



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



MAY 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 January 2021 and February 2021, the unemployment rate decreased by 1.1 percentage points. However, this may not be a positive sign, as both the employment-to-population ratio and the labor force participation rate also decreased from January 2021 to February 2021. Job postings were lower in February 2021 than in January 2021, with slightly fewer postings in Health Care and Social Assistance and in Retail Trade.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 55.3% in February 2021. This is a 0.7 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 52.6% in February 2021. This is a 0.1 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 4.9% in February 2021. This is a 1.1 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The total labor force decreased by 258 people from January 2021 to February 2021. The number of employed people decreased by 37, and the number of unemployed people decreased by 221.



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

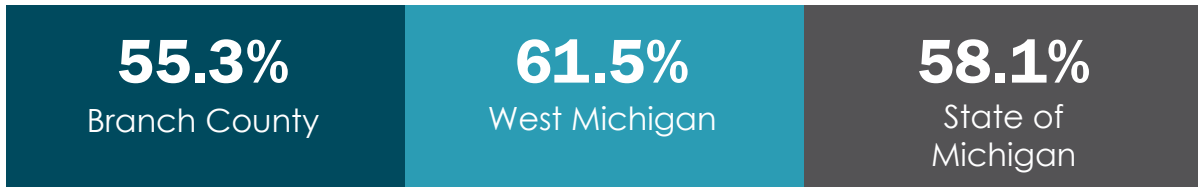


There were 197 job postings in February 2021. This means job postings decreased by 6.6% from the previous month.

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

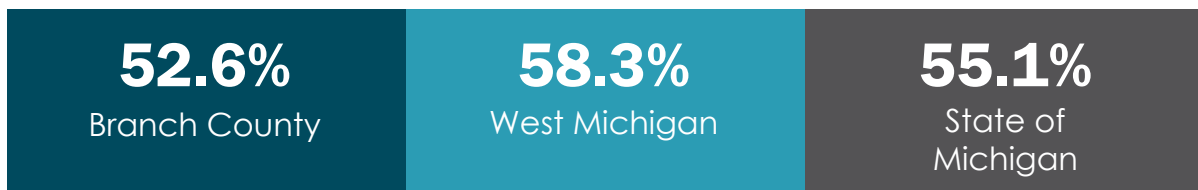
February 2021

Labor Force Participation Rate



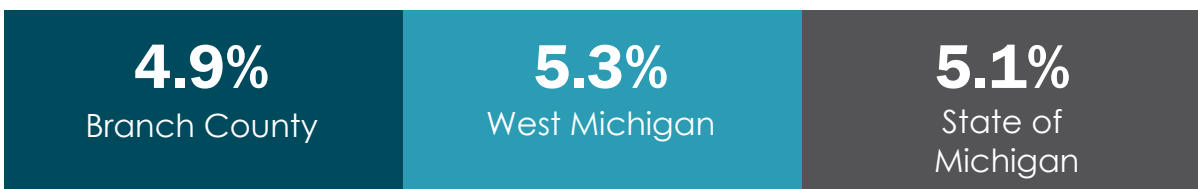
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 55.3% in Branch County in February 2021. This was lower than the rate in west Michigan by 6.2 percentage points and lower than the rate in the state of Michigan by 2.8 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, stood at 52.6% in Branch County in February 2021. This was 5.7 percentage points below the rate for west Michigan and 2.5 points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

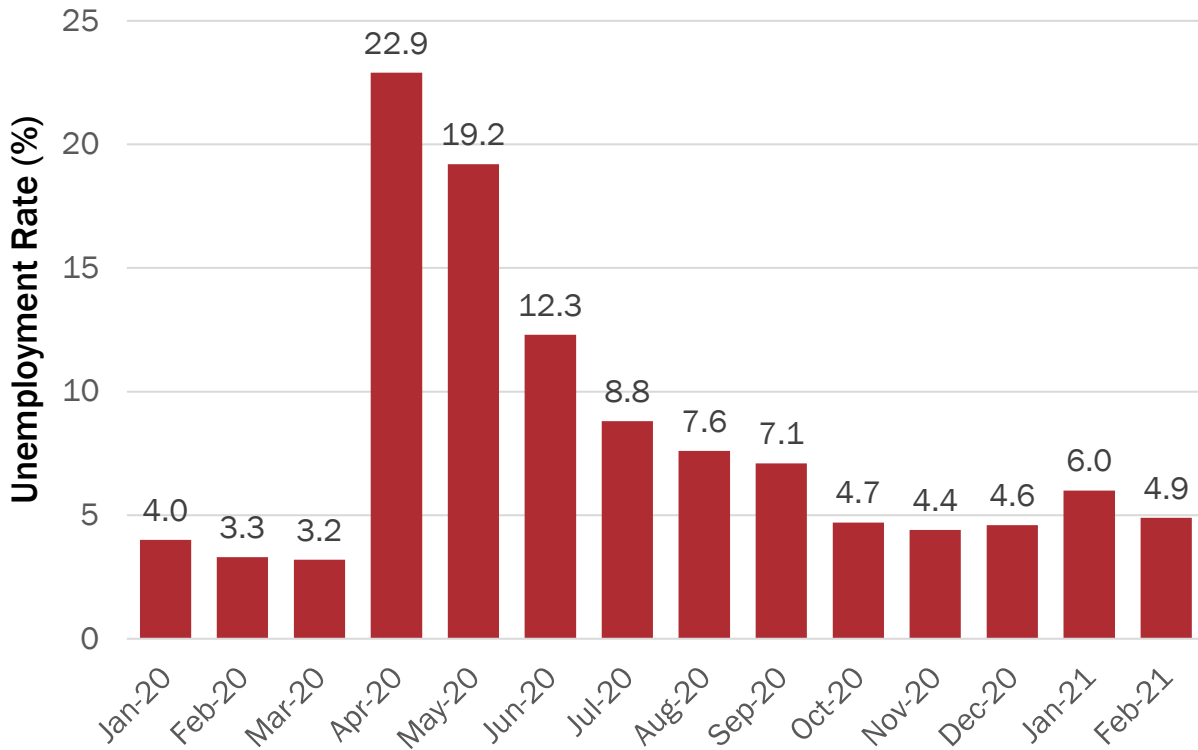


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, stood at 4.9% in Branch County in February 2021. This was 0.4 percentage points lower than the rate in west Michigan and 0.2 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

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

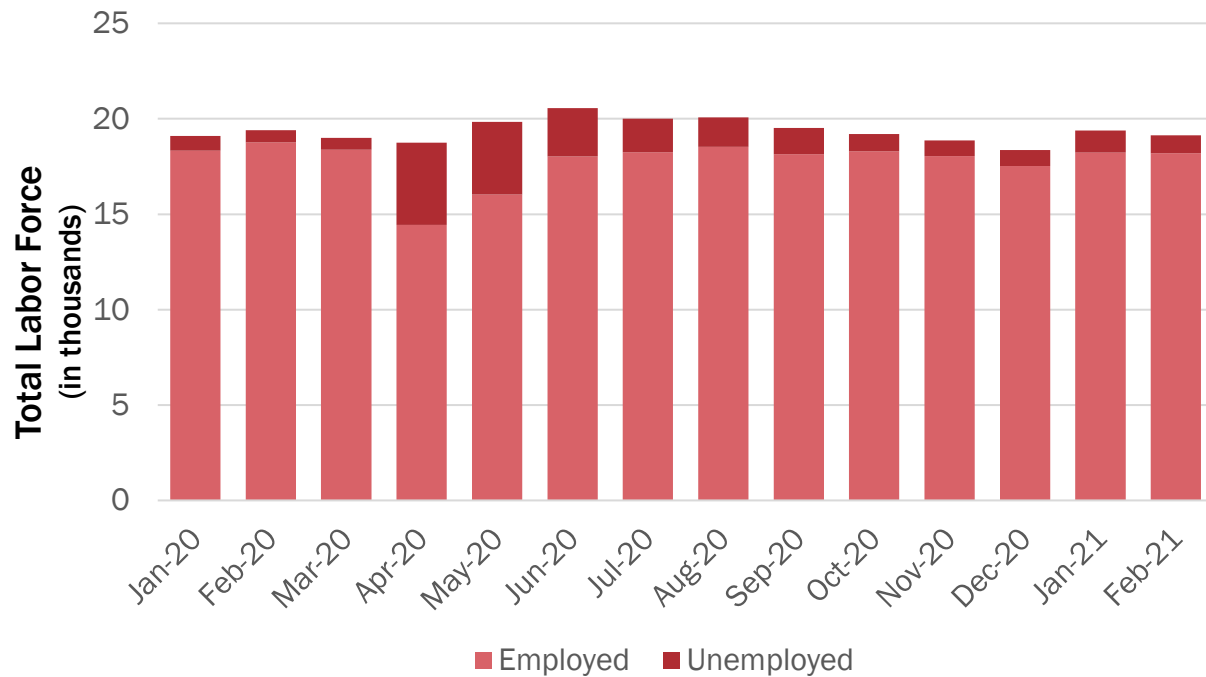
From January 2021, the unemployment rate in Branch County decreased by 1.1 percentage points to 4.9% in February 2021. The unemployment rate is 1.6 percentage points higher than it was at the same time last year.

In February, there were **4.7 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 February 2021 stood at 19,129, a decrease of 258 people from January 2021. The total labor force in the county has shrunk by 1.3% since February 2020, when it stood at 19,411. This indicates an decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

Labor Force by the Numbers, Q2 2020 Branch County

- 19.5%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree
- 35.1%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with an associate degree or some college
- 33.7%** Percentage of workers age 25 to 54 with a high school diploma or equivalent

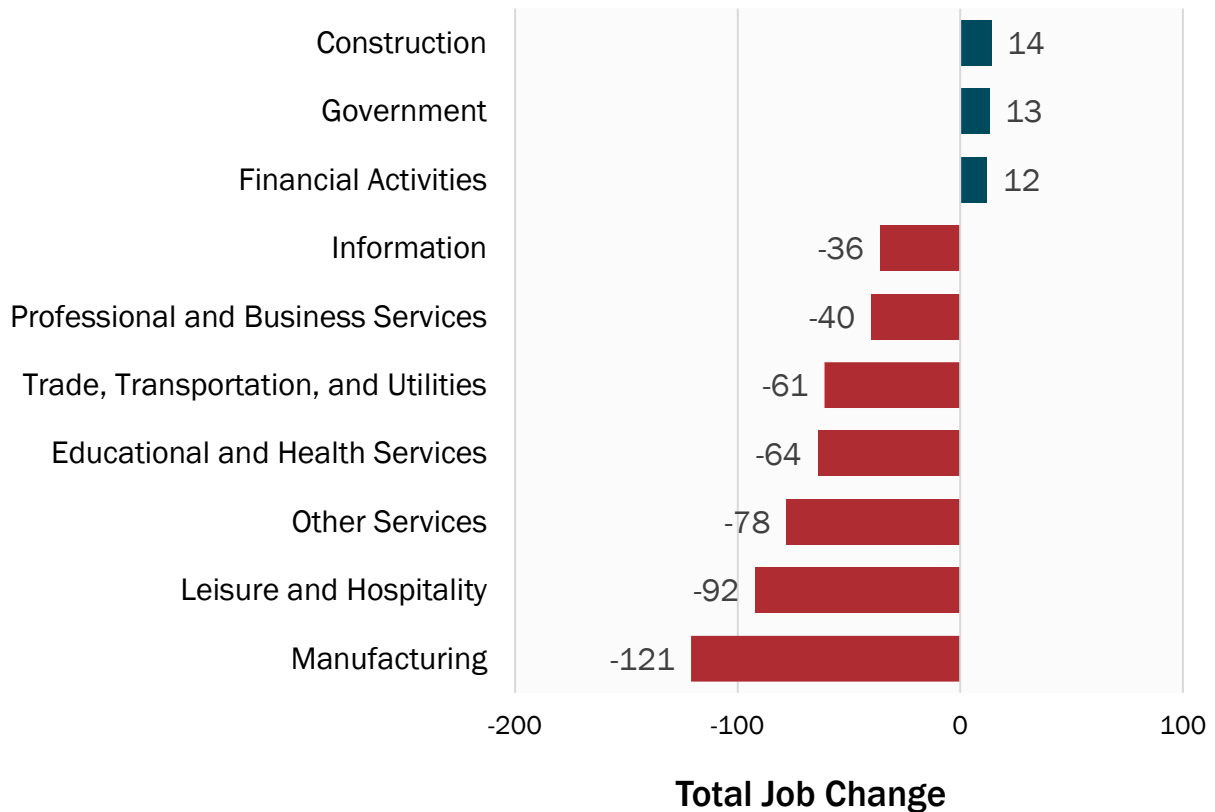
SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2020

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)



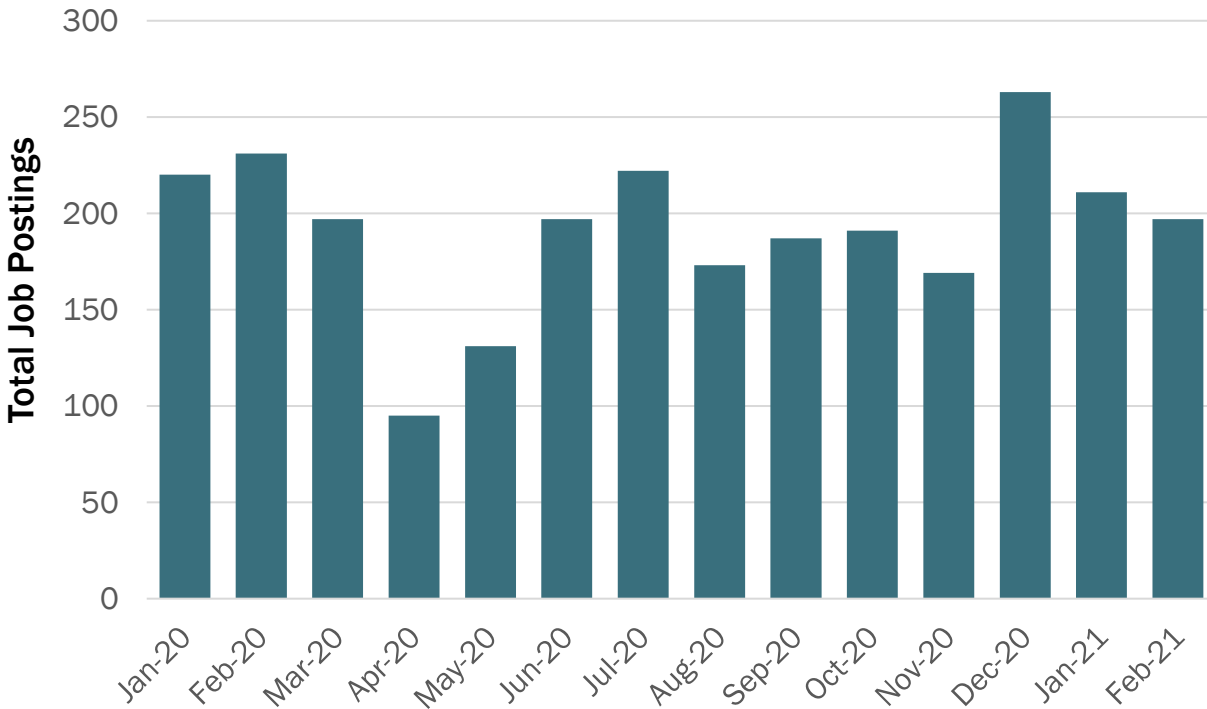
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2020

The most recent data show 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 Q3 2020 in Branch County was \$846.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

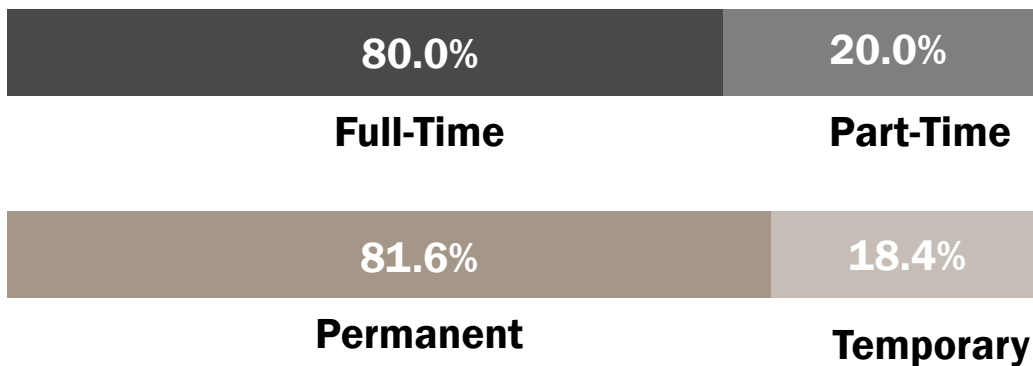
Total Job Postings, February 2021 Branch County



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

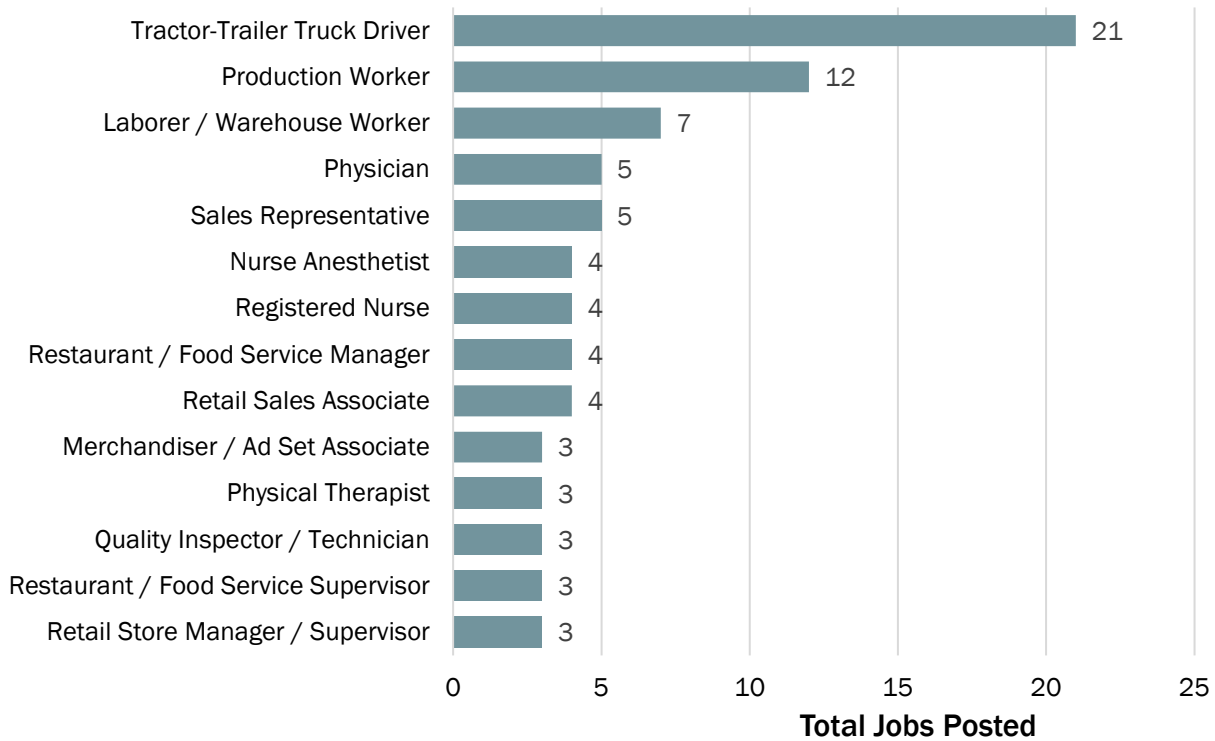
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, decreased by 6.6% between January 2021 and February 2021, from 211 postings to 197 postings. The majority of postings in Branch County, as reported by Burning Glass, were full-time and permanent positions.

Type of Job Postings, February 2021 Branch County



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

Job Postings for Top Occupations, February 2021 Branch County



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The top job occupations with job postings were for tractor-trailer truck drivers, production workers, and laborers/warehouse workers. Of the total job postings, 56.1% required a high school diploma or vocational training. This represents a decrease of 3.2 percentage points from January 2021 in the proportion of job postings requiring a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree decreased by 2.2 percentage points from January 2021, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 5.4 percentage points.

56.1% of job postings required a high school diploma or vocational training in February 2021.

17.4% of job postings required an associate degree in February 2021.

26.5% of job postings required a bachelor's degree or higher in February 2021.

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/.