



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



MAY 2022

BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County employment grew, experiencing an increase of 217 jobs from Q2 2021 to Q3 2021. Between January and February, the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate increased, and the employment-to-population ratio was unchanged. This is likely a sign that unemployed individuals are still looking for work. Job postings were higher in February than in January, with retail sales associate as the most in-demand position.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 54.0% in February. This is a 0.1 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 51.6% in February. This is unchanged from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 4.4% in February. This is a 0.1 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The total labor force saw an increase of 23 people from January to February. The number of employed people increased by 9, and the number of unemployed people increased by 14.



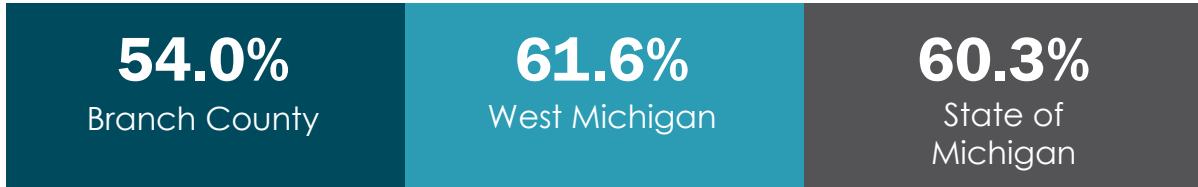
Total employment increased by 1.9% from Q2 2021 to Q3 2021.



There were 184 job postings in February, an increase of 52.1% from January.

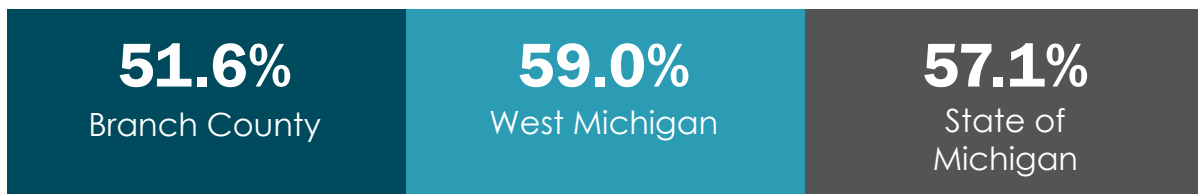
KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



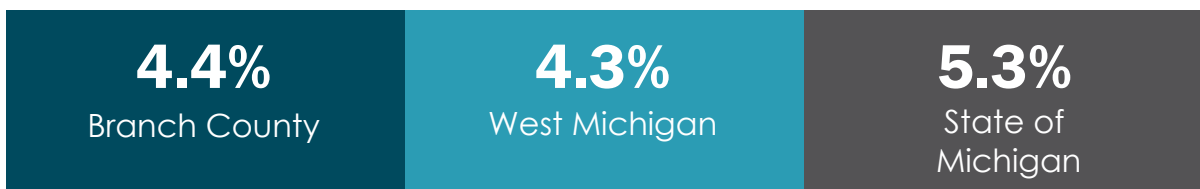
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 54.0% in Branch County in February. This was lower than the rate for west Michigan by 7.6 percentage points and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 6.3 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 51.6% for Branch County in February. This was 7.4 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 5.5 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

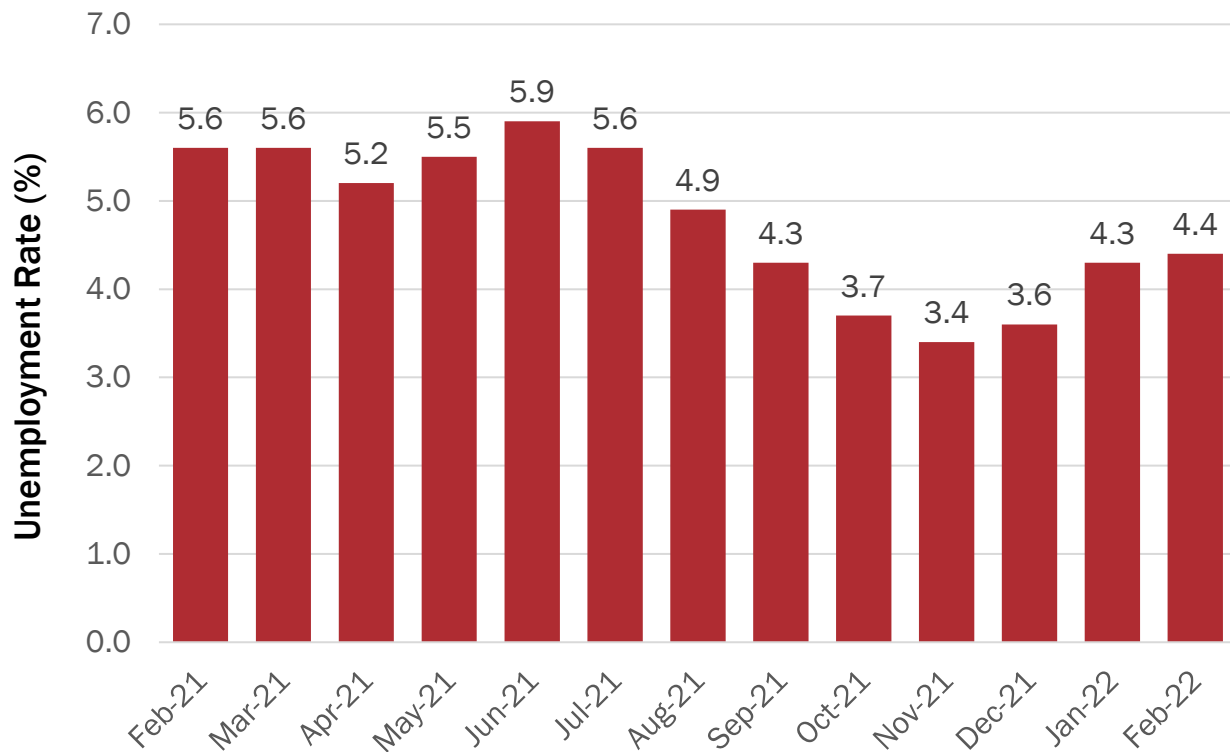


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 4.4% for Branch County in February. This was higher than the rate for west Michigan by 0.1 percentage point and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 0.9 percentage points.

SOURCE: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) & Upjohn Institute, 2022

“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, 2022

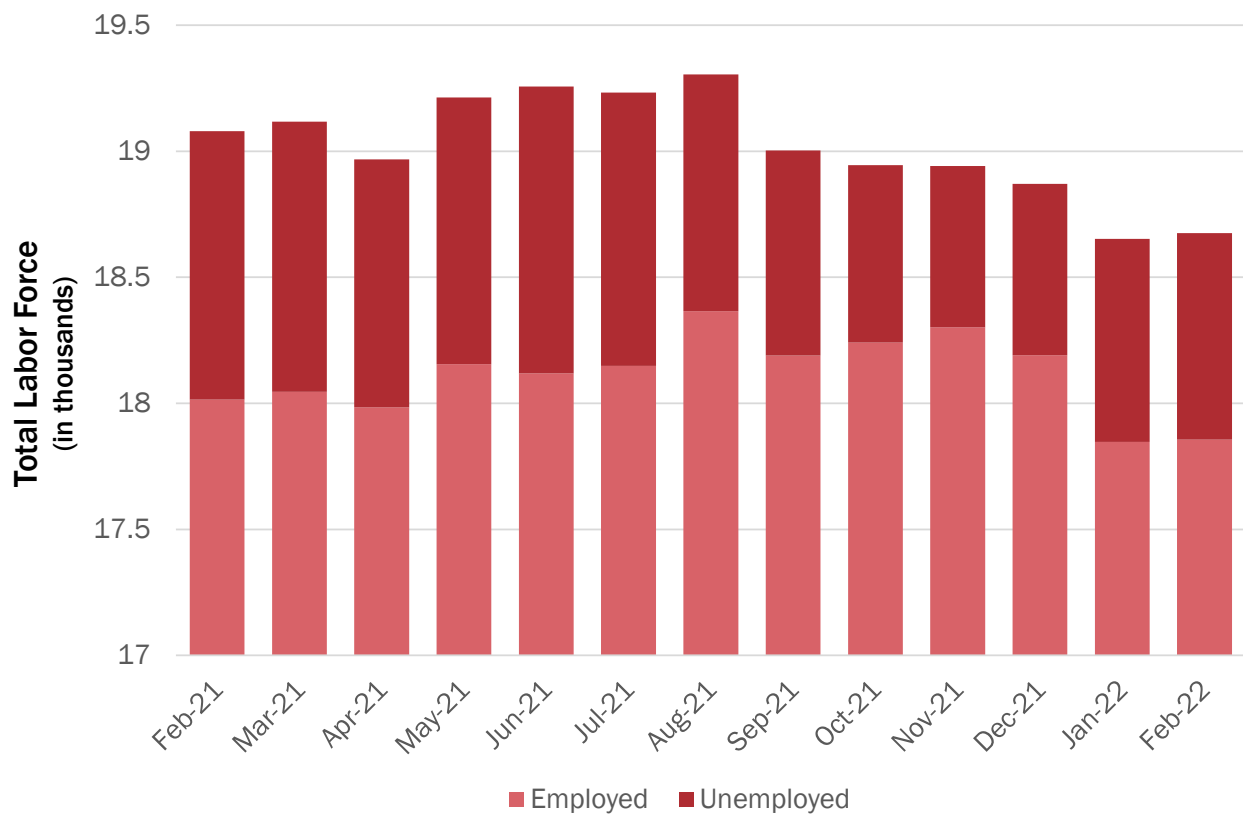
From January to February, the unemployment rate in Branch County increased by 0.1 percentage point, to 4.4 percent. The unemployment rate for February is 1.2 percentage points lower than it was at the same time a year earlier.

In February, there were 4.5 job seekers for every job posting in Branch County.*

—Burning Glass Technologies, BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) & Upjohn Institute, 2022

*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, 2022

The total labor force in Branch County in February stood at 18,675, an increase of 23 people from the January labor force of 18,652. The labor force in Branch County has shrunk by 2.1% since February 2021, when it stood at 19,079. This indicates a decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

Labor Force by the Numbers, Q2 2021

- 20.2%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree
- 34.8%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with an associate degree or some college
- 33.2%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with only a high school degree or equivalent

SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2021

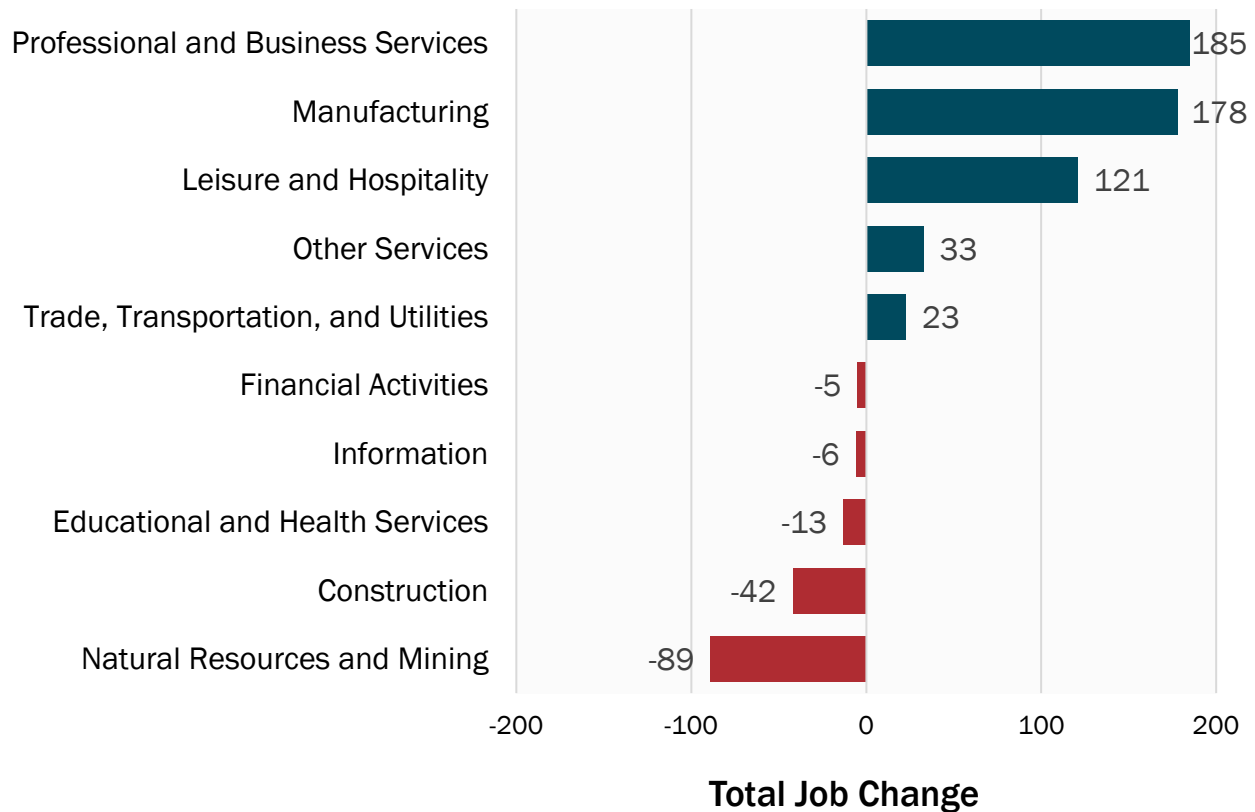
Employment by Industry (not seasonally adjusted)

Measure	Q3 2021	% Change Q2 to Q3	Q2 2021	% Change Q3 to Q3	Q3 2020
Employment (by place of work)					
Total private-sector employment	11,486	1.9%	11,269	3.5%	11,095
Goods-producing	3,626	2.2%	3,548	1.3%	3,579
Natural resources and mining	237	-6.0%	252	-27.3%	326
Construction	426	1.7%	419	-9.0%	468
Manufacturing	2,963	3.0%	2,877	6.4%	2,785
Private service-providing	7,860	1.8%	7,721	4.6%	7,516
Trade, transportation, and utilities	3,592	-1.4%	3,643	0.6%	3,569
Information	80	-22.3%	103	-7.0%	86
Financial activities	589	0.2%	588	-0.8%	594
Professional and business services	674	14.6%	588	37.8%	489
Educational and health services	858	-1.0%	867	-1.5%	871
Leisure and hospitality	1,762	7.6%	1,638	7.4%	1,641
Other services	282	4.8%	269	13.3%	249
Unclassified	23	-8.0%	25	35.3%	17
Government*	84	0.0%	84	-12.5%	96

NOTE: * Government employment data for Branch County is incomplete.

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

Employment Change, Q3 2020 to Q3 2021 (not seasonally adjusted)



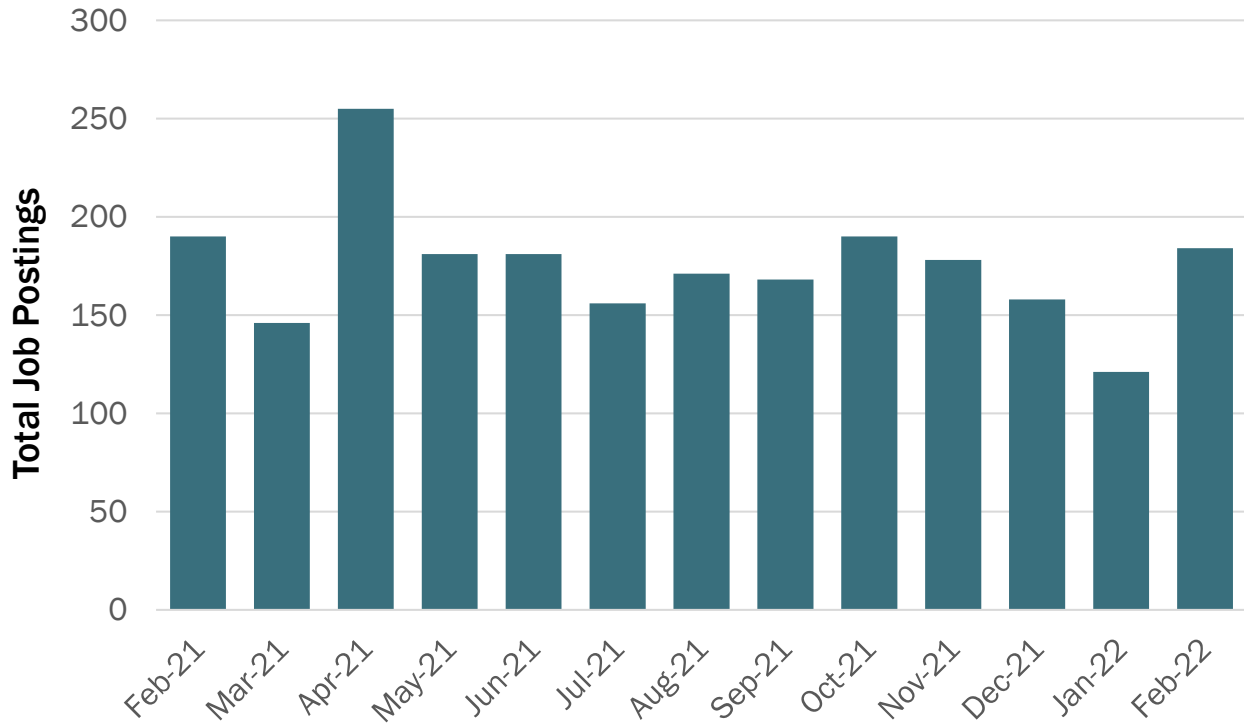
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2021

The most recent data show that the greatest decrease in employment in Branch County from Q3 2020 to Q3 2021 was in natural resources and mining, which declined by 89 jobs, or 27.3%. The greatest increase in employment from Q3 2020 to Q3 2021 in the county occurred in professional and business services, which grew by 185 jobs, or 37.8%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in Q3 2021 in Branch County was \$934.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

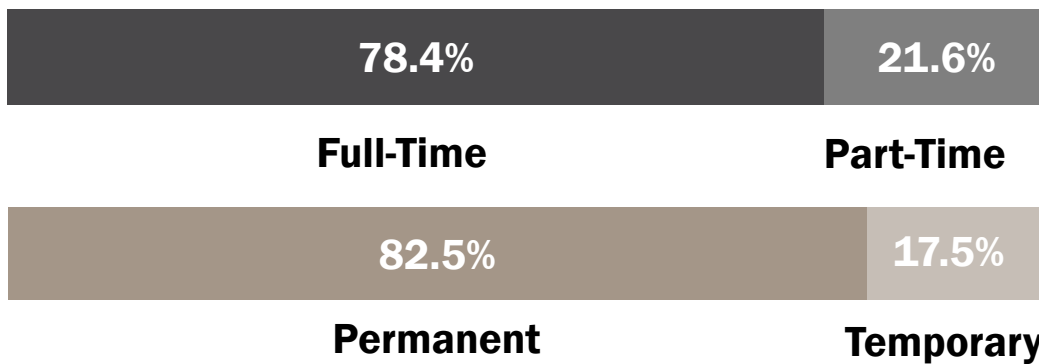
Total Job Postings for February 2022



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

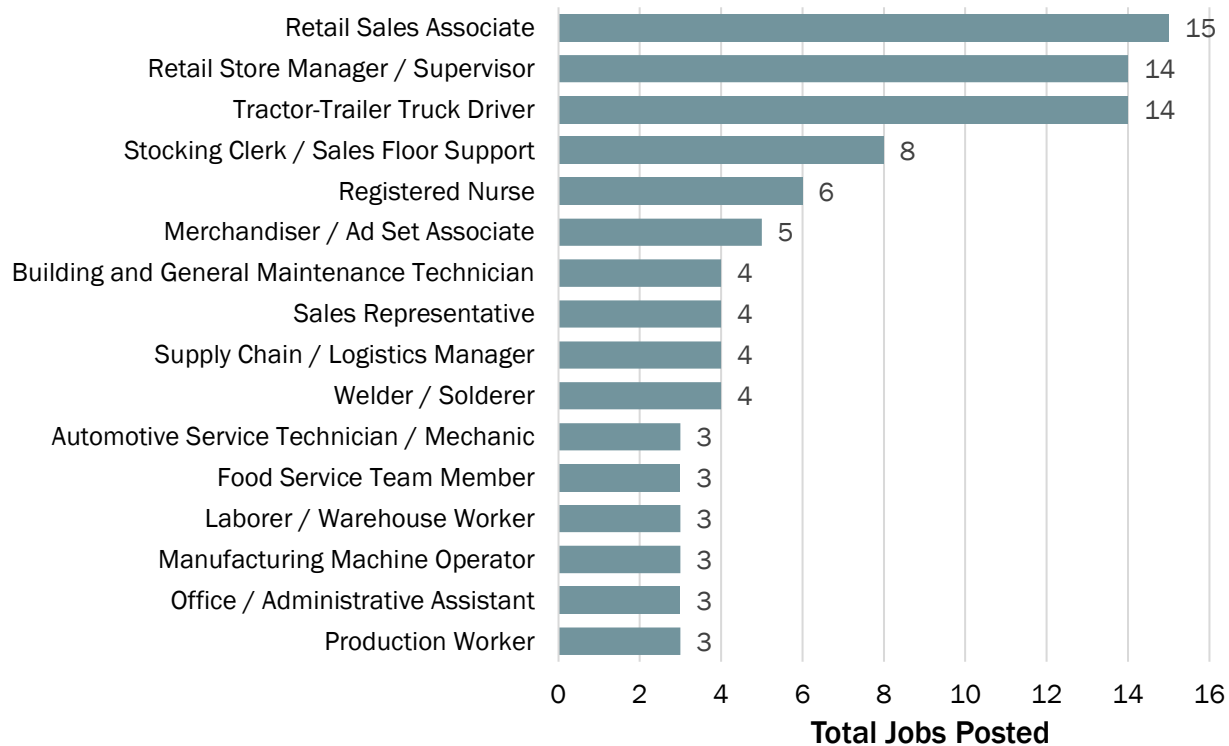
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, increased by 52.1% between January and February, from 121 postings to 184. The majority of postings in the county, as reported through Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Types of Job Postings for February 2022



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

Top Occupations with Job Postings for February 2022



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

The top occupation for job postings in February was retail sales associate, with retail manager tied with truck driver for second place. The majority of job postings, 67.5%, required no more than a high school diploma or vocational training. This is an increase of 0.8 percentage points from January in the proportion of job postings requiring only a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree decreased by 2.8 percentage points from January, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 1.9 percentage points.

67.5% of job postings in February required only a high school diploma or vocational training.

10.8% of job postings in February required an associate degree.

21.7% of job postings in February required a bachelor's degree or higher.

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 because of rounding.

SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

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

Report Contributors

Michael Horrigan
President

Brian Pittelko
Research Coordinator

Laura Pyle
Regional Assistant

Dakota McCracken
Regional Analyst

Gerrit Anderson
Mapping and Visualization Specialist

Ben Jones
Editor

Erika Jones
Production Coordinator

For More Information

For questions or information about this report, contact Brian Pittelko, Research Coordinator, 269-385-0424 or pittelko@upjohn.org.

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/.