

Quality of Life Dashboard

St. Joseph County, Michigan

April 2023

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Prepared by iEval
For the Sturgis Area Community Foundation
Funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund

St. Joseph County Quality of Life Dashboard

In 2022, the Sturgis Area Community Foundation received a Michigan Health Endowment Fund grant to develop a quality of life dashboard for St. Joseph County. A quality of life dashboard is a tool used to measure and track various aspects of a community's well-being over time. It is a visual representation of different factors that contribute to a person's overall quality of life, such as health, education, employment, income, housing, transportation, and safety.

The dashboard presents data from St. Joseph County. To develop the dashboard, members from community organizations in the county representing nonprofit organizations, healthcare, education, recreation, government, housing, early childhood, transportation, and law enforcement sectors participated in brainstorming sessions to identify data that were readily available, relevant, and could provide a comprehensive picture of overall quality of life. iEval, an external evaluation team, facilitated the process. Thank you to the following organizations:

- Access to Healthcare Committee
- Branch/Hillsdale/St. Joseph Health Department
- Brett Hamlin, small business owner
- Burr Oak Tool
- Child Abuse & Prevention Council
- City of Sturgis
- Community Mental Health
- Covered Bridge Health
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Domestic & Sexual Assault Services
- ED Commission on Aging
- Glen Oaks Community College
- Glen Oaks Community College Foundation
- Grantsman
- GT Independence
- Habitat for Humanity
- Keystone Place
- Sherriff's Office
- Southern Michigan Bank
- St. Joseph County Human Services Commission
- St. Joseph County ISD
- St. Joseph County Parks & Recreation
- St. Joseph County Transportation
- St. Joseph County United Way
- Sturges Center for the Arts
- Sturgis Area Community Foundation
- Sturgis Area Schools
- Sturgis Downtown Development Authority
- Sturgis Neighborhood Program
- SW MI Perinatal Region 8
- Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce
- Thurston Woods Village
- Veterans Affairs

The purpose of a quality of life dashboard is to provide organizations, governmental entities, and other decision-makers with a holistic view of the county's well-being, which can help make more informed decisions about resource allocation, program development, and policy changes. By tracking changes in the indicators over time, the dashboard can also be used to determine needs in the community, spark conversation among organizations, and evaluate the impact of different interventions and initiatives on the quality of life of the population.

Guiding Questions

The following questions, when used while reviewing the dashboard, can help organizations and decision-makers make sense of the data, better understand the community, and start conversations to aid in decision-making.

1. What are the key indicators being tracked on the dashboard and why do you think they were they chosen by the community representatives?
2. What are the trends over time for each of the indicators? Are they improving, declining, or remaining stable?
3. Are there any correlations or patterns between different indicators?
4. Are there any significant disparities or inequities in the data? Are certain groups experiencing better or worse outcomes than others?
5. What are the root causes of any negative trends/disparities? Are there any policy/programmatic changes that could address these issues?
6. What are appropriate benchmarks or targets to set as a goal for each indicator?
7. How do the results of the dashboard compare to benchmarks or targets set for each indicator? Are they on track to meet these goals?
8. Are there any unexpected or surprising results that require further investigation?
9. Are there any gaps in the data or limitations to the dashboard that need to be addressed in future iterations?

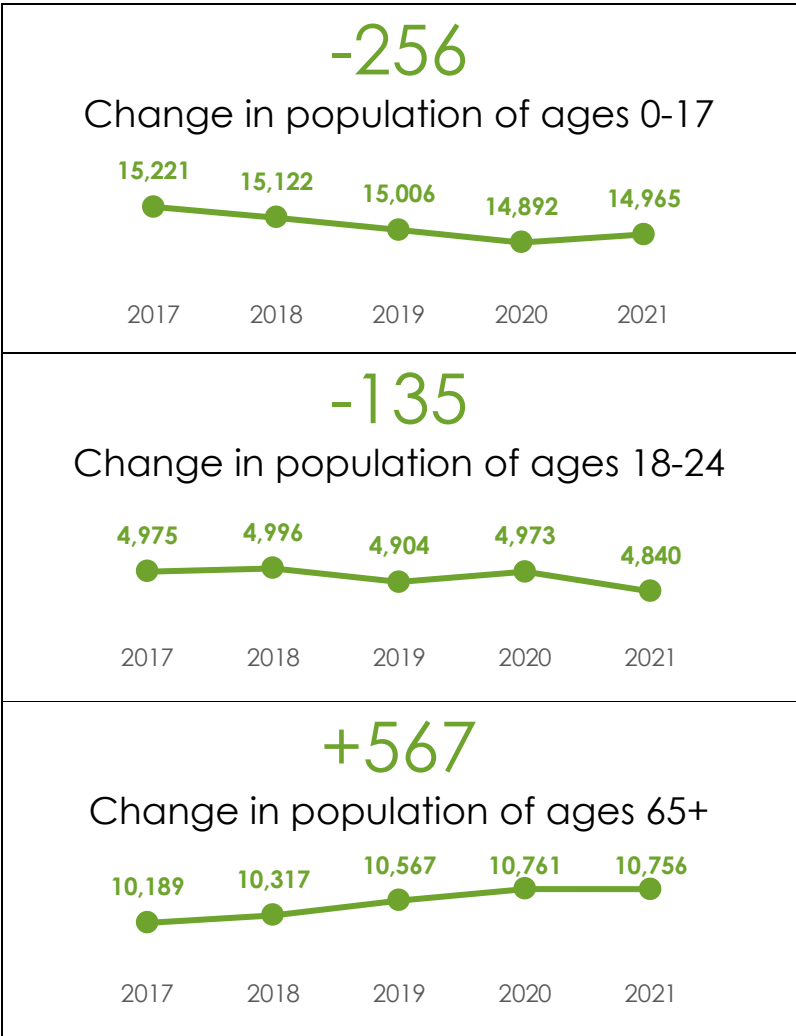
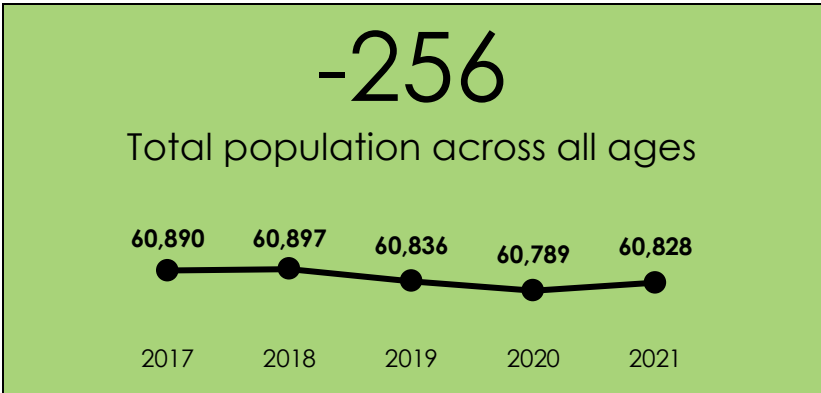
For each section of the dashboard (i.e., education, safety, transportation), the following questions could be asked to better understand the data:

1. What is the overall quality of [section name] in the community and how is it being measured? For example, what is the quality of education?
2. What trends in this section require further investigation or intervention?
3. How do the outcomes and measures of St. Joseph County that are displayed in this section compare to state averages?
4. Are there significant challenges in this sector or system that are affecting the county?

Based on the five-year estimates from the U.S. Census, the overall population of St. Joseph County has remained fairly steady since 2017. Similar to the state, the population is aging, with a growing number of people over the age of 65.

Sources: data.census.gov

Population by Age

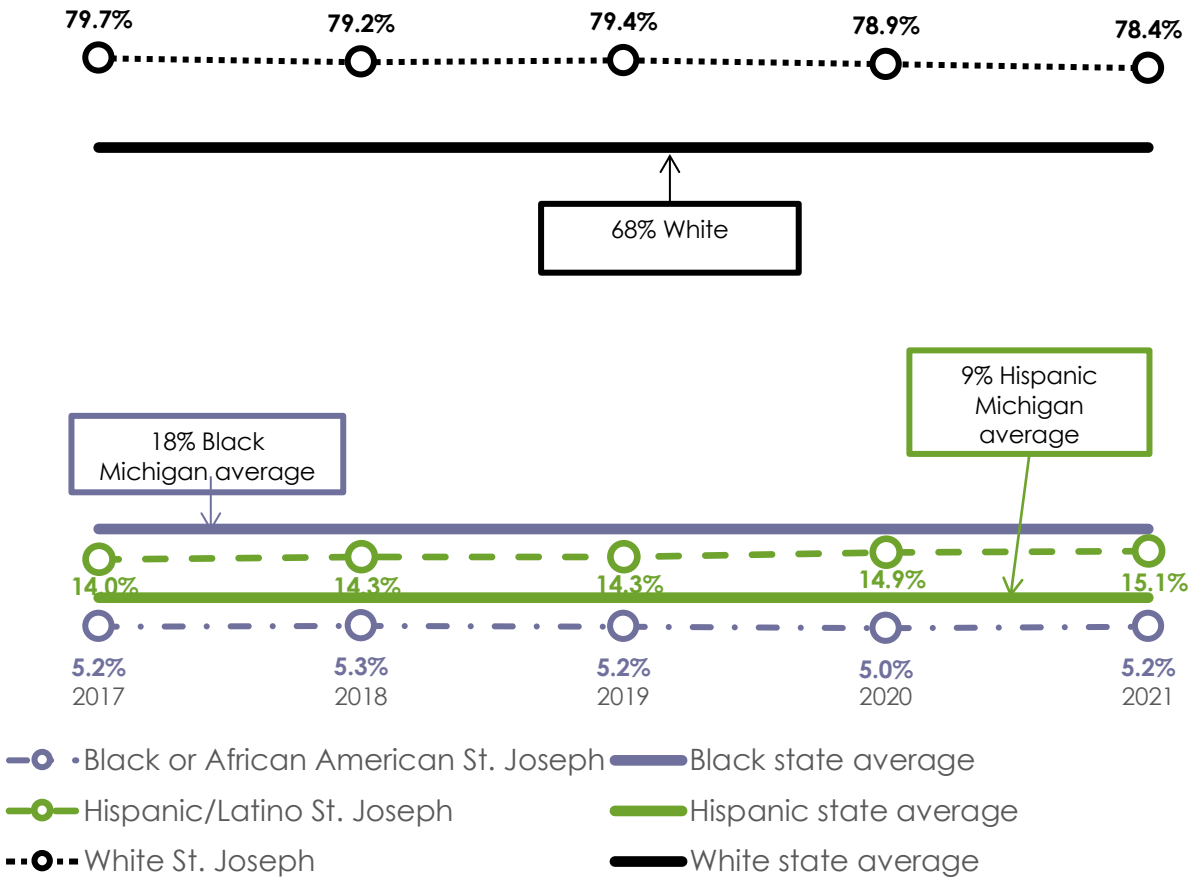


The population demographics by race have not varied much over the past five years. Overall, the majority of individuals in the county are White (86%), higher than the state average of 75%. The county also has a higher overall percentage of Hispanic residents compared to the state (7.8% and 5%, respectively) and lower percentage of Black residents (2% and 13%, respectively). These percentages differ only slightly when examining the population of residents who are under 18, which are illustrated in the chart below. About 79% of the county population under the age of 18 is White (68% in state), approximately 14-15% are Hispanic (9% in state), and around 5% are Black (18% in state).

Sources: datacenter.kidscount.org, datausa.io

Population by Race

Population by Race (Ages 0-17)



Although childcare costs have risen significantly since 2017, the cost of childcare in St. Joseph County continues to be less than the state average (\$589 vs \$722/month). The cost of childcare as a percentage of minimum wage has also risen over time and the cost for a month is an average of 34.5% of minimum wage in the county. The number of children in foster care has dropped since 2017, from 211 to 140 in 2022.

Sources: datacenter.kidscount.org, childcareresearch.apps.lara.state.mi.us, DHHS

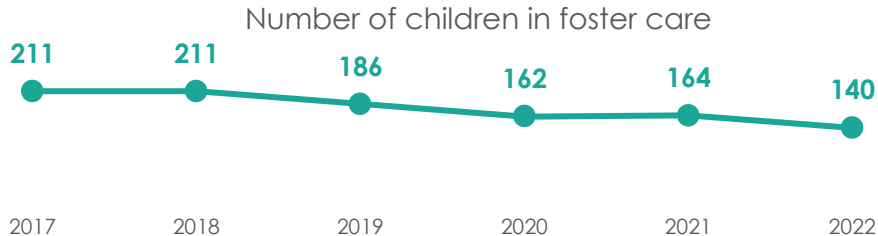
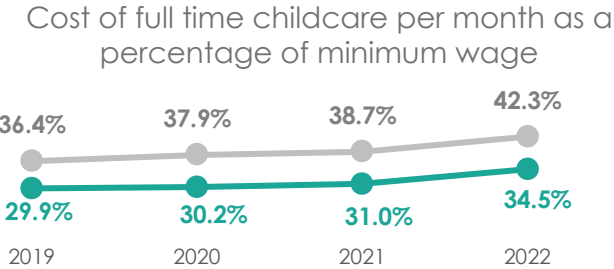
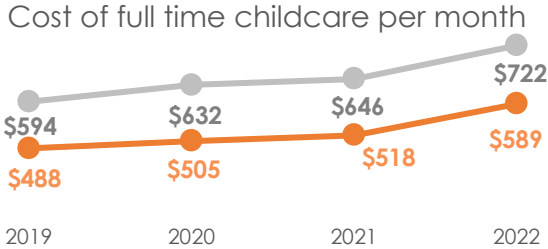
Pregnant women in St. Joseph County receive less prenatal care compared to Michigan averages, and those numbers are fairly steady over the years. About 44% of women in the county receive less than adequate prenatal care and an average of 9% receive late or no prenatal care.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1,559</p> <p>Capacity of childcare providers in St. Joseph County</p> | <p>58</p> <p>Number of childcare providers in St. Joseph County</p> |
|---|--|

Care of Children

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <p>43.9%</p> <p>St. Joseph County</p> | <p>32.2%</p> <p>Michigan</p> |
| <p>Births with less than adequate prenatal care (average from 2017-2020)</p> | |
| <p>9.4%</p> <p>St. Joseph County</p> | <p>5.6%</p> <p>Michigan</p> |
| <p>Births with late or no prenatal care (average from 2017-2020)</p> | |

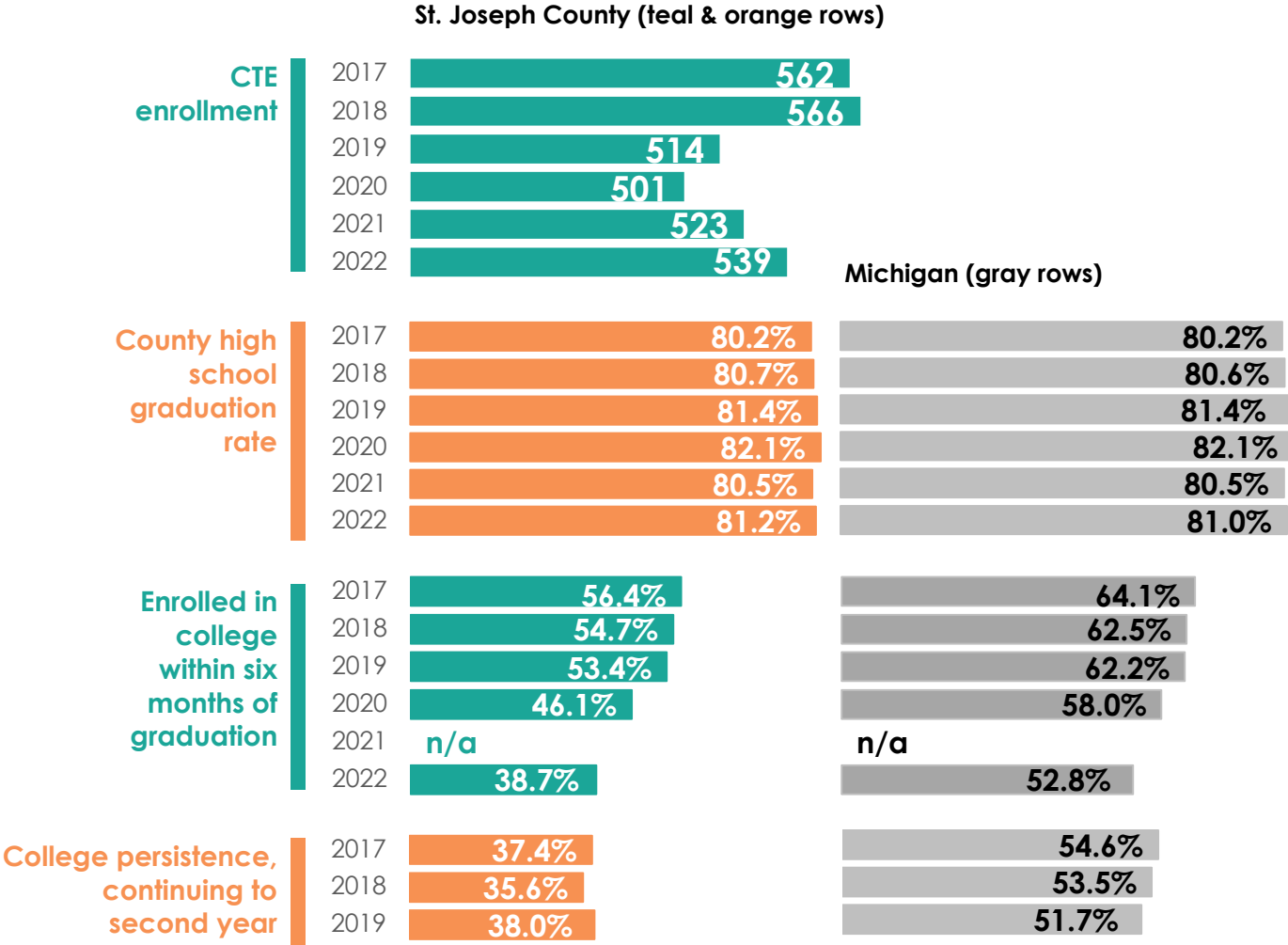
- Michigan
- St. Joseph County
- St. Joseph County



In looking at the county’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment to high school graduation rates to college enrollment to college persistence, the trends vary in the educational progression. CTE enrollment has decreased since 2022, from 562 enrolled in 2017 to 539 in 2022, with increases over the past two years. High school graduation rates have remained steady, even through the pandemic. Since 2017, there has been a significant decrease in college enrollment from 56.4% of high school students in 2017 to 38.7% in 2022. Persistence in enrollment was fairly steady for the classes of 2017, 2018, and 2019, which are the most recent data available.

Sources: datacenter.kidscount.org, St. Joseph County ISD, childcareresearch.apps.lara.state.mi.us, DHHS

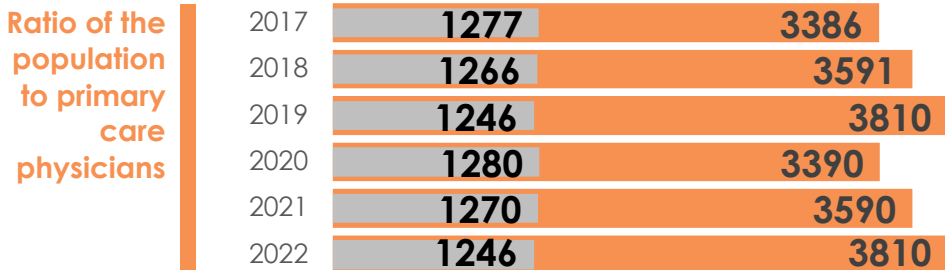
Educational Progression



St. Joseph County has a lower ratio of both primary care physicians and mental health providers compared to Michigan averages, and more St. Joseph County residents are without health insurance compared to Michigan averages. The percentage of residents without health insurance has risen slightly (from 9.1% to 10%) since 2017. Although there was a slight dip in 2019, the number of nonfatal opioid poisoning hospital visits has increased. The number of children in the county who were victims of abuse or neglect has declined significantly since 2017.

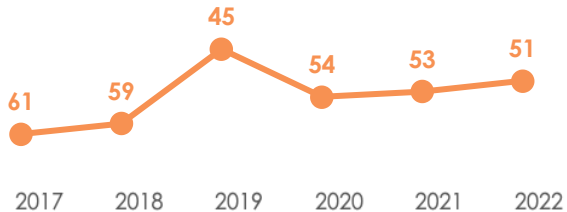
Sources: data.census.gov, countyhealthrankings.org, datacenter.kidscount.org

Health & Wellbeing

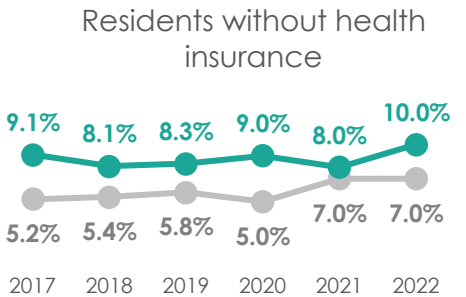
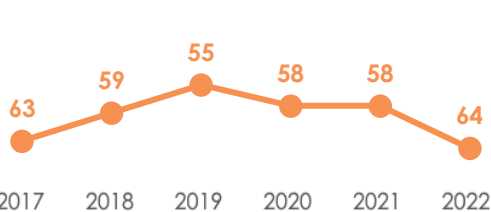


Out of 83 counties in Michigan, St. Joseph County consistently ranks in the 50s or 60s for **overall health factors** (things you can control) and **overall health outcomes** (things you cannot control). Overall health factors have improved, moving from 61st in the state to 51st between 2017 and 2022, while health outcomes improved but then returned to 2017 levels.

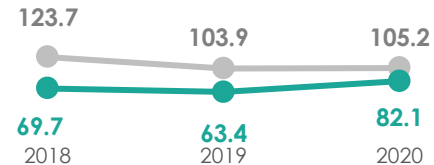
County rankings: Overall health factors based on health behaviors, clinical care, social & economic factors, & physical environment



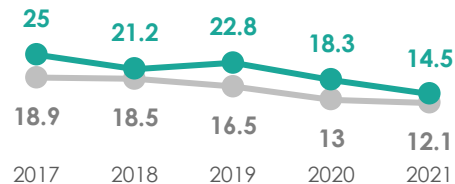
County rankings: Overall health outcomes based on length of life and quality of life



Nonfatal opioid poisoning emergency room visits, rate per 100,000



Confirmed victims (0-17) of abuse and/or neglect, rate per thousand

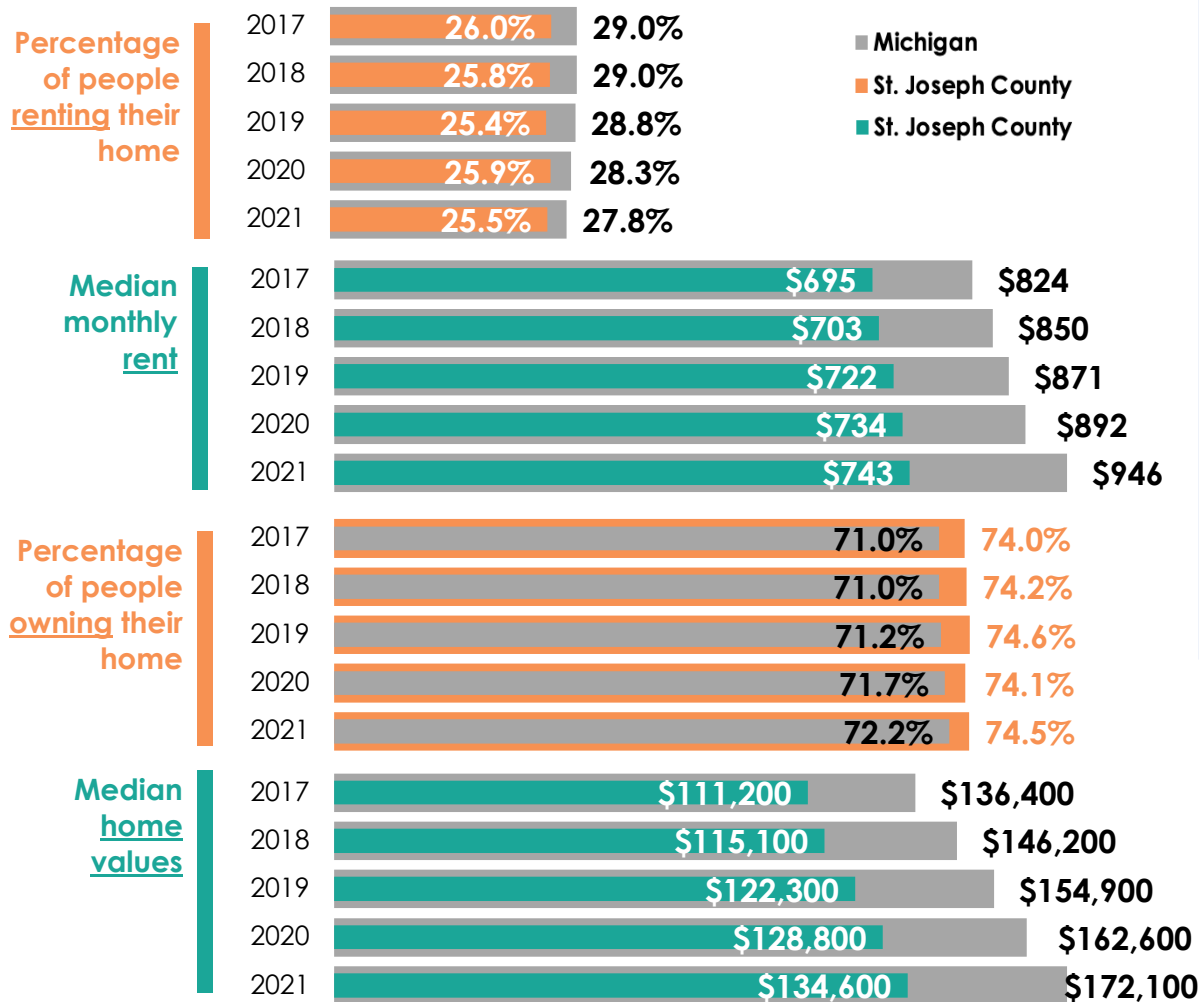


■ Michigan
 ■ St. Joseph County
 ■ St. Joseph County

Overall, the percentage of people renting their homes in St. Joseph County has remained fairly steady, slightly less than the Michigan percentages. However, the median monthly rent, while increasing just as the state averages have, has increased by only 7% between 2017-2021 while the state increased at 14%. There is consistently a higher percentage of St. Joseph County residents who own their home when compared to the state, although those numbers are fairly stagnant over the past five years. The median home values, while less than state averages, have been increasing at a similar rate to the state.

Sources: data.census.gov, countyhealthrankings.org, datacenter.kidscount.org

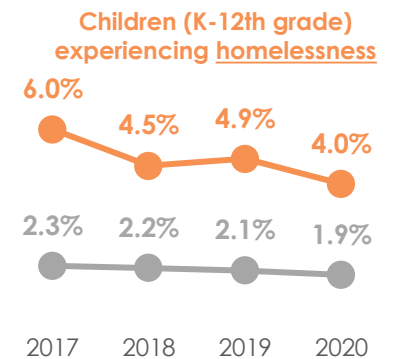
Housing



Families living with **high housing-cost burdens** (i.e., housing insecurity) is slowly declining between 2018-2020 (from 23.4% to 22.3%), slightly lower than state (27.6% to 26.2%).

Similarly, families with **severe housing problems** (i.e., at least one of these problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, lack of plumbing facilities) is slowly declining between 2017-2022 (from 15% to 13%), slightly lower than the state (17% to 14%).

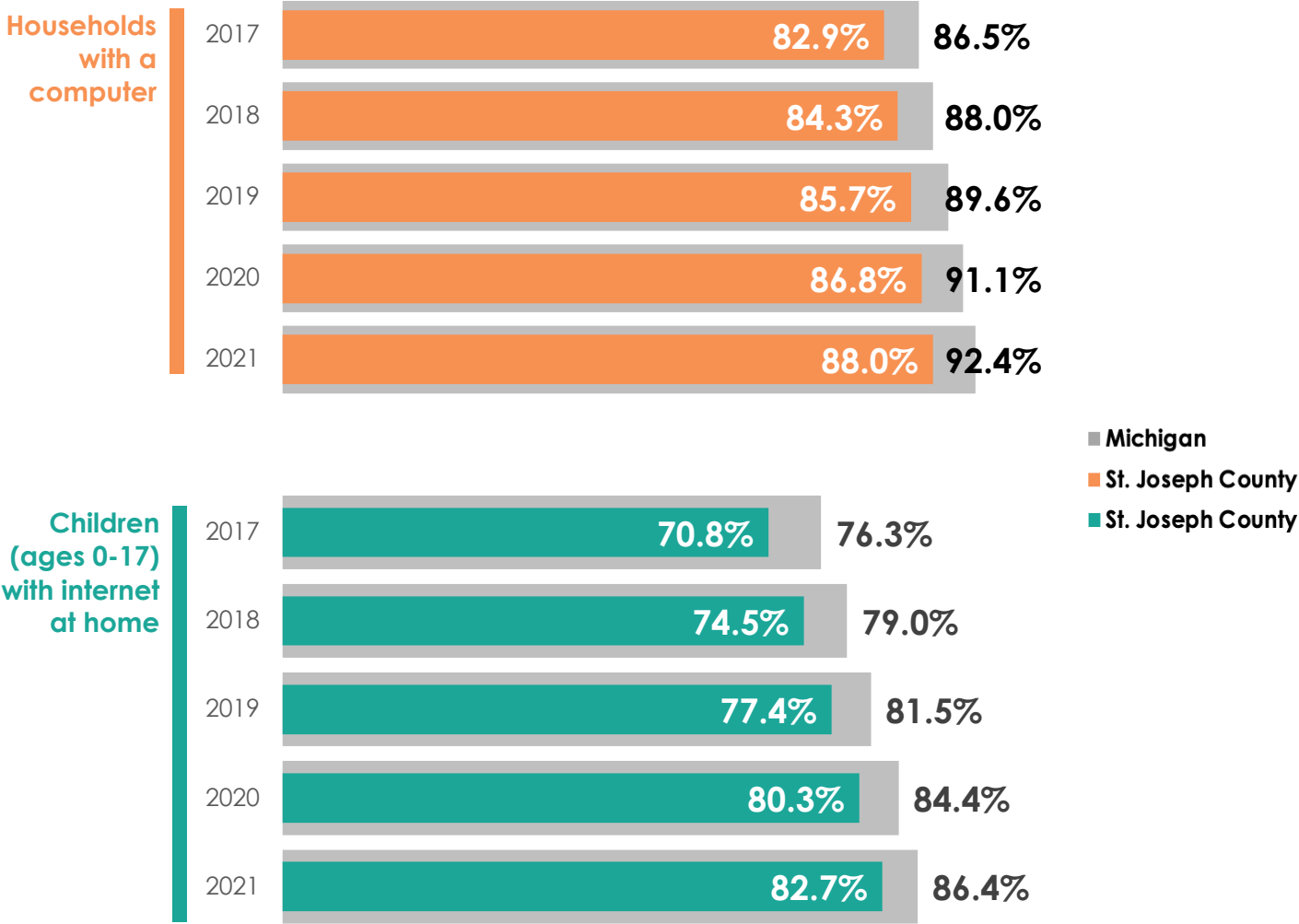
While the percentage of **homeless children** is decreasing in the county, it is still double that of the state average.



Since 2017, there has been a consistent increase in the percentage of households with a computer and children with internet at home in both Michigan and St. Joseph County. Nevertheless, St. Joseph County lags behind Michigan in both these areas, with a lower percentage of households with a computer and children with internet at home.

Sources: data.census.gov

Internet & Computers

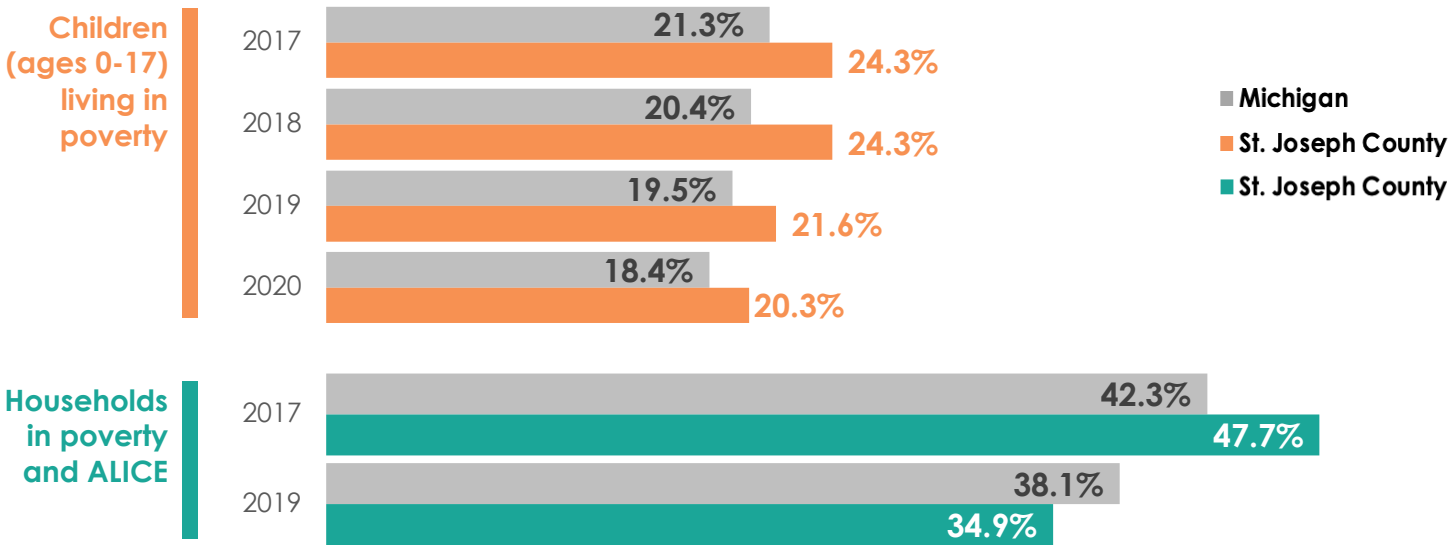


St. Joseph County has historically had a higher percentage of children (ages 0-17) living in poverty compared to the state. However, the percentage of children living in poverty has been declining in both the county and the state. As of 2020, 20.3% of children in St. Joseph County were living in poverty, while the state average was 18.4%.

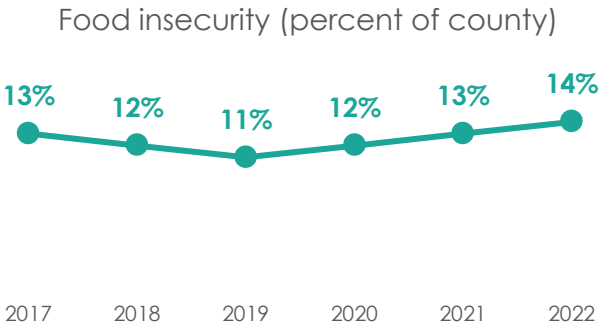
St. Joseph County also has a significant number of households who are working but experiencing financial hardship, as indicated by the ALICE (Assets Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) measurement. As of 2019, 34.9% of households in the county fell into this category, struggling to meet the basic necessities of housing, food, childcare, technology, healthcare, and transportation. However, this percentage has decreased dramatically since 2017 (47.7% to 34.9%).

Sources: countyhealthrankings.org, datacenter.kidscount.org

Poverty & Food Insecurity



Since 2019, the percentage of county residents who experience **food insecurity** has been on the rise (11% in 2019 to 14% in 2022). The percentage of the county with **limited access to healthy foods** has remained steady over the years at about 5%.

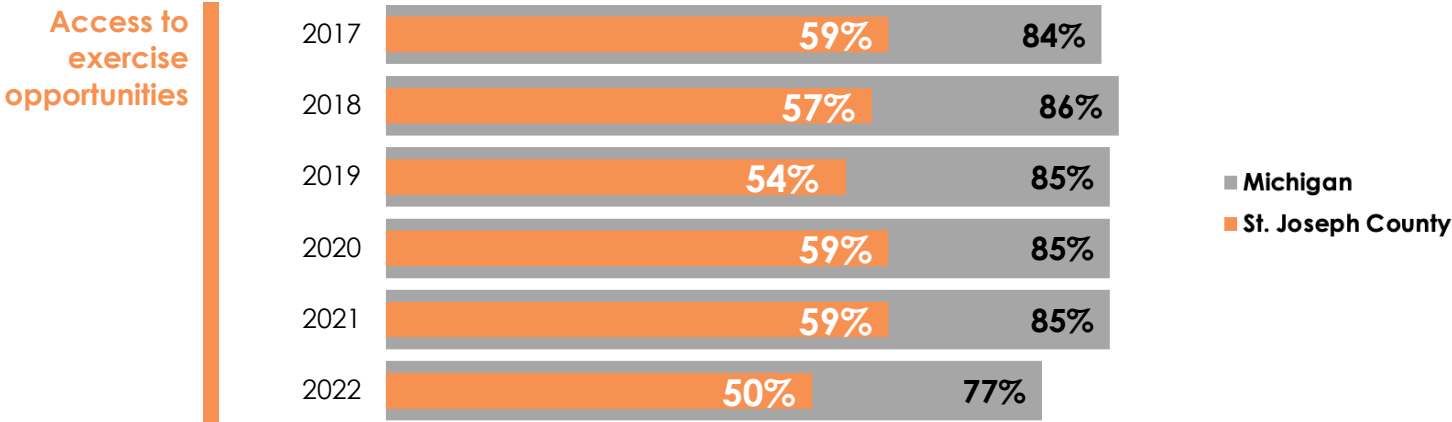


5%
Average percent of county with limited access to healthy food since 2017

Although St. Joseph County boasts 66 parks comprising more than 800 acres, only half of the residents of the county have access to exercise opportunities. This is less than the Michigan average, where in 2022, 77% of residents had access to exercise opportunities.

Sources: St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation, countyhealthrankings.org

Recreation

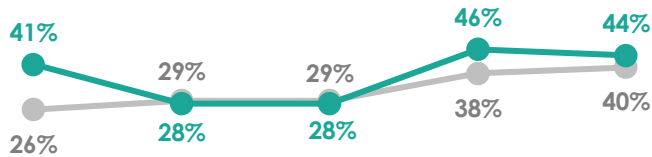


The highest number of Part 1 Arrests in the county have been primarily related to assaults and thefts, with aggravated felonious assaults the highest (also the highest in the state). Burglary has been on the rise since 2019, increasing from 6% to 18% of Part 1 Arrests; yet Retail Fraud Theft has decreased since 2019 from 41% to 13%. The county has a lower percentage of driving deaths involving alcohol compared to the state; and while the percentage has been increasing since 2018, it is still lower than the state.

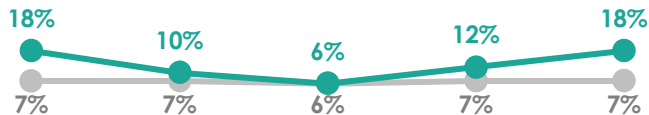
Sources: Michigan.gov, countyhealthrankings.org, Michigan State Police

Safety

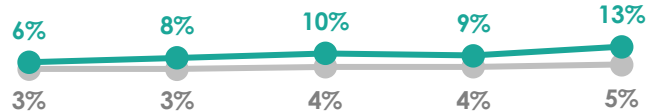
Arrests: Aggravated felonious assaults (13002)



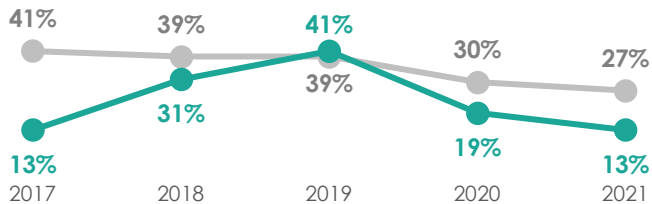
Arrests: Burglary/Forced Entry (22001)



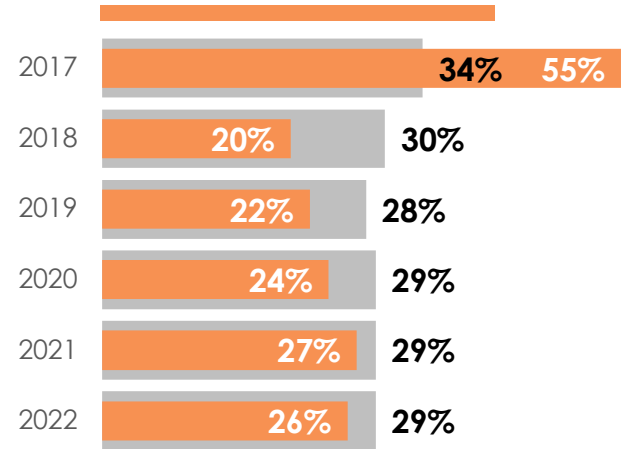
Arrests: Motor vehicle theft (24001)



Arrests: Retail fraud theft (30002)



Percentage of driving deaths involving alcohol

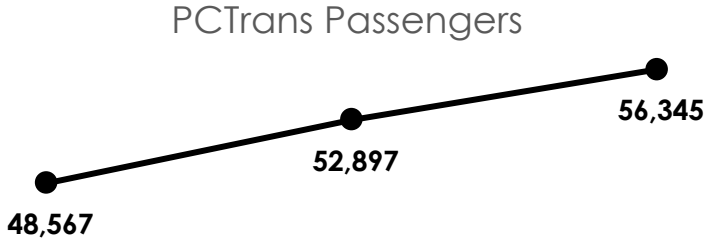


■ Michigan
 ■ St. Joseph County
 ■ St. Joseph County

Overall, the number of rides provided by county transportation services increased by almost 8,000 since 2020. The number of rides to disabled passengers using the service has increased. However, the number of rides for senior passengers and rides to medical appointments has decreased since 2020.

Sources: County Transportation Authority, data.census.gov

Transportation



Look below for passengers by category



People who live in St. Joseph County have shorter **average commute** times to work than people who live in other parts of the state. On average, it takes people in the county 21.5 minutes to get to work, which is shorter than the average commute time of 24.5 minutes for people in Michigan.

21.5 min
Average commute time in St. Joseph County

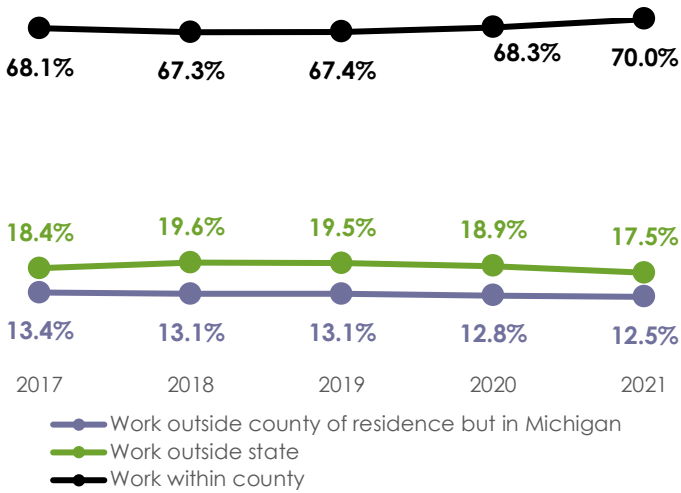
24.5 min
Average commute time in Michigan

The unemployment rate in St. Joseph County has been similar to the unemployment rate in Michigan since 2017. However, the county's unemployment rate has been slightly lower than the state's rate during this time. In 2021, for example, the unemployment rate in Michigan was 5.9%, while St. Joseph County had a lower rate of 5.1%. Percent employed by a nonprofit has increased by 1.3% since 2017, but employment in other sectors (government, private, and self employed) has dropped. Median household income continues to be lower than the statewide average.

Sources: data.census.gov, datacenter.kidscount.org

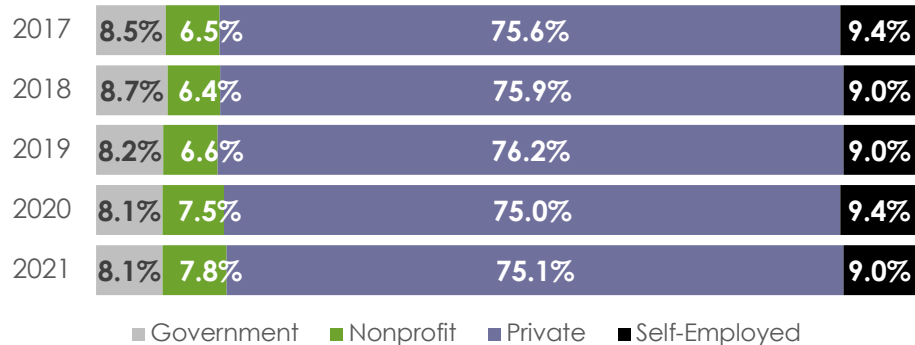
Workforce

Location of Employment

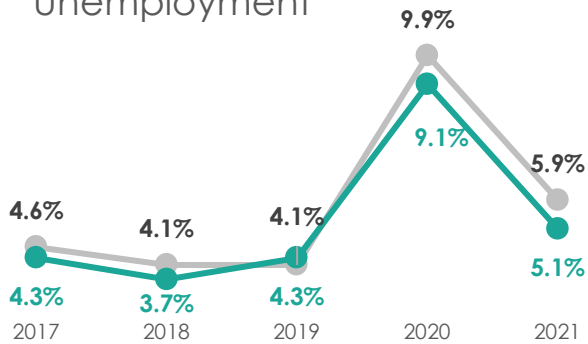


The **type of employment** over the past five years has remained fairly steady in St. Joseph County. There has been a minor decrease in each of government employment, private company employment, and self-employment as well as a slightly larger increase in nonprofit employment.

Employment by Type



Unemployment



Median Household Income

