



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



AUGUST 2022



BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County employment grew from Q3 2021 to Q4 2021, experiencing an increase of 151 jobs. Between April and May, the unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, and employment-to-population ratio all increased. This is likely a sign that some individuals are reentering the labor force and finding work, while others are still looking. Job postings were lower in May than in April because of a methodology change in posting data collection by Labor Insight from Burning Glass Technologies, a database of job-posting information. Tractor-trailer truck driver was the most in-demand position.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 54.4% in May. This is a 1.6 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 52.3% in May. This is a 1.4 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 3.9% in May. This is a 0.3 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The total labor force saw an increase of 578 people from April to May. The number of employed people increased by 480, and the number of unemployed people increased by 98.



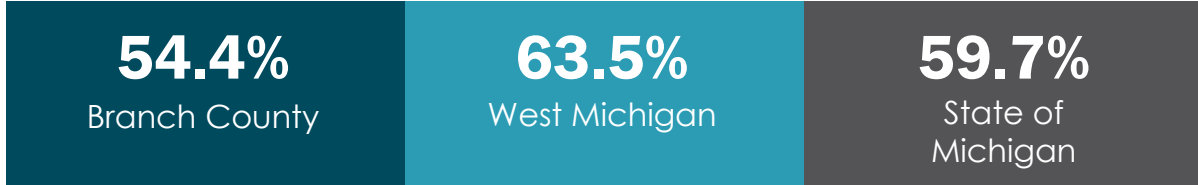
Total employment increased by 1.3% from Q3 2021 to Q4 2021.



There were 184 job postings in May, a decrease of 6.6 percent from April.

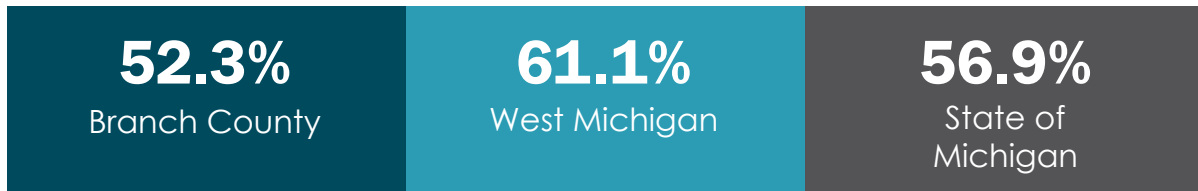
KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



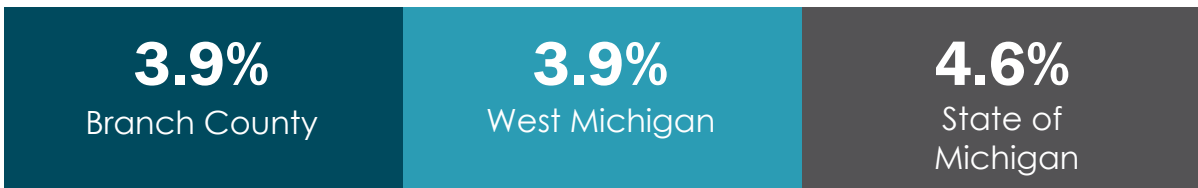
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy’s active workforce, was 54.4% in Branch County in May. This was lower than the rate for west Michigan by 9.1 percentage points and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 5.3 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 52.3% for Branch County in May. This was 8.8 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 4.6 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

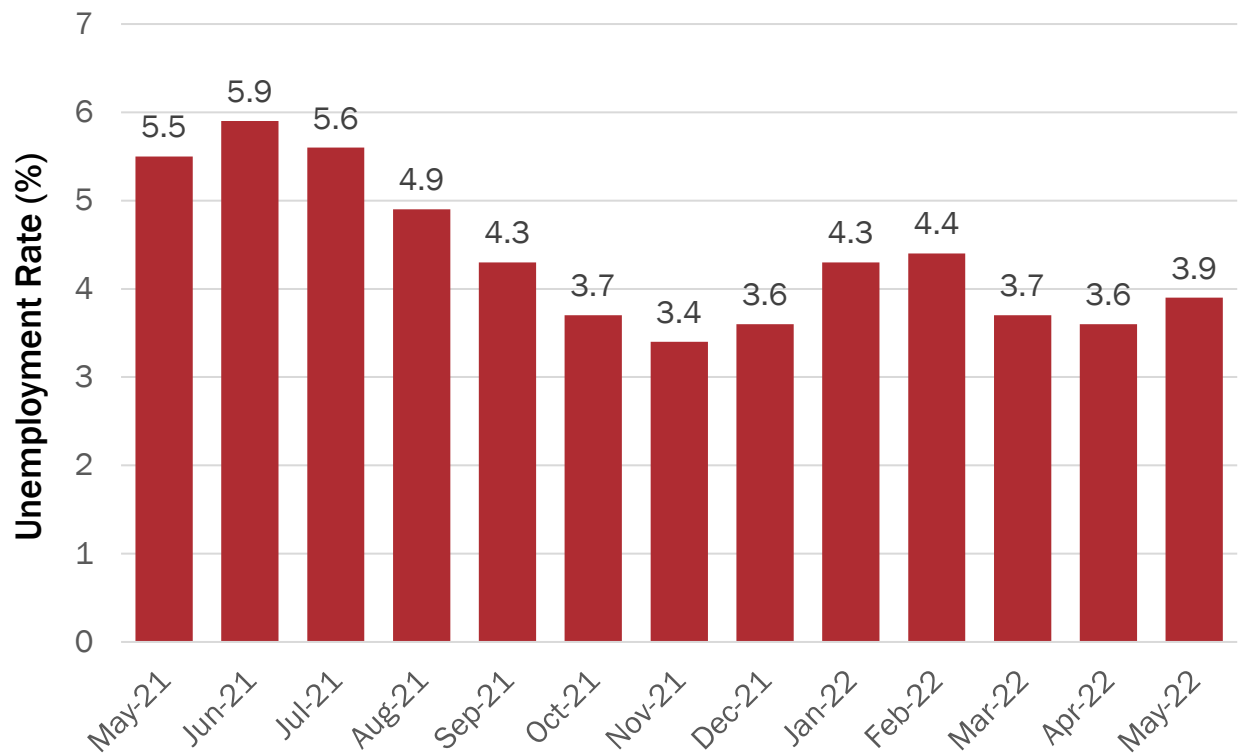


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 3.9% for Branch County in May. This was the same as the rate for west Michigan and 0.7 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

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 (LAUS), & Upjohn Institute, 2022

From April to May, the unemployment rate in Branch County increased by 0.3 percentage points, to 3.9 percent. The unemployment rate for May is 1.6 percentage points lower than it was at the same time a year earlier.

In May, there were **4.2 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.

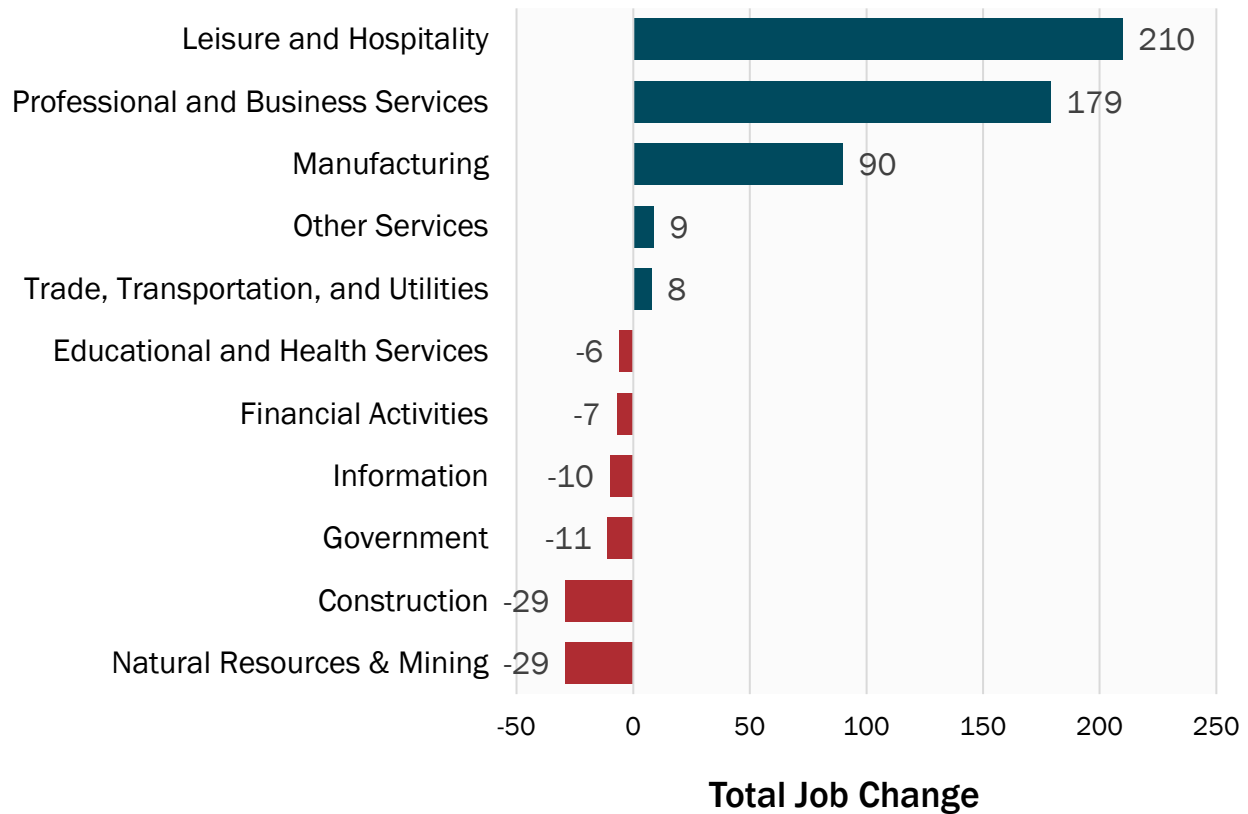
Employment by Industry (not seasonally adjusted)

Measure	Q4 2021	Q3 2021	% Change Q3 to Q4	Q4 2020	% Change Q4 to Q4
Employment (by place of work)					
Total private-sector employment	11,622	11,471	1.3%	11,208	3.7%
Goods-producing	3,660	3,626	0.9%	3,628	0.9%
Natural resources and mining	236	237	-0.4%	265	-10.9%
Construction	417	426	-2.1%	446	-6.5%
Manufacturing	3,007	2,963	1.5%	2,917	3.1%
Private service-providing	7,962	7,845	1.5%	7,580	5.0%
Trade, transportation, and utilities	3,747	3,592	4.3%	3,739	0.2%
Information	84	80	5.0%	94	-10.6%
Financial activities	584	589	-0.8%	591	-1.2%
Professional and business services	717	674	6.4%	538	33.3%
Educational and health services	866	858	0.9%	872	-0.7%
Leisure and hospitality	1,674	1,762	-5.0%	1,464	14.3%
Other services	268	267	0.4%	259	3.5%
Unclassified	22	23	-4.3%	23	-4.3%
Government ^a	79	84	-6.0%	90	-12.2%

NOTE: ^a Government employment data for Branch County is incomplete.

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

Employment Change, Q4 2020 to Q4 2021 (not seasonally adjusted)



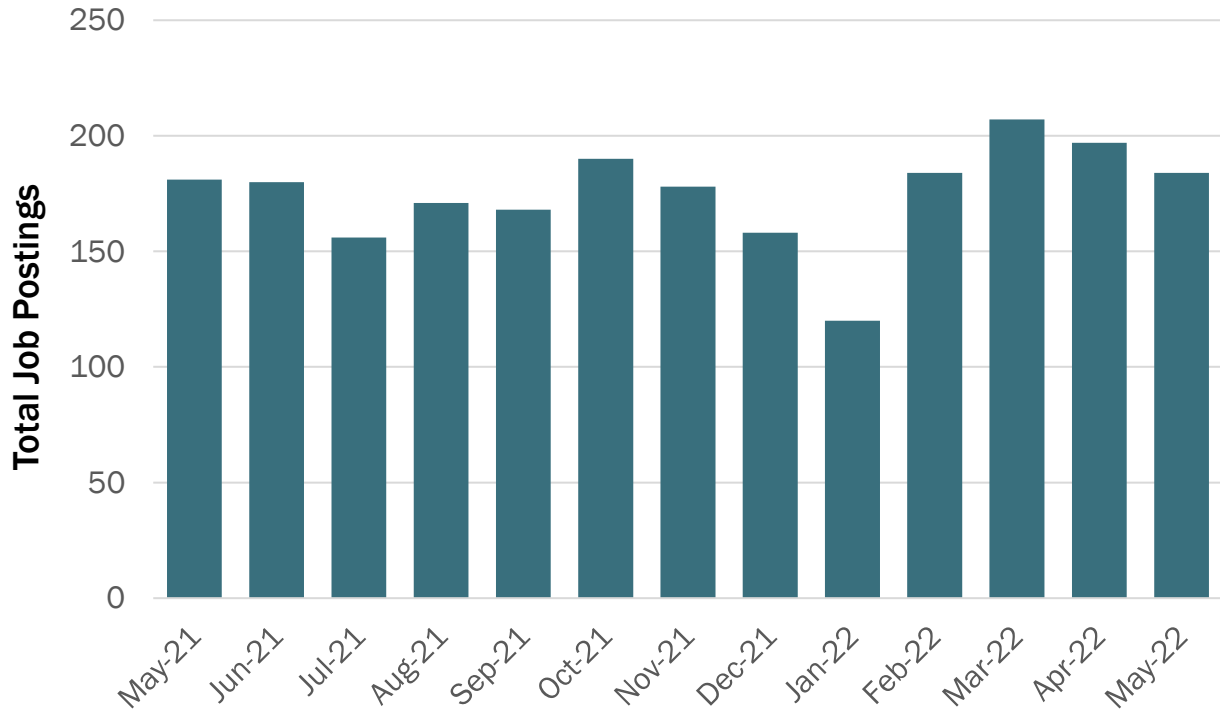
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2021

The most recent data show that the greatest decreases in employment in Branch County from Q4 2020 to Q4 2021 were in natural resources and mining and also in construction, each of which declined by 29 jobs. The greatest increase in employment from Q4 2020 to Q4 2021 in the county occurred in leisure and hospitality, which grew by 210 jobs, or 14.3%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in Q4 2021 in Branch County was \$983.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

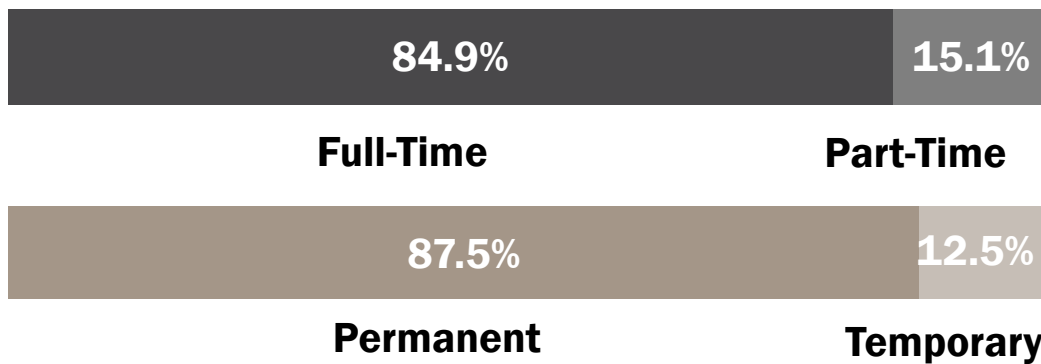
Total Job Postings for May 2022



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

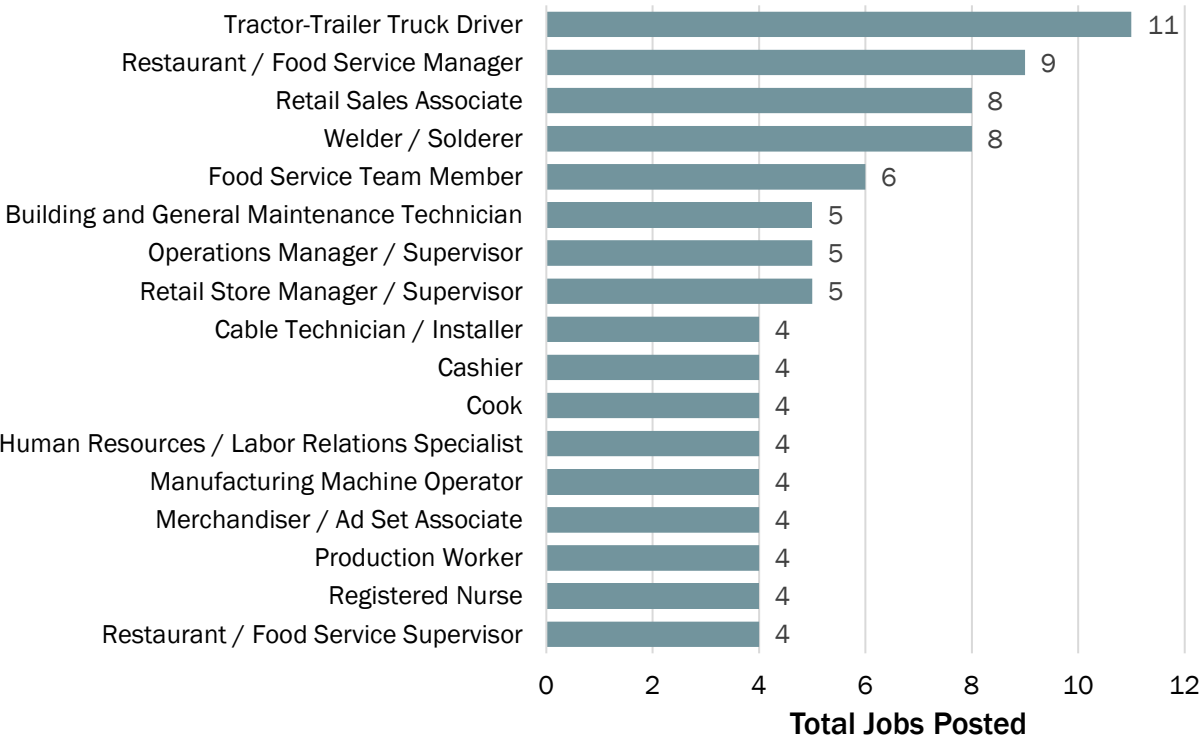
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, fell in May because of a change by a major job-posting website: the decrease in postings is a result of that, rather than of lower demand. The majority of postings in the county, as reported through Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Types of Job Postings for May 2022



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

Top Occupations with Job Postings for May 2022



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2022

The top occupations for job postings in May were tractor-trailer truck driver, food service manager, and retail sales associate. The majority of job postings, 59.2%, required no more than a high school diploma or vocational training. This is a decrease of 8.1 percentage points from April 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 2.0 percentage points from April, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher increased by 10.1 percentage points.

59.2% of job postings in May required only a high school diploma or vocational training.

10.7% of job postings in May required an associate degree.

30.1% of job postings in May 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

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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/.