



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



JULY 2021



BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County continues to show some small growth, with an increase of 50 jobs from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020. Between March and April, the unemployment rate decreased, while the labor force participation rate did not change and the employment-to-population ratio increased. This indicates that individuals are likely finding employment. Job postings were higher in April than in March, with more postings in Retail Trade, Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, and Transportation and Warehousing.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 55.6% in April 2021. There was no change in the rate from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 53.1% in April. This is a 0.2 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 4.5% in April. This is a 0.5 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The total labor force saw a decrease of 16 people from March to April. The total number of employed people increased by 78, and the total number of unemployed people decreased by 94.



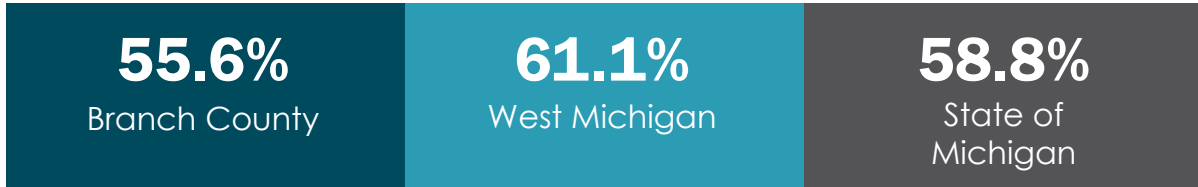
Total employment increased by 0.7% from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020.



There were 258 job postings in April 2021, an increase of 72.0% from the previous month.

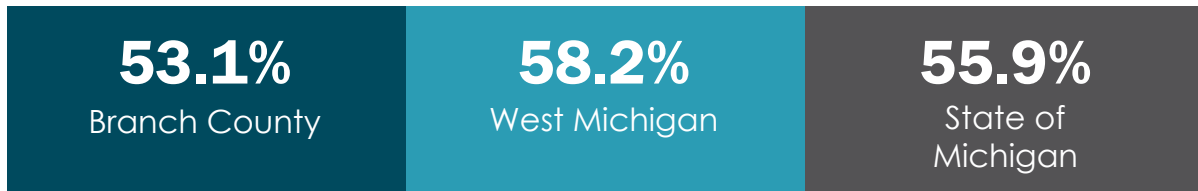
KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



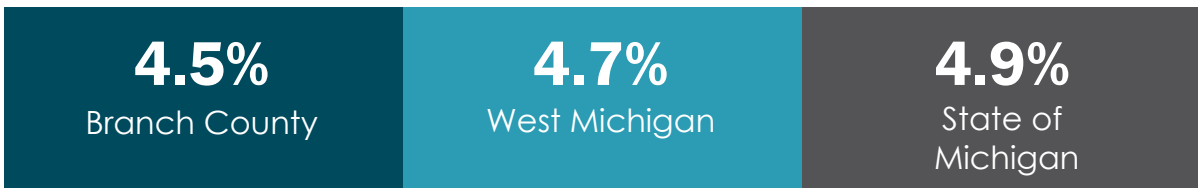
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, stood at 55.6% in Branch County in April. This was lower than the rate in west Michigan by 5.5 percentage points and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 3.2 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 53.1% in Branch County for April. This was 5.1 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 2.8% lower than the ratio for the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

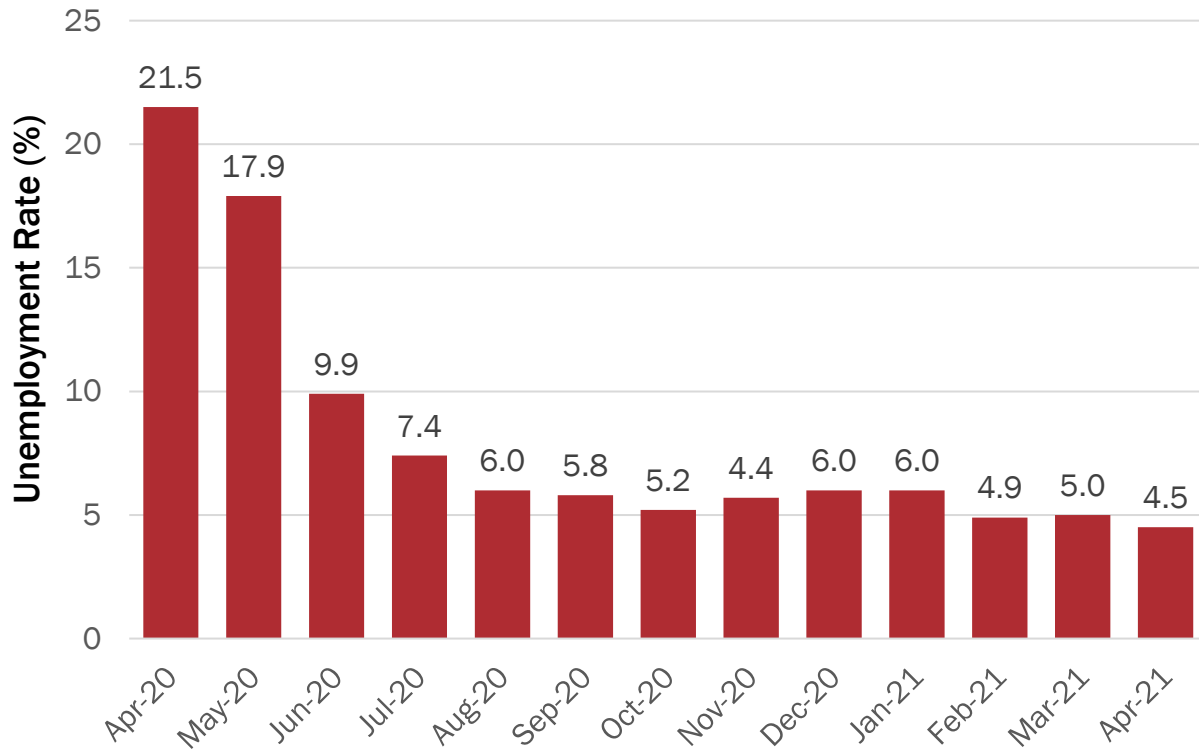


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 4.5% in Branch County in April. This was 0.2 percentage points lower than the rate for west Michigan and 0.4 percentage points lower than the rate for the state of Michigan.

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 (not seasonally adjusted)



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

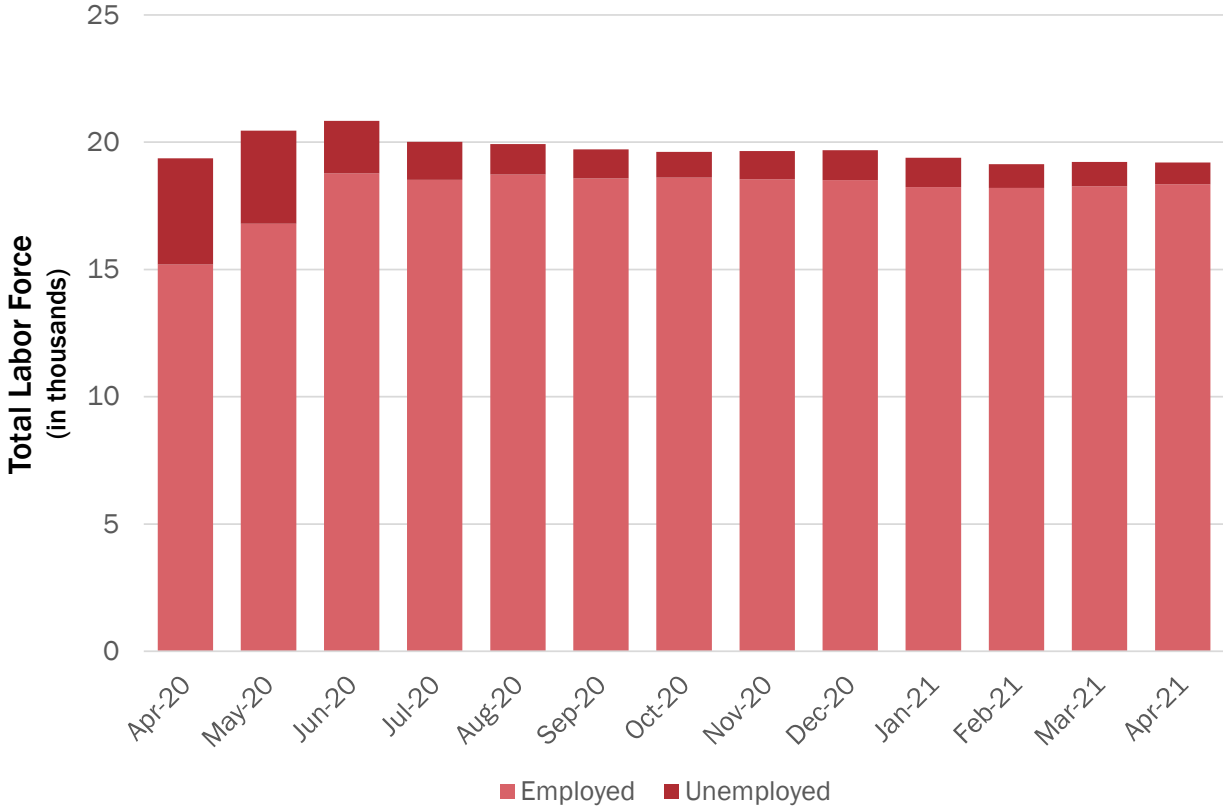
From March to April, the unemployment rate in Branch County decreased by 0.5 percentage points, to 4.5 percent. The unemployment rate for the county is 17.0 percentage points lower than it was at the same time last year.

In April, there were **3.3 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 (not seasonally adjusted)



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

The total labor force in Branch County in April stood at 19,206, a decrease of 16 people from the March labor force of 19,222. The total labor force in Branch County has shrunk by 0.8% since April 2020, when it stood at 19,365. This indicates a decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

Labor Force by the Numbers, Q3 2020

- 19.8%** Percentage of workers aged 25 or older with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree
- 35.1%** Percentage of workers aged 25 or older with an associate degree or some college
- 33.4%** Percentage of workers aged 25 or older

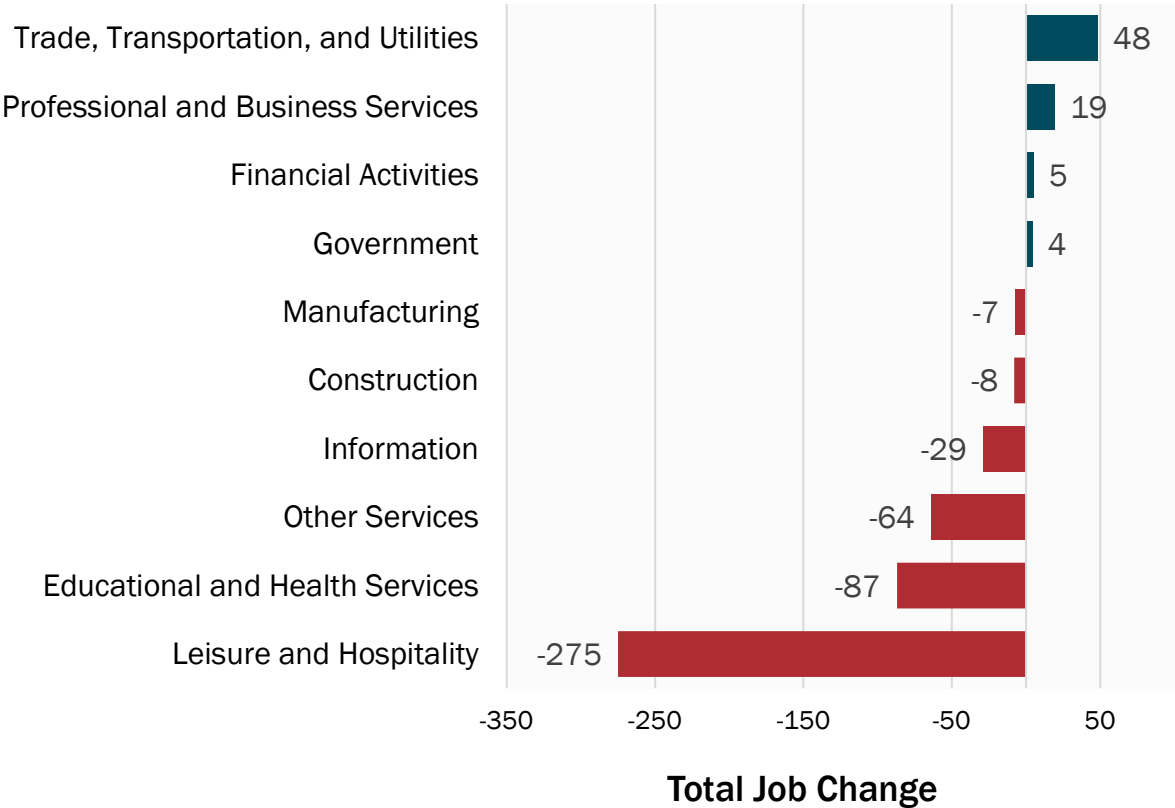
SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2020

Employment by Industry (not seasonally adjusted)

Measure	Q4 2020	Q3 2020	% Change Q3 to Q4	Q4 2019	% Change Q4 to Q4
Employment (by place of work)					
Total Private Sector Employment	11,181	11,103	0.7%	11,611	-3.7%
Goods-Producing	3,628	3,578	1.4%	3,675	-1.3%
Natural Resources & Mining	265	326	-18.6%	297	-10.9%
Construction	446	468	-4.6%	454	-1.6%
Manufacturing	2,917	2,785	4.8%	2,924	-0.3%
Private Service-Providing	7,552	7,525	0.4%	7,936	-4.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	3,711	3,566	4.1%	3,663	1.3%
Information	94	87	8.4%	123	-23.5%
Financial Activities	591	592	-0.2%	586	0.9%
Professional and Business Services	538	494	8.8%	519	3.7%
Educational and Health Services	872	871	0.2%	959	-9.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,464	1,643	-10.9%	1,739	-15.8%
Other Services	259	249	4.2%	323	-19.8%
Unclassified	23	23	0.0%	23	0.0%
Government*	90	96	-5.9%	86	5.0%

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

Employment Change, Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 (not seasonally adjusted)



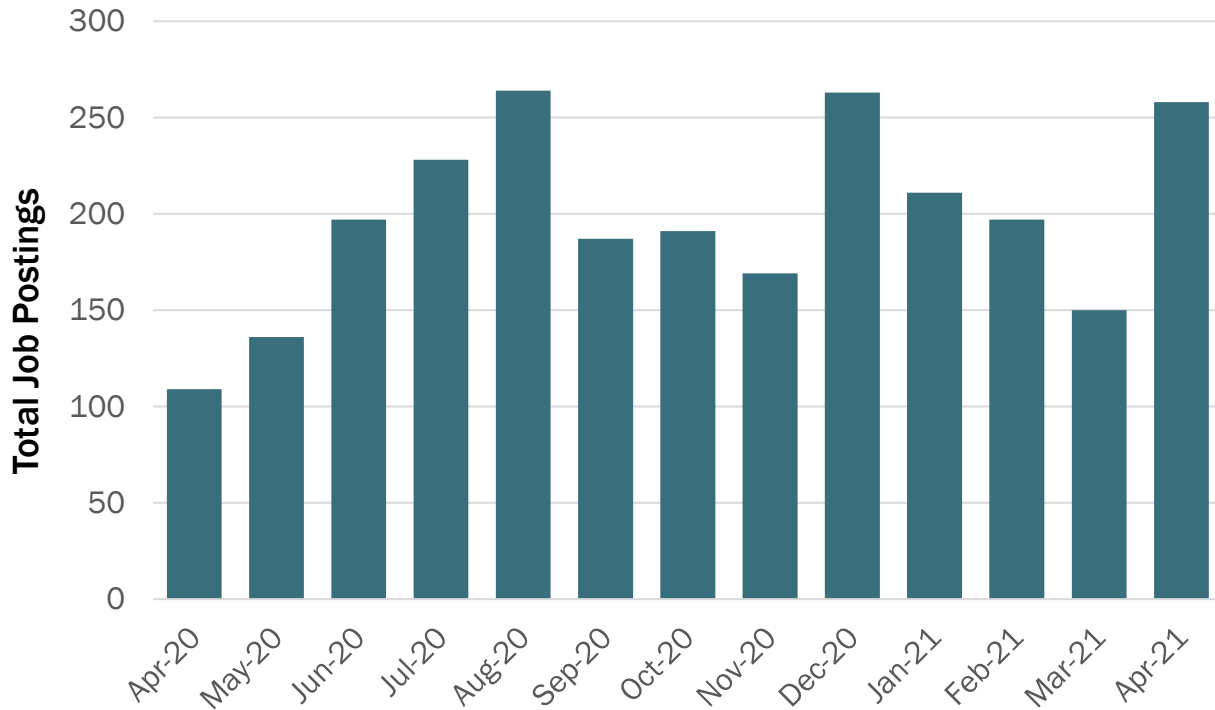
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2020

The most recent data show that the greatest decrease in employment for Branch County from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 occurred in leisure and hospitality, which declined by 275 jobs, or 15.8%. The greatest increase in employment from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 for the county was in trade, transportation, and utilities, which grew by 48 jobs, or 1.3%.

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

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

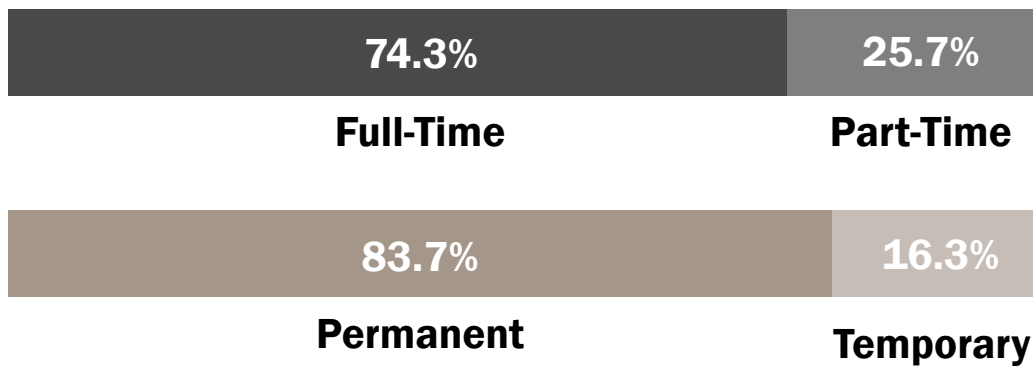
Total Job Postings, April 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

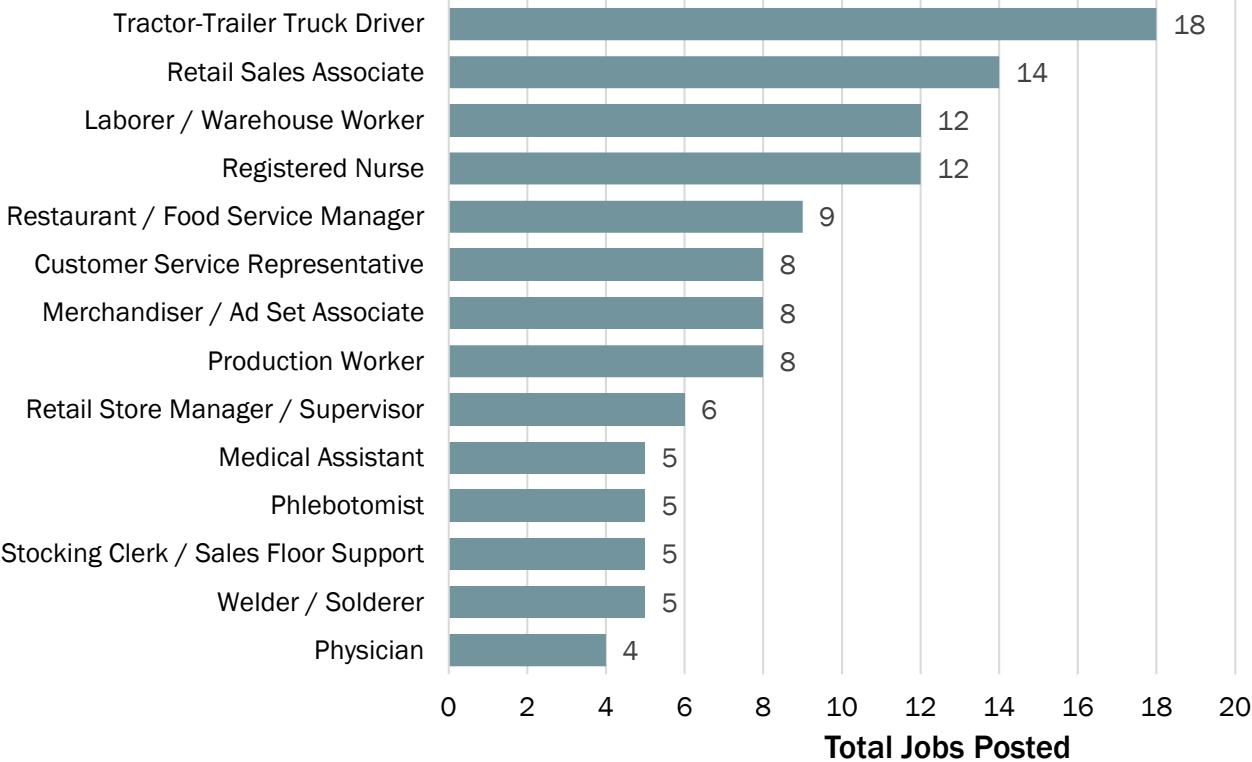
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, increased by 72.0% between March 2021 and April 2021, from 150 postings to 258. The majority of postings in Branch County, as reported by Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Type of Job Postings, April 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

Top Occupations for Job Postings, April 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The top occupations with job postings were for tractor-trailer truck drivers, retail sales associates, and registered nurses. Nearly half of the job postings, 54.4%, required at a minimum a high school diploma or vocational training. This represents exactly the same proportion as in March of job postings requiring a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree increased by 1.9 percentage points from March, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher decreased by 1.9 percentage points.

54.4% of job postings in April 2021 required a high school diploma or vocational training.

20.8% of job postings in April 2021 required an associate degree.

24.8% of job postings in April 2021 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/.