



# *Regional Economic Trends*

*for Michigan Works! Southwest Region*



**AUGUST 2021**



**W.E. UPJOHN  
INSTITUTE**  
FOR EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH

# MICHIGAN WORKS! SOUTHWEST REGION

**The Trend:** The Michigan Works! Southwest Region continues to recover, gaining more than 2,000 jobs from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020. Between April 2021 and May 2021, the unemployment rate and labor force participation rate increased, while the employment-to-population ratio stayed the same. This is likely a sign that individuals are reentering the labor market but not necessarily finding jobs right away. Job postings were higher in May than in April, with more postings in manufacturing.

## REGION UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 58.1% in May. This is a 0.5 percentage-point increase from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 55.3% in May. This is a 0.5 percentage-point increase from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 5.7% in May. This is a 0.8 percentage-point increase from the previous month.



The total labor force saw an increase of 1,983 people from April to May. The number of employed people increased by 104, and the number of unemployed people increased by 1,879.



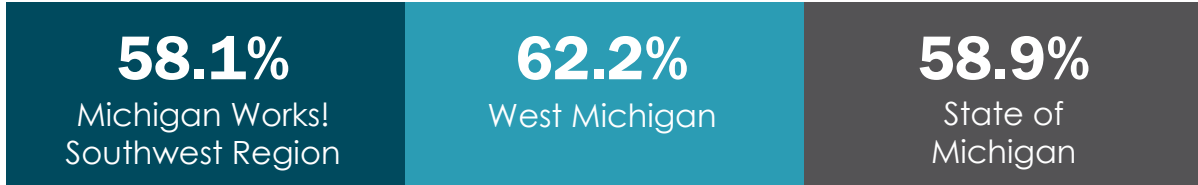
Total employment increased by 9.5% from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020.



There were 5,206 job postings in May, an increase of 1.3% from April.

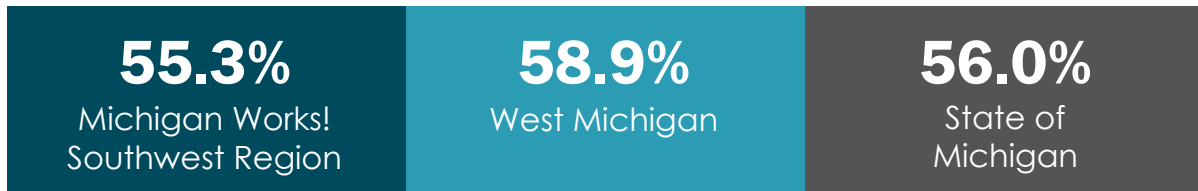
# KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## Labor Force Participation Rate



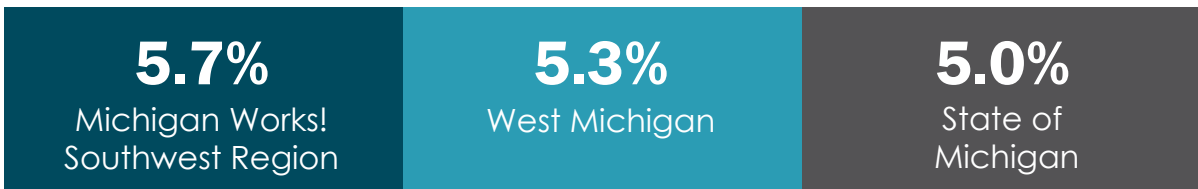
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 58.1% in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region in May. This was lower than the rate for west Michigan by 4.1 percentage points, and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 0.8 percentage points.

## Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 55.3% for the Michigan Works! Southwest Region in May. This was 3.6 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 0.7 percentage points lower than that for the state of Michigan.

## Unemployment Rate

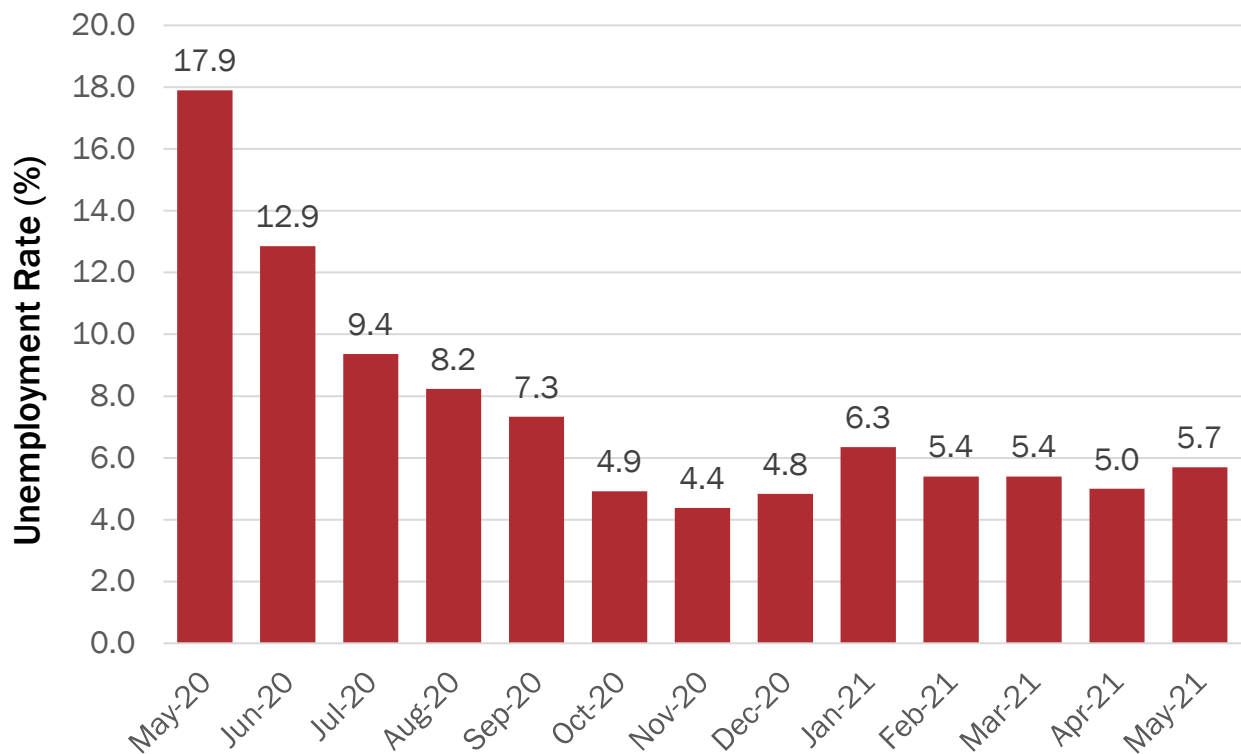


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 5.7% in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region in May. This was 0.4 percentage points higher than the rate for west Michigan and 0.7 percentage points higher than the rate for the state of Michigan.

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 April to May, the unemployment rate in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region increased by 0.7 percentage points, to 5.7 percent. The unemployment rate is 12.2 percentage points lower than it was at the same time last year.

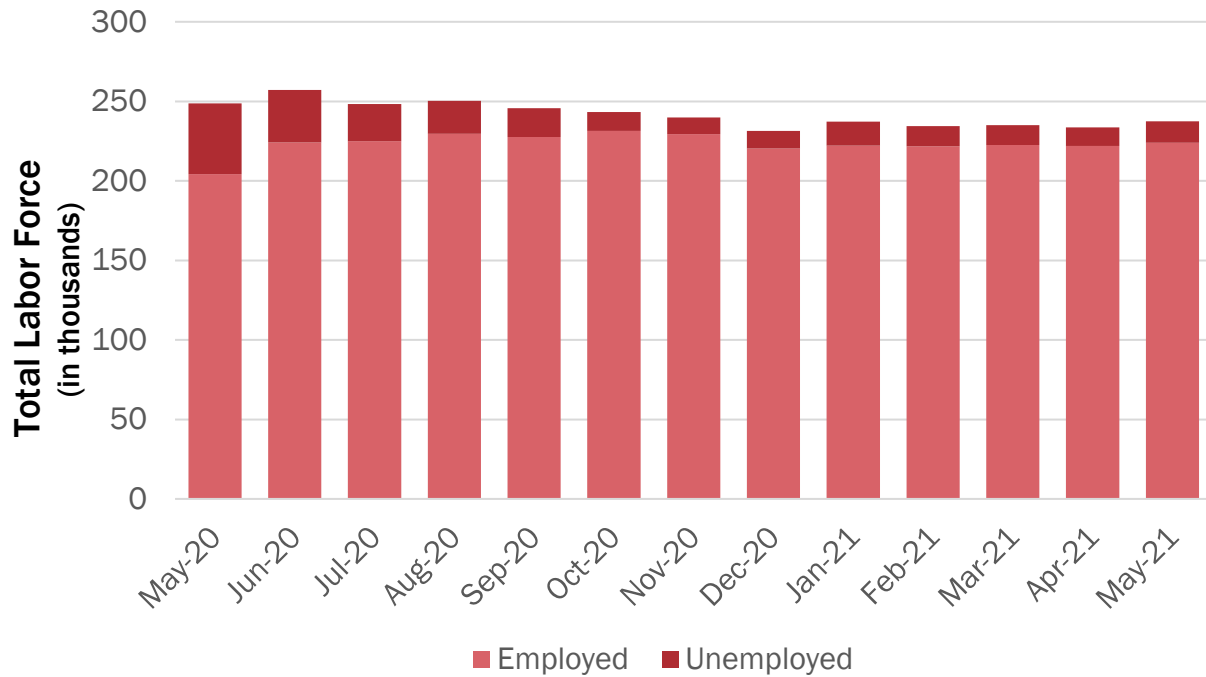
In May, there were **2.6 job seekers** for every **1 job posting** in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region.\*

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.

# MICHIGAN WORKS! SOUTHWEST REGION

## Total Labor Force (not seasonally adjusted)



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

The total labor force in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region in May stood at 235,546, an increase of 1,983 people from the April labor force of 233,563. The labor force in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region has shrunk by 4.3% since May 2020, when it stood at 246,258. This indicates a decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

## Labor Force by the Numbers, Q3 2020

- 25.7%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree
- 33.9%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with an associate degree or some college
- 29.5%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a high school degree or equivalent

SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2020

## Employment by Industry MWSW Region (not seasonally adjusted)

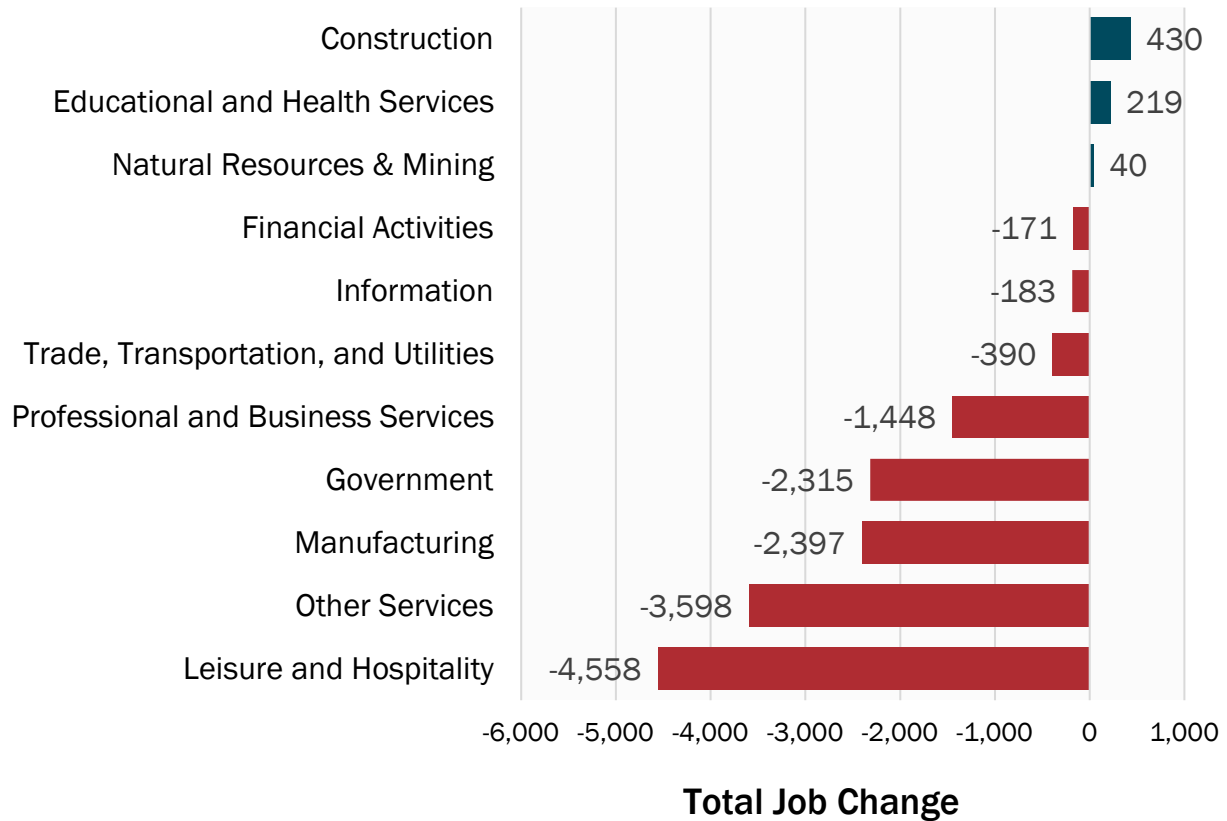
Measure	Q4 2020	Q3 2020	% Change Q3 to Q4	Q4 2019	% Change Q4 to Q4
<b>Employment (by place of work)</b>					
Total Private Sector Employment	172,003	169,948	1.2%	184,308	-6.7%
Goods-producing	50,625	50,338	0.6%	52,551	-3.7%
Natural Resources & Mining	2,321	2,588	-10.3%	2,281	1.8%
Construction	8,798	8,780	0.2%	8,368	5.1%
Manufacturing	39,506	38,970	1.4%	41,903	-5.7%
Private Service-Providing	121,378	119,610	1.5%	131,757	-7.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	36,779	35,352	4.0%	37,169	-1.0%
Information	885	903	-2.0%	1,068	-17.1%
Financial Activities	9,471	9,550	-0.8%	9,642	-1.8%
Professional and Business Services	17,039	16,248	4.9%	18,486	-7.8%
Educational and Health Services	34,929	34,440	1.4%	34,710	0.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	16,272	17,272	-5.8%	20,830	-21.9%
Other Services	5,644	5,499	2.6%	9,242	-38.9%
Unclassified	360	346	4.1%	610	-41.1%
Government*	24,249	23,138	4.8%	26,564	-8.7%

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



# MICHIGAN WORKS! SOUTHWEST REGION

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



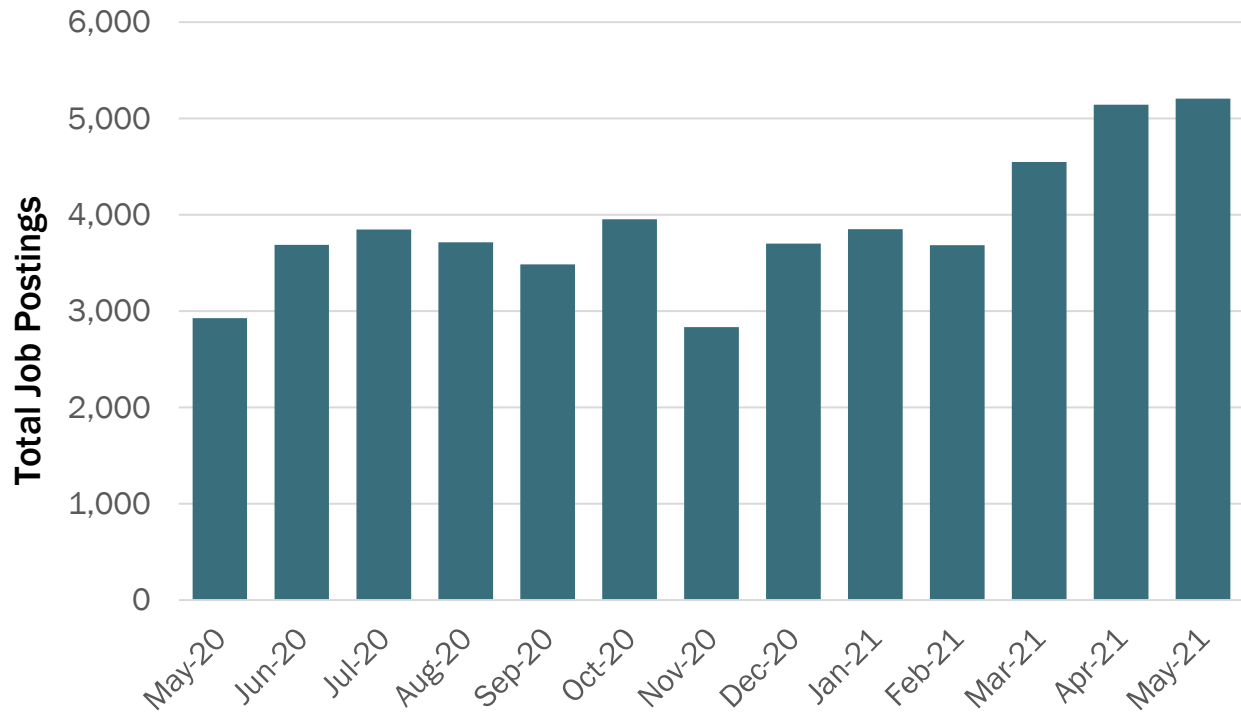
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2020

The most recent data show that the greatest decrease in employment in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 occurred in leisure and hospitality, which declined by 4,558 jobs, or 21.9%. The greatest increase in employment in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 was in construction, which grew by 430 jobs, or 5.1%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region in Q4 2020 was **\$996**.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

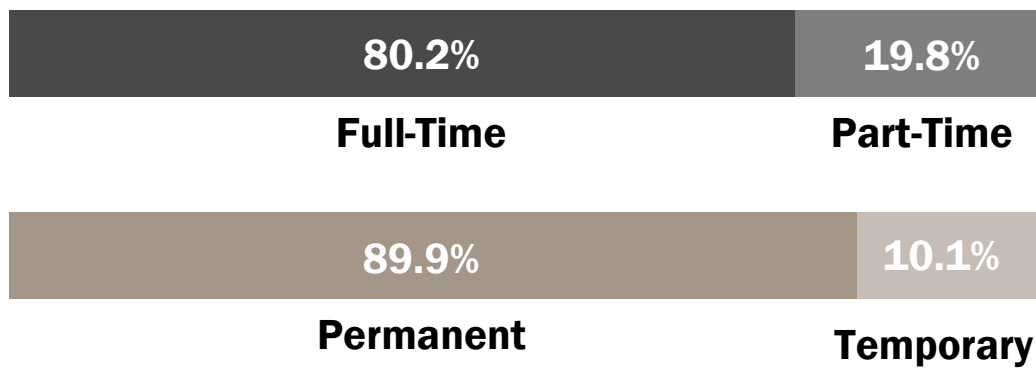
## Total Job Postings, May 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The number of job postings in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region, which demonstrates demand for labor, increased by 1.3% between April and May, from 5,141 postings to 5,206. The majority of postings in the Michigan Works! Southwest Region, as reported by Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

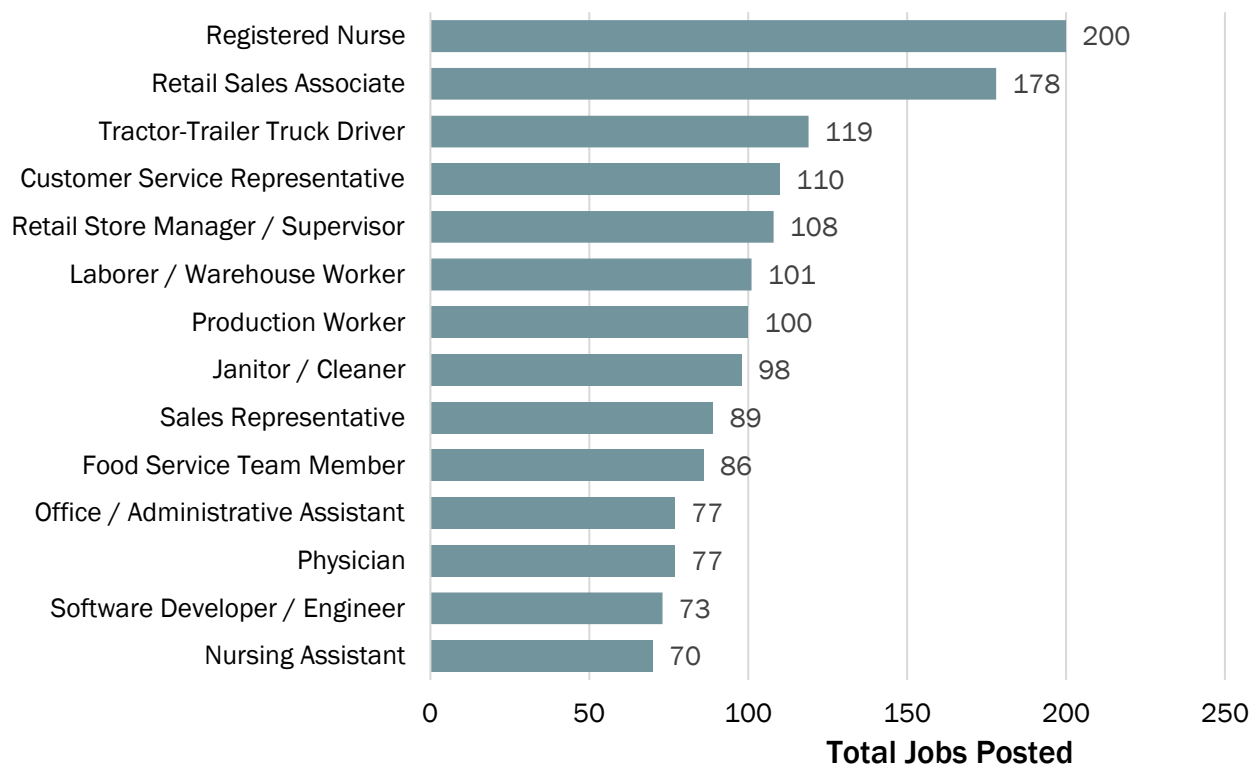
## Type of Job Postings, May 2021



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 registered nurses, retail sales associates, and tractor-trailer truck drivers. More than 4 in 10 job postings, 42.2%, required at a minimum a high school diploma or vocational training. This represents a decrease of 2.3 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 2.5 percentage points, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 4.8 percentage points.

**42.2%** of job postings in May required a high school diploma or vocational training.

**13.7%** of job postings in May required an associate degree.

**44.1%** of job postings in May 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.

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## 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

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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/](http://www.upjohn.org/Business_Outlook/Data_Dictionary/).