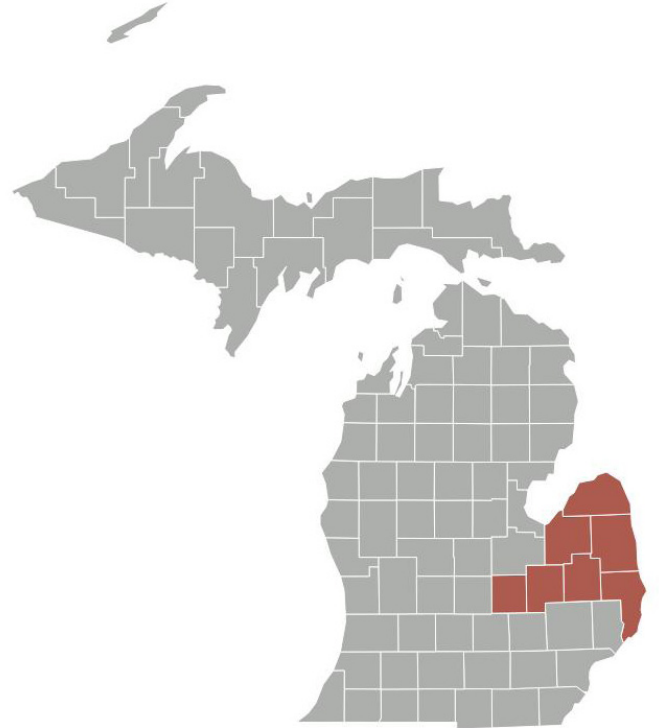


Michigan Poverty & Well Being Map: East Region

The East region includes: Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, and Tuscola counties. Learn more about the map at poverty.umich.edu.

Investment in Education Can Boost Wages for East Michigan Residents

At first glance, the East region appears to be doing as well as the rest of the state, with the exception of Genesee County, which has higher rates of economic vulnerability than the region and state overall. These disparities are often attributed to economic conditions in Flint. However, closer examination shows that median income in the East region is about 10% lower than the state overall, with differences in Genesee, Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties that are above 17%, suggesting that economic vulnerability is not just restricted to Flint and Genesee County. Despite having poverty rates similar to the state across the region and most of the counties, these lower median incomes are reflected in a higher proportion of ALICE households - households that are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed and as such are struggling to make ends meet - in the same counties noted above. Understanding why incomes are lower and why households are struggling can help guide policy interventions that will provide better opportunities for its residents and help the region thrive.



Education is likely playing a role in these outcomes. High school completion rates are similar to the state overall with about 91% of residents having at least a high school diploma, however, the proportion of residents who hold a bachelor's degree or higher is significantly lower than the state overall, 20% versus 31%.¹ Education is linked to labor force participation in the region, with lower levels of education associated with lower levels of labor force participation. Less than 70% of working age residents with a high school diploma are in the labor force versus 84% of those with a bachelor's degree or more. Additionally, for workers with a

	State	Region
Population	10,062,512	848,973
Median Income	\$63,202	\$56,954
Below Poverty Level (<18)	17.6%	19.3%
Below Poverty Level	13.0%	13.7%
ALICE	25.9%	26.8%
ALICE + Poverty Rate	39.0%	40.5%
Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.6%	15.2%
Housing Cost Burdened	31.3%	30.8%
Without Health Insurance	7.1%	7.5%
Single Parent Households	25.2%	26.1%

high school diploma, labor force participation starts to fall dramatically for workers over the age of 50, which may be a reflection of the physical demands common in jobs available for these workers. In contrast, labor force participation for workers with a bachelor's degree or more starts to fall dramatically for workers over the age of 60.² Ensuring workers can stay in the labor force for longer will help improve economic well-being for the region's residents. Investments in mid-career job training and education along with investments in upskilling can help middle-aged workers transition to jobs that allow them to stay in the labor force.

Younger residents would also benefit from more investment in post-secondary education. Despite having high school graduation rates at the same level as the state overall, a lower percentage of the traditional college-attending age group (18- to 24-year-olds) is enrolled in school in the East region compared to the state as a whole (38% versus 52%). This is consistent with data that shows that residents in the 25-to-35-year age group are less likely to have a bachelor's degree or more education compared to the rest of the state. Ensuring that students not only complete high school but continue their education and training will be important to ensure economic security for residents in the region.

The 2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report prepared by the Department of Technology, Management and Budget at the State of Michigan highlighted similar educational trends alongside reports of job losses in the region and forecasts for job growth concentrated in lower skilled service sector jobs.³ These trends do not bode well for the overall economic growth in the region. Making investments in education can help counter these trends and attract industries that can provide higher wages for residents in the region.

References

- 1 Social Explorer. "American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 (5-Year Estimates).
- 2 American Community Survey Data, 2021, Five-Year Sample; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org
- 3 State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget. "2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Reports: East Michigan." [2022]. https://milmi.org/docs/publications/PlanningReports2022/Region_6.pdf