

NEW STATEWIDE SURVEY REVEALS PRIORITIES FOR MICHIGAN RESIDENTS AGES 18-29: GET THE FUNDAMENTALS RIGHT, DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY, CREATE A WELCOMING STATE

- *Just 64% of respondents say they see themselves living in Michigan in 10 years, and those who plan to leave don't think there are enough job opportunities in the state.*
- *Improving infrastructure is the top factor respondents say would make Michigan better, and affordable housing is a top concern when deciding whether to take a job in the state or elsewhere.*

DETROIT (Sept. 20, 2023) – The Detroit Regional Chamber and Business Leaders for Michigan today released findings of a new statewide poll to better understand the key economic and lifestyle factors that influence 18-29-year-old Michiganders' choices. Insights about the decisions this key demographic makes about where to live are critically important as business and government leaders explore ways to address the state's declining population. The poll of 600 Michigan residents was conducted by research firm The Glengariff Group, Inc. from Aug. 14 to 19, 2023.

The findings indicate this generation's desire to put down roots in a place that provides job opportunities, gets the fundamentals right, and creates a welcoming environment. Policymakers and employers must focus on all three of these areas to attract and retain population in Michigan.

Survey Profile and Purpose

Michigan's population challenges have long been a concern as employers struggle to fill jobs and the state loses national influence. Michigan is losing 8,000 working-age adults (ages 18-64) annually to communities that are growing fastest in the knowledge economy. The survey found only 64% of respondents say they see themselves living in Michigan in 10 years, and those who are college-educated are the most likely to say they expect to leave the state.

Business Leaders for Michigan and the Detroit Regional Chamber sought to capture the priorities and perceptions of young adults under age 30 as the state charts a course for its economic and social future. The state's [Growing Michigan Together Council](#), first announced at the [2023 Mackinac Policy Conference](#), can use the insights from this survey as they craft solutions to reverse Michigan's population trends.

"Three things are clear from this survey that policymakers would be wise to heed: 1) young persons want the same fundamentals all Michigan residents do – solid infrastructure, safe communities, good education, and such, 2) economic opportunity is central to keeping and attracting young professionals, including careers in growing industries with competitive salaries, and 3) a state's social policies matter – a strong majority of respondents report that states with welcoming policies and that protect individual rights are more attractive," said Sandy K. Baruah, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Detroit Regional Chamber. "For Michigan to grow its population – especially young professionals – Republican and Democrat policymakers will need to work together as neither party is fully addressing this critical demographic."

“Talent drives competitiveness now more than ever. If we hope to be a winner in retaining young talent, we’ll need to offer strong job opportunities, safe and vibrant communities, and an affordable quality of life,” said Jeff Donofrio, President and Chief Executive Officer of Business Leaders for Michigan. “No one political party or group can solve the problem on their own; we have to put aside our individual interests and focus on growing Michigan together.”

“The survey results show that people under 30 are looking for good economic opportunities and a better way of life,” said Richard Czuba, President of The Glengariff Group, Inc. “But ‘a better way of life’ means different things to different people. For college-educated voters, a better way of life includes a guarantee of their rights when it comes to social issues.”

KEY FINDINGS

While More Than a Quarter of Respondents are Considering Leaving Michigan, There is Potential to Keep This Generation in the State

Overall, 64% of Michiganders ages 18-29 see themselves living in Michigan in 10 years; the 26% of respondents who say they think they will be leaving Michigan cited several factors, including to see new places and scenery and better job opportunities elsewhere. College-educated young adults are also more likely to leave than those with a high school education or a two-year degree or credential.

Nearly 20% of Respondents Are Pessimistic About Their Economic Future in Michigan

Much of this pessimism can be tied to skepticism of the opportunities the state offers. Of 15% of respondents who think Michigan offers fewer opportunities than other states, the top reasons why were all jobs related.

64% of Respondents See Themselves in Michigan in 10 Years

When asked where they see themselves living 10 years from now, respondents said:

64.3%	Michigan
26.2%	Somewhere else
9.3%	Not sure

For Michigan natives (83.8% of respondents):

66.7%	See themselves living in Michigan in 10 years
24.3%	Living somewhere else
8.9%	Unsure

For non-natives (15.5% of respondents):

52.7%	See themselves living in Michigan in 10 years
29.7%	Living somewhere else
10.6%	Unsure

Married Residents More Likely to Stay in Michigan

For those married (24% of respondents):

For those unmarried (75.7% of respondents):

<p>79.3% See themselves living in Michigan in 10 years</p> <p>15.2% Living somewhere else</p> <p>5.5% Unsure</p>	<p>59.5% See themselves living in Michigan in 10 years</p> <p>29.7% Living somewhere else</p> <p>10.6% Unsure</p>
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Education Level Impacts Decision to Stay in or Leave Michigan; Those with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher Least Likely to Stay

All respondents were asked, on a scale of one to 10, how likely it was that they would be living in Michigan 10 years from now, 10 being the most likely. When broken down by education level, those with a bachelor’s degree or higher ranked least likely to stay.

Education Level	Score
High School	7.1
Associate Degree	7.1
Technical Certificate	7.8
Bachelor’s/Master’s/Ph.D.	6.8

Michigan’s talent retention challenges lie in the fact that the key portion of the population equipped to fill the state’s needs in high-tech and knowledge economy jobs are the most likely to leave the state.

Diversifying the Economy, Creating Knowledge Economy Jobs May Keep More Young, Educated Adults in the State

15% of all respondents said Michigan offered less opportunity than other states. When asked why in an open-ended question, they said:

12.2%	There are less opportunities in my field
12.2%	There are not enough jobs
11.1%	Michigan is not diverse in its industries
8.9%	General cost of living in Michigan
6.7%	Taxes are higher
6.7%	The Democrats and their policies
6.7%	Low wages compared to other states
5.6%	Lower population than other states

While 80.7% of all respondents said Michigan does offer strong career opportunities in their chosen field, those who don’t plan to stay in the state disagreed, citing a lack of opportunities in specific industries – primarily in knowledge economy industries.

- 17.3% Performing arts, visual arts and design, and film or broadcasting
- 8.7% Medical or medical studies
- 8.7% Service industry
- 7.6% Education and behavior

Nearly 75% of Young Michigan Residents Optimistic About Their Economic Future in Michigan

- 73.5%** Optimistic about their economic future in Michigan
- 18.8% Pessimistic about their economic future in Michigan
- 7.5% Could not offer an opinion

The largest difference was based on whether a respondent planned to leave Michigan in the next 10 years.

79.3% of those planning to be in Michigan and 75.0% of those who were unsure of their location were optimistic about their economic future in Michigan. Only 59.2% of those who planned to leave Michigan were optimistic about their economic future.

Next 10 Years	Optimistic	Pessimistic
Michigan	79.3%	13.2%
Undecided	75.0%	12.5%
Somewhere else	59.2%	34.4%

Nearly 80% Believe Michigan Has the Same or More Opportunity Than Other States

- 58.0%** Believe Michigan has the same opportunity
- 21.2%** Believe Michigan has more opportunity
- 15.0% Believe Michigan has less opportunity

There were only four demographic groups where more than 20% of respondents believed Michigan had less opportunity than other locations.

- 24.2% Those believing that they will be somewhere else in 10 years
- 28.1% Leaning Republicans
- 21.4% Strong Republicans
- 20.2% Small town respondents

Most Respondents Would Choose a Job in Michigan Over One in California, Chicago, or Texas

Respondents were asked if they were offered similar job opportunities with similar salaries, would they choose to live in Michigan over different states or cities.

89.2% Would Choose a Job in Michigan Over California

<u>Party Affiliation</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>California</u>
Strong Democrat	83.8%	16.2%
Lean Democrat	93.0%	5.3%
Independent	91.7%	6.5%
Lean Republican	94.7%	3.5%
Strong Republican	95.9%	3.1%
Do Not Vote	83.6%	16.4%

Democratic respondents and those who do not vote would be most likely to choose California. Virtually no Republican or Independent respondents chose California.

87.2% Would Choose a Job in Michigan Over Chicago

<u>Education</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Chicago</u>
High School	91.5%	7.8%
Associate Degree	92.6%	5.9%
Technical Certification	94.2%	5.8%
Bachelor's/Master's/Ph.D.	80.2%	17.8%

Chicago presented the strongest draw for college-educated respondents and was a strong draw for Democratic respondents, attracting 16.2% of Strong Democrats and 14.0% of Leaning Democrats.

80.2% Would Choose a Job in Michigan Over Texas

<u>Education</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Texas</u>
High School	77.1%	22.2%
Associate Degree	73.3%	23.7%
Technical Certification	78.8%	19.2%
Bachelor's/Master's/ Ph.D.	87.0%	10.7%

There were sharp partisan differences in the choice between Michigan and Texas.

<u>Party Affiliation</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Texas</u>
Strong Democrat	87.4%	11.0%
Lean Democrat	87.7%	10.5%
Independent	76.9%	23.1%
Lean Republican	82.5%	14.0%
Strong Republican	70.4%	28.6%
Do Not Vote	71.2%	20.5%

We Have to Get the Fundamentals Right

Fundamentals such as housing costs, reliable infrastructure, low crime rates, affordable higher education, and thoughtful placemaking emerged as decision-making factors for Michigan’s young residents when considering where to locate. Getting those factors right is integral to improving Michigan’s competitiveness and attracting and retaining population.

Fundamentals Are Top-of-Mind for Michigan’s Young Adults

Respondents were read 12 different factors and asked to rank each on a one to 10 scale for how important it would be to them in deciding between a job offer in Michigan and a comparable job offer in another state.

The higher the number, the greater the personal importance:

8.6	Cost of housing and rent
8.3	Low crime rates
7.9	Affordability and availability of higher education or job training
7.6	That the state protects individuals’ rights on issues of race, LGBTQ rights, and abortion
7.6	Being close to other family members
7.5	Access to good public schools
7.4	The state’s outdoor recreational opportunities
7.3	Cultural opportunities like concerts, theatres, bars, and restaurants
6.8	Living among a diverse population, including a thriving immigrant community
6.6	Good public transportation and walkable communities
6.3	The state’s weather
6.2	Living around people your own age

While housing cost is an issue across the nation, Michigan’s relatively more affordable housing is a potential competitive advantage. Efforts to create more affordable housing in the right areas will be critical to the state’s population gains.

Infrastructure, Job Opportunities, Lower Costs Among Suggestions of What Would Make Michigan Better

Respondents were asked an open-ended question: If there was one thing that would make Michigan a better place to live and work, what would it be?

Responses were categorized as follows:

14.1%	Improve infrastructure
13.3%	Improve wages, benefits, and job opportunities
13.0%	Lower costs¹
7.6%	Political change ²
4.4%	Crime and justice
4.3%	Improve community services
3.3%	Protect the environment

Understanding the Challenges and Competition

Despite most respondents saying they would choose a job in Michigan over other places like California, Chicago, or Texas, responses from those who would opt to leave Michigan are just as valuable in understanding what the state can do to better retain and attract population.

Republicans who chose Texas cited that the state was conservative, had no income tax, a better government, or cheaper costs, while Democrats cited weather.

Half of those who chose California cited warmer weather, the ocean, and the beaches.

For those who chose Chicago, three of the top five reasons had to do with “city life” and having more things to do. Chicago also had the strongest draw for college-educated respondents.

We cannot change the weather or politics, but we can glean some lessons about capitalizing on Michigan’s natural resources, welcoming environment, and quality of life.

Michigan’s Biggest Challenges: Weather, Opportunities, Political Climate

All respondents were asked what Michigan’s biggest challenges are that might cause them to leave.

14.3%	Bad weather
13.5%	Lack of opportunities and better jobs
11.5%	Political climate³
8.7%	Cost of living
6.9%	Infrastructure
6.2%	Community problems
4.2%	Personal or family

¹ “Lower costs” refers to open-ended responses to this question citing housing affordability, desire for lower overall cost of living, and lower cost of goods like gas.

² “Political change” refers to open-ended responses to this question regarding lower taxes and representing dissatisfaction with the current administration among Strong or Leaning Republican respondents.

³ “Political climate” refers to open-ended responses to this question about disagreement with current laws and regulations, dissatisfaction with the current administration among Strong or Leaning Republican respondents, and loss of social protections and rights.

26% of All Respondents See Themselves Living Somewhere Other Than Michigan in 10 Years

These respondents were asked why they might leave in an open-ended question.

22.9%	To see new places or scenery
19.7%	Better job opportunities elsewhere or more opportunities
12.7%	Weather and dislike of the cold
6.4%	Family or friends live in another state
5.7%	My job moves my location
4.5%	Cost of living ⁴
4.5%	Democrats in office
4.5%	Plan to leave the country

When asked where specifically they would be living, there was a mix of responses, with the top three being:

8.9%	Somewhere in the south or a warmer place
7.0%	Texas
5.7%	Florida

In an open-ended question about other specific locations they would be interested in instead of Michigan, respondents shared:

6.3%	Florida
4.0%	Colorado
3.3%	New York
2.8%	North Carolina
2.7%	Georgia

Social Policies Are a Consideration for Young Adults

While economic opportunities and placemaking are of foremost importance to respondents, a state’s social policies also play an important role. While far from monolithic in their opinions, 18-29-year-old Michiganders consider a range of welcoming and socially conscious policies.

Respondents were asked if a state’s **gun policies**, including background checks, red flag laws, and safe storage laws, would or would not be important in deciding whether to accept a job in a state.

60.2%	Said it would be important, and they support the laws
11.3%	Said it would be important, and they oppose the laws
3.5%	Said it would not be important
18.7%	No opinion

⁴ “Cost of living” includes housing, goods, and lifestyle activities.



*A majority of **every demographic** group – except for rural, Strong Republican, Leaning Republican, or respondents that do not vote – said gun policy was important and that they supported the laws.*

Respondents were asked if a state’s policy on **LGBTQ rights** would or would not be important in deciding whether to accept a job in another state.

- 47.8%** **Said it would be important, and that they support the laws**
- 4.0% Said it would be important, and they oppose the laws
- 44.7% Said a state’s policy on LGBTQ rights would not be important

Respondents were asked if a state’s policies on **racial equality** would or would not be important in deciding whether to accept a job in another state.

- 73.5%** **Said it would be important**
- 25.0% Said it would not be important

Respondents were asked if a state’s policy on **abortion** would or would not be important in deciding whether to accept a job in another state.

- 46.8%** **Said it would be important, and that they were pro-choice**
- 6.3% Said it would be important, and that they were pro-life
- 42.5% Said it would not be important

*Among women, **61.5%** said a state’s position on abortion would be important, and they were pro-choice.*

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About the Detroit Regional Chamber

Serving the business community for more than 100 years, the Detroit Regional Chamber is one of the oldest, largest, and most respected chambers of commerce in the country. As the voice for business in the 11-county Southeast Michigan Region, the Chamber’s mission is carried out by creating a business-friendly climate and providing value for members. The Chamber also executes the statewide automotive and mobility cluster association, MICHauto and hosts the nationally recognized Mackinac Policy Conference. Additionally, the Chamber leads the most comprehensive education and talent strategy in the state. Learn more at detroitchamber.com.

About Business Leaders for Michigan

Business Leaders for Michigan, the state’s business roundtable, is dedicated to making Michigan a Top 10 state for jobs, education, widely shared prosperity, and a healthy economy. Our work is guided by the [Compete to Win Plan](#), a comprehensive strategy for how government, community, education, and business leaders can improve Michigan’s growth. The organization is composed exclusively of the executive leaders of Michigan’s largest companies and universities. Our members drive 40% of the state’s economy, generate over \$1 trillion in annual revenue, and serve more than half of all Michigan public university students. Find out more at businessleadersformichigan.com.



About The Glengariff Group, Inc.

The Glengariff Group, Inc. is a full-service research firm providing survey research, focus group research, dial test research, and one-on-one interviewing. The Glengariff Group, Inc. provides more than just research and numbers; it provides recommendations on how best to use your information. Learn more at glengariff.com.