



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



JANUARY 2022



BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County employment grew from Q1 2021 to Q2 2021, experiencing an increase of 201 jobs. Between September and October, the unemployment rate and labor force participation rate fell while the employment-to-population ratio increased. This is likely a sign that unemployed individuals are either finding work or leaving the labor market entirely. Job postings were higher in October than in September, with retail sales associate as the most in-demand job.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 55.2% in October. This is a 0.2 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 52.8% in October. This is a 0.1 percentage point increase from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 4.4% in October. This is a 0.6 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The total labor force saw a decrease of 83 people from September to October. The increase in employed people was 42, and the decrease in unemployed people was 125.



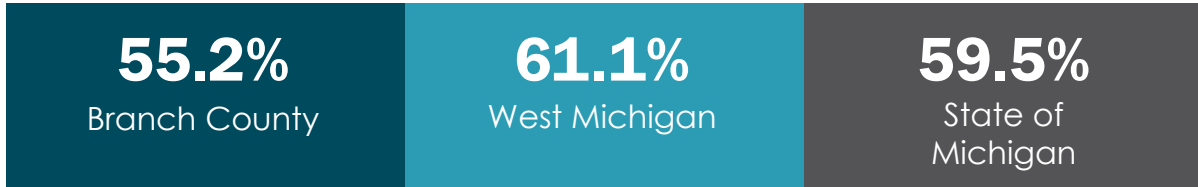
Total employment increased by 2.3% from Q1 2021 to Q2 2021.



There were 190 job postings in October, an increase of 13.1% from September.

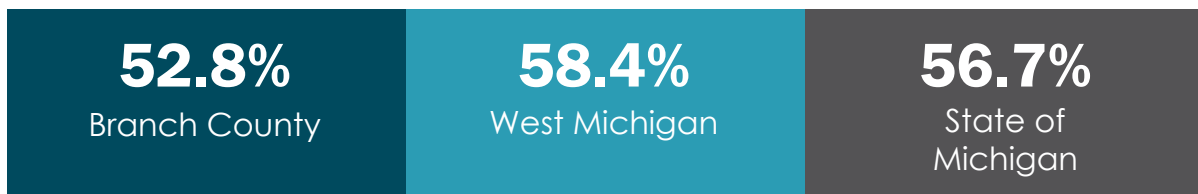
KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



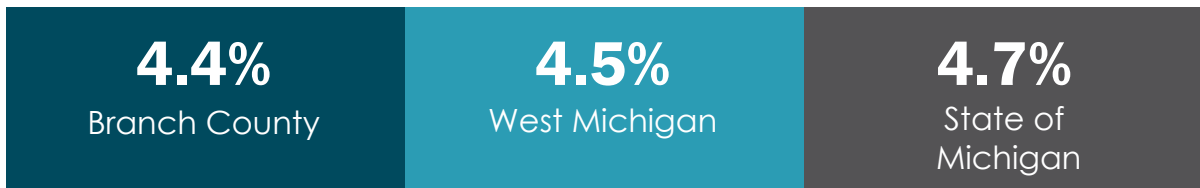
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 55.2% in Branch County in October. This was lower than the rate for west Michigan by 5.9 percentage points and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 4.3 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 52.8% for Branch County in October. This was 5.6 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 3.9 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

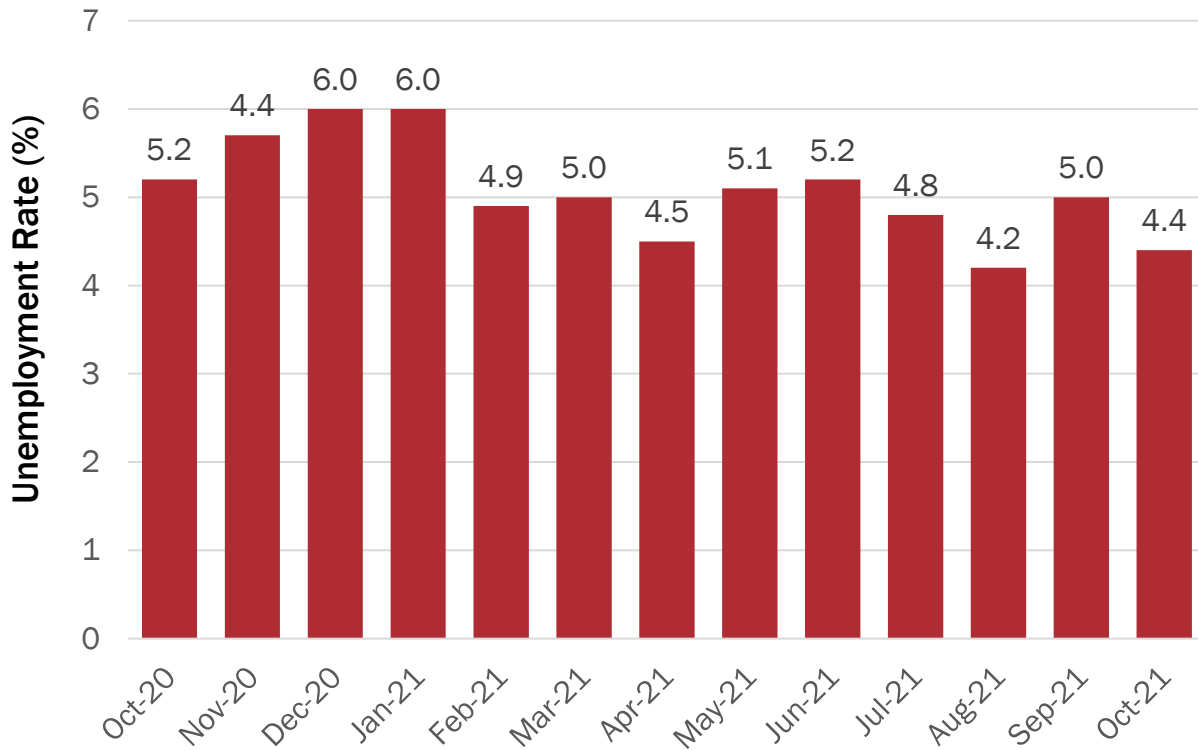


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 4.4% in Branch County in October. This was 0.1 percentage points lower than the rate for west Michigan and 0.3 percentage points lower than for the state of Michigan.

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

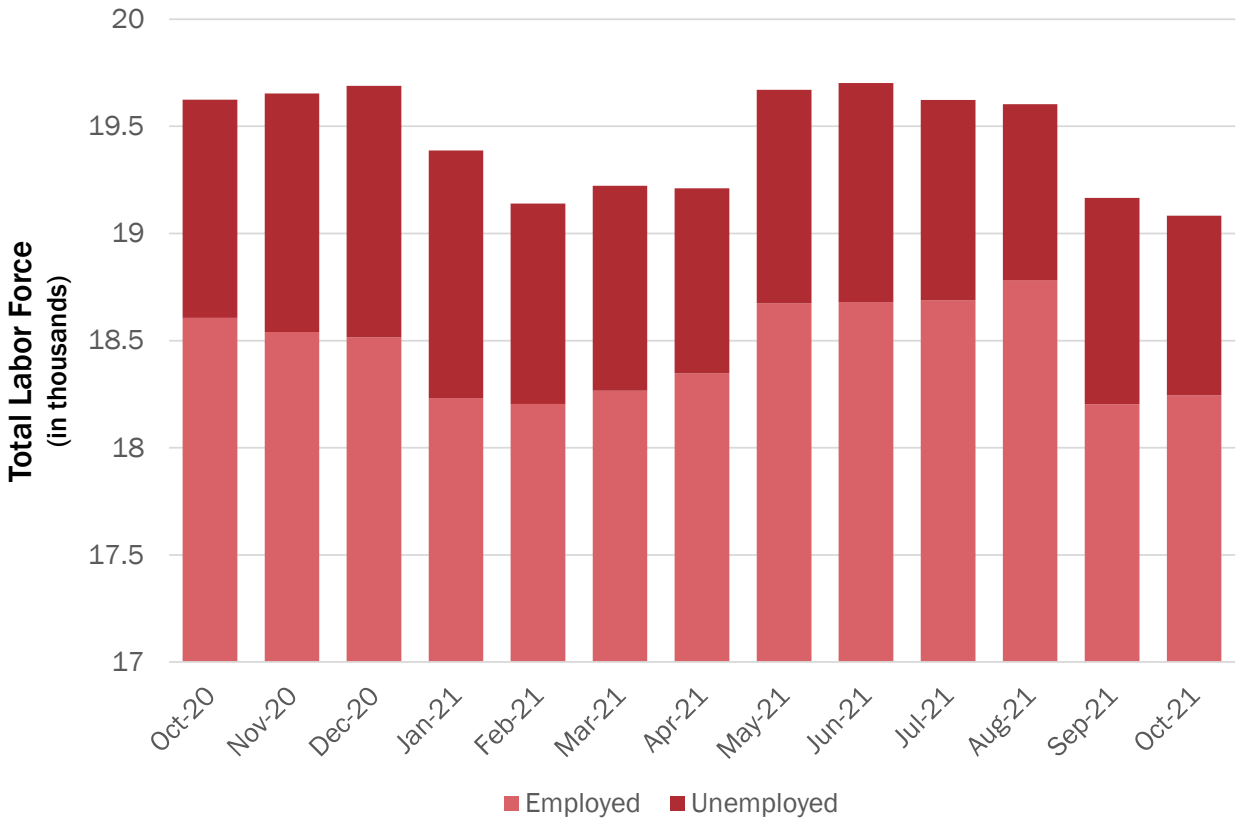
From September to October, the unemployment rate in Branch County decreased by 0.6 percentage points, to 4.4 percent. The unemployment rate for October was 0.8 percentage points lower than it was at the same time last year.

In October, there were **4.4 job seekers** for every **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 October stood at 19,083, a decrease of 83 people from the September labor force of 19,166. The total labor force in Branch County has shrunk by 2.8% since October 2020, when it stood at 19,625. This indicates a decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

Labor Force by the Numbers, Q1 2021

- 19.7%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree
- 35.2%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with an associate degree or some college
- 33.3%** Percentage of workers 25 and older with a high school degree or equivalent

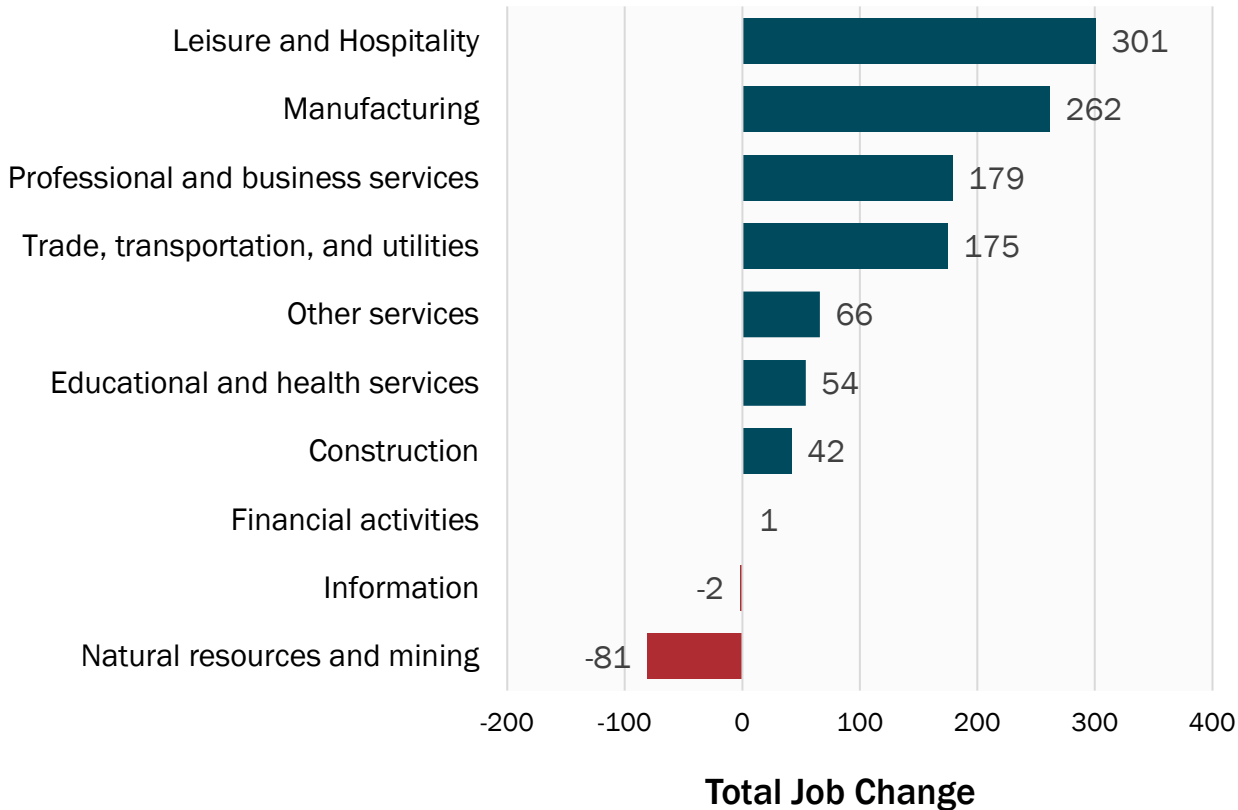
SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2021

Employment by Industry (not seasonally adjusted)

Measure	Q2 2021	Q1 2021	% Change Q1 to Q2	Q2 2020	% Change Q2 to Q2
Employment (by place of work)					
Total private sector employment	11,271	11,070	1.8%	10,267	9.8%
Goods-producing	3,549	3,564	-0.4%	3,326	6.7%
Natural resources and mining	252	233	8.2%	333	-24.3%
Construction	420	399	5.3%	378	11.1%
Manufacturing	2,877	2,932	-1.9%	2,615	10.0%
Private service-providing	7,722	7,506	2.9%	6,941	11.3%
Trade, transportation, and utilities	3,644	3,726	-2.2%	3,469	5.0%
Information	103	94	9.6%	105	-1.9%
Financial activities	588	584	0.7%	587	0.2%
Professional and business services	588	533	10.3%	409	43.8%
Educational and health services	867	876	-1.0%	813	6.6%
Leisure and hospitality	1,638	1,425	14.9%	1,337	22.5%
Other services	269	247	8.9%	203	32.5%
Unclassified	25	21	19.0%	18	38.9%
Government	84	84	0.0%	89	-5.6%

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

Employment Change, Q2 2020 to Q2 2021 (not seasonally adjusted)



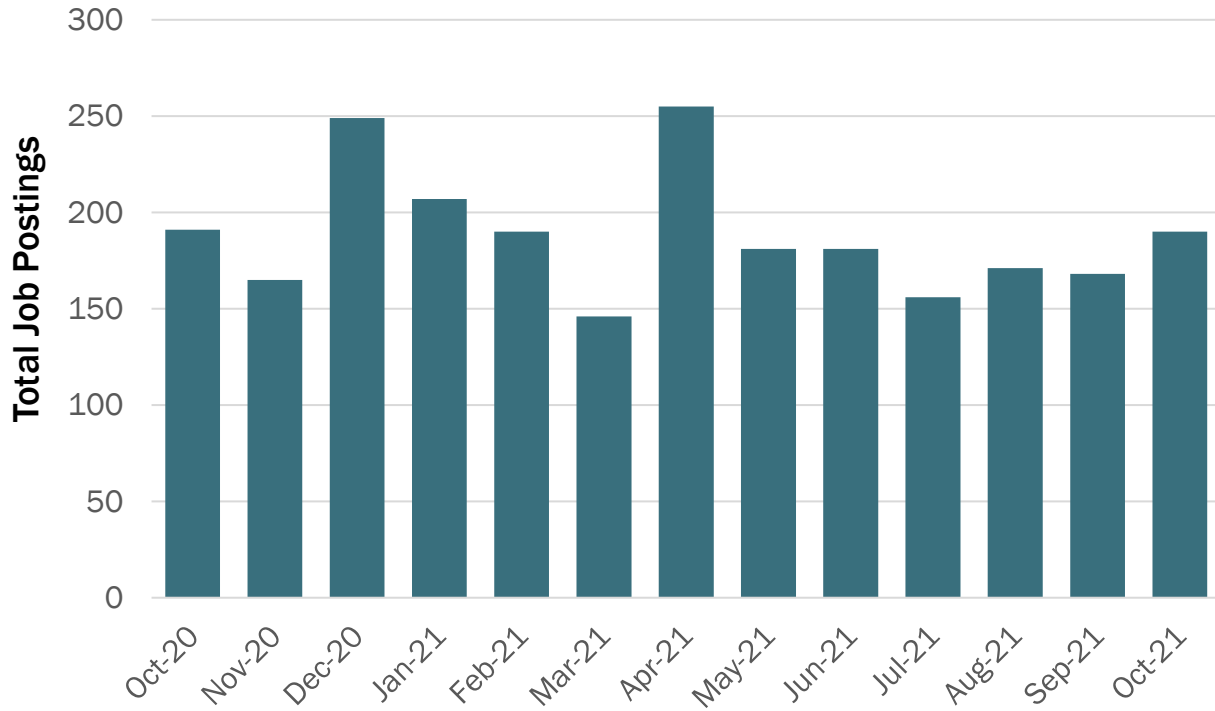
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2021

The most recent data show that the greatest decrease in employment in Branch County from Q2 2020 to Q2 2021 occurred in natural resources and mining, which declined by 81 jobs, or 24.3%. The greatest increase in employment from Q2 2020 to Q2 2021 in the county was in leisure and hospitality, which grew by 301 jobs, or 22.5%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in Q2 2021 in Branch County was \$919.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

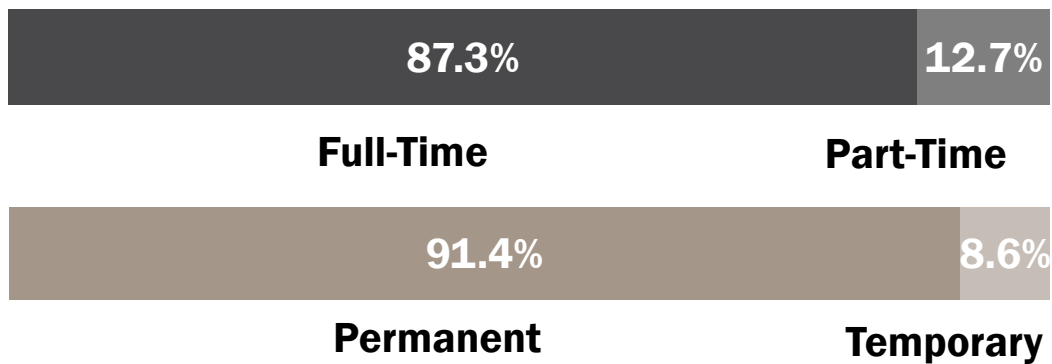
Total Job Postings for October 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

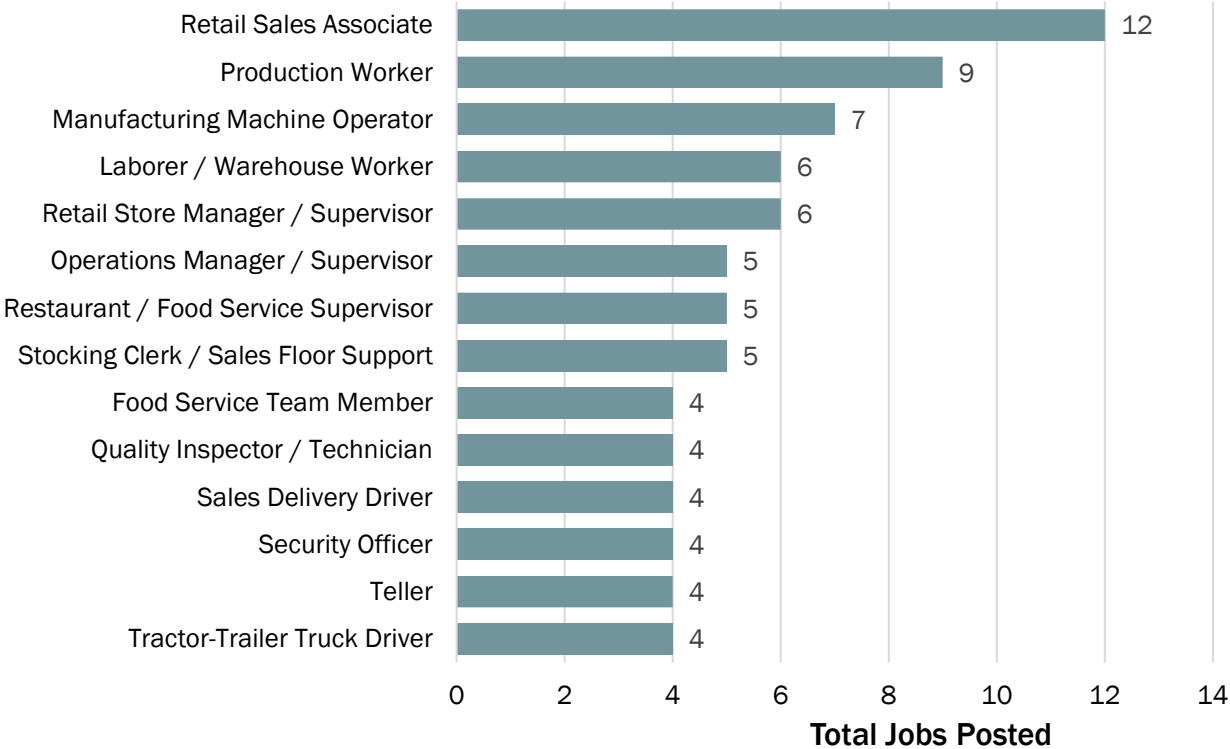
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, increased by 13.1% between September and October, from 168 postings to 190. The majority of postings in the county, as reported through Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Types of Job Postings for October 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

Top Occupations with Job Postings for October 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The top occupation with job postings in October was retail sales associate, followed by production worker and machine operator. The majority of job postings, 67.3%, required only a high school diploma or vocational training. This is an increase of 2.8 percentage points from September in the proportion of job postings requiring a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree decreased by 1.0 percentage points from September, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher decreased by 1.8 percentage points.

- 67.3%** of job postings in October required a high school diploma or vocational training.
- 6.5%** of job postings in October required an associate degree.
- 26.2%** of job postings in October 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

Report Contributors

Michael Horrigan
President

Brian Pittelko
Research Coordinator

Kathleen Bolter
Regional Research 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/.