



# Health Careers In Alaska

[www.HealthCareersInAlaska.Info](http://www.HealthCareersInAlaska.Info)

## Optometrist

An optometrist examines, diagnoses, and treats conditions of the eye and visual system. These professionals recognize the signs and symptoms of eye disease, and determine a diagnosis that may be treated with pharmaceutical agents. The optometrist is often the first doctor to recognize general health problems, and may choose to refer patients to other health care practitioners.

Optometrists assess a patient's eye health and visual system. The visual system can be treated by prescribing contact lenses, eye glasses, optical aids, or vision therapy. The goal of

treatment is to preserve vision or restore decreased vision to the maximum ability possible. The practitioner spends 50% or more of his/her time assessing the external and internal health of the eyes and prescribing pharmaceutical agents when necessary to control disease.

Some optometrists specialize in areas such as pediatrics (children), geriatrics (elderly), contact lenses, care of people with extremely low vision, strabismus (crossed eyes), amblyopia (lazy eye), glaucoma, corneal disease, dry eye, conjunctival disease, and lid disorders.

## Optometrist Facts:

### Where do optometrists work in Alaska?

Most optometrists have general practices that are set up independently or in partnership with other optometric physicians or ophthalmologists. In rural Alaska, most employment opportunities are located in the regional hospitals or clinics, although optometric physicians do a great deal of fieldwork in the villages.

### Educational Requirements

- Graduation from high school with coursework in math, science, and English.
- A minimum of four years of college, preferably with a strong academic record in biology, chemistry, and math. The curriculum is a pre-med major.
- Completion of four years of optometry school, receipt of the Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree, and passing scores on the National Board of Examiners Test in Optometry and the state examination.

### Hourly Wage Range:

\$45.47-\$79.53 (Mean \$62.50)

*\*based on Alaska DOL data*

### Years in School:

8 years or more (*after high school graduation*).

### Academic Programs in Alaska

There are no Optometry schools in Alaska. For contact information and links to optometry schools in the United States, visit the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry's web site: <http://www.opted.org/>

### State Contact:

#### Alaska Optometric Association

1501 W. 36th Ave, Ste 230

Anchorage, AK 99503

Phone: (907) 770-3777

Toll free: (877) 693-2562

Email: [akoa@alaska.com](mailto:akoa@alaska.com)

Web site: <http://www.akoa.org>

### National Contact:

#### American Optometric Association

Toll free: (800) 365-2219

Web site: <http://www.aoa.org/>

