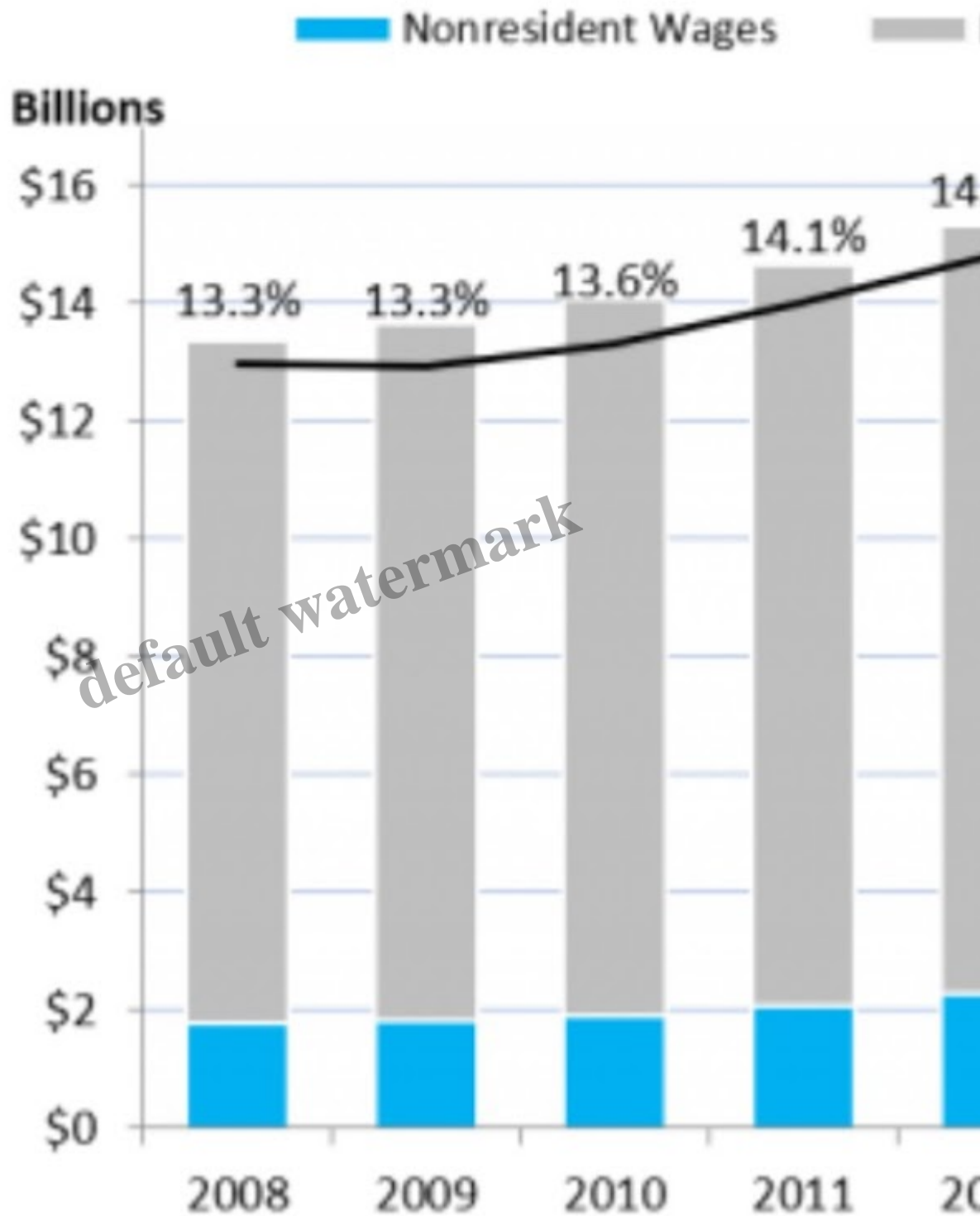
Alaska is projected to gain 17,000 jobs between 2014 and 2026, a period of 5.1 percent. The health care and social assistance sector is projected to grow at 21 percent, followed by leisure and hospitality at 18 percent.

Mining employment, which includes oil and gas extraction, is projected to grow 26 percent between 2014 and 2026 and construction is expected to grow 14 percent.

Economic Factors of Resident vs Non-Resident Workers

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**Figure 5. Resident**

Looking at Alaska's economic regions gives  
and nonresident workers in terms of jobs  
large factor. Alaska's Northern Region pro

This detailed occupational data reported by employers, together with Permanent Fund application data on residency of individual workers, allows Alaska to produce a report each year showing the industries and occupations with the highest percent of nonresident hires. Certain “Priority Occupations” have been identified as generally providing a livable wage and being either difficult to fill with qualified Alaskans or in high demand as a result of projected growth or attrition/turnover.

[6]Alaska Department of Labor report: resident vs non-resident employment

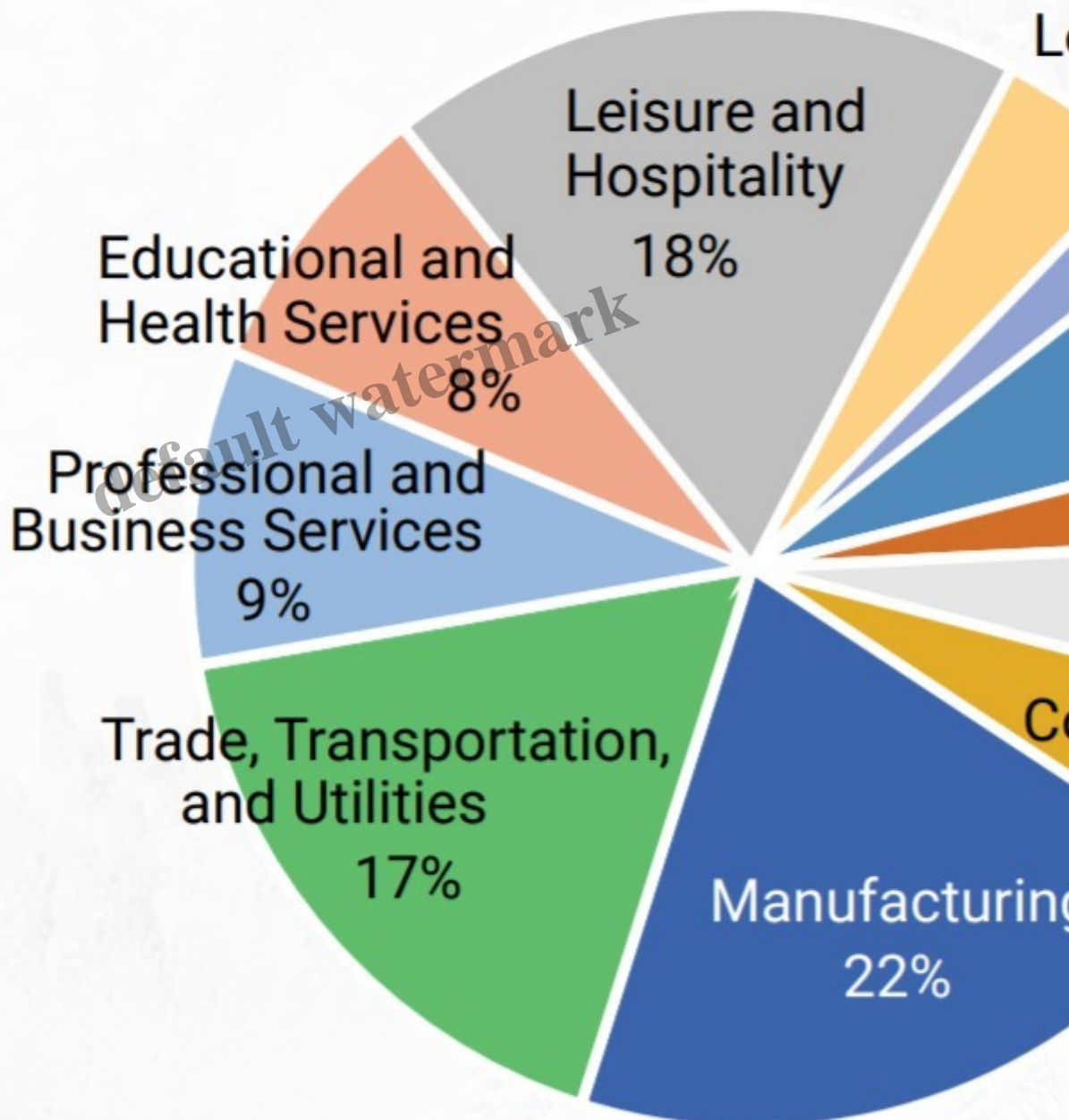
When considering training for future employment the smart person will look at categories of employment currently held by non-residents offering high pay.

**Priority Industries require certain skills in Alaska’s Workforce.**

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# Where nonresidents work



Certain Alaska industries have been identified as *Priority Industries* because they are thriving in Alaska and need employees in identified *Priority Occupations*. **Reliance on nonresident workers in priority industries and in-demand occupations was explored in a 2016 study by *The McDowel Group*, entitled: titled *Cross-Industry Workforce Development Priorities*.**

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# Occupations with large numbers of

Resi

- Seafood Processing Workers, Except Surimi and Fish Roe
- Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers
- Retail Salespersons
- Waiters and Waitresses
- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
- Fast Food and Counter Workers
- Cashiers
- Cooks, Restaurant
- Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers
- Tour Guides and Escorts
- Fishing and Hunting Workers
- Registered Nurses
- Construction Laborers
- Food Preparation Workers
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
- Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
- Sailors and Marine Oilers
- Dishwashers
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Office Clerks, General
- Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels
- Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other
- Material Moving Workers, All Other
- Carpenters
- General and Operations Managers
- Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks
- Security Guards
- Electricians
- Bartenders
- Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas
- Chefs and Head Cooks
- Managers, All Other

This study identified key skills, trainings, and concepts needed across Alaska’s construction, oil and gas, mining, health care, and maritime industries. ***The Alaska Process Industry Consortium (APICC)***, made up of companies in those Priority Industries, paid for the study. The goal was to identify priority occupations and workforce needs in common between the various priority employers.

[7] McDowell Group Cross-Industry Workforce Development Priorities Report, PG 1

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# CROSS-INDUSTRY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

FOR THE ALASKA MINING, OIL & GAS,  
CONSTRUCTION, MARITIME, AND  
HEALTH CARE INDUSTRIES

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PREPARED FOR THE ALASKA PROCESS INDUSTRY CAREERS CONSORTIUM

**A young person looking for a skill set leading to a broad-based career in Alaska’s economy should consider what they want to do and how they might assure employability, as explained in this study.**

Pathways of interest in those industries include 1. Manufacturing production process development, 2. Engineering and technology, 3. Transportation operations, 4. Therapeutic services, 5. Construction, 6. Natural resources systems, and 7. Maintenance, Installation, and Repair.

The McDowell study found: “Common skills needed include critical thinking, active listening, reading comprehension, social perceptiveness, speaking, writing, complex problem solving, mathematics and science, time management, and active learning.”

**Instructional note: This is boilerplate jargon for what employers want in ANY high skilled position. Basic skills, plus training for specific employability lead to a workplace tailored for Alaska’s economy.**

From the McDowell Report: The following first pair of charts detail specific top “priority occupation” skilled jobs in Alaska, with number of expected openings, and wage ranges available.

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## ALASKA DOL&WD TOP JOBS

The Alaska DOL&WD conducts an occupational forecast every two years, with the last forecast published in October 2014 (see Table 7).<sup>11</sup> Expected openings include openings from attrition/turnover as well as new jobs created during

the forecast period. Wage quartile signs; \$\$\$\$ represents the top quartile (\$73,245 annually) and \$\$\$ is equal to or below \$73,245.

Table 7 Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development "Top Jobs"

PRIORITY OCCUPATION	DEGREE REQUIRED	EXPECTED OPENINGS 2013-2022
Registered Nurses	Associate Degree or Postsecondary Nondegree Award	1867
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	High School Diploma or equivalent	1344
General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's Degree	1005
Carpenters	High School Diploma or equivalent	956
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	Bachelor's Degree	867
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Admin Support Workers	High School Diploma or equivalent	822
Electricians	High School Diploma or equivalent	791
Administrative Services Managers	Bachelor's Degree	702
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	High School Diploma or equivalent	627
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	Bachelor's Degree	597
Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's Degree	522
Secondary School Teachers, Except Spec and Career/Technical Education	Bachelor's Degree	517
Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's Degree	412
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	Associate Degree or Postsecondary Nondegree Award	412
Construction Managers	Bachelor's Degree	392
Commercial Pilots	High School Diploma or equivalent	391
Geological and Petroleum Technicians	Associate Degree or Postsecondary Nondegree Award	378
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	High School Diploma or equivalent	378
Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	High School Diploma or equivalent	360
Civil Engineers	Postsecondary	330

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PRIORITY OCCUPATION	DEGREE REQUIRED
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	High School Diploma or
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	Bachelor's Degree
Dental Hygienists	Associate Degree or Post Nondegree Award
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	Bachelor's Degree
Sales Managers	Bachelor's Degree
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	High School Diploma or
Middle School Teachers, Except Spec and Career/Tech Ed	Bachelor's Degree
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	High School Diploma or
Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists	Bachelor's Degree
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	Associate Degree or Post Nondegree Award
Civil Engineers	Bachelor's Degree
Computer and Information Systems Managers	Bachelor's Degree
Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	High School Diploma or
Petroleum Engineers	Bachelor's Degree
Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers	Bachelor's Degree
Correctional Officers and Jailers	High School Diploma or
Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary School	Master's Degree
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	High School Diploma or
Lawyers	Doctoral or Professional

Of 53 listed Priority Occupations in this report, 17 require a minimum of HS Diploma/GED while 8 more mandate an Associate Degree or Postsecondary Non-degree Award. 21 other job categories call for a Bachelor degree and only 3 require a Master's Degree.

Given this cross-section of job categories, a person seeking career stability by training into skills having multiple priority employment possibilities, can also cross reference priority jobs to skills with the following charts:

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# COMMONALITIES BETWEEN INDUSTRIES

## OCCUPATIONS

Table 8 combines the priority occupations of the five industries documented in this report and presents them by total expected openings predicted by the Alaska Department of Labor for the next decade. It is important to

note total on jobs in Alaska to the five inc Check marks occupation w

Table 8 Expected Job Openings, Total Jobs, and Average Salary for Priority Occupations in Oil & Gas, Maritime, Construction, and Health Care Industries

OCCUPATION	EXPECTED OPENINGS 2012-2022	NUMBER OF JOBS 2014
Direct Care Worker	3,502	13,042
Nurses	1,954	6,809
Operating Engineers	1,344	5,751
Carpenters	956	5,427
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	901	4,873
Electricians	791	3,193
Behavioral Health Clinicians	700	1,768
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	627	2,480
Vessel Operations	623	2,504
Geo/Chemical/Env. Lab Techs	566	1,300
Equipment Maintenance	504	1,940
Oil/Gas Drilling	499	3,125
Electrical and Instrumentation	416	1,405
Process and Plant Operations	409	2,071
Construction Managers	392	1,753
Geological and Petroleum Technicians	378	781

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OCCUPATION	EXPECTED OPENINGS 2012-2022	NUMBER OF JOBS 2014
Geoscientists	193	561
Inspectors	189	637
Underground Miner	184	1,012
Permitting Specialist	178	646
Physical Therapists	138	539
Telecommunications Specialists	131	975
Health and Safety Specialists	113	532
Mechanical Engineers	110	438
Electrical Engineers	104	325
Millwrights	97	333
Boiler Technician	86	664
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	83	565
Mining Engineers	71	279
Drillers and Blasters	70	400
Ship Builder	68	547
Speech-Language Pathologists	68	368
Mill Operators	64	135
Fisheries Scientists	63	230
Machinists	62	367
Can Machinist	47	197
Automations Technicians	39	76
Vessel Repair and Maintenance	39	178
Nurse Educators	35	106
Construction Management	31	22

This information over the last five years has been disrupted by an international pandemic but as we in Alaska recover our economic vitality the need for trained employees will increase. By looking at what potential jobs will be needed perhaps more Alaskans who wish to stay and participate in the economy will be able to do so.

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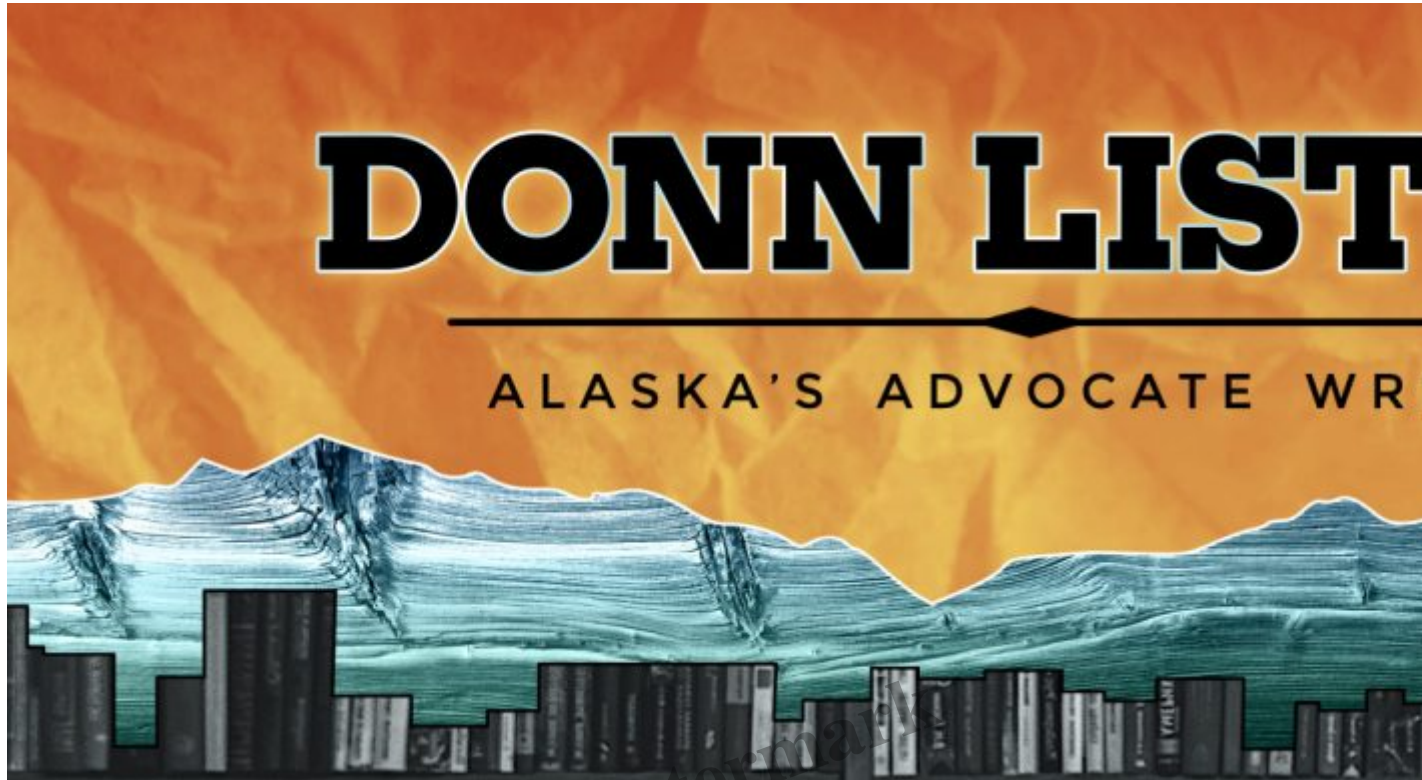
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[7] McDowell Group Cross-Industry Workforce Development Priorities Report, PG 1

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### Date Created

January 6, 2022

### Author

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