



Regional Economic Trends for Branch County



MARCH 2022



BRANCH COUNTY

The Trend: Branch County employment grew, showing an increase of 217 jobs from Q2 2021 to Q3 2021. Between November and December, the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate fell, while the employment-to-population ratio held steady. This is likely a sign that unemployed individuals are either finding work or leaving the labor market entirely. Job postings were lower in December than in November, with a tie for most in-demand job between truck driver, retail sales worker, and registered nurse.

COUNTY UPDATE



The labor force participation rate was 55.0% in December. This is a 0.1 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The employment-to-population ratio was 52.9% in December. This is unchanged from the previous month.



The unemployment rate was 3.9% in December. This is a 0.1 percentage point decrease from the previous month.



The total labor force saw a decrease of 19 people from November to December. The number of employed people decreased by 1, and the number of unemployed people decreased by 18.



Private employment increased by 1.9% from Q2 2021 to Q3 2021.



There were 158 job postings in December, a decrease of 11.2% from November.

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Labor Force Participation Rate



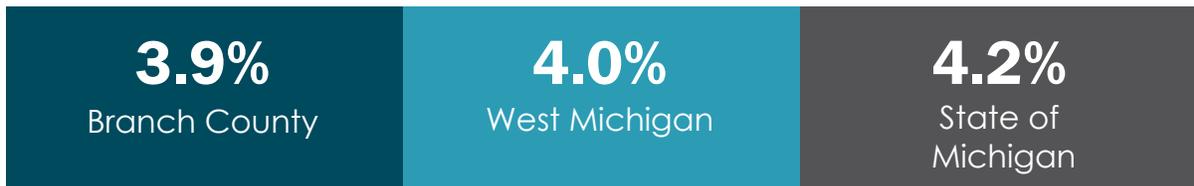
The labor force participation rate, which measures the economy's active workforce, was 55.0% in Branch County in December. This was lower than the rate for west Michigan by 6.5 percentage points, and lower than that of the state of Michigan by 4.9 percentage points.

Employment-to-Population Ratio



The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, was 52.9% for Branch County in December. This was 6.1 percentage points below the ratio for west Michigan and 4.5 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

Unemployment Rate

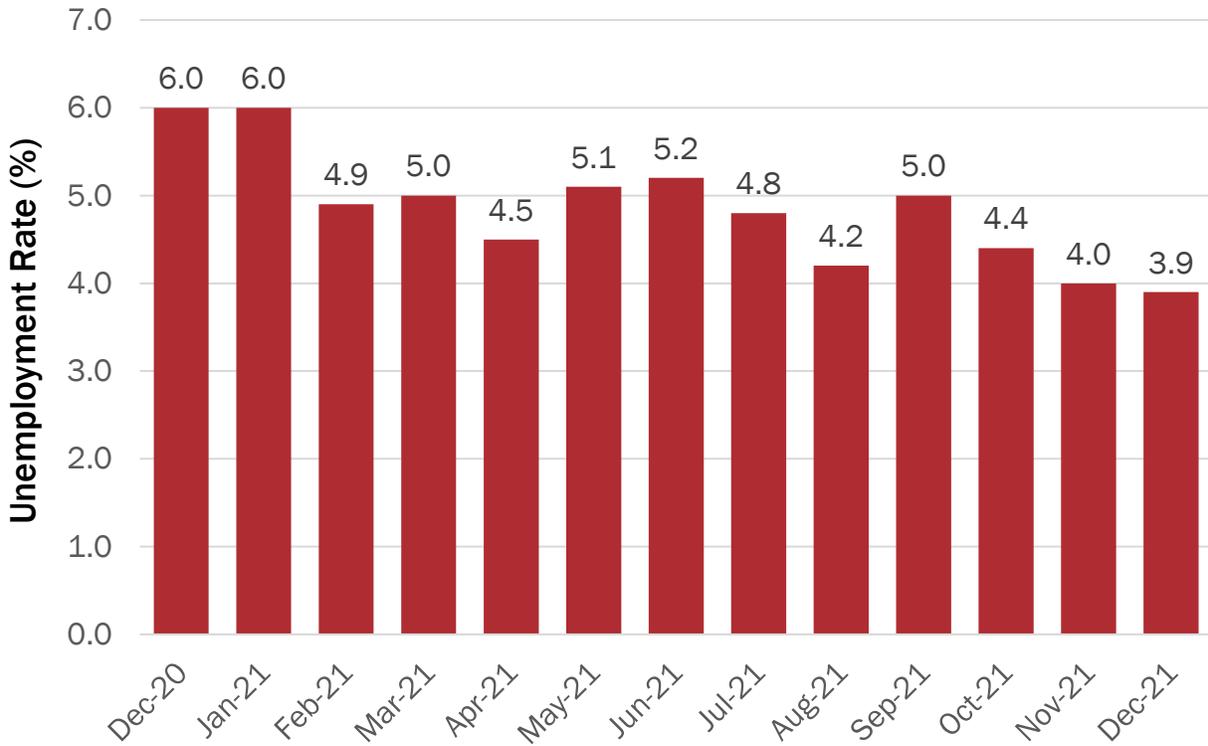


The unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of the workforce that is looking for work, was 3.9% for Branch County in December. This was 0.1 percentage points lower than the rate for west Michigan and 0.3 percentage points lower than that of the state of Michigan.

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 (not seasonally adjusted)



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

From November to December, the unemployment rate in Branch County decreased by 0.1 percentage points, to 3.9 percent. The unemployment rate for December is 2.1 percentage points lower than it was at the same time a year earlier.

In December, there were **4.7 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 December stood at 19,030, a decrease of 19 people from the November labor force of 19,049. The labor force in Branch County has shrunk by 3.3% since December 2020, when it stood at 19,689. This indicates a decrease in the available labor for firms in the area.

Labor Force by the Numbers, Q2 2021

17.8%

Percentage of workers 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree

33.5%

Percentage of workers 25 and older with an associate degree or some college

35.5%

Percentage of workers 25 and older with a high school degree or equivalent

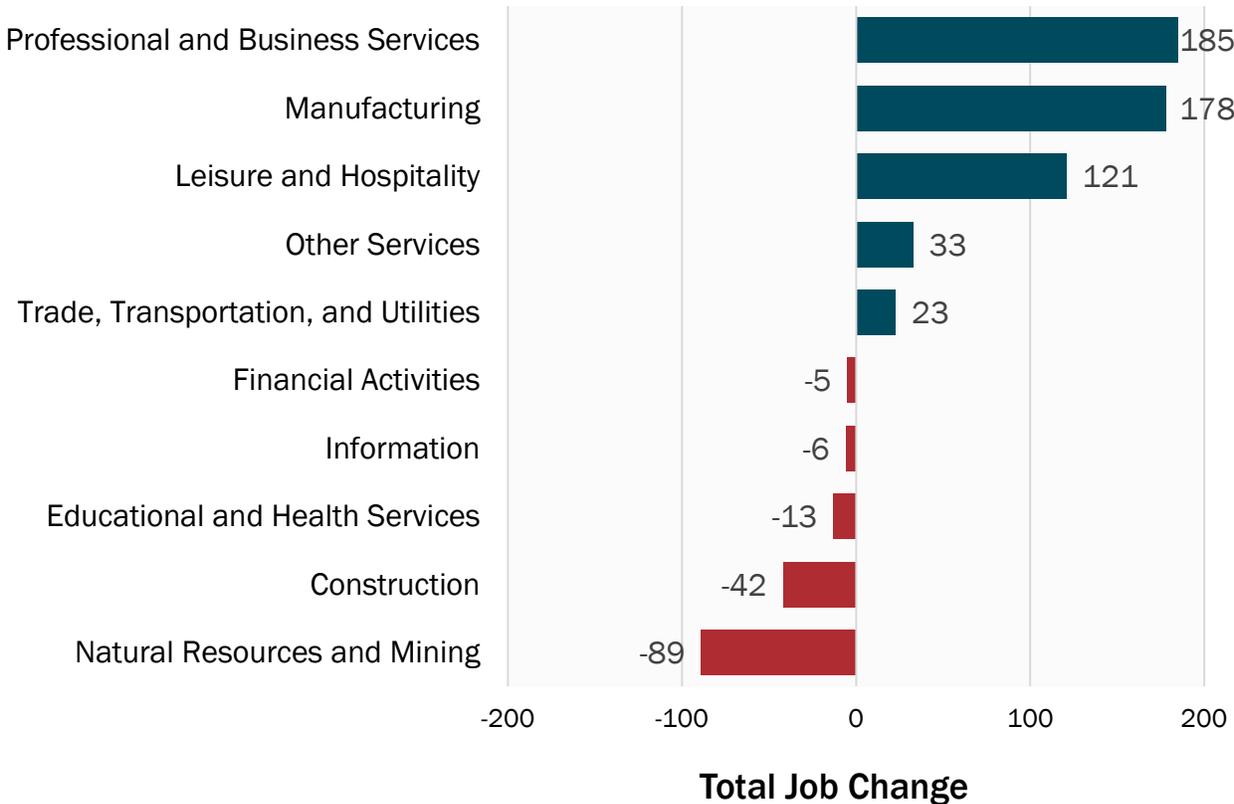
SOURCE: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2021

Employment by Industry (not seasonally adjusted)

Measure	Q3 2021	% Change Q2 to Q3	Q2 2021	% Change Q3 to Q3	Q3 2020
Employment (by place of work)					
Total private sector employment	11,486	1.9%	11,269	3.5%	11,095
Goods-producing	3,626	2.2%	3,548	1.3%	3,579
Natural resources and mining	237	-6.0%	252	-27.3%	326
Construction	426	1.7%	419	-9.0%	468
Manufacturing	2,963	3.0%	2,877	6.4%	2,785
Private service-providing	7,860	1.8%	7,721	4.6%	7,516
Trade, transportation, and utilities	3,592	-1.4%	3,643	0.6%	3,569
Information	80	-22.3%	103	-7.0%	86
Financial activities	589	0.2%	588	-0.8%	594
Professional and business services	674	14.6%	588	37.8%	489
Educational and health services	858	-1.0%	867	-1.5%	871
Leisure and hospitality	1,762	7.6%	1,638	7.4%	1,641
Other services	282	4.8%	269	13.3%	249
Unclassified	23	-8.0%	25	35.3%	17
Government*	84	0.0%	84	-12.5%	96

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

Employment Change, Q3 2020 to Q3 2021 (not seasonally adjusted)



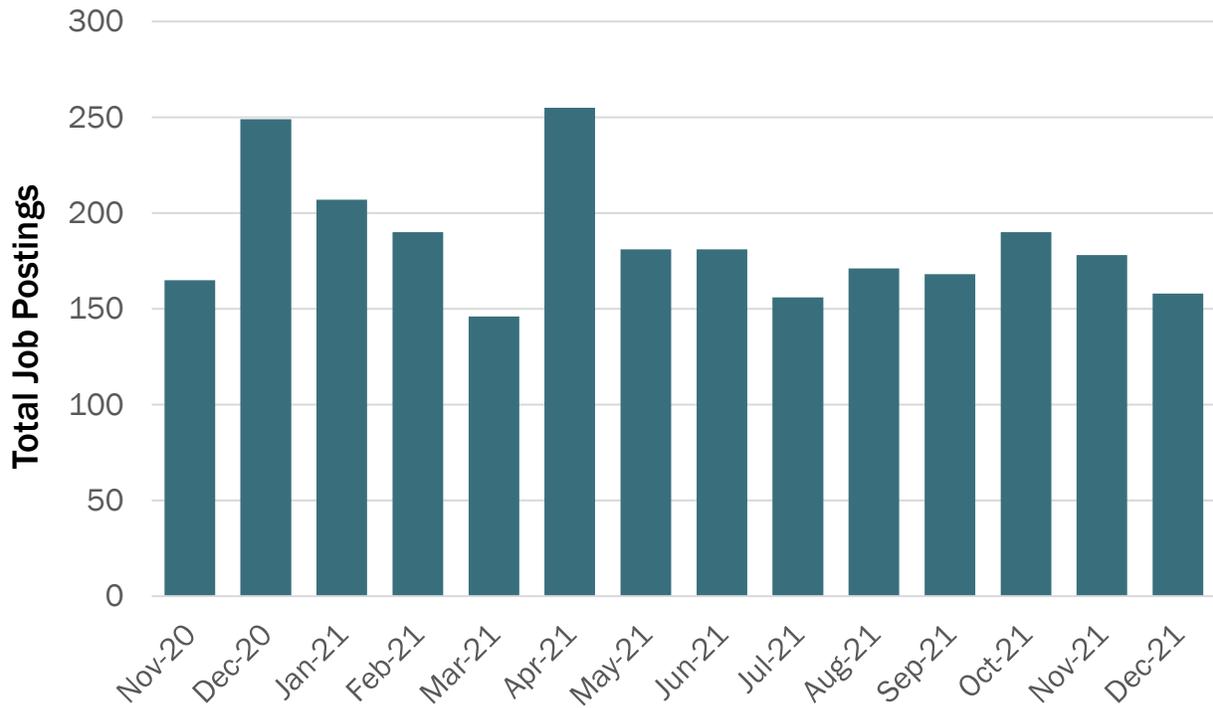
SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages & Upjohn Institute, 2021

The most recent data show the greatest decrease in employment in Branch County from Q3 2020 to Q3 2021 was in natural resources and mining, which declined by 89 jobs, or 28.3%. The greatest increase in employment from Q3 2020 to Q3 2021 in the county occurred in professional and business services, which grew by 185 jobs, or 37.8%.

The average weekly wage for nonfarm jobs in Q3 2021 in Branch County was \$934.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021

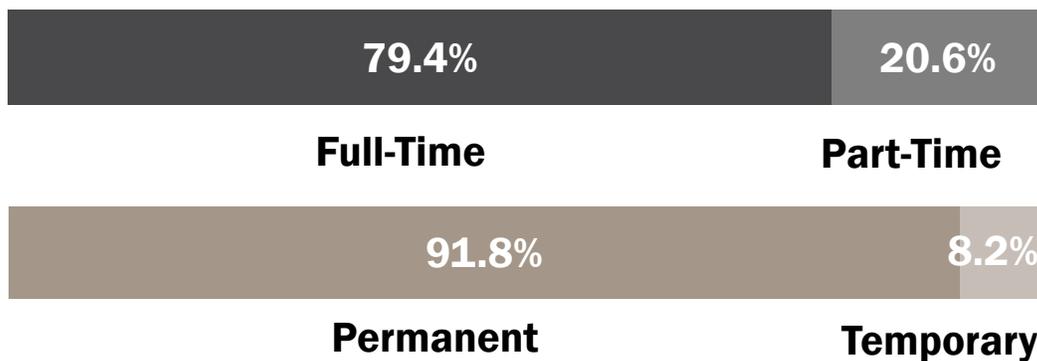
Total Job Postings for December 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

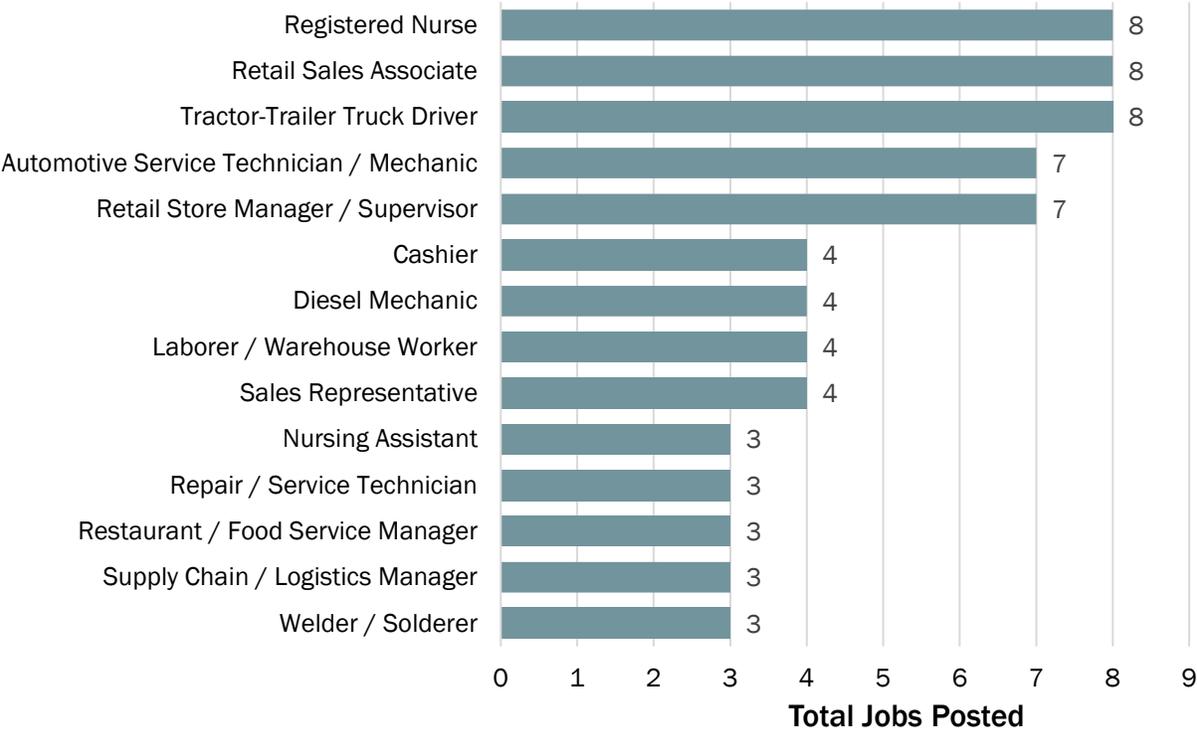
The number of job postings in Branch County, which demonstrates demand for labor, decreased by 11.2% between November and December, from 178 postings to 158. The majority of postings in the county, as reported through Burning Glass Technologies, were for full-time and permanent positions.

Types of Job Postings for December 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

Top Occupations with Job Postings for December 2021



SOURCE: Burning Glass Technologies, 2021

The top occupations for job postings in December were tied. Truck driver, retail sales associate, and registered nurse all had 8 postings. The majority of job postings, 55.8%, required no more than a high school diploma or vocational training. This is a decrease of 6.8 percentage points from November in the proportion of job postings requiring no more than a high school diploma or vocational training. The proportion of jobs requiring an associate degree increased by 4.7 percentage points from November, and the proportion of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher increased by 2.2 percentage points.

55.8% of job postings in December required only a high school diploma or vocational training.

17.7% of job postings in December required an associate degree.

26.5% of job postings in December required a bachelor’s degree or higher.

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 because of rounding.
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

Laura Pyle
Regional Assistant

Dakota McCracken
Regional 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/.