

# Michigan's Recent Graduates: Mobility and Jobs

## Executive Summary, May 2013

Economic growth of regions, states, and countries is related to the educational attainment of the workforce. Outmigration of recent college graduates – commonly referred to as “brain drain” – continues to be a concern for many states and countries, with Michigan being among them. The state’s 15 public universities have conferred more than 60,000 degrees over each of the past 5 years with increases each year (figure 1),<sup>1</sup> and almost one-third of those degrees are in critical skill areas such as medicine, engineering, mathematics, technology, and other sciences.<sup>2</sup>

In response to the need to understand more about the young talent of the State of Michigan, a study was convened by the Detroit Regional Chamber with funding support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan; and the Michigan Municipal League. Between January and March 2013, iLabs, the University of Michigan-Dearborn’s Center for Innovation Research, surveyed 7,054 of the May 2012 graduates from the 15 public universities in Michigan.

Year	Degrees Conferred
2007-08	62,413
2008-09	62,973
2009-10	63,564
2010-11	65,161
2011-12	66,207

Figure 1: Combined degrees conferred by Michigan’s 15 public universities.

### Young Mobile Talent

Recognizing that certain factors impact a person’s mobility, the full sample was sorted based on several demographic factors. The target group is defined as single, 28 years of age or younger, not currently pursuing another degree, and born in the United States. The assumption is that those who meet all four of the criteria have fewer constraints when they consider where to live after graduation and are referred to as “young mobile talent” in this summary.

### Current Location

Within the young mobile talent group, 63% are still living in Michigan, while 37% have left the state. In a similar study done in 2007, 51% of the young mobile talent group indicated they were living in Michigan approximately six months after graduation.

The current residences of young mobile talent include zip codes from across the state. However, the most common Michigan cities they are now calling home are the larger cities within the southern half of the Lower Peninsula (figure 2). Almost one-fifth (19%) of those living in Michigan indicate their current zip code is in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, or Lansing.

City	Percentage
Ann Arbor	8.6%
Grand Rapids	6.2%
Lansing	4.3%
Detroit	3.6%
East Lansing	3.5%
Kalamazoo	3.5%
Royal Oak	3.0%
Sterling Heights	2.0%
Troy	2.0%

Figure 2: Current residence and percentage within Michigan

State	Percentage
Illinois	18.7%
California	10.2%
New York	9.1%
Texas	4.5%
Wisconsin	4.4%
Ohio	3.8%
Washington DC	3.8%
Florida	3.8%
Washington	3.4%

Figure 3: Current residence and percentage within those who left Michigan

Looking nationally, 35% of the young mobile talent moved elsewhere in the United States, less than 2% moved to another country. While the young mobile talent live in 49 of the 50 states, 38% of those who left Michigan have moved to Illinois, California, and New York (figure 3).

## Employment and Income

Comparing location and employment, the young mobile talent living in Michigan are less likely to be employed full-time, as compared to those who live in another state. Less than 70% of those in Michigan have full-time employment, while almost 90% of those who live elsewhere in the United States have full-time employment (figure 4). Among those employed full-time, incomes for the young talent living in Michigan are also lower than those living elsewhere in the United States. More than a third (35%) of those in Michigan have annual incomes under \$30,000, while 16% of those living elsewhere in the United States have incomes under \$30,000 (figure 5).

You are currently employed:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Full-time	68%	86%
Part-time	22%	8%
Not employed	10%	6%

Figure 4: Employment status by current residence

## Motivations for Leaving or Staying

Recent alumni were asked questions about factors that caused them to stay in or leave Michigan. The young mobile talent who reside elsewhere in the United States were more likely to agree they left for career opportunities (85%), urban experiences (38%), and public transportation (23%), as compared to those who stayed in Michigan. However, the opinions of those who left are very similar to those who stayed with respect to ideas of climate and cultural and social opportunities, with those staying in Michigan agreeing slightly more than those who left (figure 6).

What is your current annual income:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
\$30,000 or less	35%	16%
\$30,001-\$45,000	31%	26%
\$45,001-\$60,000	23%	29%
\$60,001-\$100,000	10%	24%
\$100,000 or more	1%	5%

Figure 5: Income by current residence – full-time only

With regard to mobility and where people live, 86% of the young mobile talent agree that when they look for their next job, they will look for a job in a place they would like to live. In comparison, 56% agree they will look in the place they currently live, and 56% agree they will look for the best job regardless of location (figure 7).

Why did you stay in/leave Michigan:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Career opportunities	43%	85%
Urban experiences	18%	38%
Public transportation	6%	23%
Climate	27%	25%
Cultural/social life	41%	39%

Figure 6: Factors for staying or leaving, percent agree

## Conclusion

While the percentage of young talent staying in Michigan has increased to 63% this year, more than one-third still leave the state. Career opportunities is the most frequently cited reason for leaving, but income levels and employment rates should

Thinking about how you will look for your next job, you will look for:	Percent Agree
A job in a place you would like to live	86%
A job in the place you currently live	56%
The best job, regardless of location	56%

Figure 7: Looking for next job, percent agree

inform further discussion. Opportunities exist to retain and attract young mobile talent, as they indicate communities with urban experiences and transportation offerings do have a role in their location decisions. This group will look for their next job in places they would like to live and not just the place they currently reside.

<sup>1</sup> Michigan Higher Education Institutional Data Inventory data search on degrees conferred for all 15 public universities in the state of Michigan.

<sup>2</sup> Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan press release, March 21, 2013.