

HOMER

RELOCATION GUIDE 2020

YOU BELONG HERE

Hello! Thank you for your interest in our beautiful city Homer, Alaska!

On behalf of the Homer Chamber of Commerce, the City of Homer and the Mayor, we are excited to provide you with an overview about the numerous opportunities and benefits Homer has to offer year-round.

Enclosed you will find general information about our area including employment opportunities, cost of living and annual weather. We are also excited to share the wonderful aspects of Homer that residents enjoy such as friendly people, quality public schools, comprehensive health and wellness care, a vibrant arts scene, fantastic restaurants and world class recreational opportunities.

If you're making a pre-relocation visit to Homer, or just want to get better acquainted with Homer, please explore the Chamber of Commerce website (www.homerak.org) for information on local attractions, area wide businesses and maps – you'll find everything you need to feel right at home! In addition, you will soon receive a copy of the Homer Visitor's Guide which provides further information regarding the many activities and adventures that await you in Homer.

Both the Chamber of Commerce and the City's Economic Development Department are pleased to assist you in any way possible. Feel free to contact us.

Homer offers an unsurpassed quality of life and welcomes you whether you are relocating, seeking a second home, or starting a new business. Thank you again for your interest in Homer.

Warm regards,


Brad Anderson, Director
Homer Chamber of Commerce
and Visitor Center


Ken Costin
City of Homer



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Discover Homer

Quality of life rarely found in one location: endless opportunities for outdoor recreation, arts, and culture-- a great place to raise kids and a profound sense of community.



Photo Credit: David Haynes

The City of Homer was established as a first class municipality in March 1964. Named for Homer Pennock, a con man who arrived in 1896 and lured others to the Homer area with promises of gold, today genuine treasures attract people to live and work in Homer.

The southernmost town on the state's highway system, four hours south of Anchorage on the southern tip of the Kenai Peninsula, Homer is variously described as "where the land ends and the sea begins," "the cosmic hamlet by the sea," an arts community, and a fishing community. Each description captures a part of Homer's enduring character: creative, rich in maritime and homesteading traditions, committed to the environment, engaged and independent.

Common to every description is an acknowledgment that Homer is situated in one of the most beautiful places in the world, with

spectacular views of Kachemak Bay, the Kenai Mountains, and several volcanic peaks across Cook Inlet including Mt. Augustine, Mt. Iliamna, and Mt. Redoubt reaching to over 10,000 feet.

Homer is also famous for the Homer Spit, a 4.5 mile natural finger of land extending into Kachemak Bay. Accommodating Homer's port facilities and small boat harbor, it is a vital component of the local economy supporting both the marine trades industry and commercial fishing. Homer lands more halibut than any other port in the world, earning Homer yet another title, "Halibut Capital of the World."

The Spit also supports Homer's burgeoning tourism trade. Its numerous shops, restaurants, campgrounds, lodgings, charter fishing, water taxi, adventure and eco-tourism businesses are a beehive of activity during the summer months.

Rounding out Homer's economic drivers are healthcare services, the arts and independent farm growers, all contributing to Homer's economic diversity and extraordinary quality of life.

Homer is widely acknowledged to have the best arts scene and the best restaurants of any small town in Alaska. Many of these businesses are located on Pioneer Avenue in the heart of the City, where an abundance of peonies grace both gardens and public murals. Others are located in historic "Old Town" on the shores of Bishop's Beach.

Homer prides itself on being an ambitious, forward-thinking community that embraces responsible economic development. Major goals for the next decade include expanding Homer's port facilities to support the region's growing maritime industries and developing thirty acres in the heart of Homer as a new and vibrant Town Center.

People relocating to Alaska choose Homer partly for its beauty, partly for outstanding arts, culture, education and recreation opportunities. Mostly, they choose Homer because people here are friendly, outgoing and welcoming.

Since 2000, the city has added residents at an average rate of 0.6 percent annually for a total population of about 5,443 in 2019. Births and in-migration of new residents, primarily families and senior citizens, account for the population growth.

While Homer is not a retirement community, it is popular for retiree living, both year-round and seasonally. Alaska's senior population has been growing faster than in any other U.S. state, with the Kenai Peninsula's growth rate leading the way at 11.33%.

Homer boasts an overall low cost of living (for Alaska living) and superior schools. Residents enjoy year-round outdoor recreation opportunities that include fishing, hiking, skiing, kayaking, hunting, snow-machining, birding, kite-surfing, and more.

A diversity of arts, cultural and recreational activities throughout the year makes Homer welcoming, and makes time with family and friends extraordinarily enjoyable.

Homer is a caring community. Many residents are committed to making Homer a better place and give generously of their time and talents to contribute to overall quality of life. Civic, non-profit and grassroots efforts bring neighbors together to help those less fortunate, create solutions for shared concerns and complete civic projects.

Location & Climate

Homer is located on the southern Kenai Peninsula, overlooking beautiful Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet. The Pacific Ocean moderates Homer's climate, resulting in relatively warm winters and cool summers. Its location on the north shore of the Bay provides great solar exposure and breathtaking views of the Chugach Mountains to the southeast. The Chugach Mountains provide more than an awesome view. They shelter Homer from high winds typical in the Gulf of Alaska, and provide somewhat of a rain shadow. Homer receives only about 25 inches of rainfall annually, arid compared to other Alaskan coastal communities.

Climate Comparison	Homer	Seward	Cordova	United States
Rainfall (in)	24.7	68.2	162.7	36.5
Snowfall (in)	54.9	83.4	101.5	25
Precipitation Days	143	167	201	100
Sunny Days	135	133	133	205
Avg. July High (°F)	61	62	62	86.5
Avg. January Low (°F)	16.7	20.4	24.7	20.5



Photo Credit: Christina Travis
Young fisherman enjoying the day's outing.



Photo Credit: Robin Edwards
Every April, Lesser Sandhill Cranes flock to Homer from their wintering grounds in California to nest and rear their colts.



Photo Credit: Danielle Watson
Kachemak Bay, a Natural Estuarine Reserve rich with a diversity of marine life, is a kayaker's paradise.

Photo Credit: Kathy Sarno
Photo Credit: Pete Fineo
Homer's groomed ski trails host fun community events for all ages, from evening Tiki Torch ski events to Wine and Cheese tours, from Junior Nordic Ski lessons to marathon races.

Homer Stays Connected to the World

Though Homer is known as the 'end of the road,' it is by no means the middle of nowhere. Homer is a transportation hub for the region. The airport accommodates jet traffic and hosts multiple commercial flights a day. A 30-minute flight or 4-hour world-class scenic drive north on the Sterling Highway is close enough to the 'big city' - Anchorage - for most Homer residents, who appreciate that Homer has plenty of amenities while maintaining a small-town feel. Direct flights from Anchorage connect you to major cities in the "Lower 48" in a matter of hours -- only three hours to Seattle and less than five to Denver, Phoenix and Los Angeles. Travel to Alaska is so convenient and alluring, in fact, friends and family won't feel far away due to their frequent visits!

Homer's Deep Water and Pioneer docks support the Alaska Marine Ferry with direct service to Seldovia, Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands, barge and freight services for coastal Alaska and maritime industrial support services for industry in Cook Inlet and Western Alaska. Millions of pounds of fresh seafood are landed and trucked or flown to markets from Homer every season.

Homer is also a communications hub. With six high-speed internet providers and three submarine fiber cables landing on the beach for connectivity, it's no wonder Homer was named Google's Alaskan "eCity" in 2013 and 2014 in recognition of Homer's strong web utilization to find new customers, connect with existing clients and help fuel the local economy.

Day Length

Because the top of the earth is tilted toward the sun in the summer months, Alaska gets an abundance of daylight in mid-summer. On Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, the sun rises in Homer at 4:45 am and sets around 11:30 pm for nearly nineteen hours of daylight. Keep in mind, though, this represents only the amount of time the sun is above the horizon. Twilight is very long in Alaska, extending day length hours to twenty-two!

The opposite is true for winter. On the shortest day of the year, December 21, sunrise is at 10 am with sunset at 4 pm, giving us six hours of daylight. Twilight extends winter daylight hours, though soft, to eight hours.

Homer's Average Daylength Hours

January	06:55
February	09:08
March	11:46
April	14:33
May	17:05
June	18:34
July	17:53
August	15:35
September	12:51
October	10:04
November	07:33
December	06:08

A Great Place to Live and Play!

Homer's 5,000 residents appreciate that Homer has plenty of amenities, options for entertainment and world class outdoor activities, all while maintaining a small-town feel.

Housing - Living in Alaska presents many opportunities and challenges, and finding a home is often one of them. Luckily, Homer has an active real estate market. Average home prices and rents on the Kenai Peninsula are among the lowest in the State. Housing, which is typically a family's largest expenditure, is 29% less expensive in Homer than Anchorage.

Health Care - The diversity and quality of health care services available in Homer is notable. South Peninsula Hospital is Homer's full-service hospital offering a wide range of general and specialty services in a patient-focused and state-of-the-art facility. It, combined with Homer's wide variety of highly skilled complementary medical practitioners, provides residents with the highest quality, comprehensive health and wellness care.

Outdoor Activities - Homer is well known for its sport fishing (it is the "Halibut Capital of the World" after all), for a vast and varied State Park system offering over 25 miles of maintained hiking trails, campsites and a rental yurt system, and exceptional public recreational facilities. Come prepared to ski, play hockey, snowmobile, kayak, surf, bike, hike, hunt, boat, and golf—all within five miles of your home and mostly year-round.

Sport enthusiasts will also enjoy Homer's annual festivals: Kite Surfing Festival, Fat Tire Bike Festival, Winter King Salmon Tournament, Sea-to-Ski Triathlon, Ski Marathon ...and more! Homer's fitness facilities, lap swim hours at the community pool, a track and artificial turf field and sports clubs help you stay in shape and enjoy all these outdoor recreation pursuits.

Dining - Hands down, Homer has the best selection of high quality restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, bakeries and a gelato shop to suit all tastes, including two local coffee roasters, two breweries and one winery. Restaurant meals feature locally-sourced spirits and ingredients fresh from Homer's many local food growers.

Vibrant Arts Scene - With so many arts events to attend and participate in, Homer residents have to plan ahead to make time to stay home! Local galleries present monthly First Friday art exhibits, and two arts centers promote visual, literary and performing arts through a variety of workshops and programs. Throughout the year, bands can be heard most weekends at Homer's venues -- both local and world renowned--as Homer is a regular stop on Alaska's concert circuit. Pier One Theatre comes alive in the summer with plays, from side-splitting comedies to thought-provoking dramas. While most of the actors and actresses are local residents, you don't have to don rose-colored glasses to enjoy the shows. Pier One puts on top-notch productions that often sell out the house.



"Peonies on Pioneer" --in gardens and murals-- are a visual treat when exploring Homer's Pioneer Avenue business and shopping district.



Fat tire bicycling - Homer's recreational opportunities offer something for everyone.



Homer's Farmers Market showcases the finest local purveyors and producers of Alaskan-grown produce.



A night out to enjoy dancing to live music.



Homer's beaches provide a wonderful natural playground.



Homer's Public Library features over 36,000 books and a variety of youth and adult activities and programs.



Designing a boat to be printed from the Maker Space's 3D printers.



Homer has over 80 km of groomed ski trails, a small downhill ski area with a rope tow and extensive snow machine trails for winter fun.

A Great Place to Raise Kids!

Great schools, relatively low crime, and lots of parks, playgrounds and outdoor pursuits are part of the package that makes Homer great for children.

Recreation - world class opportunities in every season

Homer has 17 dedicated public parks with amenities ranging from playgrounds, ballfields, disc golf course, skate park, fishing lagoon, picnic areas, campsites and trails, and vast stretches of undeveloped beaches and inter-tidal zones.

Additionally, the City of Homer's Parks & Recreation and other nonprofit community groups organize many youth clubs and programs, ranging from sports, nature education, visual and theatrical arts, music, wilderness leadership, engineering/design and more.

Early Childhood Education - new families are supported in Homer

Homer has several licensed child care providers, Head Start, a Title 1 Preschool Program at Paul Banks Elementary School, an infant learning program and a private pre-school education program.

Schools - your choice of high quality public school options

Homer has three public elementary schools, one public charter school, a middle school and a high school -- all part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. Two of the schools (McNeil Canyon and West Homer Elementary) earned the distinguished Alaska Blue Ribbon School designation for achieving superior standards of academic excellence.

Parents also have the choice of two optional programs. Flex is an alternative high school for students that want to move at their own pace or that are graduating in three years because they can work faster while at the same time achieving proficiency. Connections is the school district's supported homeschool program, giving families direct access to tutors, counselors, academic support materials and funds through the program's Homer office.

Homer High School, with enrollment of 410, consistently ranks as one of the highest scoring schools in Alaska:

- Wide variety of course offerings: seven Advanced Placement courses, foreign language, creative arts (including a ceramics studio) and applied arts courses such as culinary arts, welding and mechanics with a focus on college and career readiness;
- 95-98% graduation rate;
- 70% student population involved in co-curricular activities ranging from sports, band, choir, drama/debate/forensics and student government;
- High average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score of 1640;
- Opportunity to take college classes and earn college credits while in high school through the local Kenai Peninsula College "Jump Start" Program;
- Merit-based college scholarships awards average \$12,000 to \$20,000 per student annually.

A Glimpse of Alaska's Economy

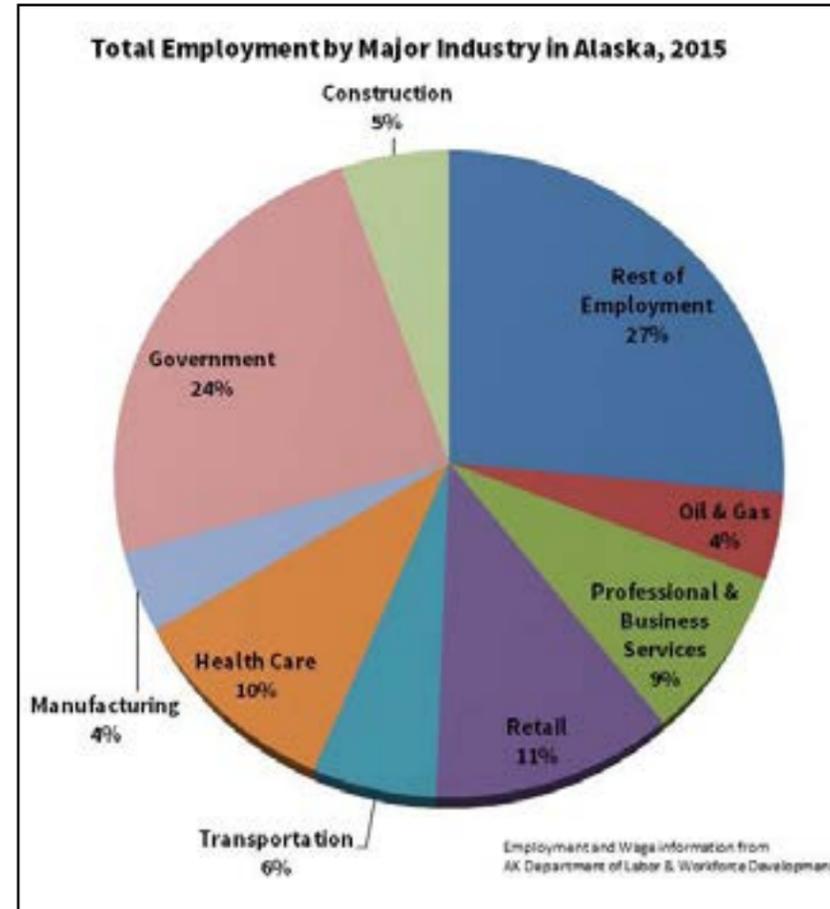
Alaska's economy is continuing its steady, incremental recovery from a three-year recession due to the sustained drop in oil prices. Low oil prices impacted Alaska's economy on two fronts: directly, through cuts to oil industry investment and employment, and indirectly, through state government budget deficits that led to spending cuts and layoffs. 2019 saw a 0.3% job increase. 2020 should be similar thanks to many bright spots in the economy.

The health care industry continues to lead employment growth, as it has for twenty years. This trend is expected to continue as the number of Alaskans age 65 and older is expected to increase by more than 125% in the next fifteen years. This demographic shift will likely equate to continued health industry growth. Even in Alaska's smallest rural communities where jobs are often scarce, health care offers year-round employment opportunities.

Alaska's visitor industry also plays a vital role in the State's economy. Tourism numbers keep reaching new heights with 2020 expected to break another record. Low oil prices and a strong U.S. economy spur American travel. Alaska is an attractive, adventurous destination for independent travelers and for cruise ship sailings. In 2019 Alaska hosted over 1.4 million cruise visitors, with 2020 passenger numbers expected to increase another 6%.

Alaska's small employment industries tend to be relatively stable over time. Of note is the agriculture industry, including locally grown food and flower products and commercial marijuana which is boosting Alaska's retail and manufacturing sectors. Beverage manufacturing, including wines, microbrews and bottled water, though quite small has been growing extensively in the past few years.

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AK Mean Wage Rates by Occupation

<http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/wage/>

Accounting/Bookkeeping	\$22.87
Administrative Service Manager	\$45.90
Aircraft Mechanic	\$32.35
Clinical Counseling	\$43.97
Community/Social Service Specialist	\$20.79
Computer Systems Analysts	\$33.84
Healthcare Technologists/Technicians	\$30.08
Janitor/Cleaner	\$16.41
Police Officer	\$42.32
Registered Nurse	\$42.94
Retail Salesperson	\$14.45
Technical Writers	\$34.74
Welder/Cutter	\$32.37



The health care industry is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Alaska, including the Kenai Peninsula.

Kenai Peninsula Borough & Homer Economy

Kachemak Bay and the waters of southwestern Alaska shape our picturesque coastal town and anchor Homer's economy. Homer features a professionally managed Port & Harbor facility and a renowned, full-service marine trades sector. Together they support a diverse commercial fishing fleet, and thriving marine industrial and maritime transportation industries.

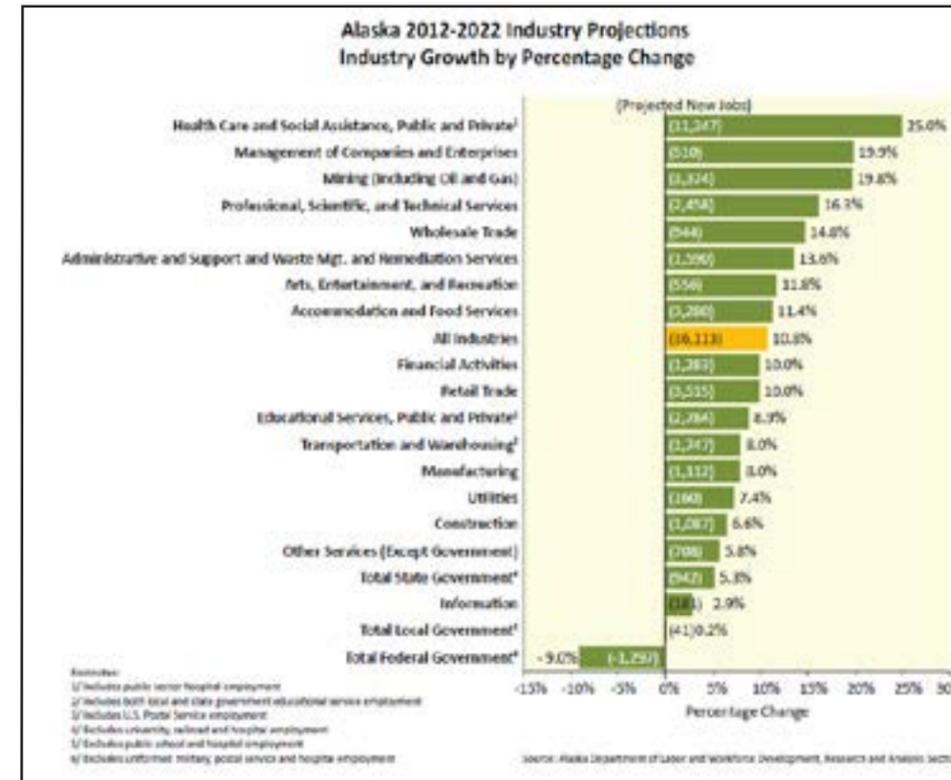
21% of Homer residents participate in commercial fishing, bringing in 8% of the total commercial harvest by all Alaskans. In 2016, Homer's seafood landings of 6.7 million pounds worth \$18.1 million, ranked Homer the 67th largest port in the US by seafood weight and the 55th port by the value of those landings.

Maritime commerce centers on transportation, ship building and repair, marine surveyors, science and ship supply. Homer harbor is a significant support to these industries. A barge mooring / haul-out repair facility proposed for Homer Harbor in the near term, and a new large vessel harbor proposed in the long term recognize both industry needs and the importance of marine industry to Homer's economy.

Our coastal location, relatively mild climate and quality amenities also make Homer a popular tourist destination and attracts new residents. As Homer's tourism and population rates grow, so do opportunities for retail trade, education, health services, and leisure and hospitality. Together these sectors makes up over 26% of Homer's total employment. Gross sales for 2018 were up 8.5% from 2017, fueled in part by robust summer seasonal tourism.

Current demands in the residential and commercial real estate markets are taking construction related industries on an upward trend. Like elsewhere in the State, health and social assistance is the largest employment sector in the Borough. Its fast growth is fueled by a shift from predominantly acute care to chronic disease prevention and management, and by steady growth in the Peninsula's senior population. Demand for senior services and housing that allows residents to age in place is expected to grow.

Rounding out Homer's economic drivers are the arts and independent farm growers, all contributing to Homer's economic diversity and community vitality. Comprehensive employment information is available at <http://labor.alaska.gov/jobseek/>.



As Alaska's largest private sector employer, commercial fishing is a major contributor to Homer's (and the State's) employment and wages.

City of Homer Information

City Government Homer is a first class city with a City Manager/ City Council form of government. Elected officials consist of six City Council members and a Mayor. The City of Homer provides road, public safety, water and sewer, library, recreational and other services associated with local government, including an airport terminal and extensive Port & Harbor facility. The City is part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Sales Tax: There is no state income tax or state sales tax in Alaska. The sales tax in Homer is 7.85% (4.85% City of Homer and 3% Kenai Peninsula Borough). Non-prepared foods are exempt from sales tax from September through May.

Property Tax:

Homer:	4.50 Mills	The property tax rate translates to a levy of \$1,150 for every \$100,000 in assessed value. However, the first \$20,000 in value is tax exempt for most residents upon request. Senior citizens (age 65 and older) benefit from an additional exemption on the first \$150,000 in value for the City of Homer portion and on the first \$300,000 for the Kenai Peninsula Borough portion.
Borough:	4.70 Mills	
So. Penin. Hospital:	2.30 Mills	
Total	11.50 Mills	



Homer Public Library offers over 45,000 loan items and a variety of programs.



Homer's small boat harbor offers 950 reserve slips and additional docks for transient moorage.



491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603
Phone: 907-235-8121
Monday - Friday 8 - 5 p.m.
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Water & Sewer: Water and sewer utilities are provided by the City of Homer within City limits. City water (which exceeds EPA standards and was awarded Alaska's best tasting water) is sourced from the Bridge Creek Reservoir via an adjacent water treatment plant. Households not hooked up to City water obtain water from commercial water haulers.



Bridge Creek Reservoir is in a designated Watershed Protected District to insure Homer's quality drinking water for the long term.

Power & Utility Industries

Electric Utility

In 1945, nine forward-thinking citizens of Homer met and began working together to form Alaska's fifth rural electric cooperative. By 1950, the system was energized, making Homer brighter for 56 cooperative members. Today, 80 Megawatts of generation fulfills 23,000 member-owners' electrical needs in a 3,166 square-mile service area on the southern Kenai Peninsula.

HEA's mission is to safely provide reliable electricity to members and the community through superior customer service and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices. Power generation is primarily from natural gas (88%) with almost all of the remainder from the Bradley Lake hydroelectric facility and a tiny but growing amount from small-scale wind and solar installations on private property. Rates change frequently, mostly in response to fluctuations in the price of natural gas. Current rates can be found on HEA's website.

Home Heating Options

ENSTAR Natural Gas Company's development of a southern Kenai Peninsula natural gas distribution system in 2014 introduced natural gas as a heating option. ENSTAR is a regulated public utility serving approximately 140,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in and around Southcentral Alaska. ENSTAR has four rate classes for gas service based on the capacity of the gas meter required. Currently Homer, Anchor Point and Kachemak City have access to natural gas.

Other home heating options in Homer are electric, heating oil, propane or wood. Two fuel oil companies serve Homer: HomeRun Oil and Petro Marine. Two companies also supply propane: Amerigas and Suburban Propane.

Renewable energy options such as solar electric, solar thermal and geothermal supplement traditional energy sources.



The aurora borealis (or northern lights) brighten Alaska's winter nights.



3977 Lake Street
Homer, AK 99603
Phone: 907-235-8551
www.homerelectric.com



36225 Kenai Spur Hwy
Soldotna, AK 99669
907-262-9334
www.enstarnaturalgas.com



3518 FAA Road
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-8772
www.amerigas.com



60998 East End Road
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-1393



4755 Homer Spit Road
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-8818



60970 East End Road
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-8565
www.suburbanpropane.com

Educational Institutions

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

With the mission to develop productive, responsible citizens who are prepared to be successful in a dynamic world, the Kenai Peninsula School District (KPBSD) serves nearly 9,000 students in forty-four public schools in a district larger than the entire state of West Virginia. Six of those schools are in the Homer area.

In order to register students for the KPBSD, new students are required to have the following:

- Original Birth Certificate.
- Physical Examination. Forms are available in local doctor's offices.
- Immunization Records: Typically a yellow card provided by healthcare providers that lists immunizations your child has received.



148 North Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669
Phone: 907-714-8888

www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us

UAA's Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College

The Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College (KBC) is located on three acres in the heart of Homer overlooking Kachemak Bay and a vista of glacier-capped mountains. The campus offers a wide variety of degree and continuing education courses and programs of excellence in a friendly, personalized setting. Kachemak Bay Campus is recognized for teaching excellence.



KBC offers 650-800 students a variety of classroom and online courses leading towards two-year Associates of Arts and Associates of Applied Science degrees, as well as vocational certificates including the following:

- Biology, Natural Sciences, Psychology, Education, Business and Fine Arts;
- Nursing (RN), Certified Nurse Assistant, Medical Assisting and Coding;
- Fisheries and Maritime Technology, Welding, Corrections, General Business and General Education Degrees.

A number of other four-year degree programs are available via distance delivery through other University of Alaska campuses. KBC is recognized for its Semester-By-The-Bay, a marine science field studies program, and its Marine Technology Program that provides the academic grounding and practical skills essential for success in marine support industries.

The campus includes classrooms, computer lab, learning center, bookstore, art studio, library and a student services and enrollment center. Small classes, individualized attention, and the highly qualified faculty give the campus a private college feel.

<u>Fall 2019 - Summer 2020</u>	<u>Resident Tuition</u>	<u>Non-Resident Tuition</u>
Jump Start (High School)	\$74/credit	N/A
Lower Division (100-200)	\$223/credit	\$789/credit
Upper Division (300-400)	\$269/credit	\$835/credit



Kenai Peninsula College

533 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603
Phone: 907-235-7743

<http://kpc.alaska.edu/kbc>

<http://www.kpc.alaska.edu>

Health Care

South Peninsula Hospital (SPH)

SPH is a full-service hospital offering a wide range of general and specialty services to the Homer community. Its newly constructed and remodeled areas provide first-rate services in an entirely patient focused and state-of-the-art facility. SPH's home-like, healing environment, combined with the best in medical expertise



and technology allows patients to receive the comprehensive care they need close to home. Available services include: Birthing Center, Cancer Care, Emergency, Functional Medicine, Home Health, Imaging, Laboratory, Long Term Care, Surgery, Orthopedics, Rehabilitation Services, Sleep Center and Specialty Clinics.

Family Practices

Kachemak Bay Medical and Homer Medical Center provide solutions for preventive, diagnostic, and primary care treatment and Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic offers a full range of clinical services for reproductive health care for men and women.



Dental Care

Several dentists and orthodontists offer local options for general, cosmetic and corrective dentistry in Homer.

Seldovia Village Tribe (SVT) Health & Wellness

SVT Health & Wellness provides a variety of integrated medical, dental and natural wellness services on a sliding scale according to income. Their Outreach & Eligibility Department helps all community members, whether patient or non-patient, with veteran benefits, Medicare, Medicaid, navigating the Health Insurance Marketplace.



Complementary Medicine

Homer is also fortunate in the number of highly professional complementary medical practitioners offering a diversity of integrative medical therapies. Complementary medicine is used alongside conventional medicine to facilitate the body's innate healing response during acute and chronic disease challenges and to promote wellness through prevention. Treatment is often individualized to focus on presenting symptoms as well as underlying factors that influence long-term health, wellness and disease. Therapies include whole medical systems such as naturopathy, homeopathy and ancient healing (traditional Chinese and Ayurveda); mind-body medicine such as meditation and relaxation; biologically based practices of diet and herbal remedies; manipulative practices such as therapeutic massage, chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation; and energy medicine such as yoga, therapeutic touch and meditation.

Vacationing in Alaska is a great way to learn about the state, and explore job opportunities. Alaska is vast, stretching thousands of miles in all directions, with starkly contrasting climate zones, breathtakingly beautiful scenery, abundant wildlife, and Native people with rich cultures. It presents abundant and varied recreational opportunities. No wonder it is a prime tourist destination! Come for a visit, savor the flavor of various communities, experience the weather, and check out the job scene. Remember to include Homer on your itinerary! @VisitHomer on FaceBook shares visitors' stories about Homer. Let them inspire you, too!



Downtown Anchorage at sunset on a clear day.

Anchorage: Alaska's largest city, with a population of 298,908 on the shores of Cook Inlet, is the hub of the Anchorage /Matanuska-Susitna region in Southcentral Alaska. Anchorage has the most job openings and a relatively reasonable cost of living.



Fields, mountains, and waters near Valdez, Alaska.

Valdez: Located on Prince William Sound, east of Anchorage, Valdez is home to the terminus of the Alaska Pipeline which transports oil from the North Slope for shipping to markets. It has a stable economy where tourism is growing to compensate for recent declines in the oil industry.



A snow-capped mountain reflecting off a lush green lily pad covered pond on the Kenai Peninsula.

Kenai Peninsula: The Kenai Peninsula has a population of 57,763. A popular recreation area, seasonal work in tourism or seafood processing may be available. The Kenai also supports oil and gas exploration and extraction industries. With a high growth rate in the senior population, health care is an expanding Kenai Peninsula industry.



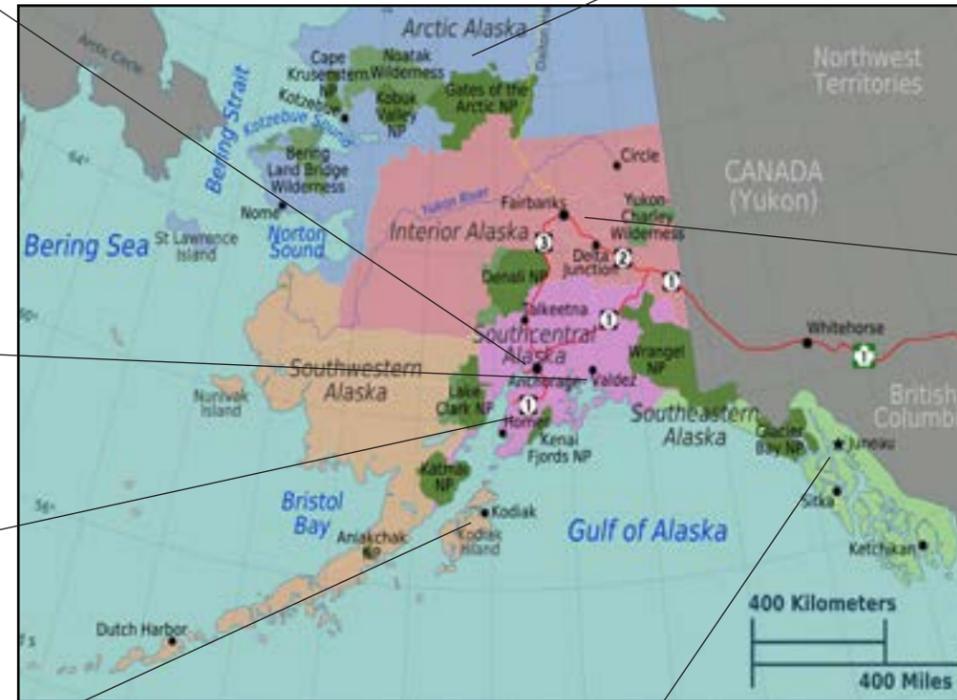
View from Pillar Mountain down to the town of Kodiak. Photo credit: Katie Miller.

Kodiak Island: Ninety miles south of the Peninsula (and accessible by jet and the Alaska Marine Ferry), Kodiak Island has a large commercial fishing industry and supports the largest Coast Guard base in Alaska.



Whaling monument in Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow), a Native whaling village..

Western & Northern Alaska: These areas are mainly off the road system. In the north, winters are severe, and the sun makes only brief appearances. Midsummer days have no nightfall. Villages outside the hub communities of Nome, Kotzebue and Utqiagvik often have difficulty finding qualified professionals and technical employees. The western Alaska towns of Bethel and Dillingham are sometimes in need of qualified medical, city government, and education professionals. Food and other purchases in the Alaska's Bush villages can cost twice the price than in urban areas.



Fairbanks: The state's second largest city has long, warm summer days and long, cold winters with temperatures of -50 degrees. The population of the Fairbanks North Star Borough is 98,645. Fairbanks is home to the University of Alaska Fairbanks; government is also a major employer there.

Juneau: The state capital has a population of 33,277. State government is the largest employer, and tourism is a source of seasonal employment. Apartment rental prices in Juneau are amongst the highest in the nation, averaging about \$1,500 for two bedrooms, without utilities.



Alaska State Capitol Building.



A view of Fairbanks, Alaska and the Tanana River in the Fall.