

Michigan Poverty & Well-being Map: East Central

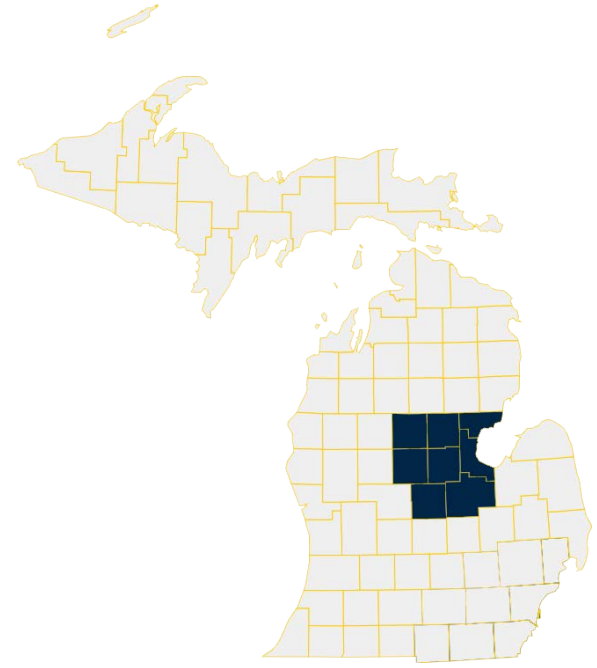
The East Central region includes: Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw counties. Learn more about the map at poverty.umich.edu.

Declining Population Amid Diminishing Economic Opportunity

Michigan's East Central region has seen diminishing economic opportunity and a declining population in recent years. The region has the highest poverty rate in the state, 16.3%, compared to the state's average of 12.9%.¹ Notably, poverty rates reach as high as 23% in Isabella County and 19.6% in Clare County. Population growth has stalled in the region since 2010 with only one county – Clare – experiencing notable positive growth. Arenac, Bay, and Saginaw counties have seen especially large population losses.²

According to Michigan Works!, the size of the labor force in the region has declined by 2.6% since 2013 and employment is expected to continue to contract in the region through 2026.³ By 2026, 1 in 5 jobs will be in the service sector and one-third of jobs will require an associate degree or more extensive training.⁴ There are skills gaps in many of the industries expected to grow in the next decade, such as advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, construction, and agribusiness.⁵ Additionally, Saginaw County identified attracting employers as the main challenge for economic development.⁶

Fortunately, current workforce development efforts are aimed at addressing the changing nature of the area's workforce with the goal of improving economic security in the region. Michigan Works! connects residents to training opportunities and helps employers recruit and train residents. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 sets aside \$3 billion for Economic Development Assistance Programs to rebuild local economies and industries hit by the pandemic.⁷ The region can prioritize its funds to support workforce development and bolster the current workforce development efforts. Additionally, Michigan received \$651 million in ARPA funds to support small businesses and create better employment opportunities – including retraining programs for emerging industries – and \$722 million to “grow the middle class” and educate workers to close the skills gap.⁸ Within the region and at the state level, ARPA funding can be leveraged to build a strong workforce that will support growth throughout the state.



East Central: Change in the Size of the Population⁹

County	Percent Change Since 2010
Arenac	-8.5%
Bay	-5.8%
Saginaw	-5.0%
Gratiot	-3.3%
Isabella	-3.1%
Midland	-0.8%
Gladwin	0.3%
Clare	1.9%

References

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2019" Accessed March 21, 2022.

https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/#/?map_geoSelector=aa_c.

² U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2019 and 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table A00001.

³ Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! "2020-2023 WIOA Regional and Local Plan." <https://www.michiganworks.com/public-documents/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ofori-Dankwa, Joseph and Hinton, Dawn. "Community Needs Assessment for the Saginaw County Area." Accessed March 21, 2022. www.saginawcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Saginaw-County-CAC-CNA-3-4-19.pdf.

⁷ Gielczyk, Ben. "House Fiscal Brief: American Rescue Plan Act of 2021." (House Fiscal Agency, 2021). Accessed March 21, 2022. https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/PDF/Alpha/Fical_Brief_American_Rescue_Plan_Act_of_2021_Apr14.pdf.

⁸ Michigan Department of Labor and Opportunity. "American Rescue Plan: Michigan's Potential Investments to Increase Economic Opportunity." Accessed March 21, 2022. <https://incompassmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ARPA-Investments-Combined.pdf>.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2019 and 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table A00001.