



**2009
West Michigan
Vital Signs**

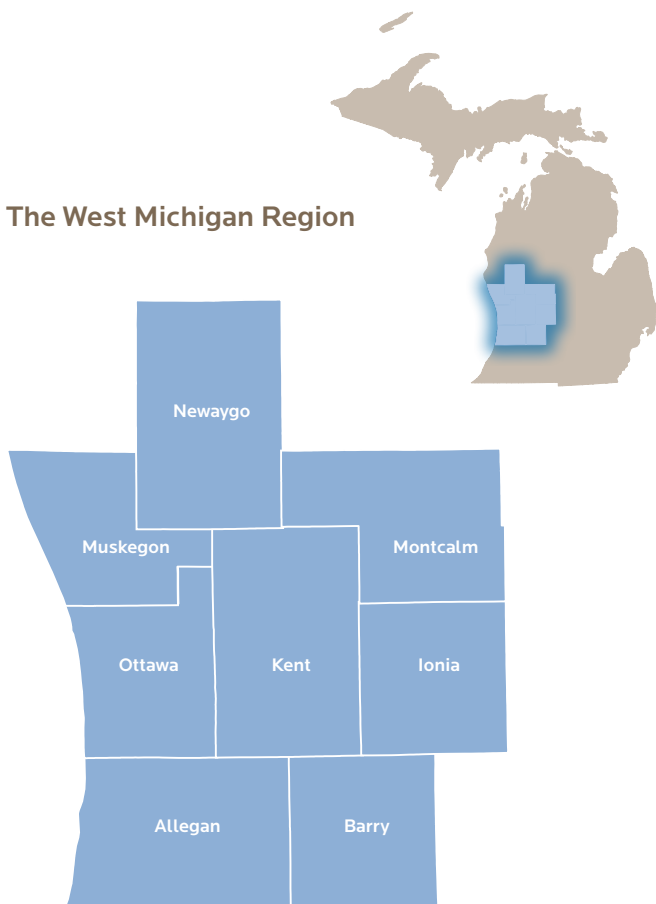
Introduction

The *2009 West Michigan Vital Signs* is produced by the West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) and its partners. The regional indicators described in the report are used to measure trends in economic prosperity, environmental integrity and social justice. These indicators are designed to help people understand the bigger picture.

In addition to tracking trends and comparing our region's data to statewide and national data, the *2009 West Michigan Vital Signs* introduces benchmarking data that compare West Michigan with 26 peer regions around the U.S.

Indicators are not solutions in and of themselves. Their value is to increase public awareness and enhance understanding of issues and trends affecting our long-term sustainability. The *West Michigan Vital Signs* provides a starting point for rational discussion about what more we need to know, where we need to go and how we might get there—simply, how we can do better.

The West Michigan Region



Summary of Key Findings

When we compare our region to other places with similar population, multiple counties and multiple city centers, it turns out West Michigan is rubbing shoulders with some very well-known regions, such as Portland, Oregon; Austin, Texas; and Raleigh, North Carolina.

- Comparing indicators of economic prosperity, West Michigan ranks high (number 8 out of 27) for Self-employed Professionals, an indicator of the entrepreneurial environment of a region. The region's strong entrepreneurial environment is also reflected in the fact that West Michigan ranked second only to Austin, Texas, in the number of total jobs created in 2007. Yes, the region lost a lot of jobs in 2007, but it retains many growing, innovative, entrepreneurial firms. Outside of this indicator, the economic data suggest we need to improve our performance against these peer regions.
- Identifying the most environmentally similar regions from the list of 26 can lead us to best practices that positively affect the indicators. We are focused on getting better data to understand how we can improve our region's environmental integrity. The two indicators tracked in the *Vital Signs*, Toxic Release Inventory and Closed Beach Days, are both trending positively.
- West Michigan's performance on most of its social justice indicators is keeping pace with the best-in-class regions. Still, West Michigan shows negative trends in indicators of disparity such as No Health Care Coverage and Median Income by Race.

The addition of benchmarking data should lead to questions about why we are being outperformed. As you read through the report, look for Des Moines, Iowa. Their region shows up on nine of the listings for Top Performing Regions. This should lead us to ask: What can we learn from Des Moines? What are they doing that is making a difference? Does their region have any political, social, economic, environmental or technological advantages that make it distinct?

You can make a difference in West Michigan by taking action to benefit the region in the long-term. For information on stimulating regional action, read on and contact info@wm-alliance.org.

Contents

| Page | | Regional Trend Over Time | Compared to Michigan | Compared to United States | West Michigan Rank 1-27 |
|------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 | About Benchmarking | | | | |
| 6 | Self-employed Professionals | positive | better | better | 8 |
| 6 | Educational Attainment | positive | same | worse | 11 |
| 6 | Per Capita Income | positive | worse | worse | 18 |
| 7 | Employment Change | negative | better | worse | 25 |
| 7 | Employment Rate | positive | better | better | 10 |
| 7 | Free and Reduced Priced Lunch | negative | worse | better | 13 |
| 8 | Benchmarking Economic Prosperity | | | | |
| 10 | Closed Beach Days | positive | NA | NA | NA |
| 10 | Toxic Release Inventory | positive | NA | NA | 16 |
| 11 | Benchmarking Environmental Integrity | | | | |
| 12 | No Health Coverage | negative | better | NA | 7 |
| 12 | Median Income by Race Disparity Index | negative | worse | worse | 15 |
| 12 | Voter Participation | positive | better | NA | 14 |
| 13 | Housing Cost Burden | negative | better | better | 20 |
| 13 | Teens Not in School | positive | better | better | 5 |
| 13 | Crime Rate | positive | better | NA | NA |
| 14 | Benchmarking Social Justice | | | | |
| 16 | <i>Vital Signs</i> Background | | | | |
| 17 | Sustainability | | | | |
| 18 | Action Implementation | | | | |
| 20 | Improving Data and Next Steps | | | | |
| 22 | About the Data | | | | |
| 23 | Geek Page | | | | |
| 24 | Funding and Participants | | | | |

The chart above helps to show where the gaps are in these data. If there is no regional trend, then consistent data were not available over the past three to five years. In some cases comparable data are not available at the state or national levels. (NA= Not Available)

Benchmarking

Regional Benchmarks

The origin of the term *benchmarking* comes from making marks on a cobbler's bench to ensure a well-fitting shoe. It means measuring against a standard.

For our purposes, it is a process in which our region is evaluated in relation to best practices of other peer regions. Benchmarking can lead to making improvements or adopting best practices with the aim of increasing our region's performance.

The social and economic conditions of all regions are impacted by changes in the national economy. By looking at local indicators alone, it is impossible to determine if improvements in local conditions are due to local factors or improving national conditions. It is only by observing our region's relative performance compared to other similar regions, influenced by national trends, that one can separate out the change due to local factors.

We benchmark for the environment to understand where we are as a region and where we might end up if current trends continue. For example, benchmarking our region against others with similar resource bases but a higher population can give us a plausible future situation for West Michigan if our population continues to increase.

Selecting Benchmark Regions

The 26 regions included in our regional benchmarking model were selected using the following standards.

- Regions composed of **five or more counties**. The West Michigan region contains eight counties.
- Regions containing **two or more major core urban areas**. The West Michigan region has multiple urban centers including Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Holland.
- Regions with a **population of more than 375,000 but less than 2.2 million**. The West Michigan region has a population of 1.4 million.

| Regions ¹ (alphabetical) | State(s) | 2007 Population Estimate | Counties | Number of City Centers |
|--|----------|--------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Albany/Schenectady/Amsterdam | NY | 1,148,416 | 10 | 2 |
| Augusta/Richmond County | GA/SC | 528,519 | 6 | 2 |
| Austin/Round Rock | TX | 1,598,161 | 5 | 2 |
| Boise City/Nampa | ID | 587,689 | 5 | 2 |
| Chattanooga/Cleveland/Athens | TN/GA | 677,820 | 9 | 2 |
| Columbus/Auburn/Opelika | GA/AL | 435,608 | 7 | 3 |
| Dayton/Springfield/Greenville | OH | 1,067,741 | 7 | 2 |
| Des Moines/Newton/Pella | IA | 616,122 | 7 | 3 |
| Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point | NC | 1,535,926 | 10 | 3 |
| Greenville/Spartanburg/Anderson | SC | 1,221,881 | 8 | 3 |
| Gulfport/Biloxi/Pascagoula | MS | 383,558 | 5 | 3 |
| Indianapolis/Anderson/Columbus | IN | 2,014,267 | 15 | 3 |
| Johnson City/Kingsport/Bristol | TN/VA | 497,240 | 8 | 3 |
| Knoxville/Sevierville/La Follette | TN | 1,029,155 | 12 | 2 |
| Little Rock/North Little Rock/Pine Bluff | AR | 841,326 | 10 | 2 |
| Louisville/Jefferson County/Elizabethtown/Scottsburg | KY/IN | 1,369,024 | 16 | 2 |
| Macon/Warner Robins/Fort Valley | GA | 386,534 | 7 | 2 |
| Milwaukee/Racine/Waukesha | WI | 2,003,218 | 7 | 4 |
| Omaha/Council Bluffs/Fremont | NE/IA | 865,894 | 9 | 2 |
| Portland/Vancouver/Beaverton | OR/WA | 2,175,113 | 7 | 2 |
| Providence/New Bedford/Fall River | RI/MA | 1,600,856 | 6 | 3 |
| Raleigh/Durham/Cary | NC | 1,695,974 | 8 | 3 |
| Salt Lake City/Ogden/Clearfield | UT | 1,686,703 | 8 | 2 |
| Savannah/Hinesville/Fort Stewart | GA | 401,132 | 5 | 2 |
| South Bend/Elkhart/Mishawaka/Benton Harbor | IN/MI | 916,646 | 8 | 4 |
| Virginia Beach/Norfolk/Newport News | VA/NC | 1,658,754 | 16 | 3 |
| West Michigan/Grand Rapids/Muskegon/Holland | MI | 1,386,045 | 8 | 3 |

Identifying Comparison Regions

Overview

In establishing the initial 26 regions, we applied the general criteria as referenced on page 4. For the social and economic sectors, we wanted to know which regions were best-in-class. For the environmental sector, we wanted to find which regions were most similar to our region's natural resource base.

Economic and Social Comparison Regions

For the economic and social indicators, this meant using a statistical method called a Z-score² to compare unlike information such as dollars and percent of population. The result is the five regions that scored the best across our set of economic and social indicators.

Economic Indicators Best-in-class

1. **Raleigh**/Durham/Cary, North Carolina
2. **Austin**/Round Rock, Texas
3. **Des Moines**/Newton/Pella, Iowa
4. **Omaha**/Council Bluffs/Fremont, Nebraska/Iowa
5. **Portland**/Vancouver/Beaverton, Oregon/Washington

Social Indicators Best-in-class

1. **Des Moines**/Newton/Pella, Iowa
2. **Knoxville**/Sevierville/La Follette, Tennessee
3. **Augusta**/Richmond County, Georgia/South Carolina
4. **Milwaukee**/Racine/Waukesha/Kenosha, Wisconsin
5. **Dayton**/Springfield/Greenville, Ohio

Environmental Comparison Regions

Because of the unique nature of each region's environment, the goal of selecting five comparative regions for environmental indicators was to select those regions that best resemble West Michigan's natural environment. This was done by using 12 sets of data covering four categories: population, land use, geography, and climate³.

Environmentally Most Similar Regions

1. **Dayton**/Springfield/Greenville, Ohio
2. **Indianapolis**/Anderson/Columbus, Indiana
3. **Milwaukee**/Racine/Waukesha/Kenosha, Wisconsin
4. **Portland**/Vancouver/Beaverton, Oregon/Washington
5. **South Bend**/Elkhart/Mishawaka, Indiana/Michigan

²The Calculation of Standardized "Z" scores

For the economic and social indicators, a Z-score was created for each of the indicators for each region. Calculating a Z-score allowed us to compare factors that are measured in different units such as percentages, percent of change or dollars. Z-scores allowed us to present the results of this comparative analysis on one graph for ease of comparison.

There are several steps required to calculate a Z-score. The first step is to find the difference (D) between West Michigan's measurement for an indicator (X) and the average of the indicator measurements for the entire comparison sample.

$$D = (X \text{ region 1} - X \text{ average for all regions})$$

Using the Educational Attainment data for 2007 as an example, West Michigan had 27.07% of 25 to 34 years olds with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to an average of 27.65% for the 27 regions in the comparison sample (including West Michigan.)

$$D = -0.58$$

In the second step, we find the sample standard deviation.

$$SSD = \sqrt{\frac{\text{the sum of } D \text{ for each region}^2}{(\text{number of regions}-1)}}$$

Standard deviation is a measure of the variation in data sets. A high standard deviation means that there is a wide variation among the regions for this indicator. Likewise, a small standard deviation means that all of the regions are very similar to each other in this indicator. For Education Attainment, the maximum is 43.5% (Raleigh, NC) and the minimum is 16.4% (Gulfport, MS). The sample standard deviation for Education Attainment is:

$$SSD = .0624$$

The last step is to find the Z-score by dividing the difference (D) by the sample standard deviation.

$$Z \text{ region 1} = (D / SDD)$$

For Educational Attainment, West Michigan's Z-score = -0.94

Using Z-scores allowed us to make direct comparison of West Michigan's performance and conditions relative to the other regions in our sample across dissimilar indicators because it controls for means and distribution.

³Environmental data sets used for selecting comparison regions:

- Population of 900,000 or more
- Spatial area (square miles)
- Population density (population divided by spatial area)
- Total urban land (square miles)
- Percent urban land (what percent of total area in the CSA is urban land)
- Farmland (square miles)
- Specialty crops (vegetables, fruits, orchards, soy beans)
- Geography (Is it on a lake? In the Great Lakes Basin? On the ocean?)
- Latitude (as a measure of potential climate similarities)
- 30-year average for precipitation (inches)
- 30-year average temperatures for January (in °F)
- 30-year average temperatures for July (in °F)

Economic Prosperity Indicators

West Michigan
Michigan
United States

Self-employed Professionals

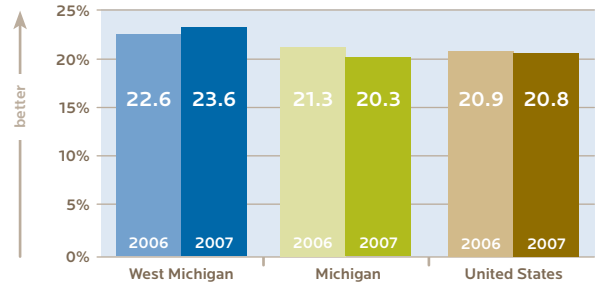
Overview

The percentage of professional, scientific and technical persons who are self-employed is an indicator of a region's entrepreneurial environment, which is strongly associated with innovation. A region with a welcoming environment for entrepreneurship in the knowledge-based fields of science, technology and health is more likely to experience economic growth.

How West Michigan Is Doing

The percentage of professionals in West Michigan who are self-employed increased in 2007, while it fell modestly nationwide and across the state. While one year does not make a trend, this is an encouraging reflection of the region's entrepreneurial environment for knowledge-based workers.

% Of Professional, Scientific and Technical Persons Self-employed 2006 - 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey⁴

Top Performing Regions 2007

- Greensboro 25.6%
- Portland 25.5%
- Chattanooga 24.9%
- Little Rock 24.8%
- Providence 24.5%
- 8. West Michigan 23.6%**

Educational Attainment

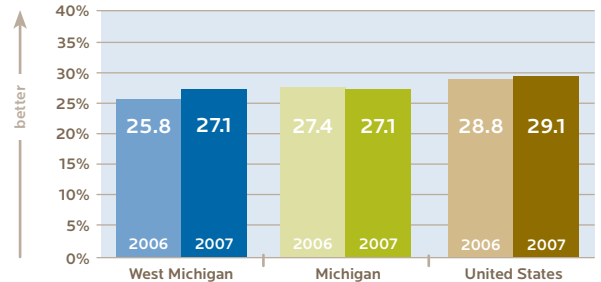
Overview

Educational Attainment measures the percentage of the region's 25 to 34 year olds who hold at least a bachelor's degree. It is an indicator of both the quality of the region's labor force and the attractiveness of the region to young, knowledge-based workers. Attracting and retaining these young, talented workers is key to the region's economic success.

How West Michigan Is Doing

In 2007, the percentage of young adults with at least a bachelor's degree increased to be even with the state percentage as a whole. While this is a significant improvement, the region still lags the nation. Growing, retaining, and attracting knowledge-based workers remains a challenge for the region.

% Of 25 to 34 Year Olds with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher 2006 - 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey⁵

Top Performing Regions 2007

- Raleigh 43.5%
- Austin 37.3%
- Des Moines 36.1%
- Albany 35.7%
- Omaha 34.3%
- 11. West Michigan 27.1%**

Per Capita Income

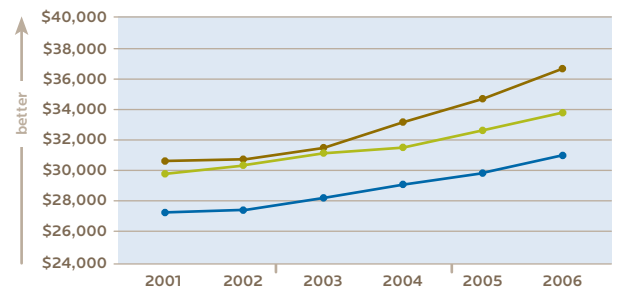
Overview

Per Capita Income is a well-accepted indicator of a region's economic well-being, as it reflects both earned (wages and salaries) and unearned (investment) income. Regions with high Per Capita Income provide good-paying jobs to their residents and, at the same time, attract and retain investors.

How West Michigan Is Doing

Although, Per Capita Income in West Michigan increased by 3.1% in 2006, the region's Per Capita Income still lags the state's and the nation's. West Michigan's Per Capita Income is held down by many factors, such as the low education achievement levels of its workers, which contributes to the relatively low wages being paid by its employers.

Per Capita Income 2001-2006



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis⁶

Top Performing Regions 2006

- Omaha \$39,216
- Des Moines \$38,103
- Milwaukee \$38,049
- Providence \$37,185
- Portland \$37,157
- 18. West Michigan \$30,845**

Economic Prosperity Indicators

Employment Change

Overview

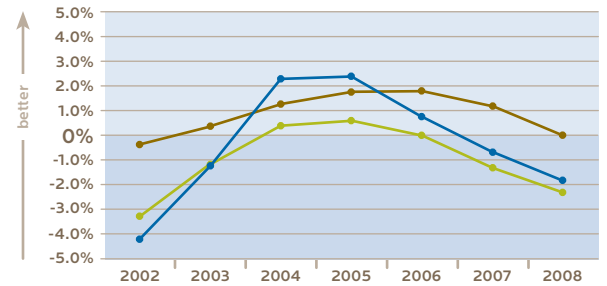
Employment Change, the increase or decrease in the number of jobs in the region, is the standard measure of economic performance. In today's harsh global environment, only the highly competitive and/or high-amenity regions enjoy an increase in jobs. However, the Employment Change indicator does not take into account whether the jobs being created are low-paying or high-paying.

How West Michigan Is Doing

Employment in West Michigan has declined during the past two years. Due to harsh international and national conditions, the region's large manufacturing sector continues to lose jobs, while the region's health and professional services continue to add jobs. A major challenge facing the region is the preservation of manufacturing jobs.

West Michigan
Michigan
United States

Annual % Change in Employment 2002-2008



Source: Bureau of Labor⁷

Top Performing Regions 2008

1. Virginia Beach 1.5%
2. Austin 1.4%
3. Salt Lake City 1.2%
4. Gulfport 1.1%
5. Little Rock 1.1%
- 25. West Michigan -1.8%**

Employment Rate

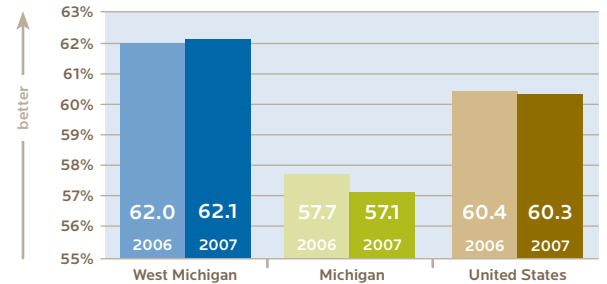
Overview

Employment Rate is the percentage of persons 16 years and older who are employed. The Employment Rate monitors the ability and willingness of the region's residents to find employment. Unlike the region's unemployment rate, it includes the number of discouraged workers who have dropped out of the labor force.

How West Michigan Is Doing

Compared to the state and the U.S., a greater percentage of workers in West Michigan were employed in 2006 and 2007. The fact that a lower percentage of West Michigan adults have fallen into the class of the hard-to-employ, discouraged workers separates our region from most other regions.

% Of Persons Aged 16 Years and Older Employed 2006 - 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey⁸

Top Performing Regions 2007

1. Des Moines 68.9%
2. Salt Lake City 67.9%
3. Austin 67.8%
4. Omaha 67.1%
5. Raleigh 65.2%
- 10. West Michigan 62.1%**

Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)

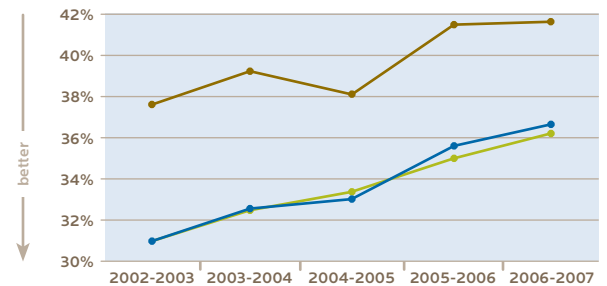
Overview

FRPL measures the percentage of K-12 students eligible for free and reduced priced lunch based on family income levels. More than an indicator of childhood poverty, FRPL is also a good predictor of student performance. Low-income students face significant barriers that can block their academic success.

How West Michigan Is Doing

Nearly the same percentage of West Michigan students were eligible for free and reduced priced lunch as the entire state in the 2006-2007 school year. Due to the worsening economic environment, it is not surprising that this percentage has increased over the past several years.

% Of Students Qualifying for FRPL 2002-2007

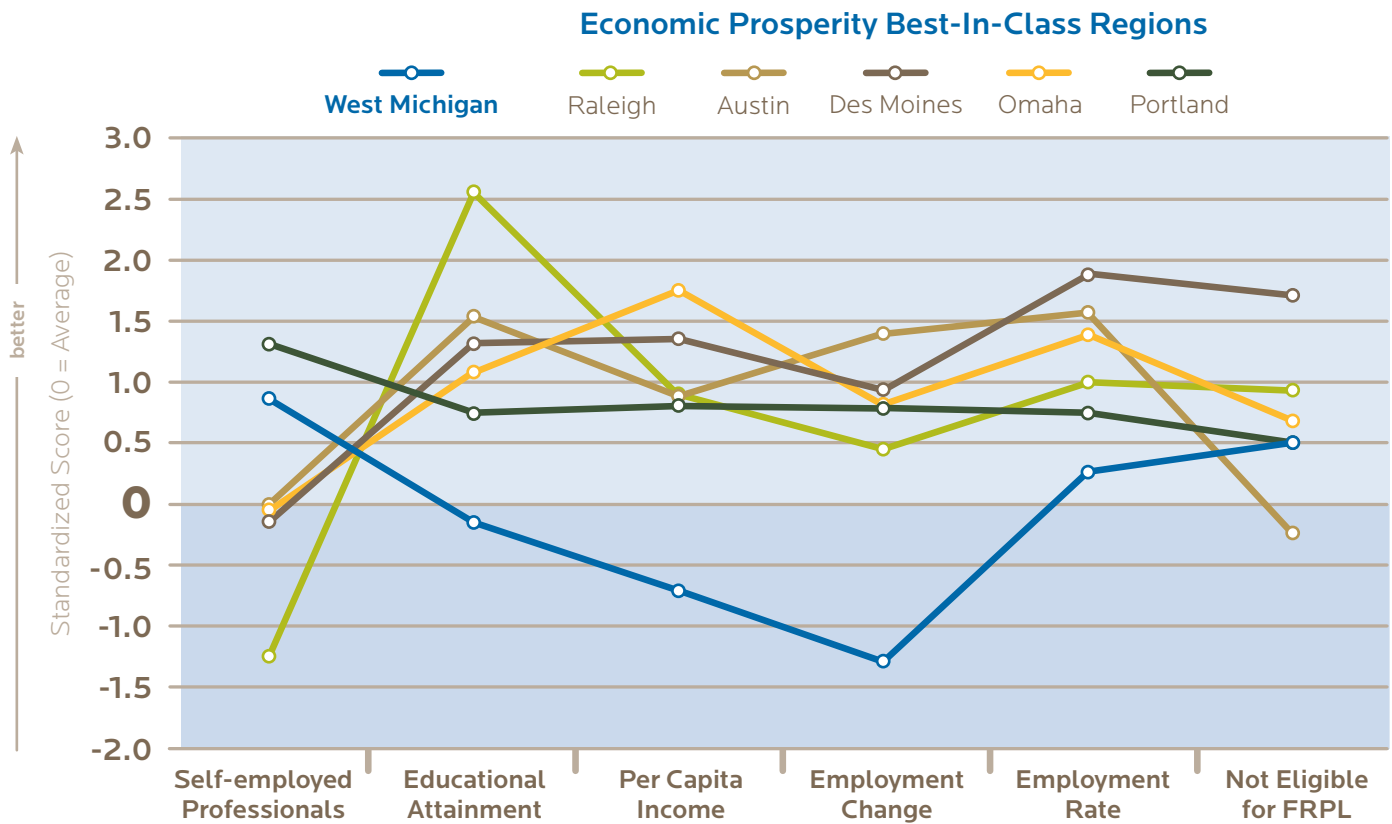


Source: National Center for Education Statistics⁹

Top Performing Regions 2006 - 2007

1. Albany 27.1%
2. Des Moines 27.8%
3. Salt Lake City 30.4%
4. Providence 32.2%
5. Raleigh 32.9%
- 13. West Michigan 36.7%**

Benchmarking Economic Prosperity



Self-employed Professionals measures the annual estimate of how many professional, scientific and technical workers are self-employed. It is an indicator of an entrepreneurial environment among knowledge-based workers.

Educational Attainment measures the percentage of the region's 25 to 34 year olds who hold at least a bachelor's degree. It is an indicator of both the region's workforce quality and quality of life.

Per Capita Income is the average personal income of the residents of the region. It is an indicator of general economic well-being.

Employment Change is employment estimates based on where the worker lives. It is an indicator of economic performance.

Employment Rate is the percentage of persons 16 years and older who are employed. It is an indicator of the current employment situation in the region.

Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) measures the percentage of K-12 students eligible for free and reduced priced lunch based on family income levels. It is an indicator of family poverty. It was necessary to calculate the percentage of students **not** eligible for free and reduced priced lunch for comparison purposes.

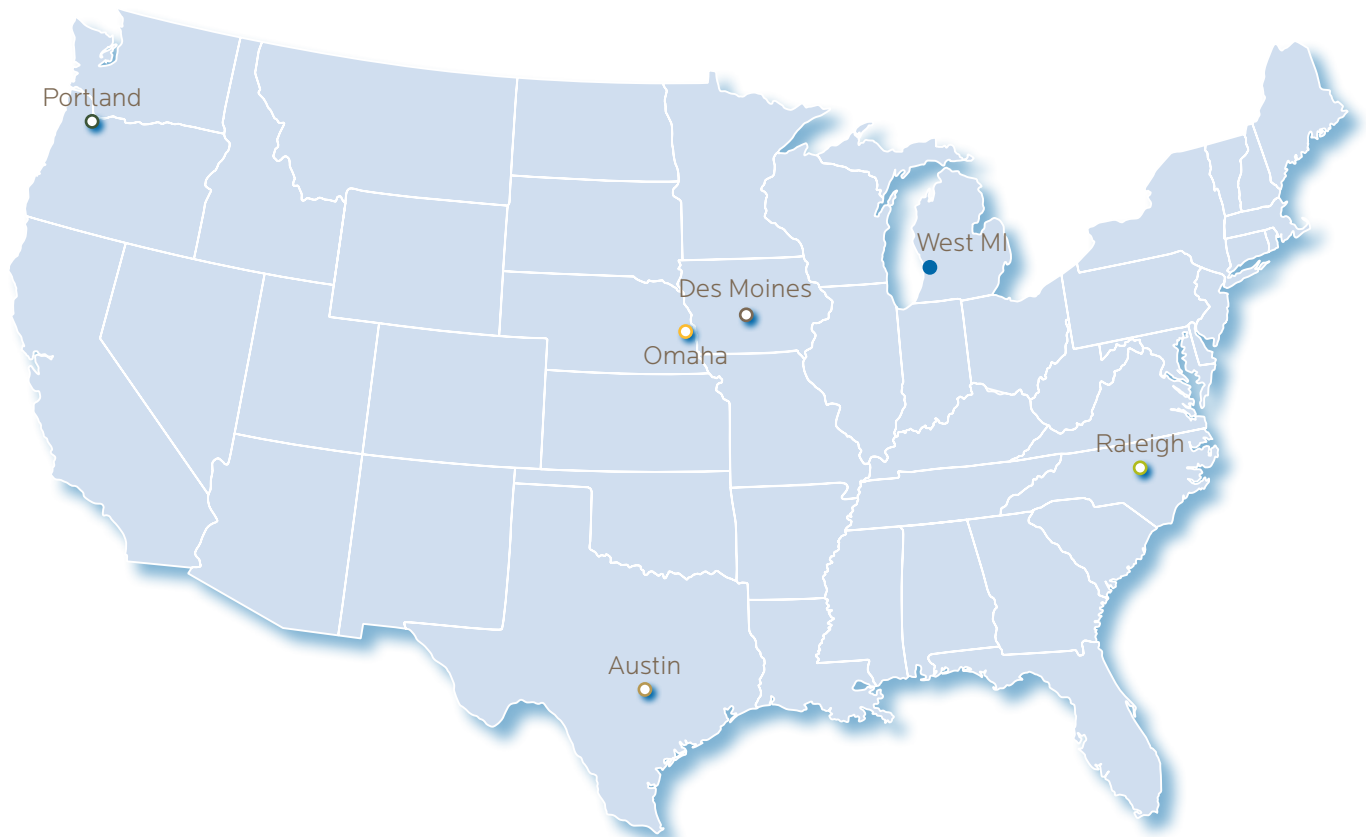
Benchmarking Tells Us

The graph on the facing page shows West Michigan with the top five best-performing regions across all the economic indicators. The good news is that West Michigan's entrepreneurial environment (as measured by the percent of professional workers who are self-employed) is among the best. West Michigan is known to have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and that spirit is confirmed, once again, in this analysis.

Still, the region is lagging in all other economic indicators. In particular, the region's future growth may be hindered by the low educational achievement levels of its young adults.

The region's relatively low educational levels can also partially explain its low ranking in per capita income. While a higher-than-average percentage of the region's working-age adults are working, employment opportunities are declining. If employment continues to decline, the region will have a tougher time attracting young, educated workers.

Economic Prosperity Best-In-Class Regions and West Michigan



Environmental Integrity Indicators

Closed Beach Days

Overview

The number and frequency of Closed Beach Days is considered an important water quality indicator given that contaminated beaches are not only a health concern, but their closure can have significant economic consequences. The frequency of monitoring beaches is often dependent on the availability of trained staff and financial resources. Monitoring efforts are not always comparable given that some health departments do more testing than others.

How West Michigan Is Doing

In 2008, 71 beaches were monitored throughout West Michigan for excessive levels of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). Of the beaches monitored, 33 were closed at least one day due to elevated *E. coli* levels and resulted in 81 total Closed Beach Days. This is a considerable drop compared to 2007, when 73 beaches were monitored and resulted in 579 Closed Beach Days.

Toxic Release Inventory (TRI)

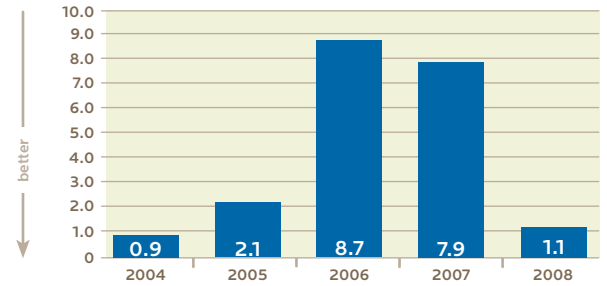
Overview

The TRI is a database that contains information on the release of 650 chemicals and chemical categories from industries including manufacturing, electric utilities and commercial hazardous waste treatment. These chemical releases are cataloged by type (e.g., air, water, or land) and whether the disposal was done on-site or off-site. Even with proper disposal, different types of industries contribute to higher amounts of toxic release.

How West Michigan Is Doing

West Michigan has experienced a continuing decrease in toxic releases during the seven years from 2000 to 2006. In 2006, the region released nearly seven million less pounds of toxic chemicals than in 2000. During this seven year period, West Michigan has decreased its overall toxic release by 37%, with the most significant change coming from the reduction of on-site disposal.

Closed Days Per Beach Monitored 2004-2008

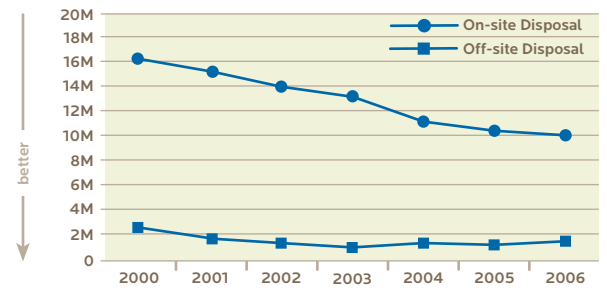


Source: For Michigan: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
For Indiana and Wisconsin: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency¹⁰

Top Performing Regions in the Lake Michigan Basin 2008

- 1. West Michigan**
1.14 closed days per beach monitored
(71 beaches monitored; 81 closed beach days)
- 2. South Bend**
1.26 closed days per beach monitored
(30 beaches monitored; 38 closed beach days)
- 3. Milwaukee**
2.77 closed days per beach monitored
(39 beaches monitored; 108 closed beach days)

Toxic Release for West Michigan 2000-2006 (in millions of pounds)



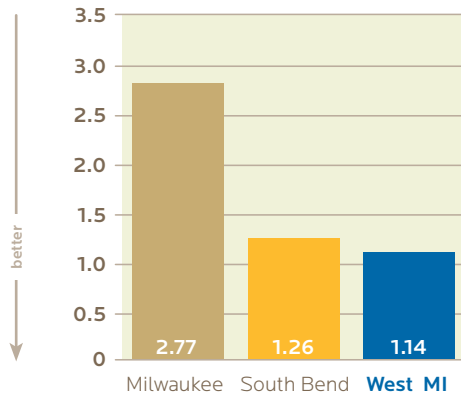
Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency¹¹

| Top Performing Regions | # of total pounds |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Austin | 753,062 |
| 2. Albany | 1,819,674 |
| 3. Des Moines | 1,862,355 |
| 4. Dayton | 2,094,502 |
| 5. Greenville | 2,616,744 |
| 16. West Michigan | 11,621,937 |

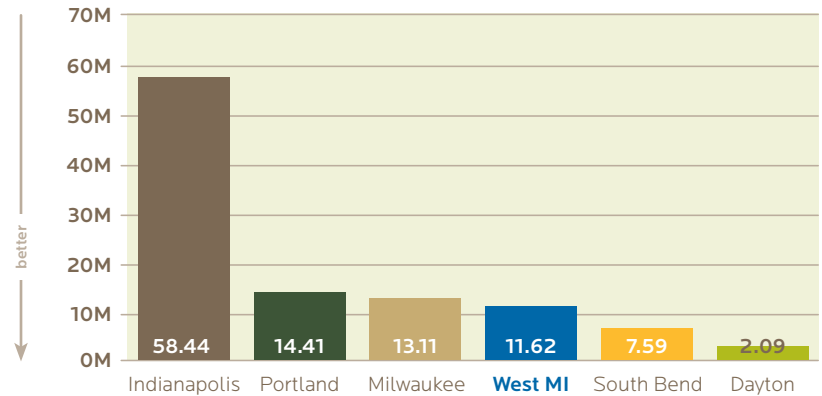


Benchmarking Environmental Integrity

Closed Days Per Beach Monitored 2008

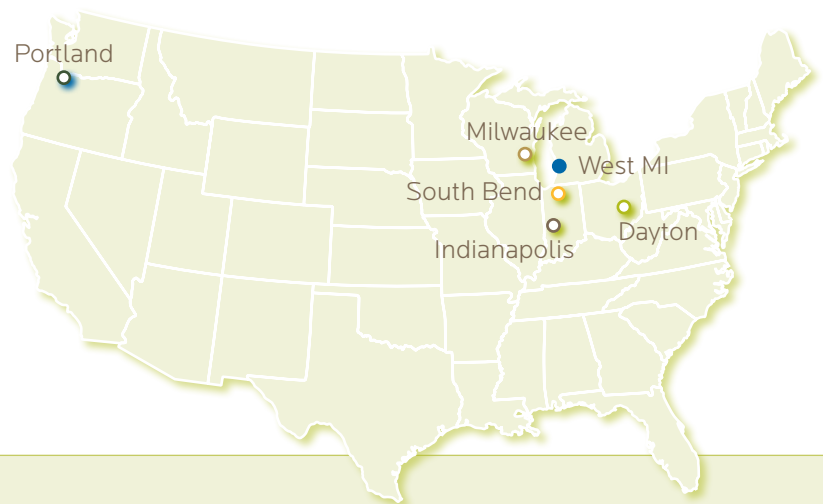


Toxic Releases (in millions of pounds)



The charts above show how West Michigan performs against the comparison regions for Toxic Release Inventory and Closed Beach Days. Only three selected regions had comparable data for Closed Beach Days.

Environmentally Most Similar Regions



Benchmarking Tells Us

Even with proper disposal of the chemicals measured in the Toxic Release Inventory, the mix of industries has a big effect on the number of pounds released. Since 2000, West Michigan has steadily reduced its overall toxic release by 37% from 18.4M to 11.6M pounds. This translates into good news for West Michigan and a direct improvement in our water, air, and habitat quality, since fewer chemicals are being released into the environment.

Among the six regions that have similar environmental characteristics, West Michigan ranks third behind Dayton and South Bend. We should look to those best-in-class regions for ideas on best management practices to further reduce our toxic releases. Specifically, we can look at Dayton as a specific “best-in-class” illustration, with environmental characteristics similar to those of West Michigan and better performance with regard to toxic releases.

Across the Lake Michigan Basin, Closed Beach Days have drastically decreased. In 2008, West Michigan had 1.14 closed beach days for every beach monitored. This was the best ratio for all areas within the Lake Michigan Basin that were examined as part of this study. South Bend had the next best record at 1.26, and Milwaukee had a ratio of 2.77. These were the only areas compared to West Michigan since beach closings vary by state.

We can attribute this drop, in part, to changes in natural processes, such as climate and species composition, as well as to better overall management of non-point source pollution. Education related to non-point source pollution and storm water runoff and banning the use of phosphorus fertilizers are examples of current initiatives cities, townships, and counties have put into practice to improve water quality. This decrease could also be a result of health departments monitoring the beaches less frequently due to a lack of staff and funding. We were unable to confirm this possibility.

Social Justice Indicators

West Michigan
Michigan
United States

No Health Care Coverage

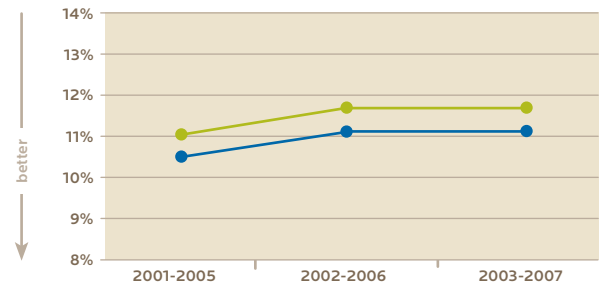
Overview

This indicator measures the portion of the adult population with no form of health care coverage including health insurance, prepaid plans or government plans. It is an indicator of access to health care. Those with no health care coverage are less likely to seek preventative health care options. This often leads to late diagnosis and an increase in preventable hospitalizations.

How West Michigan Is Doing

West Michigan continues to have a greater percentage of people with health insurance than the state as a whole.

% of Persons Aged 18 to 64 Years Reporting No Health Care Coverage 2001 - 2007



Source: Michigan Department of Community Health¹²

Top Performing Regions 2003 - 2007

1. Knoxville 9.2%
2. Albany 9.2%
3. Des Moines 9.4%
4. Milwaukee 10.5%
5. Providence 10.6%
7. **West Michigan 11.1%**

Median Income by Race Disparity Index

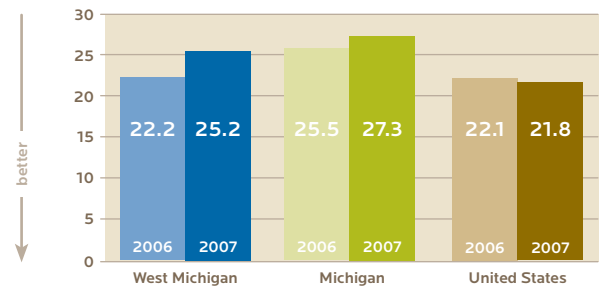
Overview

This indicator is a partial measure of racial/ethnic disparity related to household income. A lower index reading translates to lower levels of disparity. For example, if the region were to score 0, it would mean that all seven racial/ethnic groups identified by the U.S. Census have exactly the same median household income. It demonstrates the degree to which varying racial and ethnic groups may have different access to wealth and asset creation or may be disproportionately impacted by changes in the economy.

How West Michigan Is Doing

Households in West Michigan are experiencing a greater disparity in income based on their race and ethnicity than the nation as a whole. However, we experience a slightly lower rate than the state. At both the local and state level, the two-year trend has been toward greater disparity.

Income Disparity Index by Race and Ethnicity 2006 - 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey¹³

Top Performing Regions 2007

1. Augusta 12.9
2. Knoxville 14.5
3. Salt Lake City 17.3
4. Columbus 17.6
5. Virginia Beach 18.3
15. **West Michigan 25.2**

Voter Participation

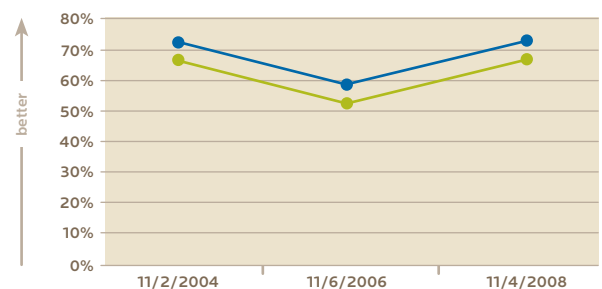
Overview

Voter Participation measures the percentage of registered voters who cast a ballot in the general election. Strong Voter Participation is an indicator of civic engagement and the desire of local citizens to influence policy and elect leaders that represent their beliefs and values.

How West Michigan Is Doing

West Michigan's Voter Participation rate remains better than the state's. Even though more people voted in West Michigan in the last general election than ever before (695,197 votes) due to the large increases in voter registration, the actual percentage of registered voters who voted was smaller than in 2004.

% Of Registered Voters Who Cast Ballots in the General Election 2004, 2006, 2008



Source: Michigan Department of State¹⁴

Top Performing Regions 2007

1. Portland 86.0%
2. Milwaukee 82.8%
3. Boise City 78.3%
4. Des Moines 78.1%
5. Albany 77.4%
14. **West Michigan 71.8%**

Social Justice Indicators

West Michigan ■
Michigan ■
United States ■

Housing Cost Burden

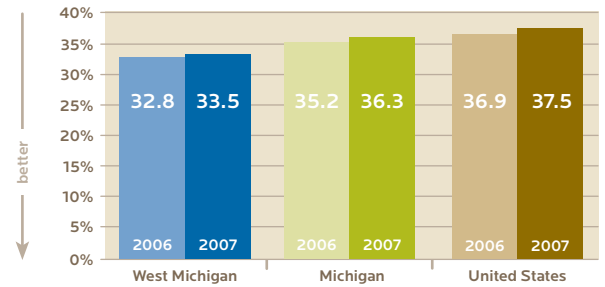
Overview

Housing Cost Burden measures the percentage of homeowners who are paying more than 30% of their income for housing. This is an indicator of how affordable housing is in the region. Housing is usually the most costly part of a household budget. A lack of affordable housing significantly reduces the ability of low- to moderate-income families to meet other basic needs.

How West Michigan Is Doing

Although West Michigan residents experience less of a housing cost burden compared to the state and nation, more than one in three homeowners in West Michigan are paying more than 30% of their income for housing. The housing cost burden increased from 2006 to 2007 at the regional, state and national levels.

% Of Homeowners Paying More Than 30% of Income For Housing 2006 - 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey¹⁵

Top Performing Regions 2007

1. Little Rock 23.8%
2. Des Moines 26.7%
3. Indianapolis 27.2%
4. Greenville 27.3%
5. Augusta 27.5%
- 20. West Michigan 33.5%**

Teens Not In School

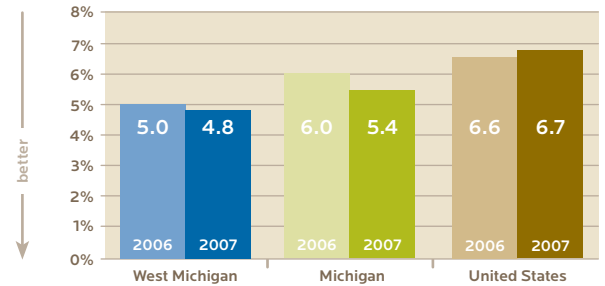
Overview

Teens Not in School measures the percentage of teens aged 16 to 19 years who have left school or failed to get a diploma by the time they were 19. This is an indicator of academic failure and drop-out rate. Education is critical to success in the knowledge economy.

How West Michigan Is Doing

West Michigan is keeping a greater percentage of students in school than the state as a whole. The West Michigan and Michigan percentage improved slightly from last year as well. This is the only indicator where West Michigan is among the top five performers.

Teens Not In School as a % of Persons Aged 15 to 19 Years 2006 - 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey¹⁶

Top Performing Regions 2007

1. Johnson City 3.0%
2. Omaha 3.9%
3. Milwaukee 4.1%
4. Des Moines 4.2%
- 5. West Michigan 4.8%**

Crime Rate

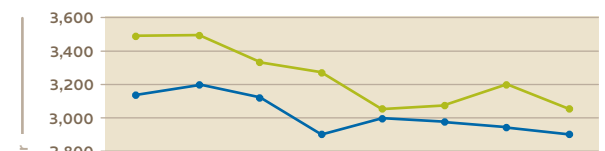
Overview

Crime Rate measures the number of violent (murder, rape, robbery, assault) and property (burglary, larceny, car theft, arson) crime offenses per 100,000 people. It is an indicator of public safety. Safe communities are an important element for developing high quality of life in our region, and the negative impact of a high crime rate reaches far beyond the residents of a high crime neighborhood.

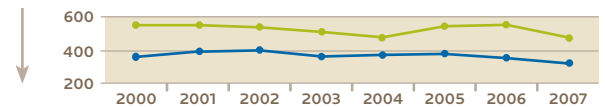
How West Michigan Is Doing

The Violent and Property Crime Rates in West Michigan have continued to decline since 2004 and have stayed below the state's rate. West Michigan's violent and property crime rates are the lowest they have been since 2000.

Property Crime per 100,000 People 2000-2007



Violent Crime per 100,000 People 2000-2007

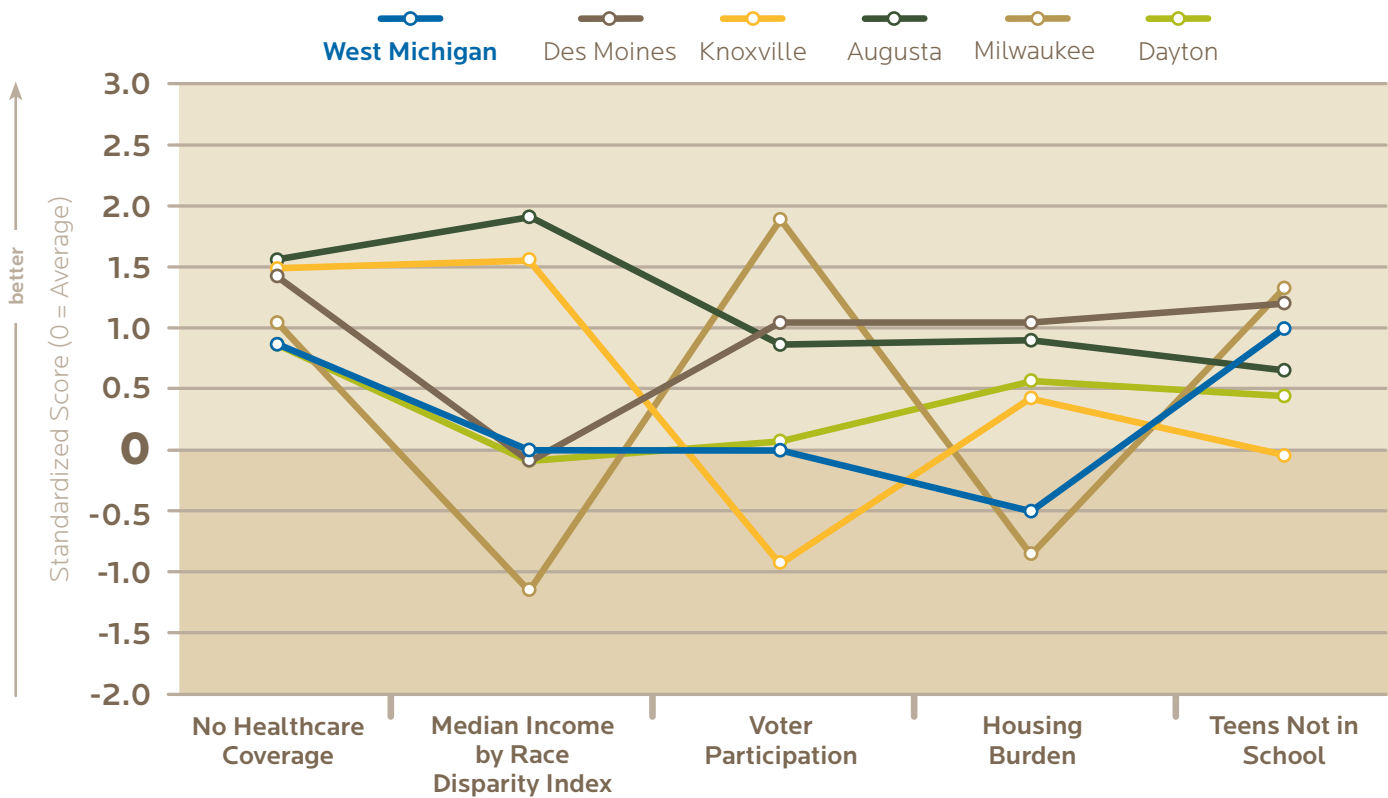


Source: Michigan State Police Uniform Crime Report¹⁷

Crime Rate data are not available to determine top performing regions.

Benchmarking Social Justice

Social Justice Best-In-Class Regions



No Health Care Coverage measures the percentage of people aged 18 to 64 years who self-reported having no health care coverage. It is an indicator of access to health care.

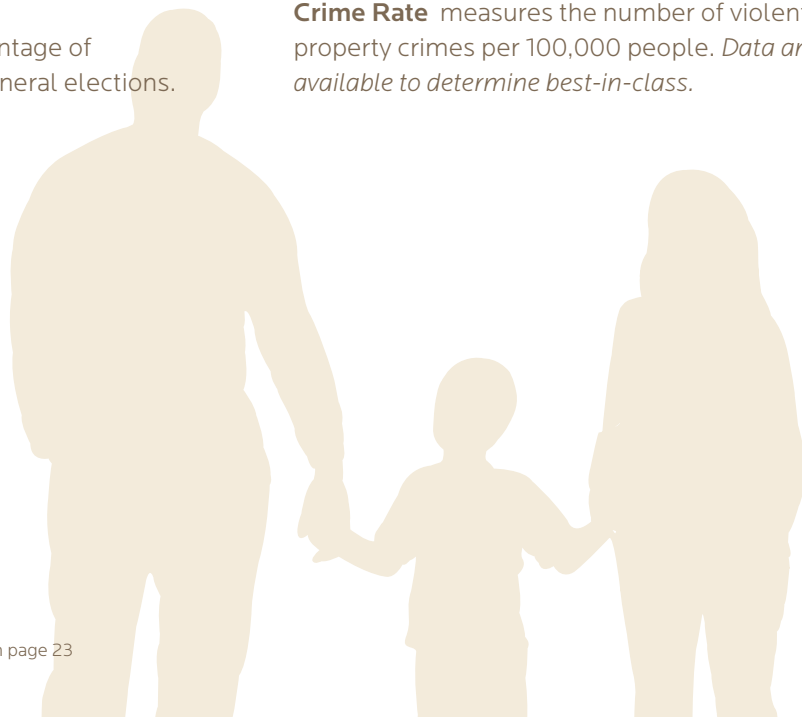
Median Income by Race Disparity Index measures the income gap between households by race and ethnicity. It is an indicator of equity and equal opportunity.

Voter Participation measures the percentage of registered voters who voted in recent general elections. It is an indicator of civic engagement.

Housing Cost Burden measures the percentage of homeowners paying 30% or more of their income for housing. It is an indicator of housing affordability.

Teens Not in School measures the percent of teens that are not enrolled in school or a high school graduate. It is an indicator of educational success and dropouts.

Crime Rate measures the number of violent and property crimes per 100,000 people. *Data are not available to determine best-in-class.*



Benchmarking Tells Us

West Michigan scored 8th out of the 27 regions according to the total score across the social indicators. The region compared more favorably in the indicators of Voter Participation, No Health Care Coverage and Teens Not in School, but less favorably in the indicators of Median Income by Race Disparity Index and Housing Cost Burden.

This means citizens of West Michigan are experiencing a greater disparity in income based on their race/ethnicity than if they lived in most of the other comparison regions. Our region requires a greater percentage of a person's income devoted to housing costs than might be experienced somewhere else. When you combine

this with our region's low Per Capita Income, it means even less income is available for other necessities when compared to other regions. While no region is perfect, the regions of Des Moines and Dayton received a better overall score than us and share a similar pattern across the social indicators. These may be specific regions that we research to determine what conditions might be present that result in better overall scores.

West Michigan is performing well, but there is still work to be done. Our region scores low in the social indicators that reflect disparities, such as Median Income by Race Disparity Index and Housing Cost Burden. We should be concerned if our region isn't offering the same opportunity for everyone.

Social Justice Best-In-Class Regions and West Michigan



Background

WMSA and its partners established the Regional Indicators Initiative in 2006 to use data to help create a shared understanding of how the West Michigan region is doing over time. A broad group of stakeholders took a look at what a sustainable region might look like. This resulted in the *Elements of Quality of Life* in West Michigan.

After much consideration and community dialogue, a list of 15 indicators was developed to gauge regional performance across the economic, social and environmental elements. These 15 indicators were originally published as the *Vital Signs* in 2007.

Using the *Vital Signs* to identify the gap in West Michigan's educational attainment—measured by the percentage of the population ages 25 to 34 with bachelor's degrees or higher—led to WMSA's Internship Initiative. This

statewide collaboration is designed to create 25,000 new internships statewide with 3,000 at West Michigan employers by 2011 as a strategy to retain young, educated talent.

All indicators with available data were updated in 2008 and the *Vital Signs* was published digitally on the WMSA website. In 2009, the *Vital Signs* added benchmarking data to compare West Michigan's performance against 26 other peer regions across the U.S.

In 2009, the Regional Indicators Technical Team will draw on the expertise of the region to address gaps in environmental and diversity measures. WMSA will conduct a series of stakeholder meetings to establish goals within each indicator.

Elements for Quality of Life in West Michigan

The following Elements are not in order of priority and should be viewed as an interconnected and integrated set of statements that support each other. They were developed as a foundation for the regional indicators by stakeholders in 2006 as we set out to measure what matters for regional sustainability.

Promoting Economic Success

- Create a diverse and vibrant regional economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work that builds household economic well-being.
- Provide excellent quality culture, leisure and recreation opportunities that are readily available to all.
- Foster the West Michigan innovative and collaborative spirit among business, institutions and government.
- Develop an integrated infrastructure connecting where we live, learn, work and play within the region and to the world.

Valuing The Natural And Built Environment

- Use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care.
- Minimize waste, then reuse or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery and carefully dispose of what is left.
- Restore, preserve and enhance natural systems.
- Value and protect bio-diversity and natural habitats while maintaining access.
- Build and maintain rural, suburban and urban places which are aesthetically appropriate, safe and enjoyable to be in, and well suited to environmental conditions.

Ensuring Social Equity

- Provide world-class education and learning opportunities for all ages: early childhood development through adult education.
- Embrace authentic diversity and social distinctiveness and strengthen the local community and cultural identity.
- Ensure access to good food, water, housing and energy at a reasonable cost.
- Empower people to participate in problem solving, decision making and action to create safe, caring and sustainable communities.
- Promote healthy lifestyles, prevent disease and provide affordable, accessible health care.
- Provide comprehensive, effective public safety services.

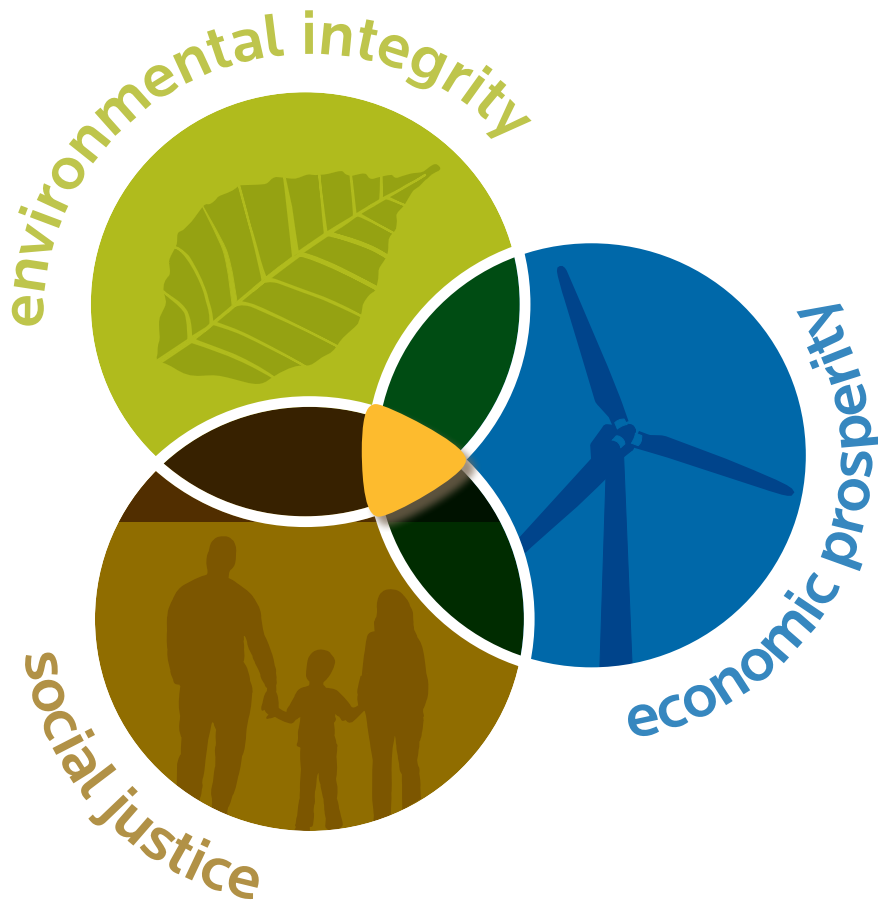
The Triple Bottom Line for West Michigan

Sustainability

The principle of sustainability—or the triple bottom line—governs the work of WMSA. This principle states that the best actions are those that balance the benefits and impacts for our region's economy, environment and people. This means meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. All three interconnected areas are equally important.

Environmental Integrity

West Michigan's environmental assets are the foundation necessary for a sustainable economy and viable social system. If we violate our environment or endanger the ecological functions that it provides, we threaten our economy and make it increasingly difficult to achieve social equity.



Economic Prosperity

We have all witnessed firsthand the impact of the economic downturn. We must continue to revitalize West Michigan's economy to provide us with the resources needed to care for our people and our environment. The future of our region depends on continual innovation and education.

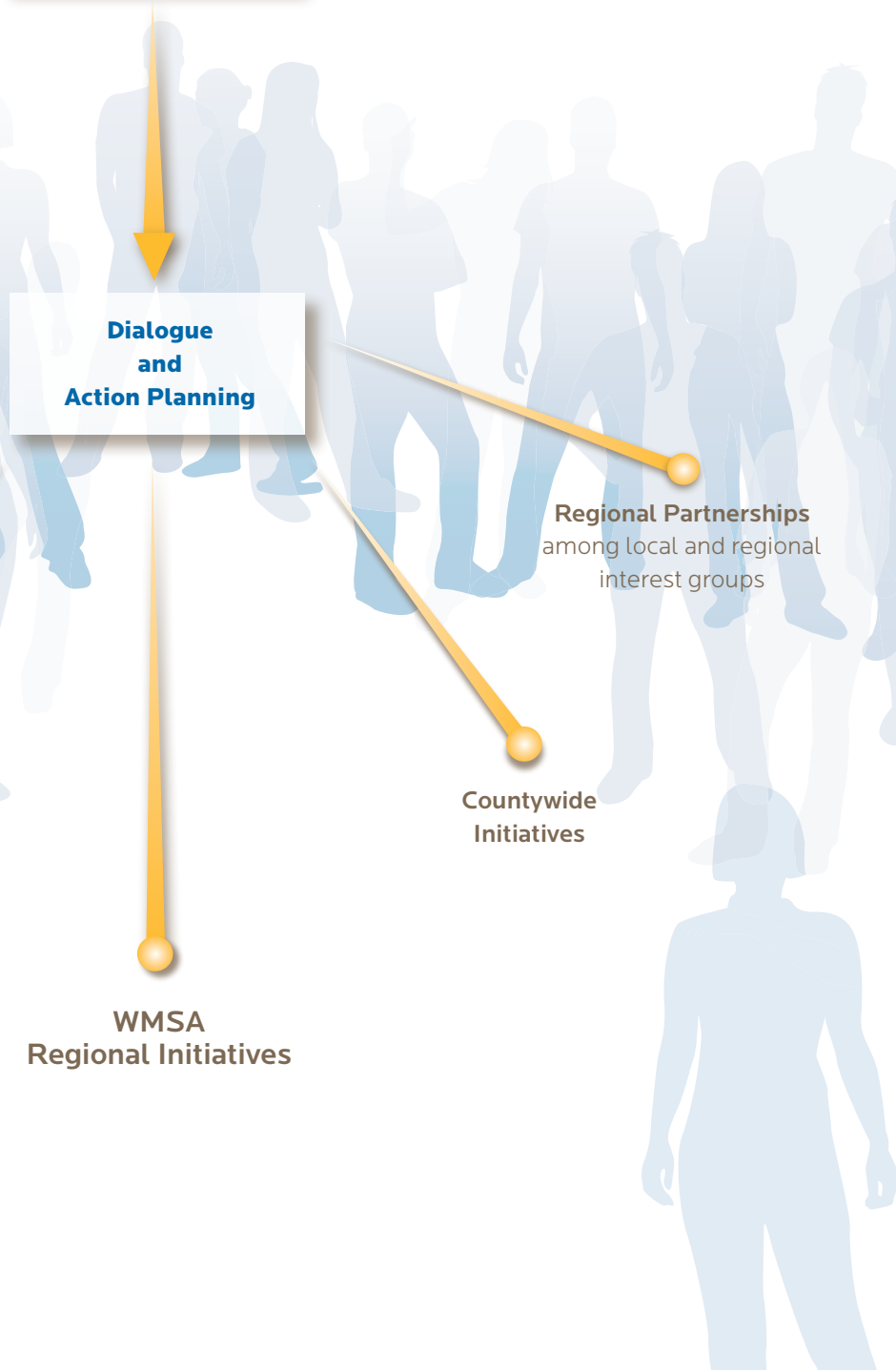
Social Justice

Because we are all interdependent and deeply connected, the concept of equity is critical to our collective survival. How we integrate and engage diverse people and ideas of all types into our regional culture will ultimately determine how effectively we sustain and/or improve our quality of life. We must invest in all people across the social spectrum.

Data Lead to Action

Indicators are meant to trigger dialogue about our region's future—dialogue that results in action. WMSA urges people and organizations to work together to take action that balances benefits to the economy, the environment and the people of West Michigan.

WMSA will continue to use the indicators to guide regional collaborative initiatives such as the Internship Initiative that resulted from the *2007 Vital Signs*.



Collaborative Implementation Model

The data in the *Vital Signs* are key to the Collaborative Implementation Model WMSA uses to stimulate regional action. Each initiative the organization pursues follows these steps to ensure it is not duplicating another regional effort, it is leveraging best practices of others and it is reaching a targeted need.

The *Vital Signs* report was instrumental in identifying the gap in West Michigan's educational attainment—measured by the percentage of the population ages 25 to 34 with bachelor degrees or higher—as an important challenge to address. When WMSA stakeholders tagged this indicator as being most relevant for our region, WMSA used its Collaborative Implementation Model to determine a regional strategy for retaining young talented people in West Michigan. This led to the Internship Initiative, which ultimately evolved into a statewide collaboration designed to create 25,000 new internships in Michigan by 2011 with 3,000 of these at West Michigan employers.



Plans for Acquiring Improved Data

Land Use Change & Water Quality

Our West Michigan landscape is ever changing due in part to natural processes, but also due to human-induced influences. Add to this the yet unknown impact of climate change, and it becomes increasingly obvious that to maintain our quality of life we need to understand and, if necessary, mitigate land use change.

West Michigan has an amazing natural environment with an estimated 10,500 miles of rivers and streams, and 80,300 acres of inland lakes. These water resources serve not only as places to live, work, and play, but also contribute to the overall stability and well-being of our ecosystems. The protection of water quality is of paramount importance and ultimately a key factor in achieving a sustainable region.

Grand Valley State University's Annis Water Resources Institute is currently investigating ways in which to institutionalize the systematic and scientifically valid collection of land use and land cover information.

Enhancing the Environmental Indicators

The purpose of the *Vital Signs* is to measure what is important for our region and to determine if our quality of life is getting better or worse. Having only two environmental indicators in this report doesn't mean the environment isn't important. Environmental data on a regional, county, and local levels are difficult to find. To make matters worse, if data are available, often times they are not consistent enough to make reasonable comparisons.

Since the first release of the *Vital Signs* in 2007 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has produced *Report on the Environment* (www.epa.gov/roe/). In this report, many air, land and water quality indicators were examined, along with the strengths and weaknesses associated with each indicator. The researchers at Grand Valley State University's Annis Water Resources Institute will examine these new suggestions by the EPA and determine if some might be used as part of future *Vital Signs* reports. Other potential indicators will also be examined with the assistance of knowledgeable and invested stakeholders throughout the region.

Diversity & Education

After the publication of the first *Vital Signs* report, we knew that we needed to develop more sophisticated measures for the indicators used to inform our progress on Diversity and Education. At the time, the data were not available in a form that would adequately meet the data criteria we developed for the indicators. Over the coming year, we will be revisiting these discussions and determining an improved indicator for the Median Income by Race Disparity Index and Teens Not in School. Regional stakeholders and experts will engage in reviewing the recommendations from our initial 2006 study, discovering if new data are available, selecting improved indicators and collecting and analyzing the information.

Next Steps for Regional Indicators

There are several next steps for developing the West Michigan Regional Indicators:

1. Identifying better indicators for land use change and water quality.
2. Refining our social indicators to better represent the region's diversity.
3. Conducting an inclusive process to establish goals for the region for each indicator.
4. Tracking these indicators over time to determine trends.
5. Prioritizing and initiating regional action to address the areas where West Michigan does not perform well.

Get Involved

Sustainability begins with you. Each one of us can take many separate actions to enhance the performance of the region.

- Register and vote
- Tutor or mentor a child
- Reduce, reuse and recycle
- Volunteer time to help someone or some place in need
- Hire an intern
- Buy locally
- Become an entrepreneur
- The possibilities are endless

The mission of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance is to be a catalyst for regional collaboration. The actions of each person matter, but until we can work toward sustainability on a regional scale, we won't increase our region's performance. Your actions will be amplified by working with others.

Measuring what Matters

The next important milestone in the development of the *West Michigan Vital Signs* will be to conduct a goal setting process. Using input from stakeholders around the region, we will establish a goal or performance target for each of the indicators. To participate, go to www.wm-alliance.org and fill out the get involved form on the Contact Us page.

To learn more about community indicator projects underway in the region, visit these websites:

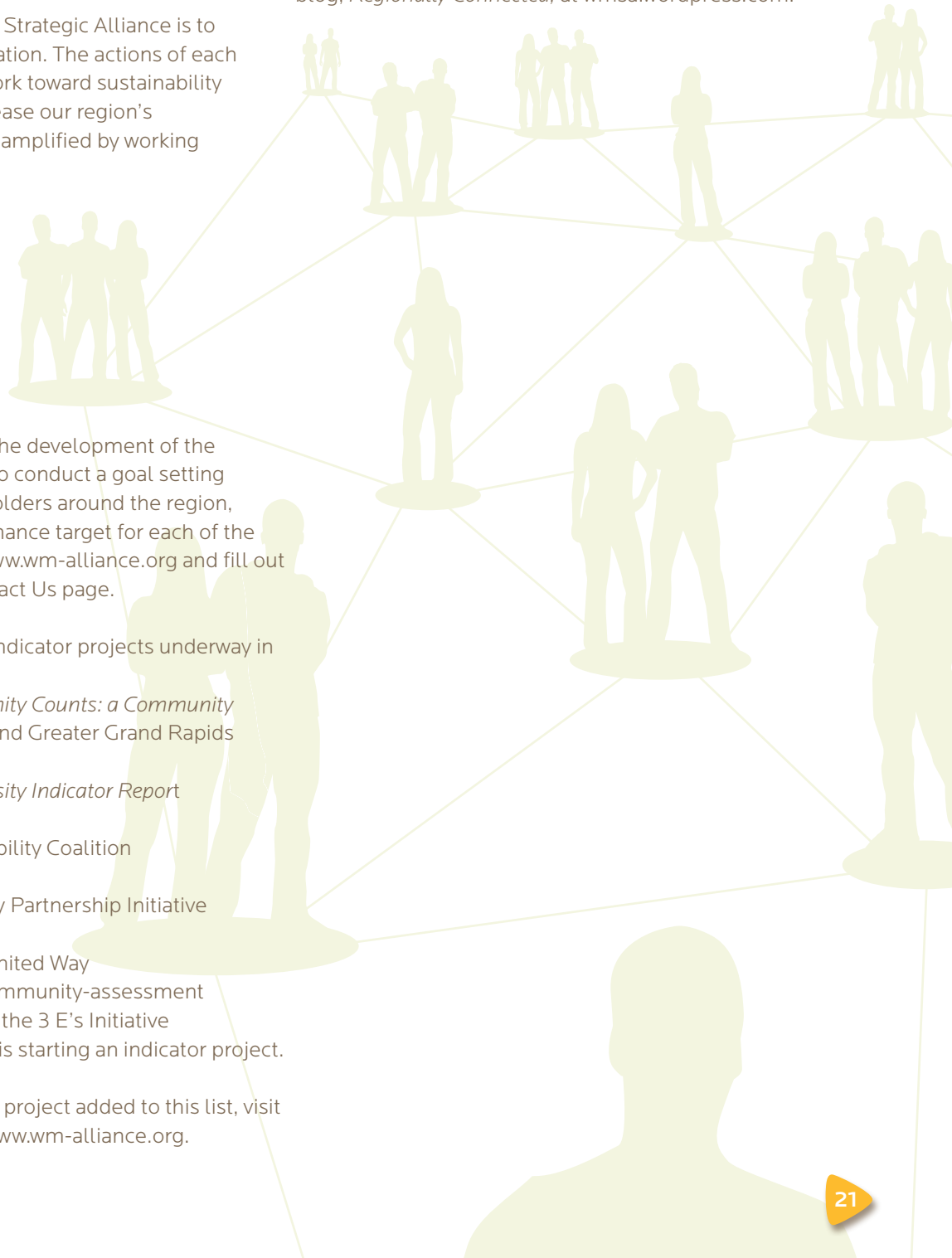
- The Delta Strategy's *Community Counts: a Community Report Card* for Kent County and Greater Grand Rapids
www.deltastategy.org
- *The Grand Valley State University Indicator Report*
www.gvsu.edu/sustainability
- The Muskegon Area Sustainability Coalition
www.muskegonasc.org
- The Community Sustainability Partnership Initiative
www.grpartners.org
- The Greater Ottawa County United Way
www.ottawaunitedway.org/community-assessment
- In the Holland/Zeeland area, the 3 E's Initiative
www.3einitiative.org/13.html is starting an indicator project.

To have your community indicator project added to this list, visit the Regional Indicators page at www.wm-alliance.org.

WMSA can help you to connect with organizations that are active at the community level or the regional level. Visit www.wm-alliance.org to see our current initiatives and our partners list or to make a financial contribution in support of regional collaboration.

To stay informed, you can subscribe to our electronic newsletter or join our Facebook group: West Michigan Strategic Alliance.

You can be a part of the regional dialogue by following our blog, *Regionally Connected*, at wmsa.wordpress.com.



About the Data

As mentioned earlier in this report, the initial list of 15 indicators was developed to gauge regional performance across the economic, social and environmental elements. It is not perfect. There are some significant gaps in data at the regional and national levels. We are continuing to challenge our methodology and the appropriateness of each indicator. We are pursuing projects to capture better data. But, the reality is, we do have a good sense of our performance as a region using the indicators we have.

Criteria for Selection

The West Michigan regional indicators used in this report meet the selection criteria established for the original *Vital Signs* report. These include:

Reliability

Are the data coming from a reliable, credible source?

Comparability

Are the data measured or collected in the same way throughout the region?

Geographic Coverage

Do the data cover all eight counties in the West Michigan region? What is the smallest geographic unit available?

Maintenance & Updates

How often are new data available?

Access & Cost

Are the data in the public domain or do we need special permissions to gain access? Is there a fee associated with accessing these data?

Measuring 3 Sectors In 3 Ways

For each sector of the economy, the environment and a just society, we are measuring West Michigan's performance in a number of ways.

Measuring Trend

For each individual indicator we are measuring our performance over time (if available). This gives us a trend for the data. Tracking trends has the most relevance for assessing regional performance. Regardless of how we compare to others, improving our quality of life as depicted through the selected measures will show as a positive trend.

Measuring Comparison

We are comparing our data for each indicator with that of the state of Michigan and the U.S. (where available).

Benchmarking

This year we are adding a new way to look at the data we have collected. We are benchmarking our overall performance against 26 other comparable regions in the U.S.

The American Community Survey And Montcalm County

In 2007, Montcalm County requested to be included as part of the West Michigan region. Several of the indicators in this report are based on data from the 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey (ACS) as a source and do not include Montcalm County. The ACS one-year estimates are available for geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or more. The seven counties of Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Ottawa counties are included in the Grand Rapids–Muskegon–Holland combined statistical area (CSA) that has an estimated population of 1,323,095 and is therefore included in the ACS. Montcalm falls outside of the CSA and has an estimated population of 62,950, excluding it from the ACS estimates and making it unavailable for inclusion in many of the indicators at this time.

In 2008, the ACS released the first multi-year estimates for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 or more. Since this is the first year these numbers have been released for Montcalm County, we currently cannot measure trends. The second set of multi-year estimates will be released in 2009, allowing us to include Montcalm County and trend over time.

Information Available Online

A digital version of the *2009 West Michigan Vital Signs* is available online at www.wm-alliance.org. Additional information such as breakdowns of individual county data (where available) and additional information on the comparison regions is also available online.

Geek Page

¹ Comparative Regions

For the benchmarking sections, WMSA used counties as defined in each region's Combined Statistical Area (CSA). However, two regions in the Lake Michigan Basin were expanded to ensure their inclusion in this report. The South Bend region is expanded to include Berrien and St. Joseph counties in Michigan and La Porte and Starke counties in Indiana. The Milwaukee region is expanded to include Kenosha and Walworth counties.

DATA SOURCES

⁴ Self-employed Professionals

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey, Table B24070. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to seven counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Muskegon and Ottawa.

⁵ Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey, Table C15001. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to seven counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Muskegon and Ottawa.

⁶ Per Capita Income

Source: 2001-2006 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa.

⁷ Employment Change

Source: 2002 - 2008 Bureau of Labor Statistics, January to November average employment. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Montcalm, Muskegon and Ottawa counties.

⁸ Employment Rate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey, Table S2301. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to seven counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Muskegon and Ottawa.

⁹ Free and Reduced Priced Lunch

National Center for Education Statistics 2002-2007. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa.

¹⁰ Closed Beach Days

Michigan Data Source: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan BeachGuard System (www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/public/default.aspx). For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa. Indiana and Wisconsin Data Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Beach Advisory and Closing Online Notification (BEACON) System (www.iaspub.epa.gov/waters10/beacon_national_page.main).

¹¹ Toxic Release Inventory

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/triexplorer). For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa.

¹² No Health Care Coverage

Source: Michigan Department of Community Health Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Montcalm, Newaygo and Ottawa.

¹³ Racial Income Disparity Index

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey, Table B19013. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to seven counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Muskegon and Ottawa.

Racial Income Disparity Index Calculation

To find racial income disparity we need to calculate how far away the income of each race is from the total median income. For example: Let's say we are researching the income disparity of 3 races.

Median Income for the total population is: \$1,000

White Median Income is: \$2,000

Black Median Income is: \$700

Hispanic Median Income is: \$800

Whites are: \$1,000 away from the Median Income

Blacks are: \$300 away from the Median Income

Hispanics are: \$200 away from the Median Income

$\$1,000 + \$300 + \$200 = \$1,500$

$\$1,500 / 3 \text{ racial groups} = \500

$\$500 / \$1,000 \text{ (total pop median income)} \times 100 = 50\% \text{ disparity}$

¹⁴ Voter Participation

Source: Michigan Department of State (www.michigan.gov/sos). For this indicator West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Montcalm, Newaygo and Ottawa. U.S. numbers are not available for comparison.

¹⁵ Housing Cost Burden

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey, Table B25091. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to seven counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Muskegon and Ottawa.

¹⁶ Teens Not in School

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and 2007 American Community Survey, Table B14005. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to seven counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Newaygo, Muskegon and Ottawa.

¹⁷ Crime Rate

Source: Michigan State Police Uniform Crime Report Statistics. For this indicator, West Michigan refers to eight counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Montcalm, Newaygo and Ottawa. Data not available for comparison regions.

The *Vital Signs* report is possible because we are able to share data from multiple sources.

Many thanks to all who supplied data for your eagerness to work together.

Thank You

Funding for the 2009 West Michigan Vital Signs

This work would not be possible without the generous support of these organizations.

The Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area
Fremont Area Community Foundation
Grand Haven Area Community Foundation
Grand Rapids Community Foundation
People and Land
Systemic Change Fund – Kellogg
Steelcase Foundation

Regional Indicators Technical Team

George Erickcek, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
Steve Faber, The Delta Strategy
John Koches, Annis Water Resources Institute, GVSU
Jeremy Pyne, Community Research Institute, GVSU
Jon VanderMolen, Annis Water Resources Institute, GVSU
Greg Northrup, West Michigan Strategic Alliance
Pam Landes, Think Again (Project Manager)

Document Review Team

Connie Bellows, The Delta Strategy
Janet DeYoung,
The Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area
Bob Garretson, Waddell & Reed
Angela Gary, 8th Street Salon
Elisa Hoekwater, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Marcia Rapp, Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Kris Spaulding, Herman Miller, Inc.
Alan Steinman, Annis Water Resources Institute, GVSU
Randy Thelen, Lakeshore Advantage
Carol Townsend, Michigan State University Extension
Jennifer VanSkiver, North Ottawa Community Hospital

Stakeholders

Thank you to the many stakeholders from around the region who participated in the development of West Michigan Regional Indicators.

Connie Bellows, The Delta Strategy
Gary Burbridge, Grand Rapids Community College
Mark Champion, Grand Rapids Community College
Norman Christopher, GVSU Sustainability Initiative
Deanna Demory, Heart of West Michigan – United Way
Janet DeYoung, The Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area
Candace Dugan, Warner, Norcross & Judd, LLP
Stephanie Elhart, fuel D
Jay Frankhouse, fuel D
Sue Higgins, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Elisa Hoekwater, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Liz Keegan, Fair Housing Center of West Michigan
Ken Kraus, Public Health Muskegon County
Nick Monoyios, The Rapid
Jill Montgomery-Keast, Public Health Muskegon County
Cortland 'Corky' Overmyer, City of Grand Rapids
Milt Rohwer, Frey Foundation
Elissa Sangalli-Hillary, Local First
Jenny Shangraw, The Right Place, Inc.
Janice Tompkins, State of Michigan, Department of Environmental Quality



Phone: 616.356.6060
FAX: 248.779.0093
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 68046
Grand Rapids, MI 49516-8046
Physical Address: 951 Wealthy Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506 - 1214
WMSA President: Greg Northrup
northrupg@wm-alliance.org
Website: www.wm-alliance.org
Email: info@wm-alliance.org
Blog: wmsa.wordpress.com
Facebook Group: West Michigan Strategic Alliance

© 2009. Published April 2009

Design by fuel D www.fuel-d.com

This document contains 15% post consumer content and was printed with soy based inks. Please recycle!