

## Social Equity Indicator: Unemployment Rate

**Why:** Loss or lack of a job makes it difficult for an individual to make financial obligations, and if extended can limit the ability to meet basic needs. High unemployment rates in a community can result in greater demands on human services and increased social and economic problems including crime, family stress, bankruptcies and foreclosures.

**What:** The unemployment rate is calculated as the number of unemployed workers divided by the total civilian [labor force](#). Only residents of the selected area who do not have jobs and are actively looking for work are counted as unemployed. Rates reported are the annual averages for the indicated year.

**Where:** U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/>

Unemployment Rate								
Geography	2000		2005		2006		2007	
	%	Index Score	%	Index Score	%	Index Score	%	Index Score
<b>Muskegon County</b>	4.1%	3.0	6.9%	1.6	6.9%	1.6	7.1%	1.3
Kent County	3.1%	3.9	5.8%	2.1	5.6%	2.2	5.8%	2.1
Ottawa County	2.6%	4.4	5.2%	2.4	5.3%	2.4	5.6%	2.2
<b>West MI Average</b>	3.3%	3.8	6.0%	2.0	5.9%	2.0	6.2%	1.9
Bay County	4.0%	3.0	7.0%	1.5	6.9%	1.6	6.7%	1.7
Genesee County	4.4%	2.8	7.8%	1.1	8.1%	1.0	8.2%	0.9
Saginaw County	4.1%	3.0	7.9%	1.1	7.4%	1.3	7.1%	1.5
<b>East MI Average</b>	4.2%	2.9	7.6%	1.2	7.5%	1.3	7.3%	1.3
Michigan	3.7%	3.3	6.9%	1.6	6.9%	1.6	8.2%	0.9
U.S.	4.0%	3.0	5.1%	2.5	4.6%	2.7	4.6%	2.7

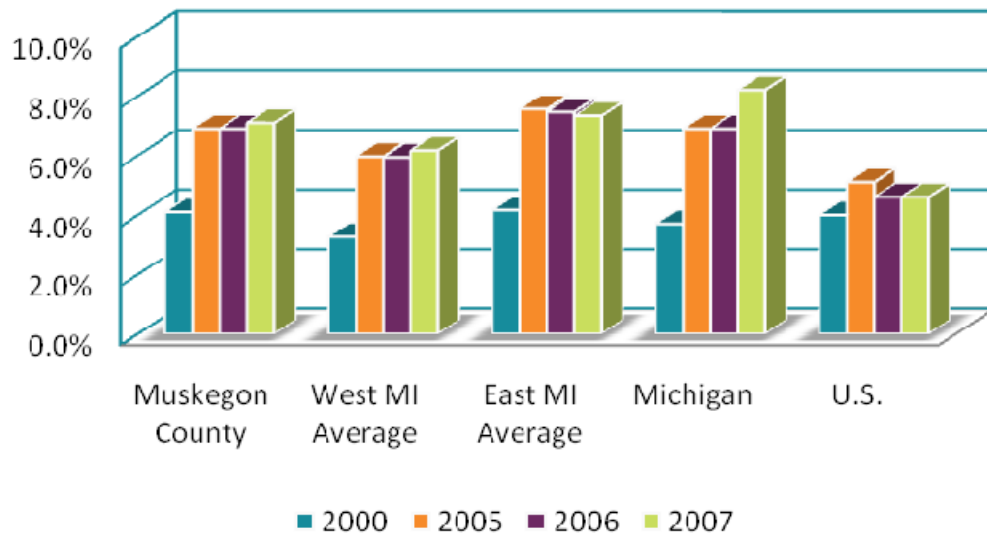
### Index Scores

**Rubic:** The target rate is based on economic theory that full employment is equivalent to an unemployment rate of between two to four percent. With job flows – the gaps of time between job openings and hirings – a zero percent unemployment rate is not considered feasible.

**Scale:** A simple scale of increasing percentages from 2.0 to 8.0 percent, with 1.0 percent intervals at each level.

Rubic: Unemployment Rate		
Level	Index	Unemployment Rate
Thriving	5	2.0% /<
Advancing	4	3%
Sustainable	3	4%
Needs Improvement	2	6%
Failing	1	8%

## Unemployment Rate



- For 2007, the Index score for the Unemployment Rate for Muskegon County was the lowest among all Social Equity indicators.
- Unemployment in Ottawa and Kent Counties has been lower than Muskegon County for each reported year.
- The unemployment rate for Michigan jumped more than 2% between 2006 and 2007 to 8.2%, resulting in a less than “failing” index score of 0.9.
- The November 2009 unemployment rate reported for Muskegon County was 10.0%, or an index score of 0.0.