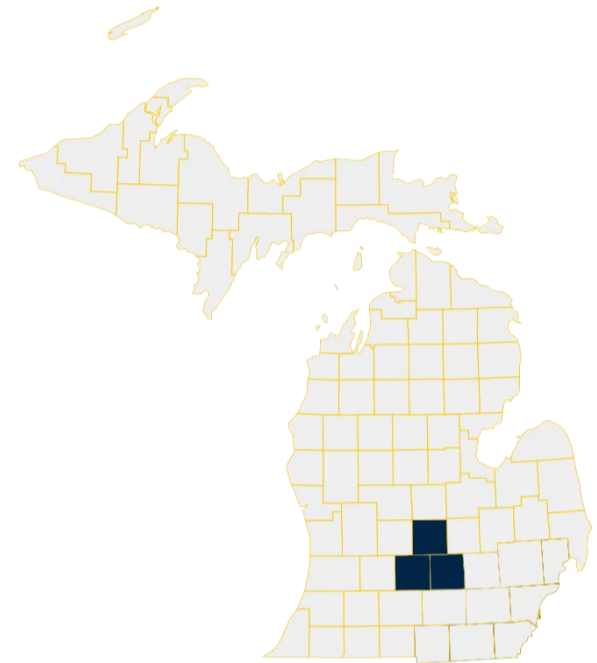## Michigan Poverty & Well-being Map: South Central

The South Central region includes: Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.
Learn more about the map at poverty.umich.edu.

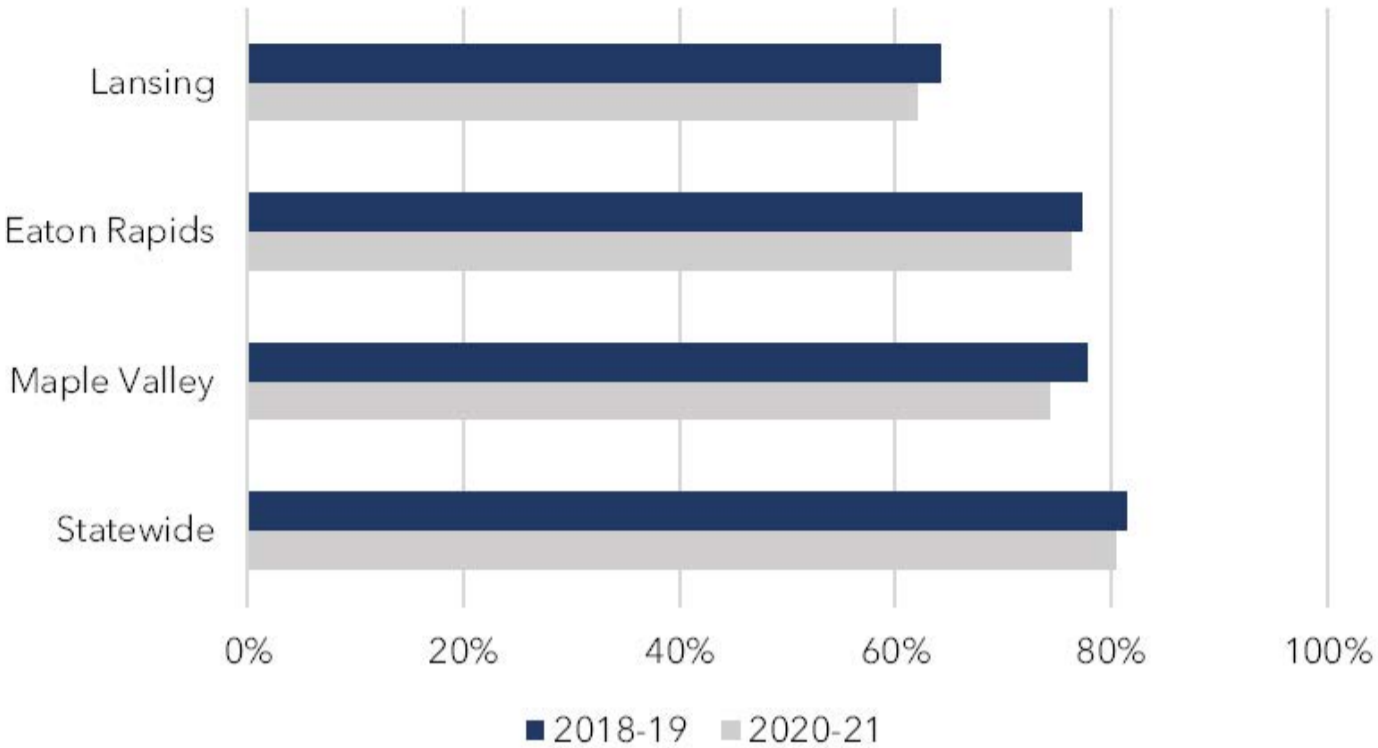### Investing in the Future Workforce

The South Central region, containing Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, is a place of steady employment and relatively lower levels of economic hardship compared to the state overall. Encompassing the state capital, this region is growing and has lower rates of unemployment and more residents with higher levels of education than the state average. Forecasts suggest that most job growth in the region will be in occupations and industries that require an associate degree or higher. To ensure families with low incomes share in this growth, investing in strong K-12 education for all and providing pathways to additional education for high school graduates with low incomes is a must.

COVID-19-related learning losses and related disengagement from school for adolescents is an issue that needs to be taken into account when investing in education in the region. Between the 2018-19 school year and the 2020-21 school year, many school districts saw decreases in their four-year high school graduation rate as high school students became disengaged with online learning and/or needed to work to help support their families. This trend is especially important to address in the three districts in the region that have four-year graduation rates below the state average: Lansing School District, Eaton Rapids Public Schools, and Maple Valley Schools.[1] Since the onset of the pandemic, even more students in these districts did not graduate on time and are at risk of dropping out or have already dropped out. Ensuring that high school students who may have become disconnected from learning during the pandemic finish high school and transition to vocational training or higher education will be essential to ensure the region can meet the labor needs for economic growth in the short term.

Additionally, the region can use some of its American Rescue Plan Act dollars to invest in education and training for low-wage service sector workers who were the hardest hit by the pandemic, which will also help address the longer-term workforce needs of the region.

References

[1] Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, Graduation and Drop-out Rates for Eaton RESA. Clinton County RESA, and Ingham ISD, (2020-21 and 2018-19). Accessed March 21, 2022. https://www.mischooldata.org/graddropout-rate/.

[2] Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, Graduation and Drop-out Rates for Eaton RESA. Clinton County RESA, and Ingham ISD, (2020-21 and 2018-19). Accessed March 21, 2022. https://www.mischooldata.org/graddropout-rate/.