



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



JUNE 2021

BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County continues to show some growth, with an increase of more than 800 jobs from Q2 2020 to Q3 2020. Between February and March 2021, both the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate increased, suggesting growth in the total labor force. An increase in the employment-to-population ratio from February to March suggests that job seekers are likely finding work. Job postings were lower in March than in February as there were slightly fewer postings in Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 55.6% in March. This is a 0.2 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 52.8% in March. This is also a 0.2 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The unemployment rate stood at 5.0% in March. This is a 0.1 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The total labor force saw an increase of 77 people from February to March. The total increase in employed people was 61, and the total increase in unemployed people was 16.



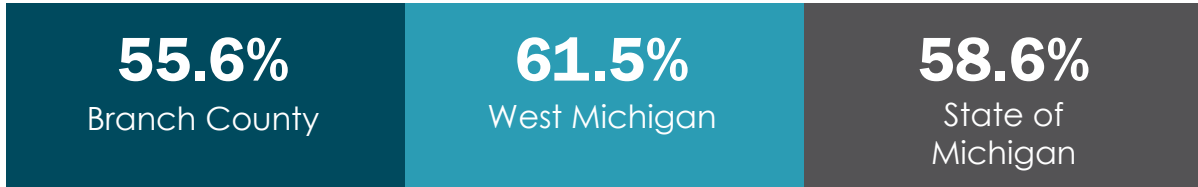
Total employment increased by 8.1% from Q2 to Q3 2020.



There were 150 job postings in March 2021. This means job postings decreased by 23.9% from the previous month.

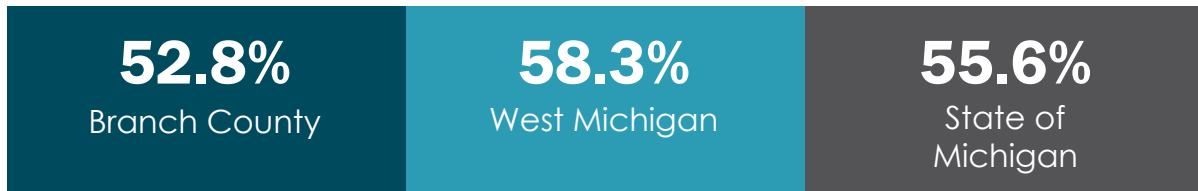
KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



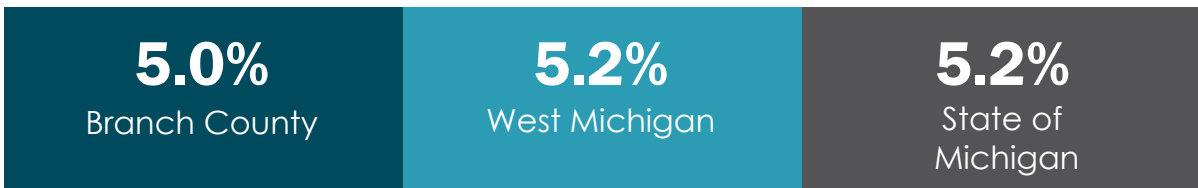
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 55.6% in Branch County in March. This was lower than for west Michigan by 5.9 percentage points and lower than for the state of Michigan by 3.0 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 52.8% in Branch County in March. This was 5.5 percentage points below that of west Michigan and 2.8 percentage points lower than the rate for the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

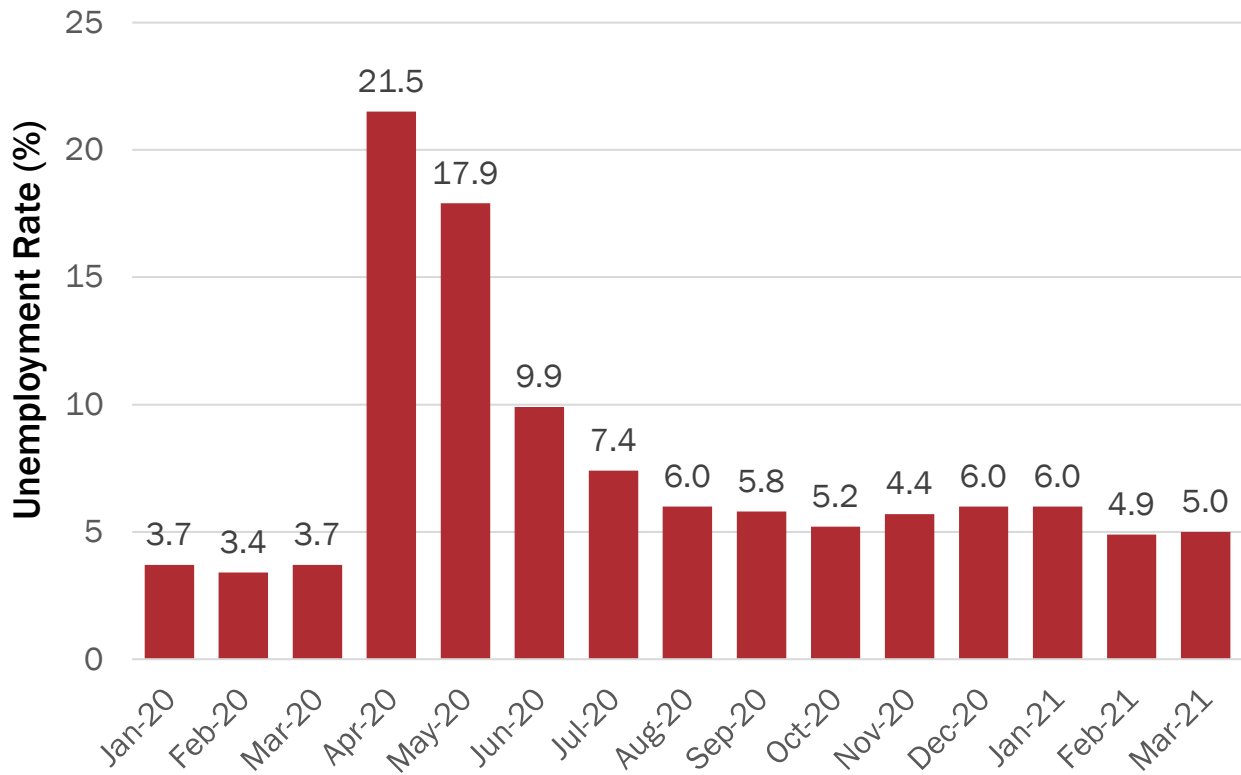


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was at 5.0% in Branch County in March. This was 0.2 percentage points lower than for west Michigan and also 0.2 percentage points lower than for the state of Michigan.

SOURCE: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) & Upjohn Institute, 2021

“West Michigan” includes Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Ottawa, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties.

Unemployment Rate Branch County (not seasonally adjusted)



SOURCE: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics & Upjohn Institute, 2021

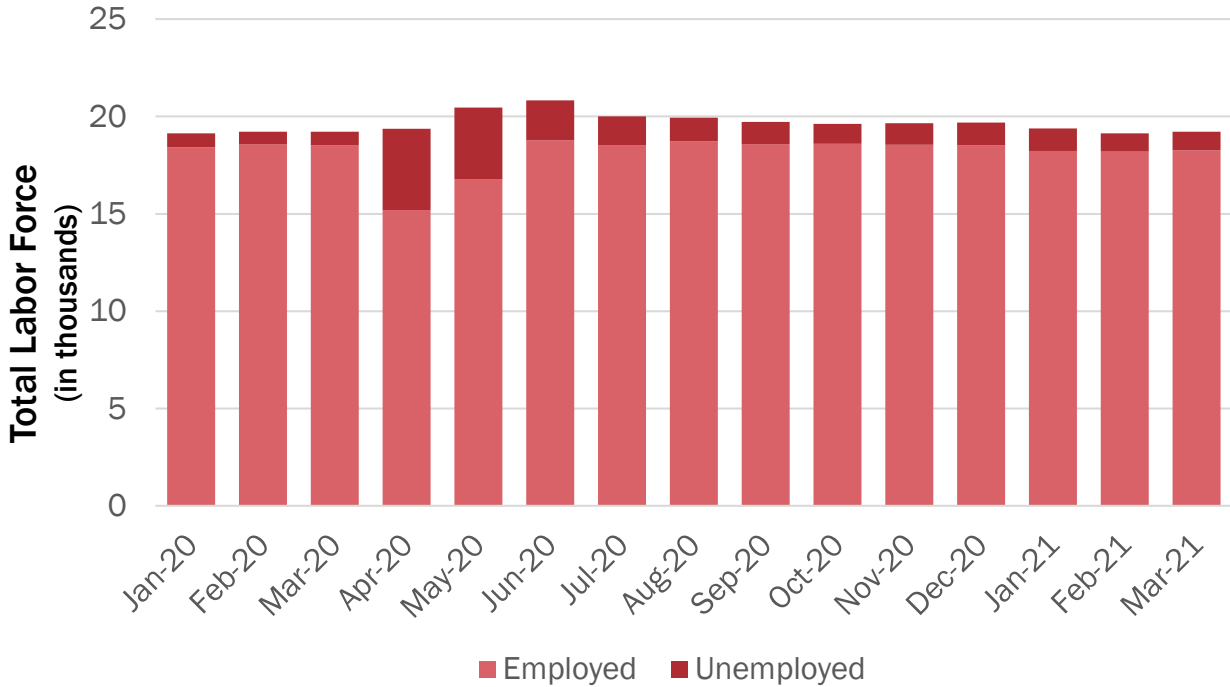
From February, the unemployment rate in Branch County decreased by 0.1 percentage points, to 5.0% in March. The March unemployment rate is 1.3 percentage points higher than it was at the same time last year.

In March, there were **6.4 job seekers** for every **1 job posting*** in Branch County.

Burning Glass Technologies, BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), & Upjohn Institute, 2021

*Burning Glass data capture only jobs that are posted online and in more traditional employment relationships. Singular job postings for multiple positions may not be fully counted.

Total Labor Force Branch County (not seasonally adjusted)



SOURCE: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) & Upjohn Institute, 2021

The total labor force in Branch County in March stood at 19,217, an increase of 77 people from February. The total labor force in Branch County has shrunk by less than 0.1% since March 2020, when it stood at 19,226. This indicates a decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

Labor Force by the Numbers, Q3 2020 Branch County

- 19.8%** Percentage of workers 25 years or older with a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree
- 35.1%** Percentage of workers 25 years or older with an associate degree or some college
- 59.9%** Percentage of workers aged 25–54 years

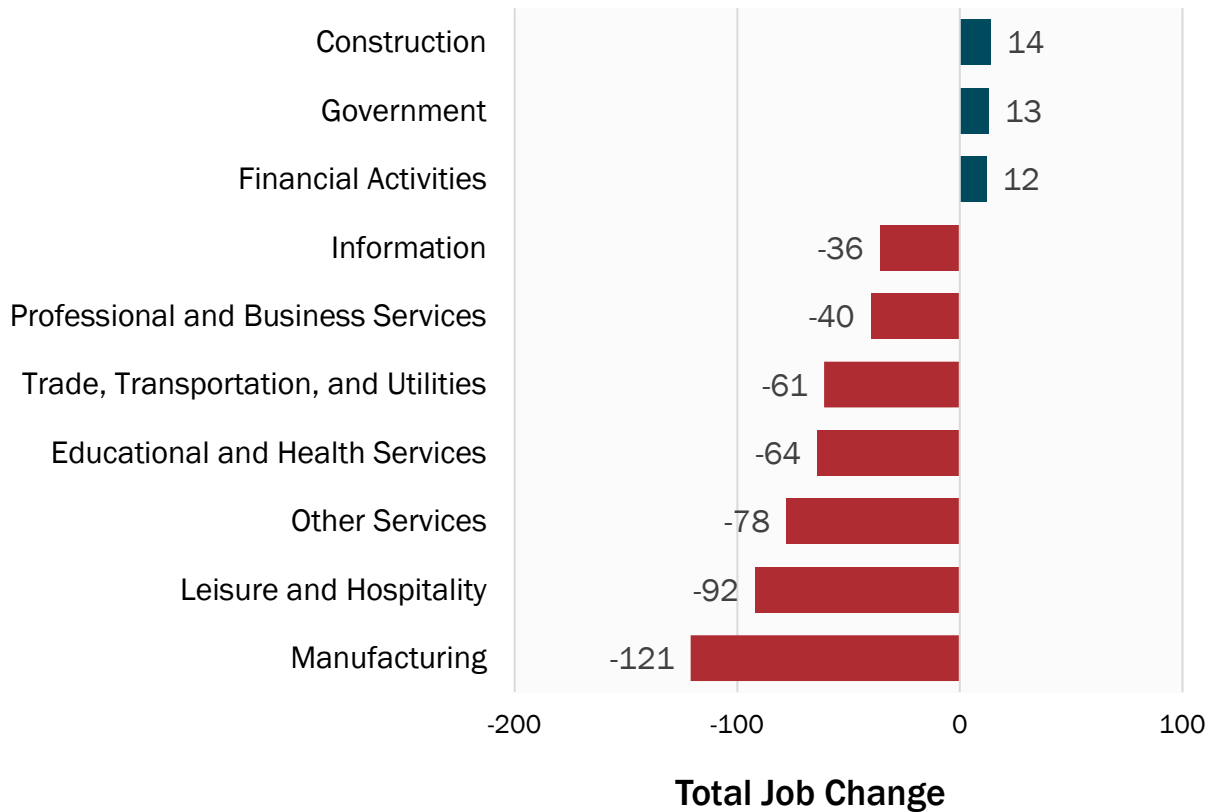
SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2020

Employment by Industry Branch County (not seasonally adjusted)

Measure	Q3 2020	Q2 2020	% Change, Q2 to Q3	Q3 2019	% Change, Q3 to Q3
Employment (by place of work)					
Total Private Sector Employment	11,097	10,268	8.1%	11,554	-4.0%
Goods-Producing	3,578	3,326	7.6%	3,668	-2.5%
Natural Resources & Mining	326	333	-2.2%	309	5.5%
Construction	468	378	23.8%	454	3.1%
Manufacturing	2,785	2,615	6.5%	2,906	-4.2%
Private Service-Providing	7,519	6,942	8.3%	7,886	-4.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	3,566	3,470	2.8%	3,627	-1.7%
Information	87	105	-17.1%	123	-29.5%
Financial Activities	592	587	0.9%	580	2.1%
Professional and Business Services	494	409	20.8%	534	-7.4%
Educational and Health Services	871	813	7.1%	935	-6.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,643	1,337	22.9%	1,735	-5.3%
Other Services	249	203	22.3%	327	-24.0%
Unclassified	17	18	-1.9%	23	-24.6%
Government	96	89	7.5%	83	16.1%

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2021

Employment Change, Q3 2019 to Q3 2020 Branch County (not seasonally adjusted)



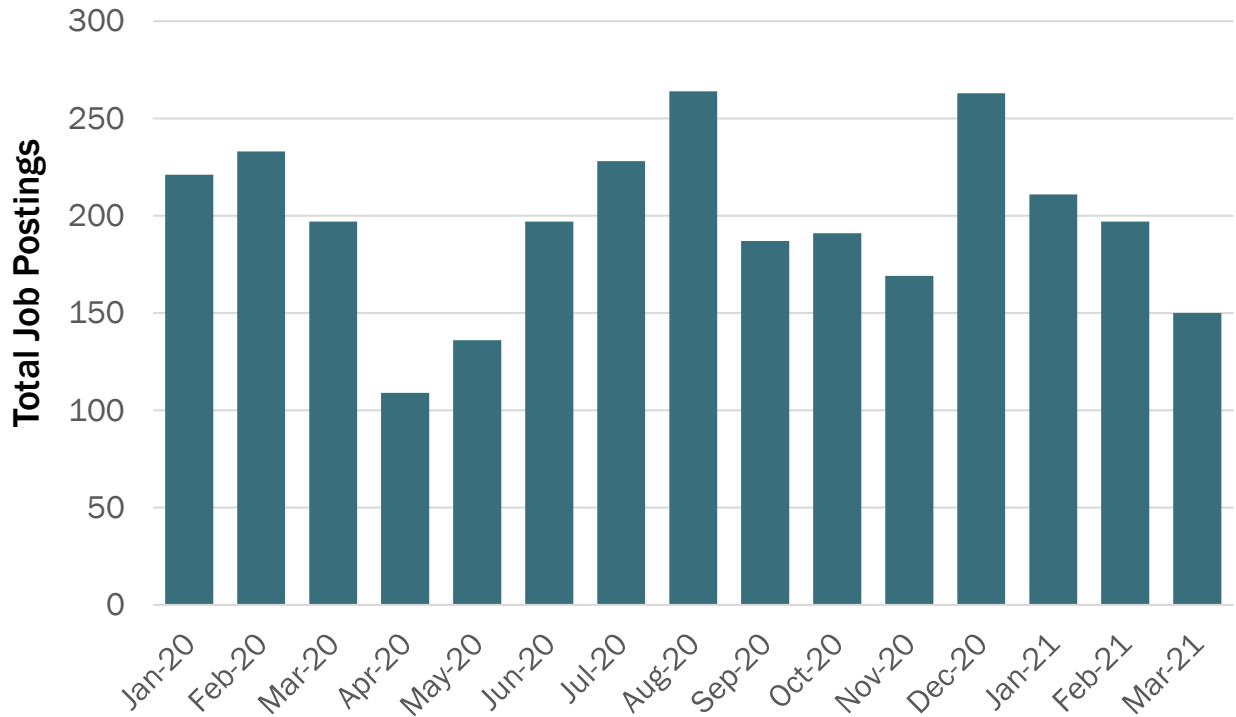
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2020

The most recent data shows that the greatest decrease in employment in Branch County from Q3 2019 to Q3 2020 was in Manufacturing, which declined by 121 jobs, or 4.2%. The greatest increase in employment from Q3 2019 to Q3 2020 was in Construction, which grew by 14 jobs, or 3.1%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in Q2 2020 in Branch County was \$846.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

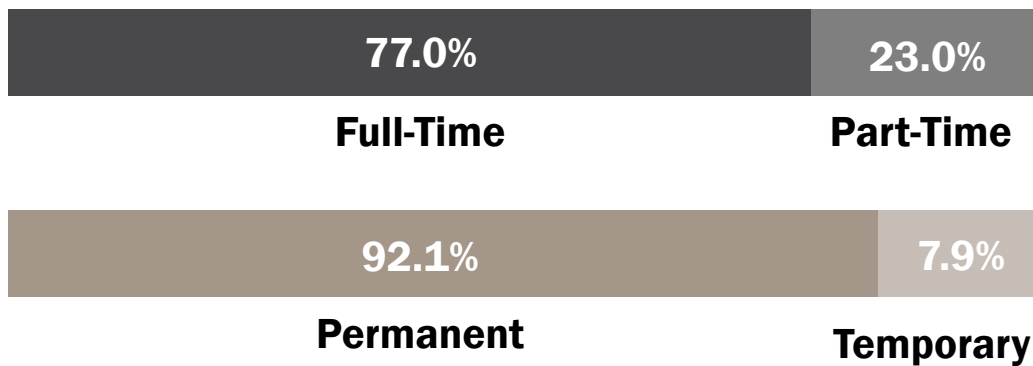
Total Job Postings, March 2021 Branch County



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

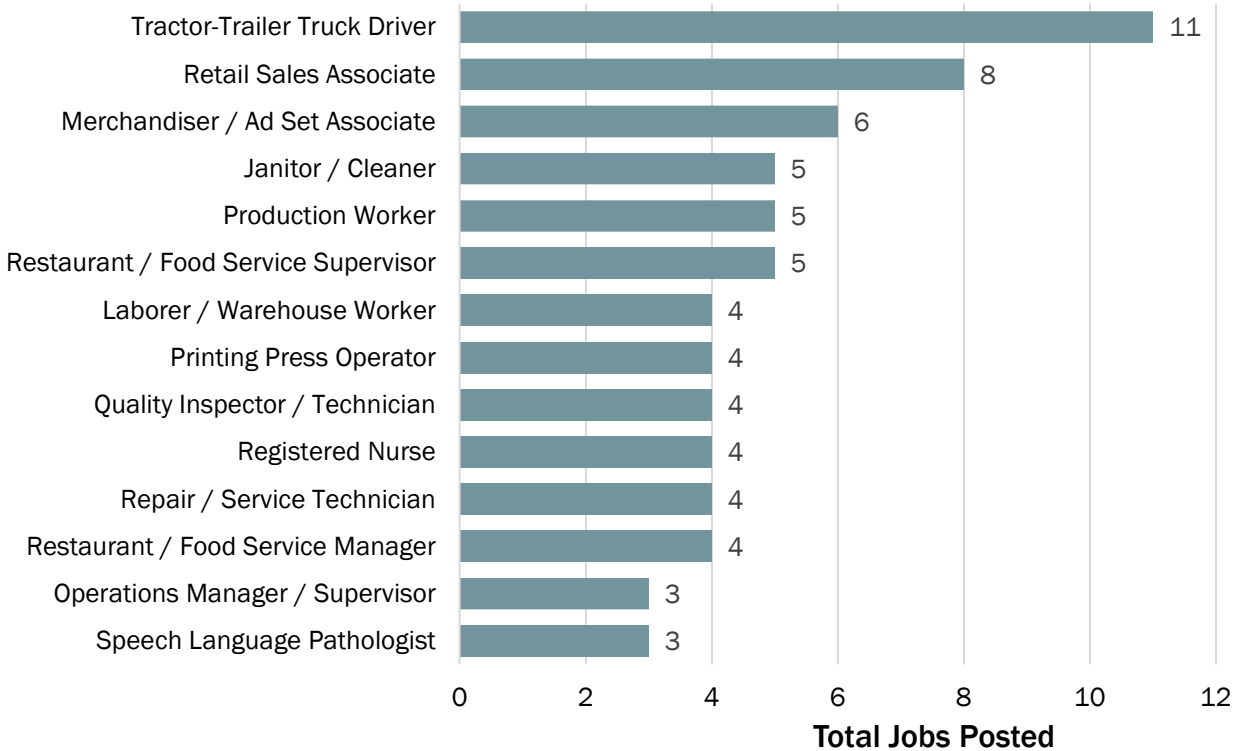
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, decreased by 23.9% between February and March, from 197 postings to 150. The majority of postings in Branch County, as reported through Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Type of Job Postings, March 2021 Branch County



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

Top Occupations for Job Postings, March 2021 Branch County



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The top occupations with job postings were for tractor-trailer truck drivers, retail sales associates, and merchandisers/ad set associates. More than half of job postings, 54.4%, required at a minimum a high school diploma or vocational training. This is a decrease of 1.7 percentage points, in the proportion of job postings requiring a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree increased by 1.6 percentage points, and the proportion requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher increased by 0.1 percentage points.

54.4% of job postings in March required a high school diploma or vocational training.

18.9% of job postings in March required an associate degree.

26.7% of job postings in March required a bachelor’s degree or higher.

SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

About the Upjohn Institute

The W.E. Upjohn Unemployment Trustee Corporation was incorporated on October 24, 1932, as a Michigan 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and is doing business as the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research has been conducting economic research and consultation for 75 years, since its founding in 1945.

The Upjohn Institute is governed by a Board of Trustees, which employs a President who is responsible for the overall operation of the Institute. The President of the Upjohn Institute is Dr. Michael Horrigan.

The Upjohn Institute currently employs 104 individuals. Upjohn's research and consultation program is conducted by a resident staff of professional social scientists, 12 of whom are PhD-level economists (senior staff). Senior staff is supported by a staff of research analysts and additional support staff. Upjohn also administers the federal and state employment programs for its four-county area through the local Workforce Investment Board. Upjohn also publishes books on economic development, workforce development, and other employment-related topics.

The PhD-level economists have more than 175 years of collective experience, conducting research on a broad variety of economic and employment topics. Their experience includes, but is not limited to, employment program evaluation, labor market dynamics, labor-management relations, employment and training programs, economic and workforce development, income replacement policy, worker adjustment, the role of education in labor markets, employment and compensation, disability, international comparison of labor adjustment policies, site selection experience, and state, regional, and local economic analysis.

About the Regional Team

The Upjohn Institute also has a Regional Economic Planning Services team of specialists who provide economic insights and analysis regionally and statewide in Michigan, in other individual states, and nationally. The team has experience in:

- Economic impact analysis
- Fiscal/cost-benefit impact analysis
- Labor market analysis
- Facilitating and conducting effective one-on-one interviews, focus groups, workshops, and charrette sessions in a diverse array of environments
- Economic and workforce development and education strategies
- GIS mapping abilities
- Rural and urban land use and economic development planning services
- Regional data analysis

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For definitions and descriptions of methodology and variables used in the report, please access our data dictionary at: http://www.upjohn.org/Business_Outlook/Data_Dictionary/.