

Economic Prosperity Indicator: Average Weekly Wages

Why: Sustainable economic development for communities requires jobs providing adequate income to meet basic needs and allow asset building. Average weekly wages that are high compared to other geographic areas, or increasing at a faster rate, may indicate a shift in employment composition to higher paying jobs.

What: Average weekly wage data by county are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to unemployment insurance laws. Nationally, reports are collected from employers covering 98 percent of all jobs. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by unemployment insurance by the average monthly number of employees, divided by the number of weeks in a quarter. In addition to employment composition, reported average weekly wages may be influenced by other factors such as the ratio full- and part-time employment, hours of work, labor turnover, seasonal factors, bonuses and so forth.

Where: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*, ES-202 program.
<http://www.bls.gov/>

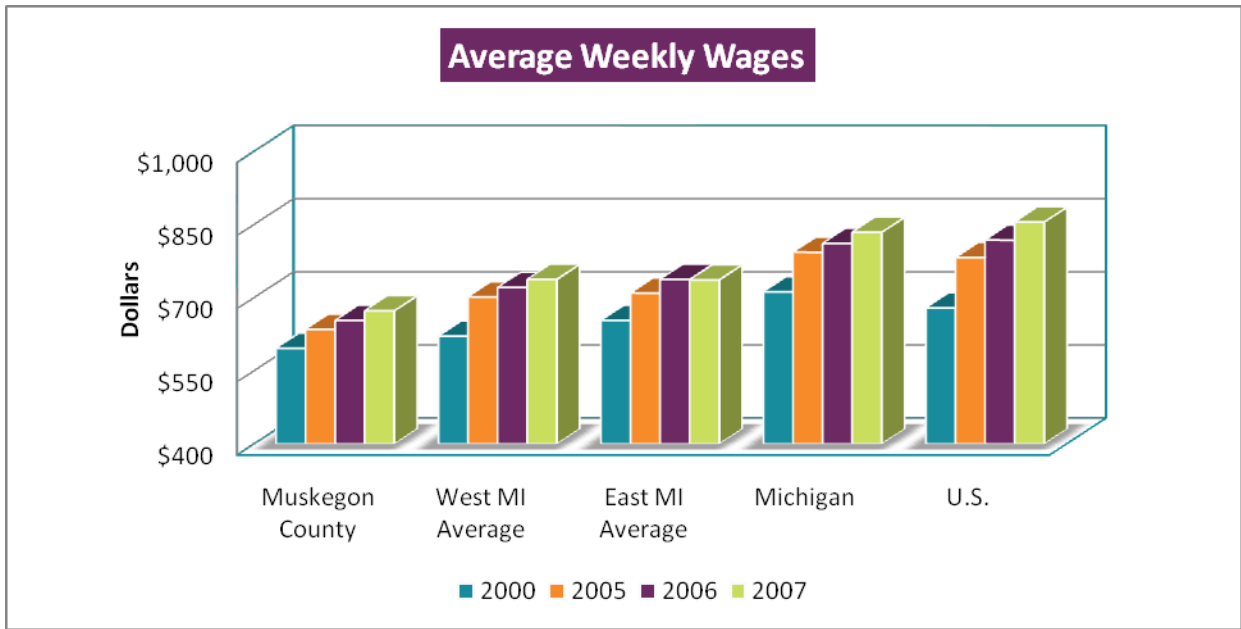
Average Weekly Wages								
Geography	2000		2005		2006		2007	
	\$	Index Score	\$	Index Score	\$	Index Score	\$	Index Score
Muskegon County	\$596	2.3	\$635	1.9	\$653	1.8	\$673	1.8
Kent County	\$654	2.7	\$722	2.6	\$745	2.4	\$763	2.3
Ottawa County	\$614	2.4	\$699	2.3	\$710	2.2	\$721	2.0
West MI Average	\$621	2.5	\$685	2.2	\$703	2.1	\$737	2.1
Bay County	\$592	2.3	\$646	2.0	\$675	1.9	\$686	1.8
Genesee County	\$699	3.0	\$730	2.6	\$758	2.5	\$756	2.2
Saginaw County	\$667	2.8	\$699	2.3	\$726	2.3	\$721	2.2
East MI Average	\$653	2.7	\$692	2.2	\$720	2.2	\$736	2.1
Michigan	\$712	3.1	\$793	2.8	\$811	2.8	\$834	2.7
U.S.	\$679	2.9	\$782	2.7	\$818	2.8	\$855	2.8

Index Scores

Rubric: The rubric scoring levels are based on the quintile distribution of the rankings of average weekly wages U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas. The distribution used here excludes the highest reported average weekly wages and all values reported for areas in Puerto Rico for each indicated year.

Scale: The average weekly wage for each index score is the lower limit of each quintile within the selected distribution of U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

Rubric: Average Weekly Wages					
Level	Index	Quintile Limits			
		2000	2005	2006	2007
Thriving	5	\$993	\$1,189	\$1,191	\$1,263
Advancing	4	\$846	\$1,011	\$1,014	\$1,080
Sustainable	3	\$699	\$833	\$847	\$898
Needs Improvement	2	\$552	\$655	\$680	\$715
Failing	1	\$405	\$477	\$514	\$532



- Average weekly wages in Muskegon County increased by 12.9% between 2000 and 2007, while the average for Michigan increased by 17.1% during the same period.
- Ottwa County had the highest increase in average weekly wages between 2000 and 2007 at 17.4% among the Michigan geographies reported, but was well below the U.S. rate of 25.9%.
- Among all geographies reported, Muskegon County had the lowest average weekly wage in 2006 and 2007, and was second lowest in 2000.