



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



AUGUST 2021



BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County continues to show some small growth, with an increase of more than 50 jobs from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020. Between April 2021 and May 2021, the unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, and employment-to-population ratio increased. This is likely a sign that individuals are reentering the labor market but not necessarily finding jobs right away. Job postings were lower in May than in April, with fewer postings in retail trade and manufacturing.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 57.0% in May. This is a 1.4 percentage-point increase from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 54.1% in May. This is a 1.0 percentage-point increase from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 5.1% in May. This is a 0.6 percentage-point increase from the previous month.



The total labor force saw an increase of 459 people from April to May. The increase in employed people was 327, and the increase in unemployed people was 132.



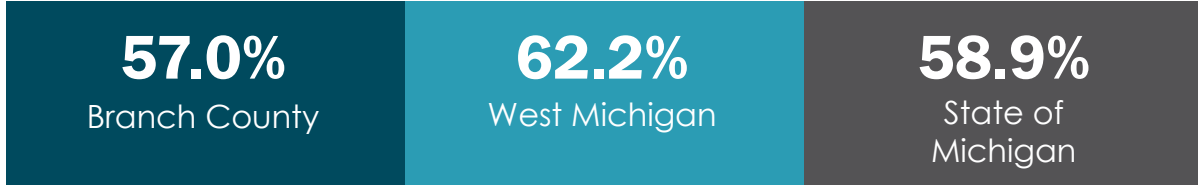
Total employment increased by 0.7% from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020.



There were 181 job postings in May, a decrease of 29.8% from April.

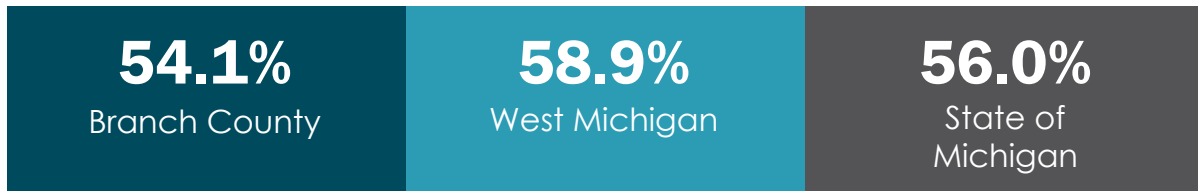
KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



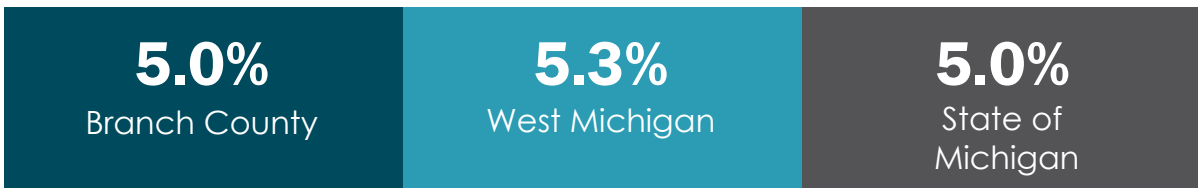
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 57.0% in Branch County in May. This was lower than the rate for west Michigan by 5.2 percentage points, and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 1.9 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 54.1% in Branch County in May. This was 4.8 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 1.9% percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

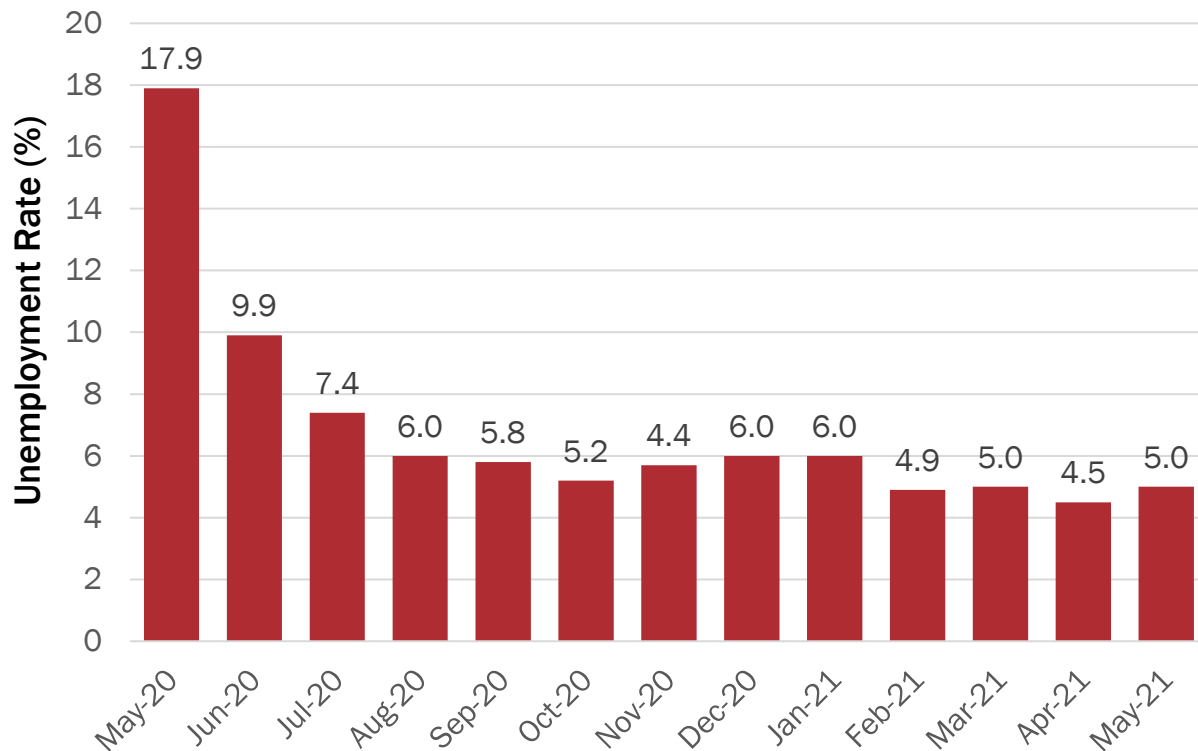


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 5.0% in Branch County in May. This was 0.3 percentage points lower than the rate for west Michigan and the same as the rate for the state of Michigan.

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

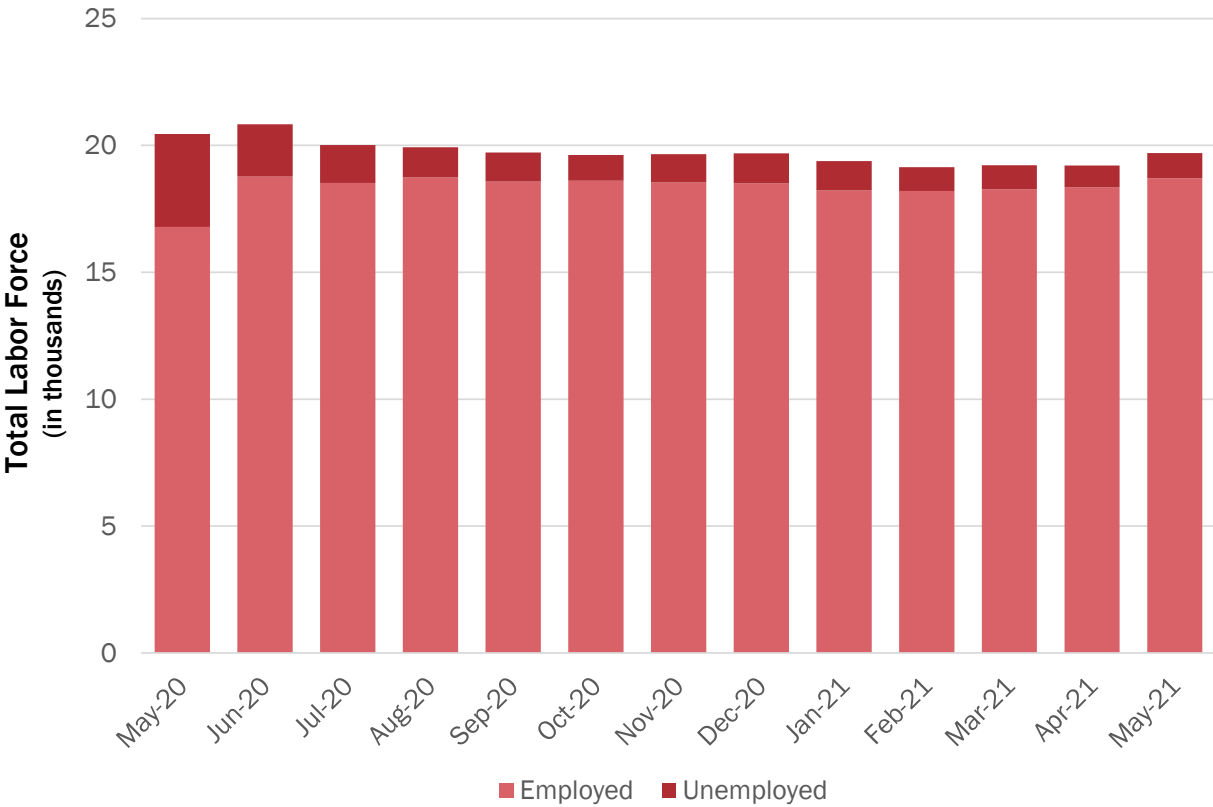
From April to May, the unemployment rate in Branch County increased by 0.5 percentage points, to 5.0 percent. The unemployment rate is 12.9 percentage points lower than it was at the same time last year.

In May, there were **5.5 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 May stood at 19,695, an increase of 484 people from the April labor force of 19,211. The total labor force in the county has shrunk by 3.7% since May 2020, when it stood at 20,456. 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 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
- 33.4%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a high school degree or equivalent

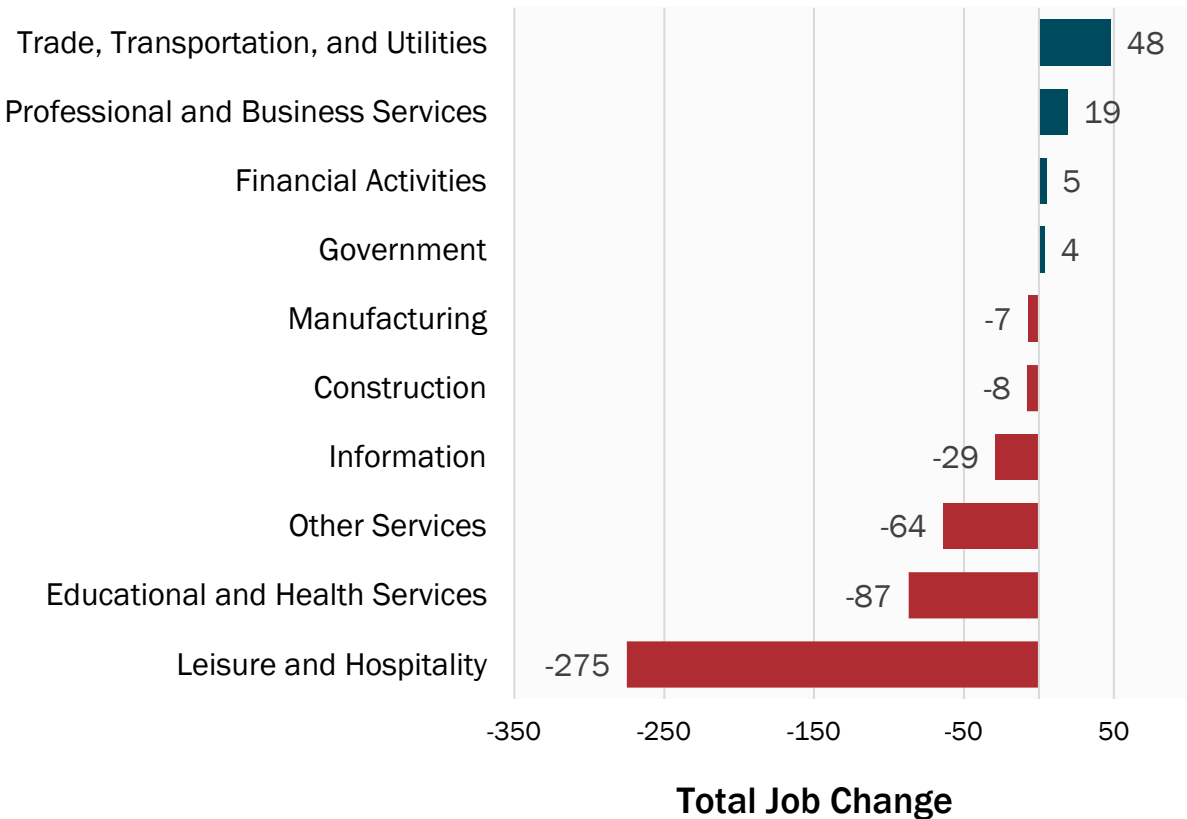
SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2020

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)



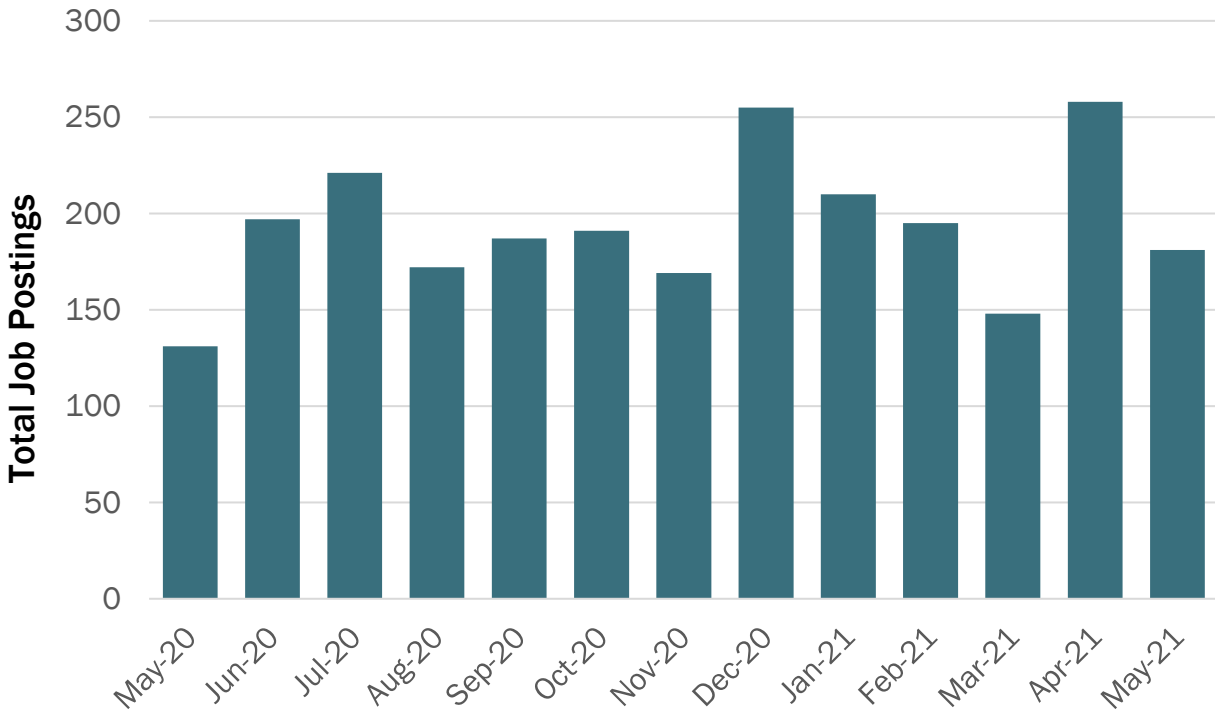
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2020

The most recent data show that the greatest decrease in employment in 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 in Branch County from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 was in trade, transportation, and utilities, which grew by 48 jobs, or 1.3%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in Branch County in Q4 2020 was \$875.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

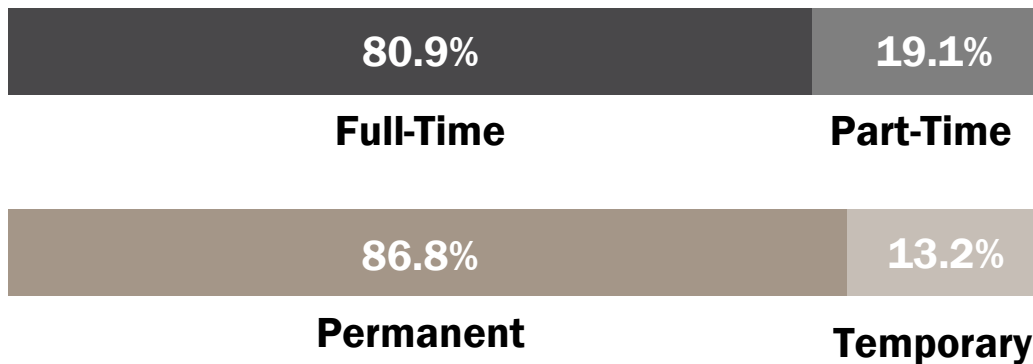
Total Job Postings, May 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

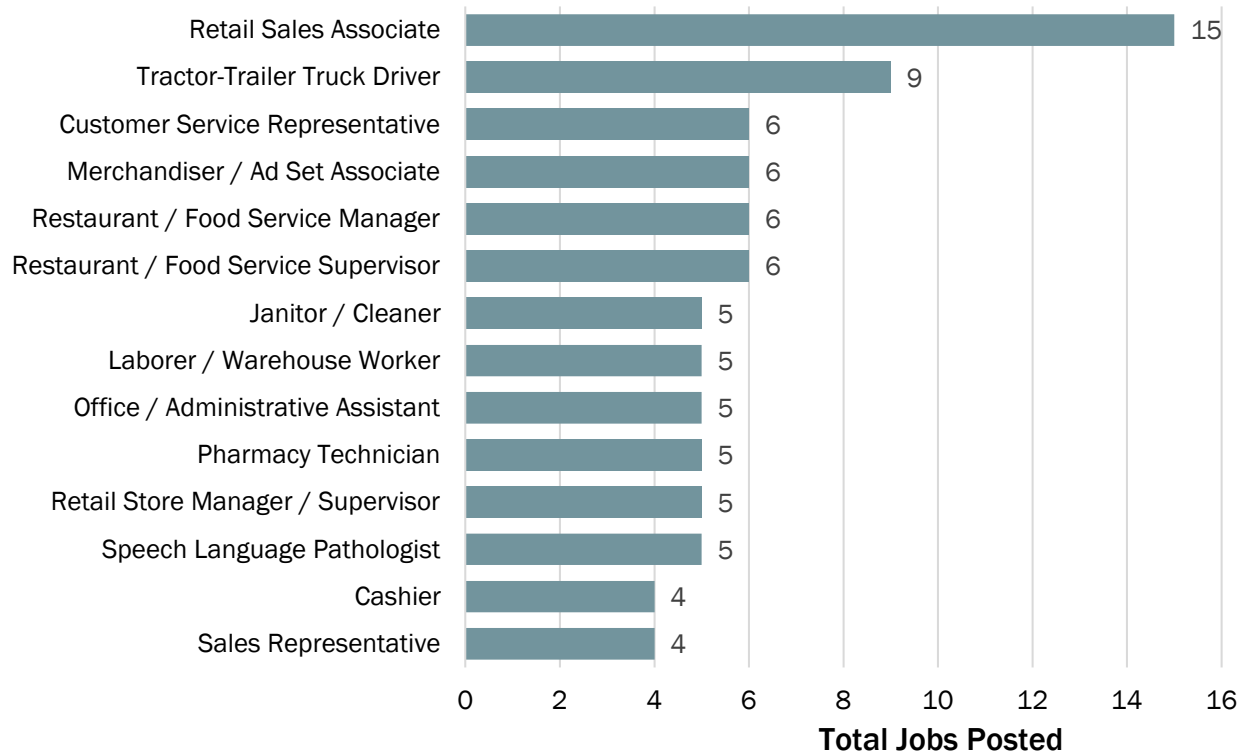
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, decreased by 29.8% between April and May, from 258 postings to 181. The majority of postings in Branch County, as reported by Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Type of Job Postings, May 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

Top Occupations for Job Postings, May 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The top occupations with job postings were for retail sales associates, tractor-trailer truck drivers, and customer service representatives. Nearly two-thirds of the job postings, 62.7%, required at a minimum a high school diploma or vocational training. This is an increase of 8.3 percentage points from April in the proportion of job postings requiring a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree decreased by 6.1 percentage points from April, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher decreased by 2.3 percentage points.

62.7% of job postings in May 2021 required a high school diploma or vocational training.

14.7% of job postings in May 2021 required an associate degree.

22.5% of job postings in May 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/.