

Michigan Labor Market and Population Trends

Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference

May 15, 2026

Wayne Rourke, Labor Market Information Director

Jaclyn Butler, State Demographer, Ph.D.



MICHIGAN
**Center for Data
and Analytics**

Who We Are



The Michigan Center for Data and Analytics provides the state with the expertise to analyze data, understand challenges, and evaluate solutions.

Through data, reporting, and analysis, the MCDA provides partners with the information and insights they need to make evidence-based decisions.

What We Do

- The **research and analytics** teams focus on leveraging state data to drive informed decisions through advanced research and cross-agency collaboration.
- The **privacy** team makes sure that information is handled responsibly, individual rights are protected, and the integrity of the state's work is maintained.
- The **demography** team serves as the state liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau and advises on Michigan's population and demographic data.
- The **labor market information** team produces Michigan employment, occupation, and industry data through partnerships with U.S. Department of Labor.

Michigan Labor Market Update

Wayne Rourke
Labor Market Information Director



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Key Takeaways

Michigan's labor market has been relatively stable in the past couple of years. The state's **unemployment rate and payroll employment totals have shown little change.**

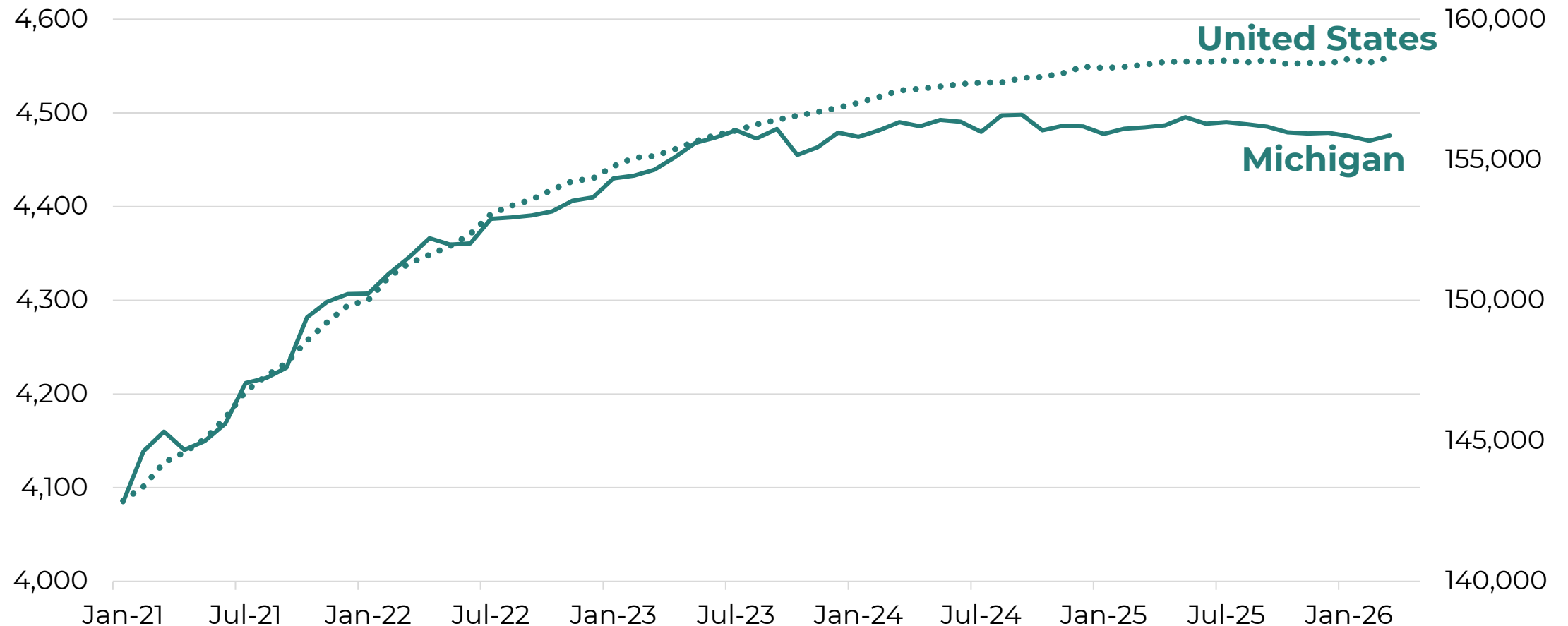
Some industries have shown growth. However, **gains in Healthcare and social assistance and Government** have been offset by **declines in Manufacturing and Trade, transportation, and utilities.**

The state's **labor force has declined** nearly every month since January 2025. An increasingly larger share of exits are due to **retirement.**

Michigan's Labor Market: **Payroll Jobs**

Michigan payroll jobs recovered from the pandemic recession but have been essentially flat the past two years.

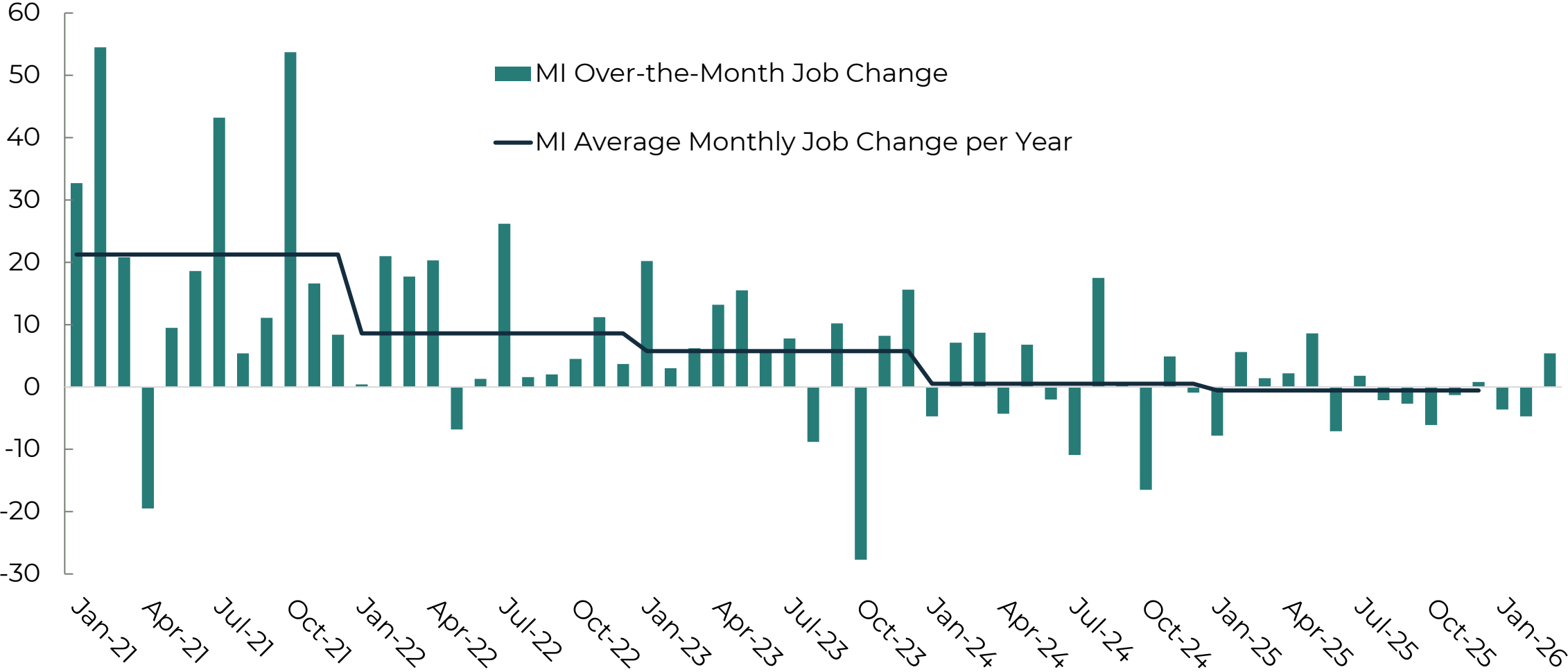
Michigan and U.S. Payroll Jobs, January 2021–March 2026 (Thousands of Jobs)



Source: Current Employment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Michigan's average monthly job gain for each year has progressively declined. In 2025, it was slightly negative.

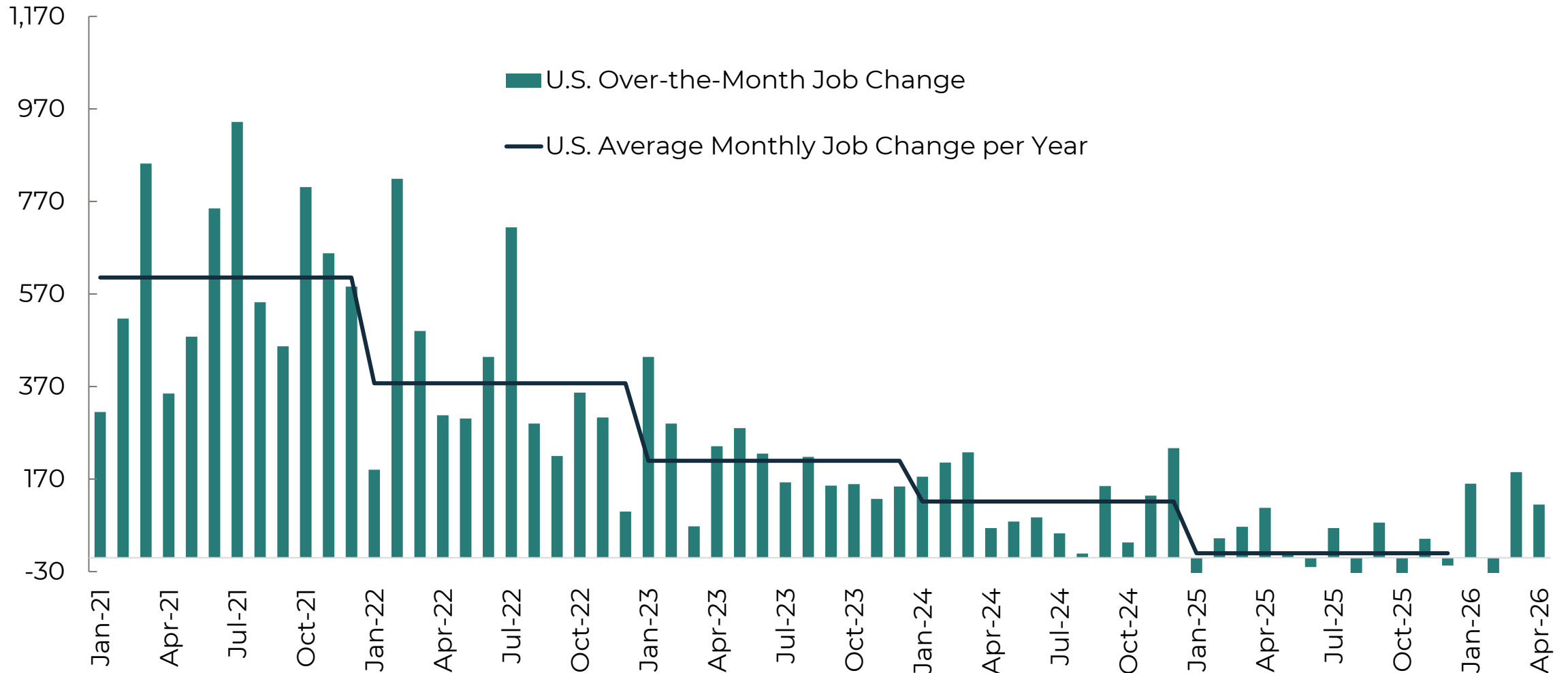
Michigan Over-the-Month Payroll Job Change (Thousands of Jobs)



Source: Current Employment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The U.S. average monthly job declines experienced a similar trend.

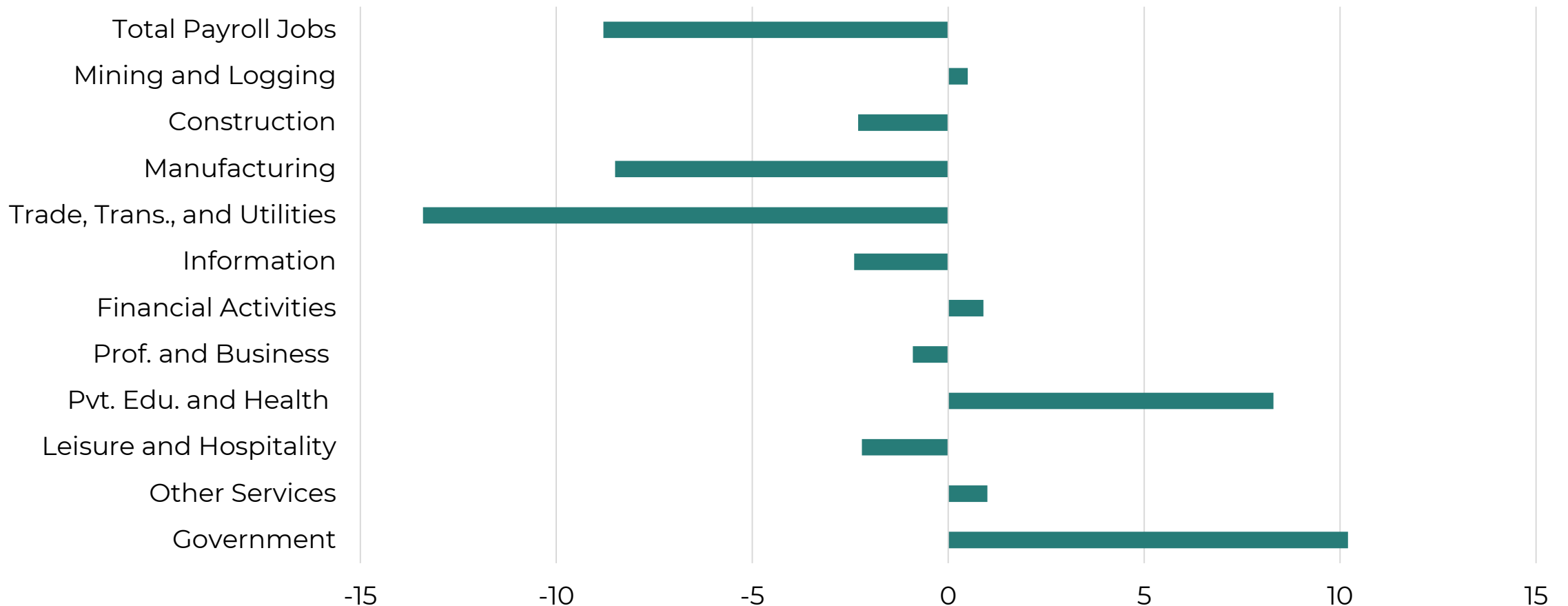
U.S. Over-the-Month Payroll Job Change (Thousands of Jobs)



Source: Current Employment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Michigan's only sectors to show over-the-year job growth were *Health care and social assistance services* along with *State and Local government*.

March 2026 Over-the-Year Industry Job Change (Thousands of Jobs)

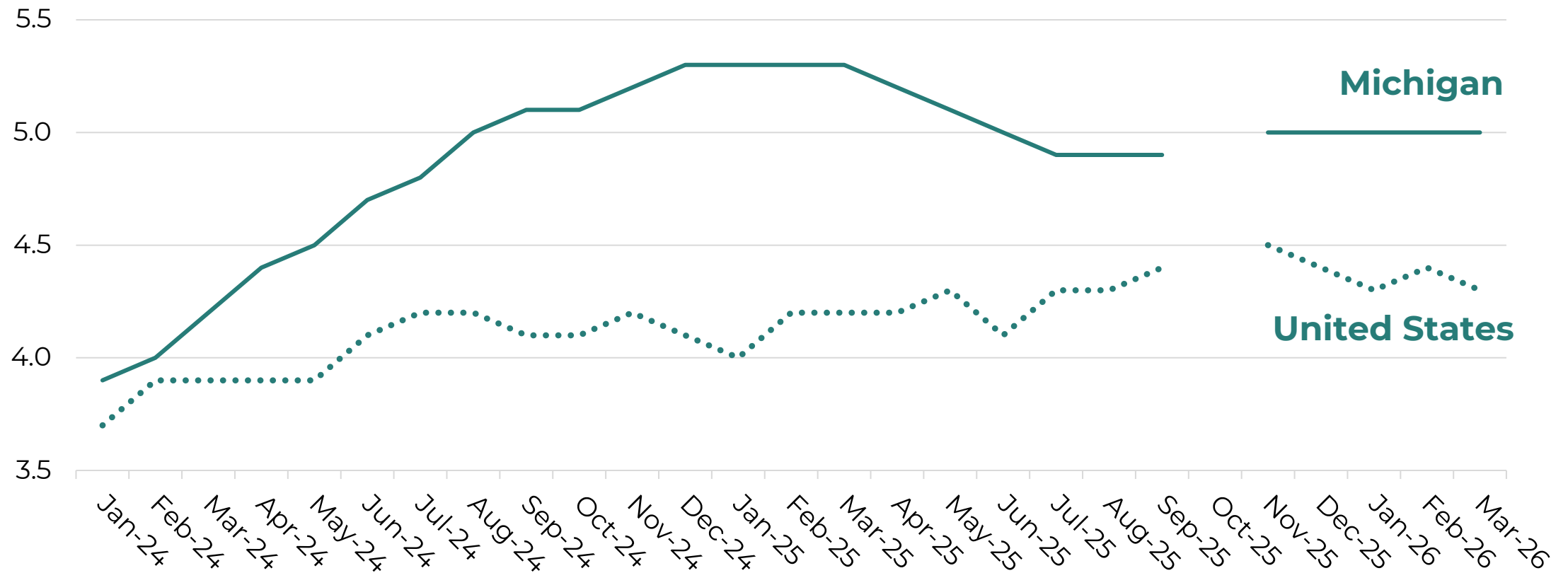


Source: Current Employment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Michigan's Labor Market: **Unemployment**

After rising in early 2024, Michigan's unemployment rate has stabilized between 4.9 and 5.3 percent for the past 20 months.

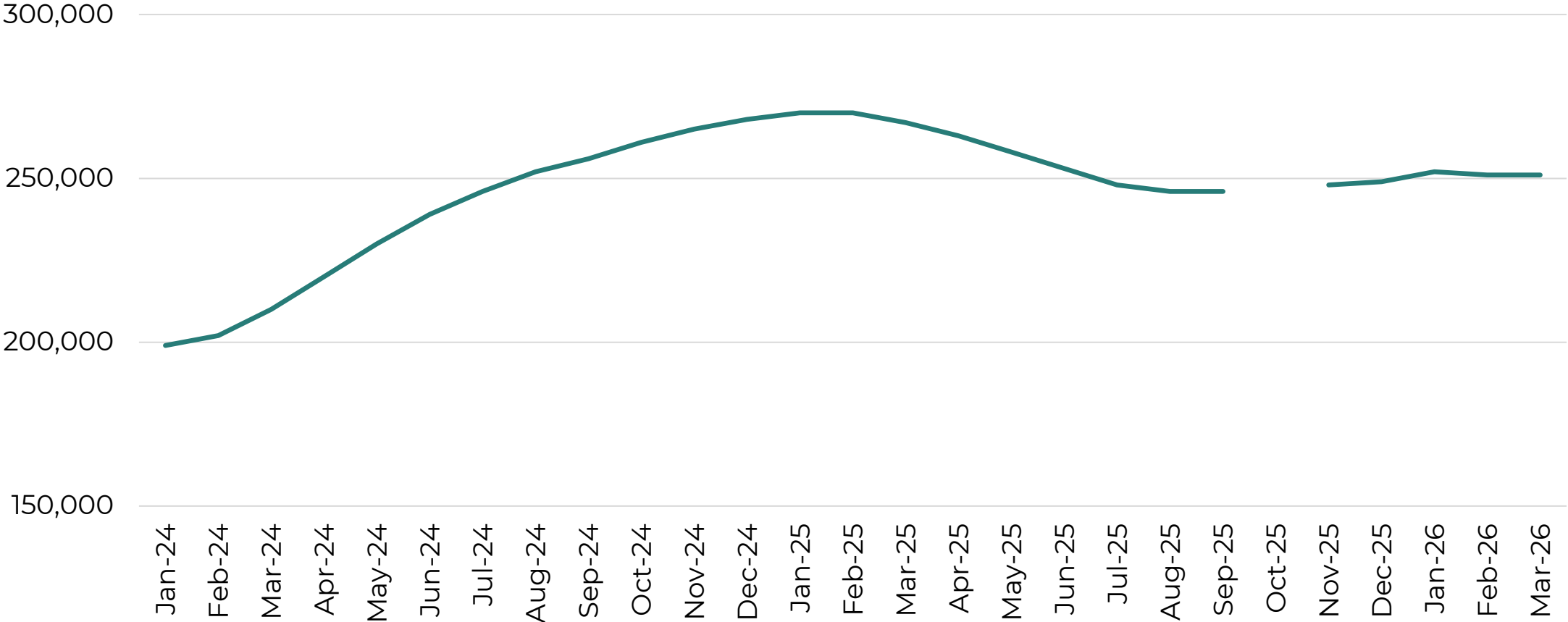
Unemployment Rate, January 2024–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

There are about 250,000 people unemployed in Michigan.

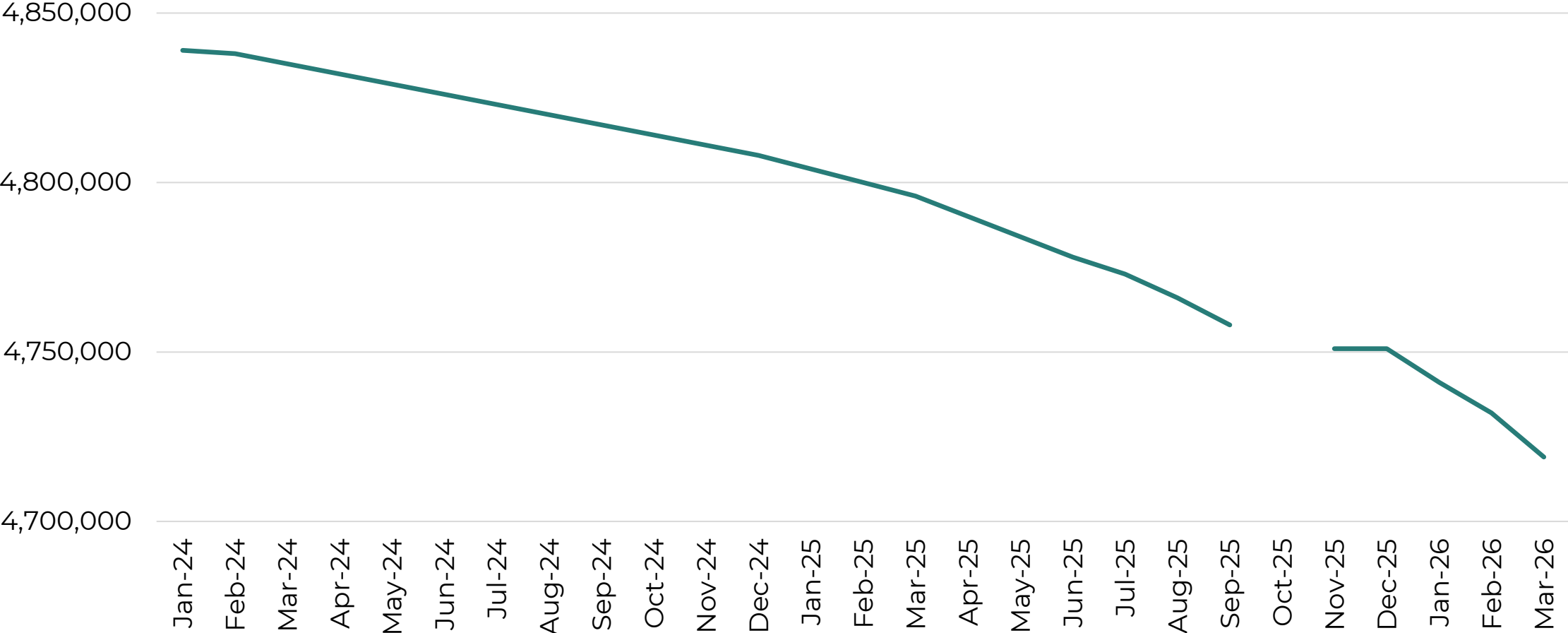
Total number of unemployed in Michigan, January 2024–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Household employment has continued to show a steady decline and has dropped 77,000 since March of last year.

Total Number of Employed in Michigan, January 2024–March 2026

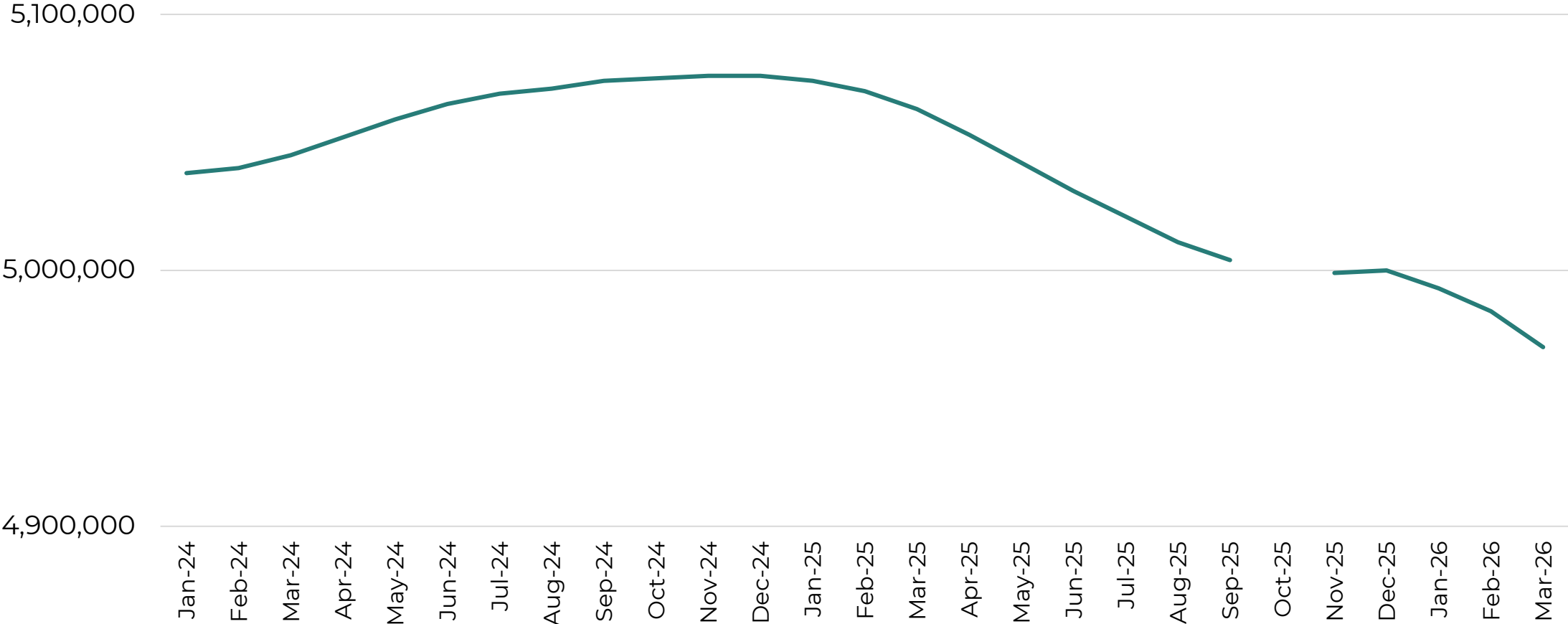


Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Michigan's Labor Market: **Labor Force**

Since March 2025, Michigan's labor force has lost 93,000 workers.

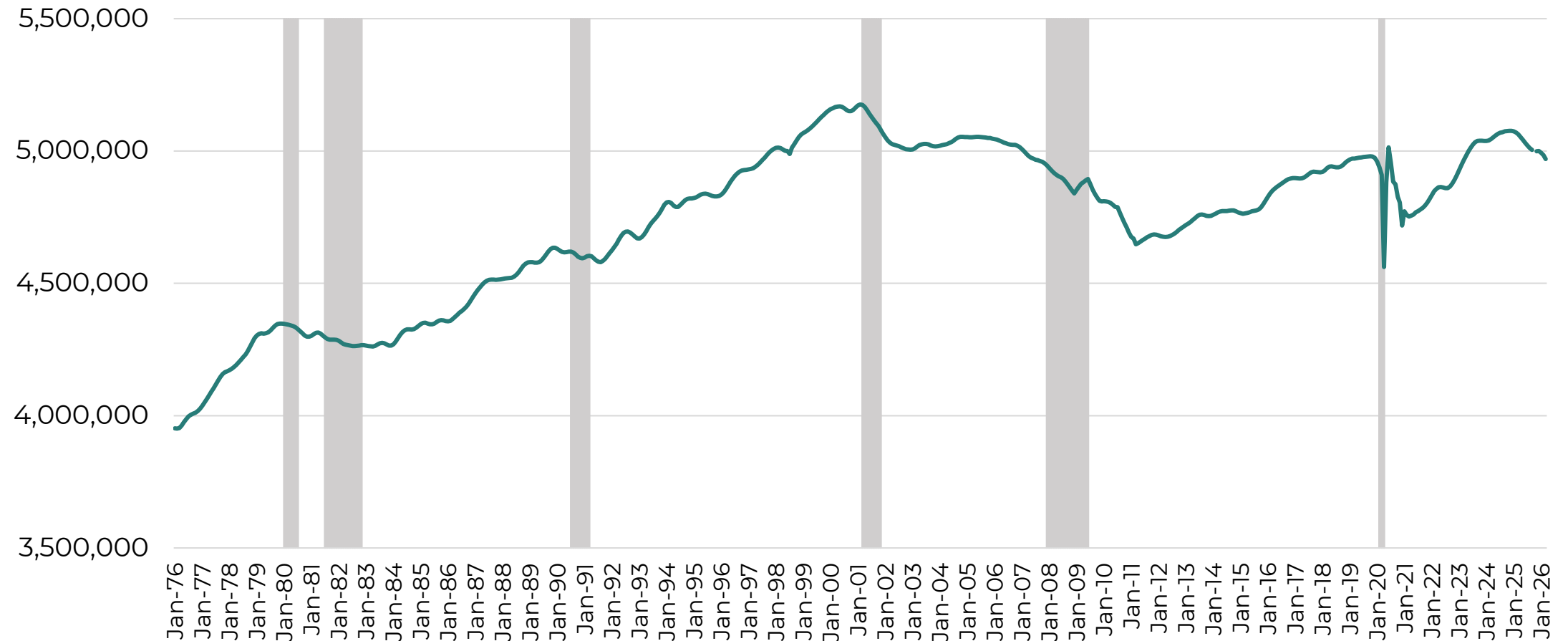
Michigan Total Labor Force, January 2024–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Michigan's labor force fell below five million after recovering from the pandemic recession.

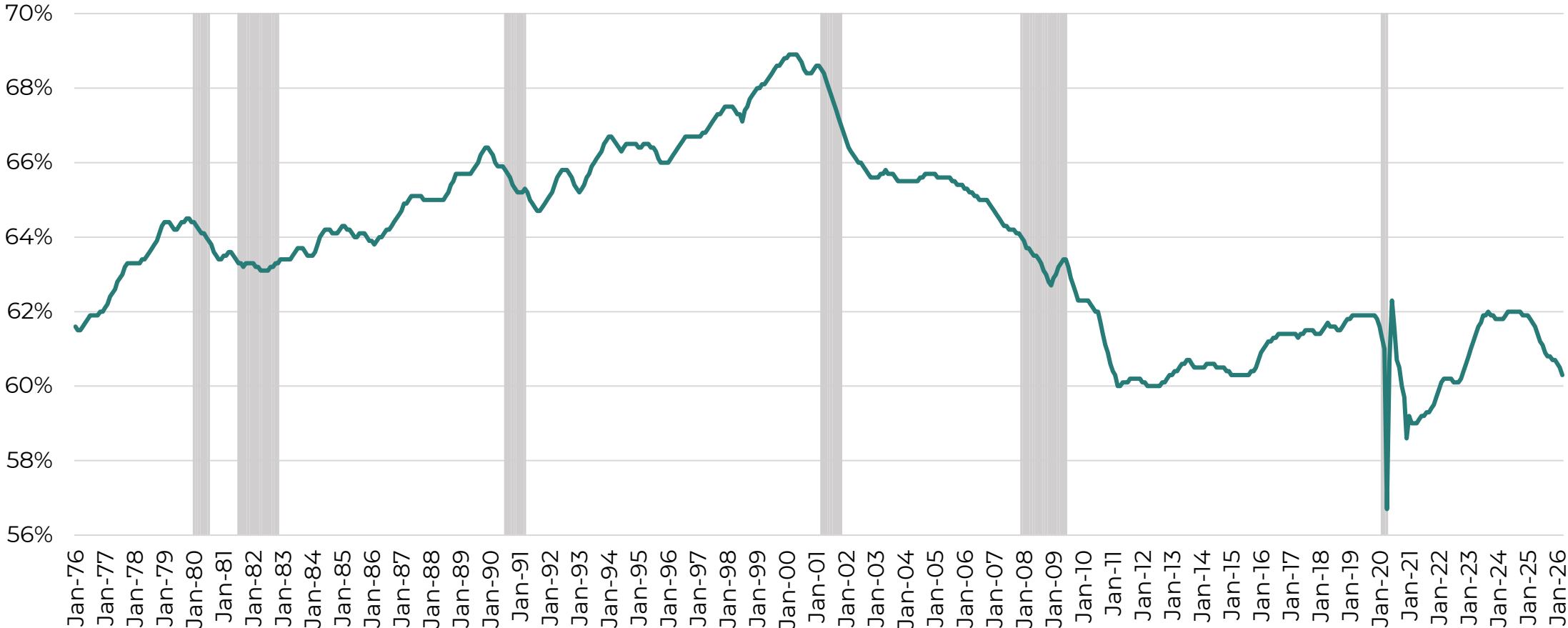
Michigan Total Labor Force, January 1976–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Recession Data, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Michigan's labor force participation rate is significantly below its peak in 2000.

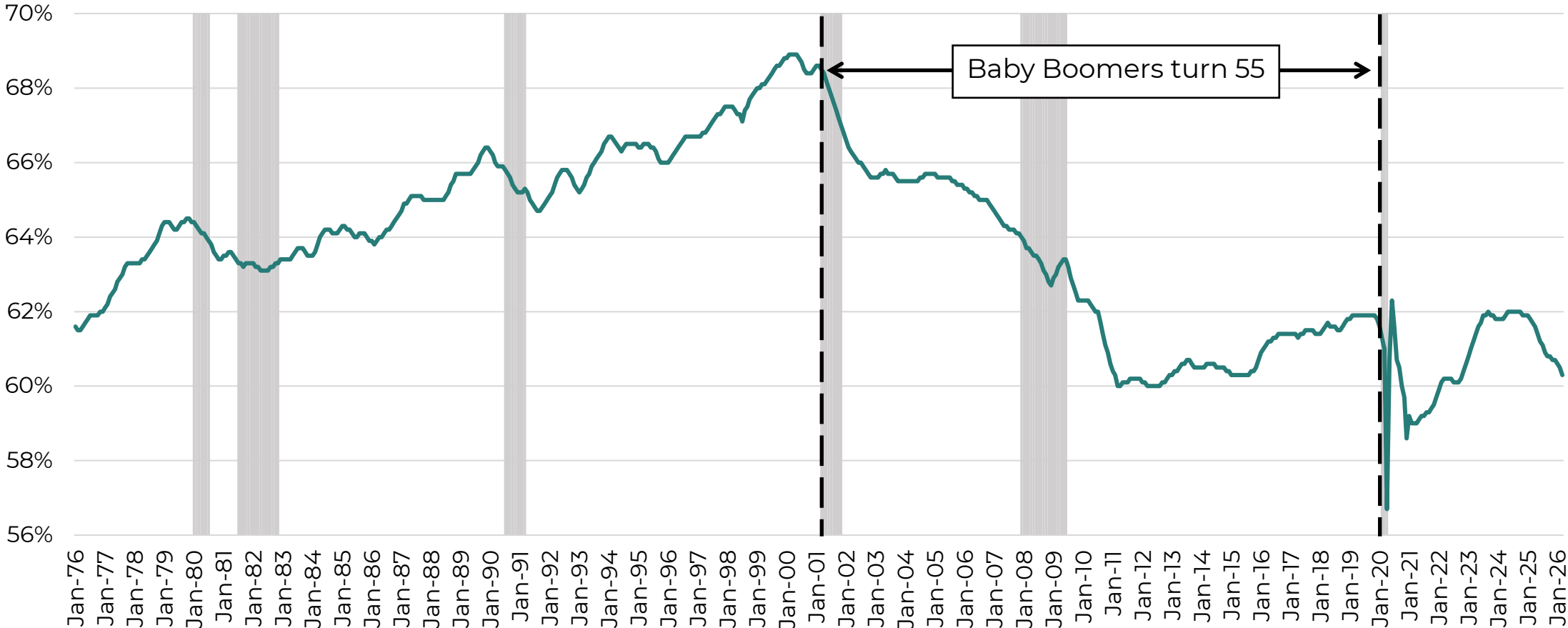
Michigan Labor Force Participation Rate, January 1976–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Recession Data, Bureau of Economic Analysis

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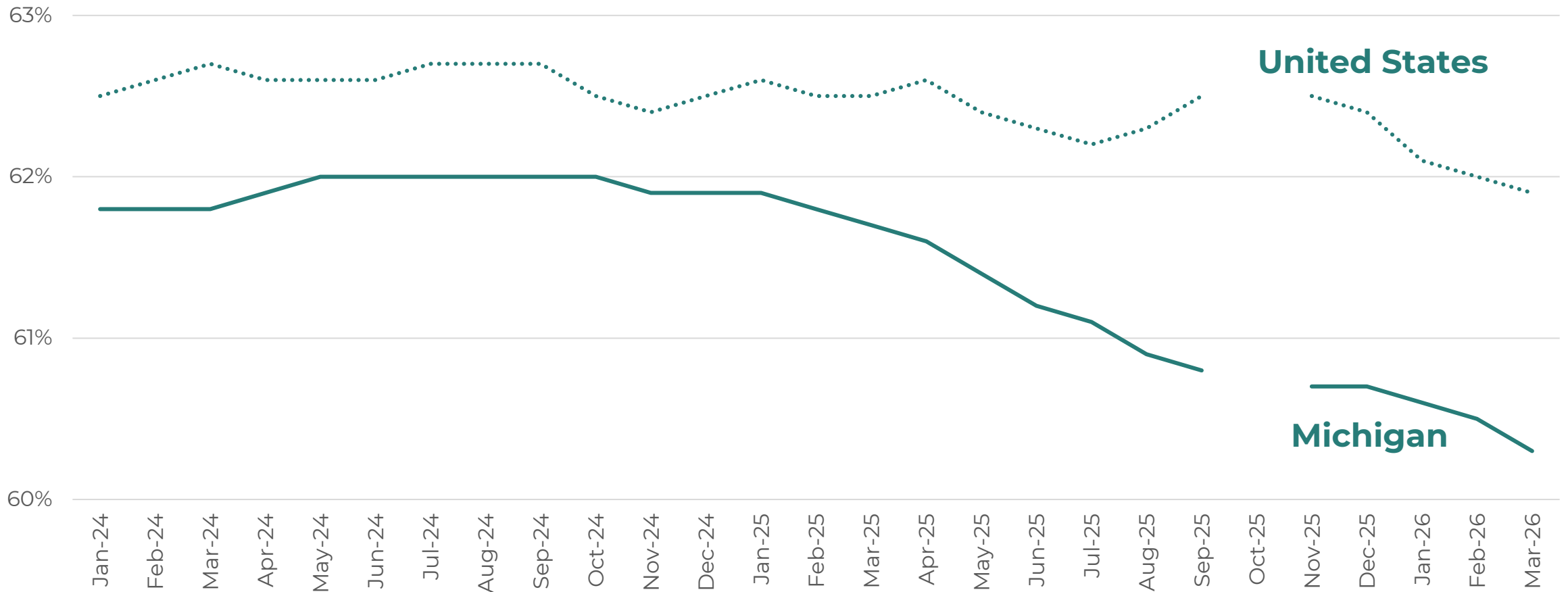
Michigan Labor Force Participation Rate, January 1976–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Recession Data, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Both Michigan and the U.S. experienced a decline in labor force participation rates in 2025.

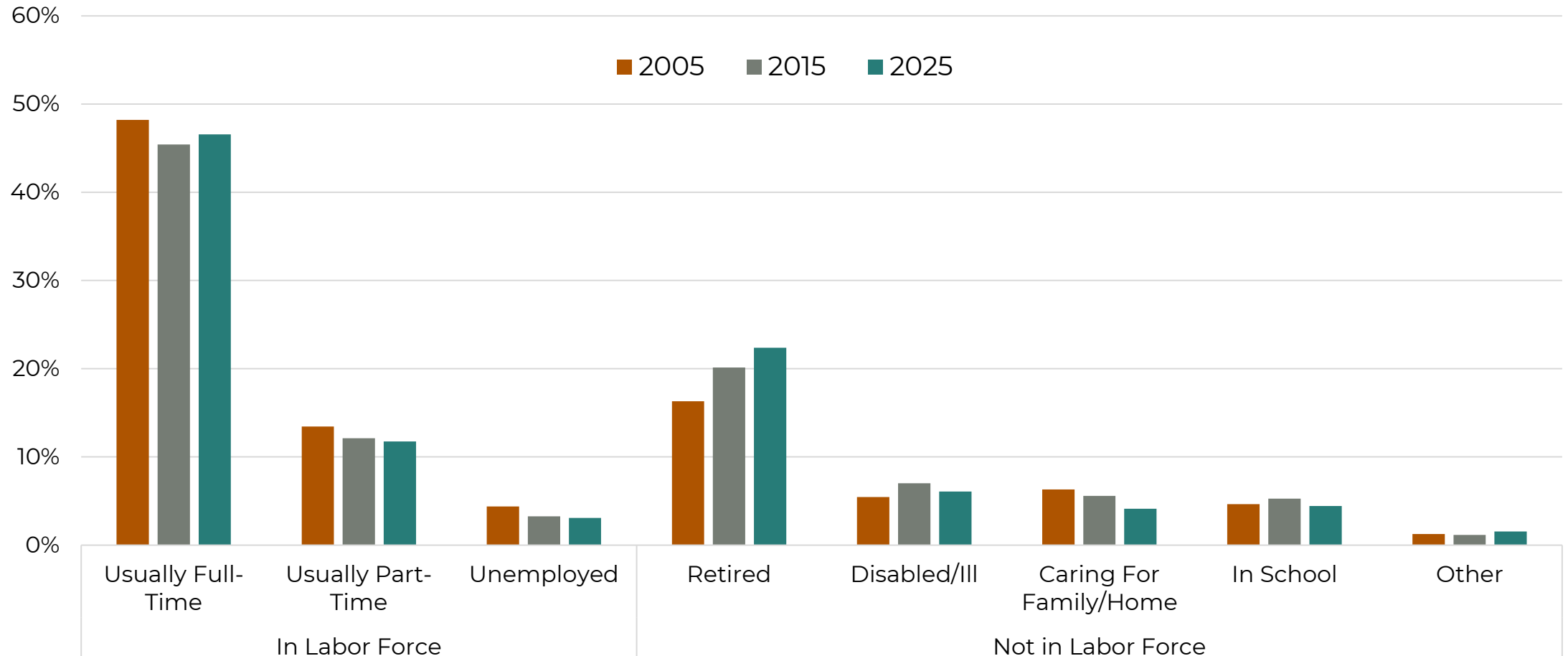
Michigan and U.S. Labor Force Participation Rate, January 2024–March 2026



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The share of people not in the labor force due to retirement is climbing.

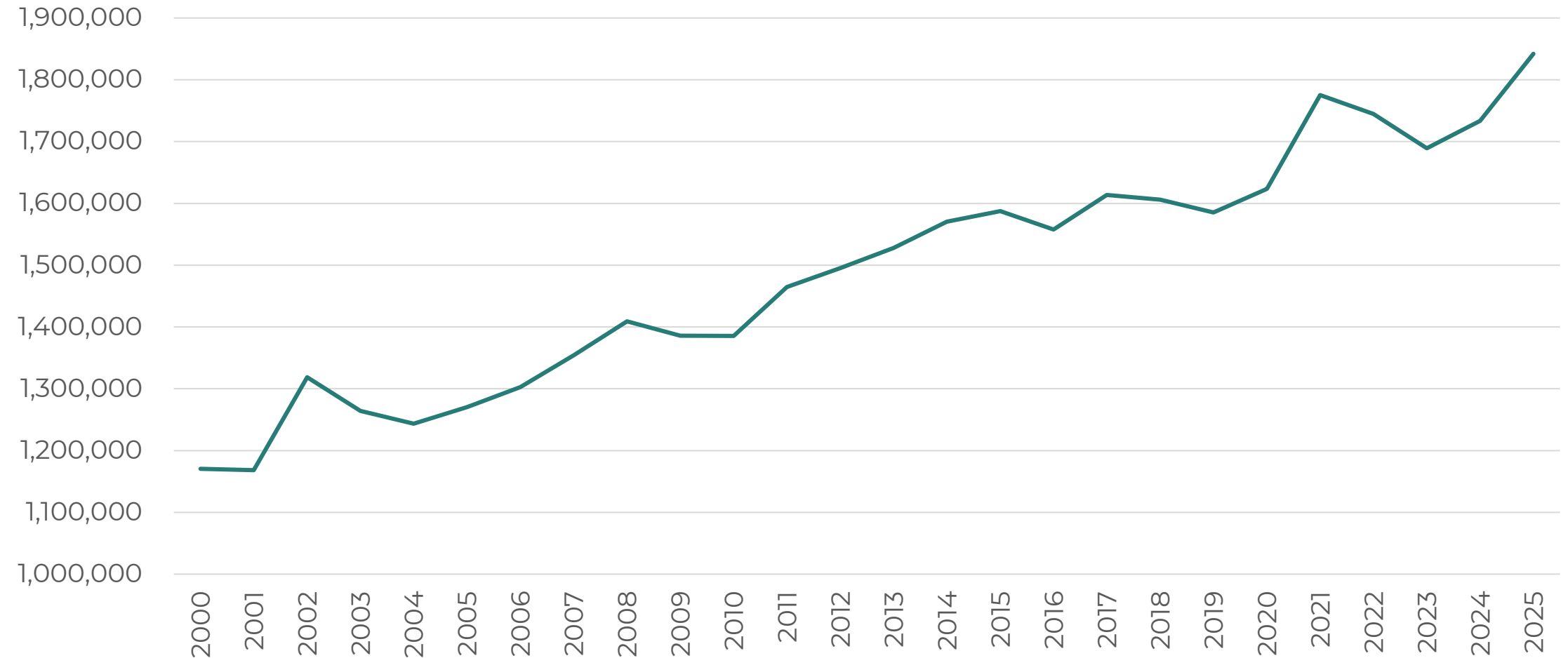
Labor Force Status of Michigan's 16+ Population, 2005, 2015 and 2025



Source: IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org; U.S. Census Bureau

The number of retired people in Michigan has been growing for a long time.

Number of Retirees in Michigan



Source: IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org; U.S. Census Bureau

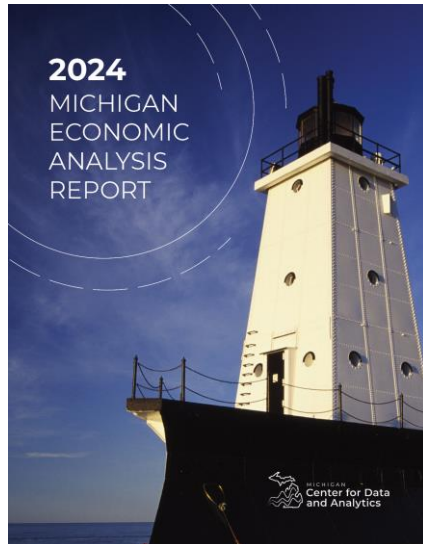
Key Takeaways

Michigan's labor market has been relatively stable in the past couple of years. The state's **unemployment rate and payroll employment totals have shown little change.**

Some industries have shown growth. However, **gains in *Healthcare and social assistance and Government*** have been offset by **declines in *Manufacturing and Trade, transportation, and utilities.***

The state's **labor force has declined** nearly every month since January 2025. An increasingly larger share of exits are due to **retirement.**

Additional Resources

The screenshot displays the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics website. At the top, the navigation menu includes 'About', 'Insights', 'Reports', 'Data Tools', 'Open Data Portal', 'Data Privacy', 'Labor Market Information', 'Population', and 'Contact Us'. The main heading is 'Michigan's Labor Market News'. Below this is a search bar labeled 'Search by keyword' and filter options for 'Topics' and 'Date Range', along with a 'Clear All Filters' button. It indicates '182 News items'. Four news items are listed, each with a title, date, and a small image:

- Occupational Focus: Dental Laboratory Technicians** (April 15, 2025) - Dental laboratory technicians are projected to experience slower employment growth compared with the average for all occupations at both the state and national levels. Roles for this occupation are mostly found in Manufacturing and health care and social assistance. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, dental laboratory technicians construct and repair full or partial dentures or dental appliances.
- Michigan Faces Growing Eldercare Demands Amid Rising Senior Population** (April 15, 2025) - As the population of the state ages, care for the elderly remains a growing concern as healthcare costs for older adults continues to rise persistently.
- Prices in the Detroit Metro Area Rise 2.3 Percent Since February 2025** (April 14, 2025) - In February, Detroit's over-the-year price increase of 2.3 percent was comparable to the U.S. inflation rate of 2.4 percent.
- February Brings a Boost in Michigan Online Job Advertisements** (April 14, 2025) - Online job advertisements for legal occupations reached record levels in February.

Michigan.gov/MCDA/labor-market-information

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Michigan Population Trends

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Population Key Takeaways

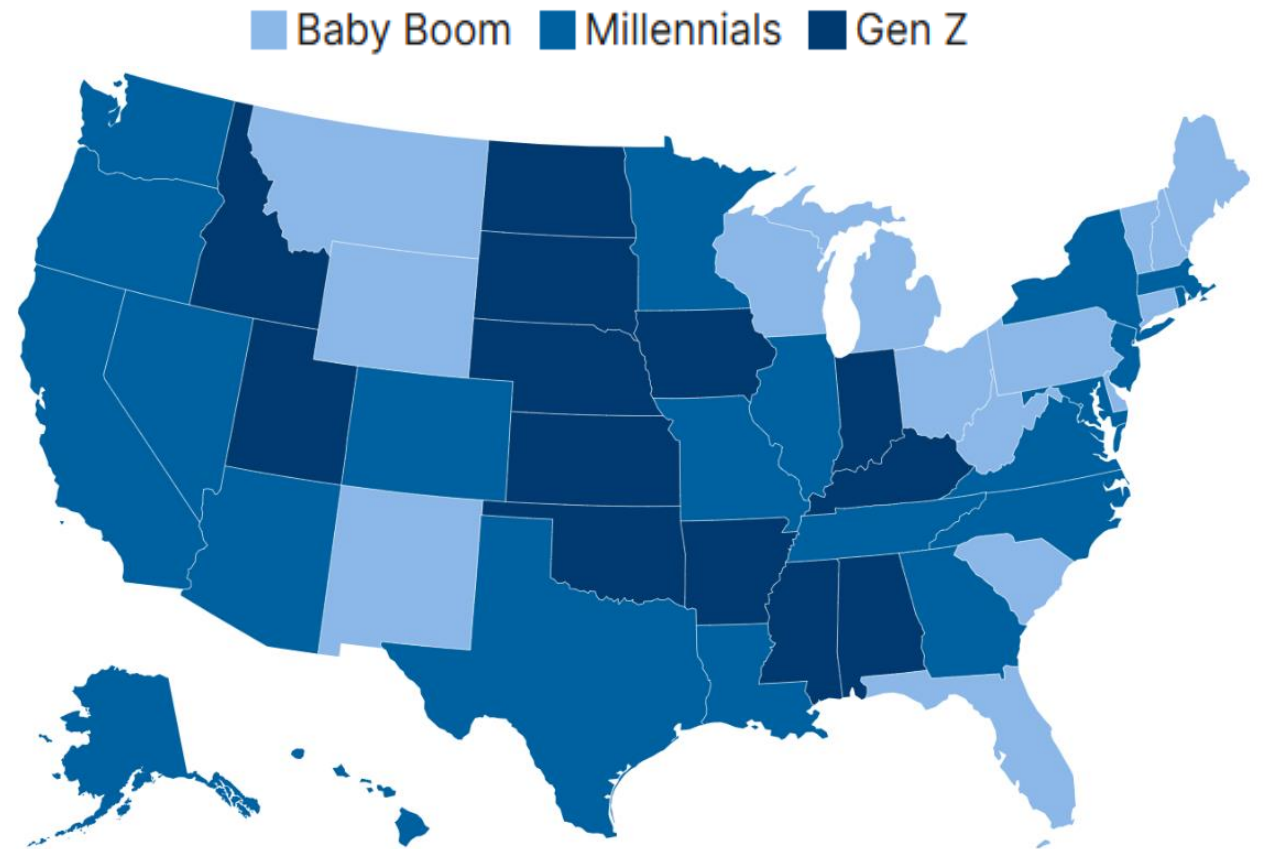
1. Michigan had some migration recovery in the 2020s so far. However, natural decrease dynamics will contribute to slow growth or decline through 2030.
2. Population aging is pronounced in Michigan and will continue impacting the labor force and potential tax revenues for the state.
3. The updated Census Address List directly impacts the census count that distributes billions of federal and state dollars.

Population aging is pronounced in, but not unique to, Michigan.

Michigan's median age of 40.1 ranked 13th highest in the nation in 2020.

Michigan and the nation will continue aging through 2050.

Michigan is among 15 states where baby boomers are the largest generation.



Dynamics of Population Change

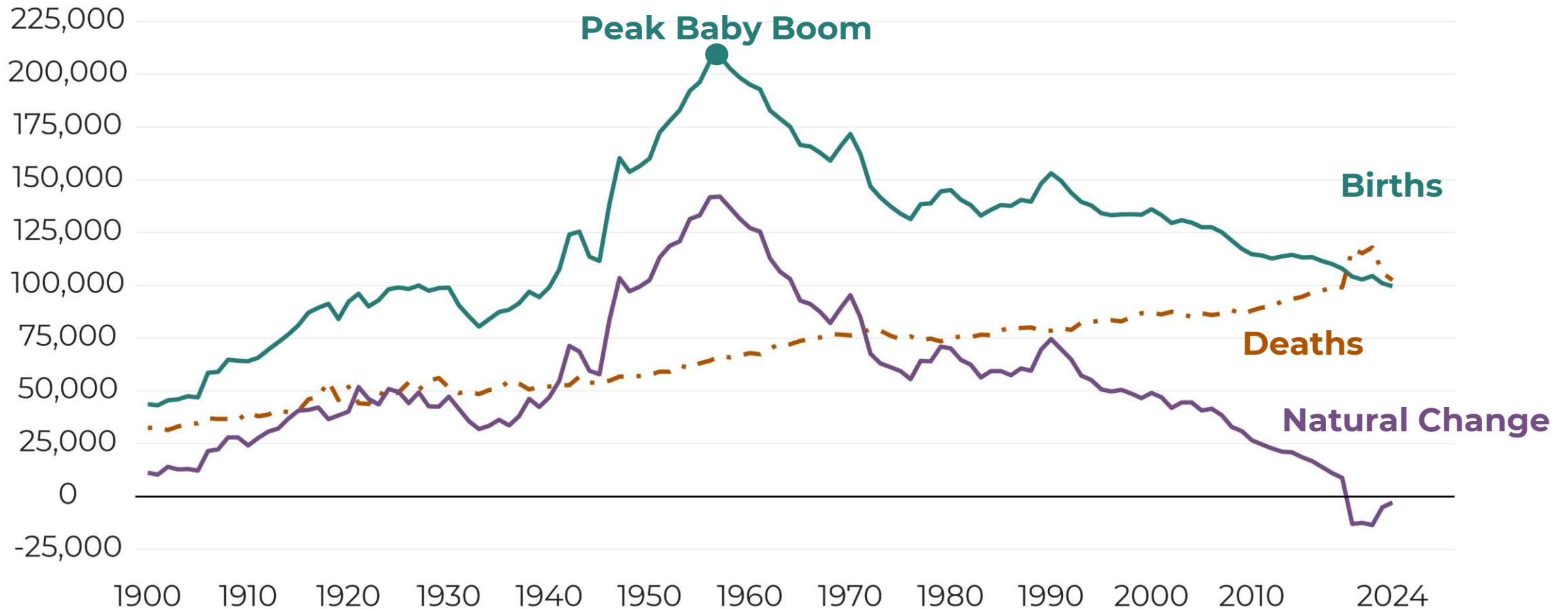
- There are three components of population change:
 - Births
 - Deaths
 - Migration

Demographic Balancing Equation

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Population} & = & \text{Population} & + & \text{Natural Change} & + & \text{Net Migration} \\ \text{in Time 2} & & \text{in Time 1} & & (\text{Births} - \text{Deaths}) & & (\text{Inflow} - \text{Outflow}) \end{array}$$

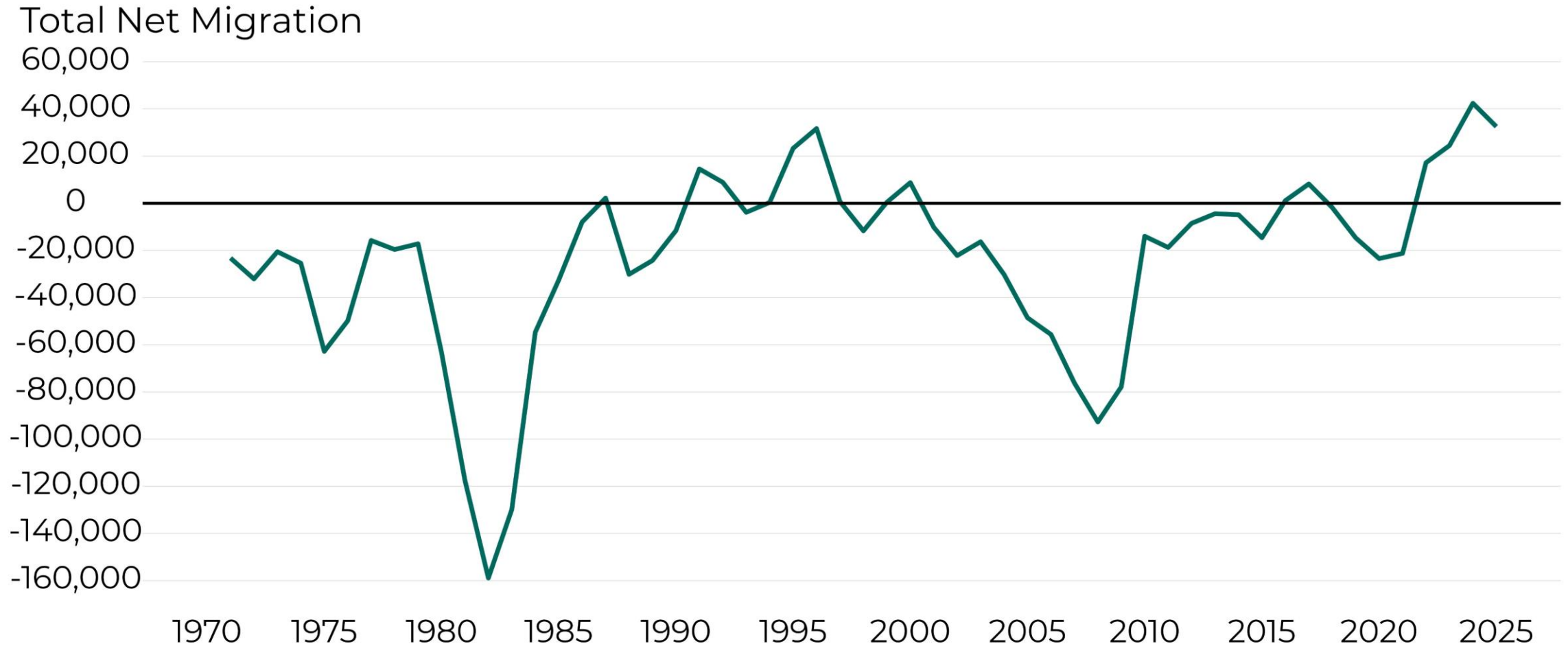
- More births than deaths = natural increase
- More deaths than births = natural decrease
- Total net migration consists of international and domestic migration (movement between states).

Michigan was trending toward natural decrease (more deaths than births) prior to COVID-19.



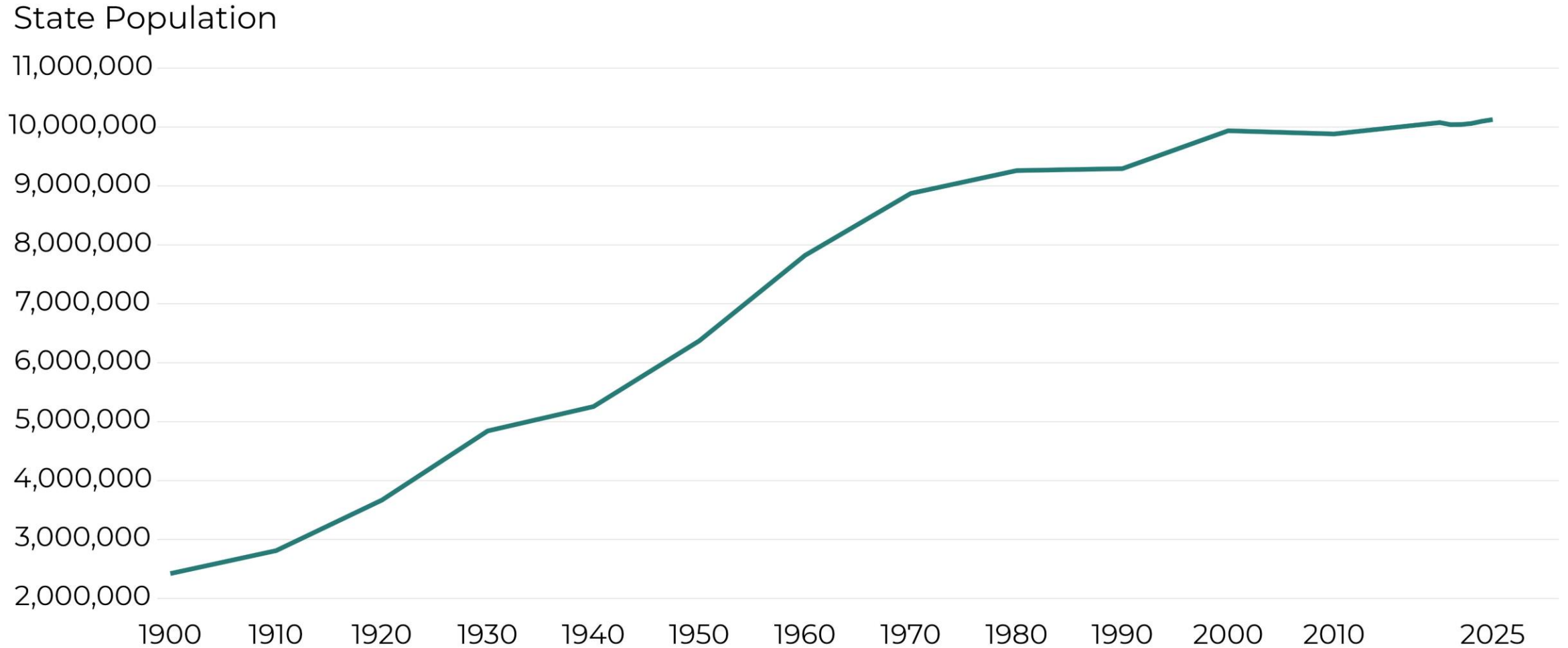
Source: 1900–2020 Michigan Resident Birth Files, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; 2024 Vintage Population Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau

Despite estimated migration increases in the 2020s, Michigan has experienced net out-migration most years since the 1970s.



Source: 1971-2010 Residual Method, MCDA; 2020 and 2025 Vintage, Population Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau

The state's population trajectory has been flat the past 25 years due to decreasing births, increasing deaths, and uneven migration.



Migration



The Great Migration
1910-1970



The Great Recession
2007-2009

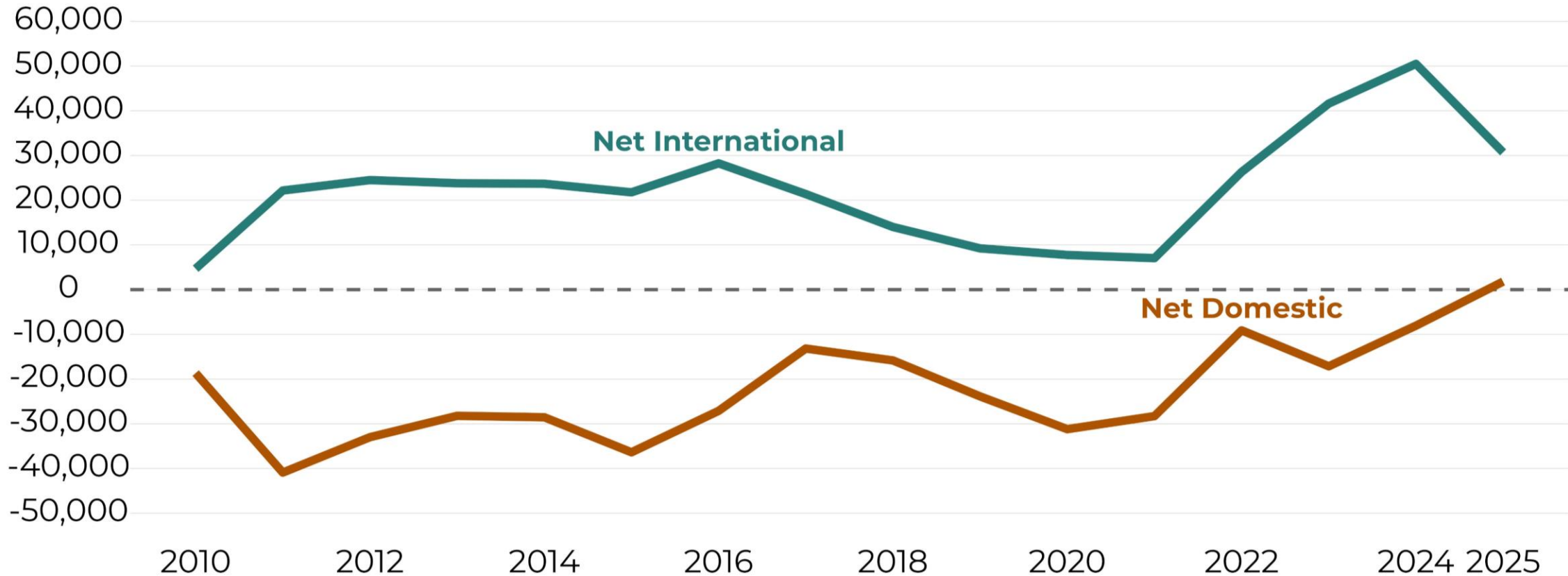


Recent Population Changes in the U.P.
Amidst the Pandemic

By Michael Broadway and Joslin Brown | March 30, 2022

The Pandemic Period
2020s

Michigan's recent net migration increases in the 2020s were driven by estimated international migration increases and reduced net domestic loss.

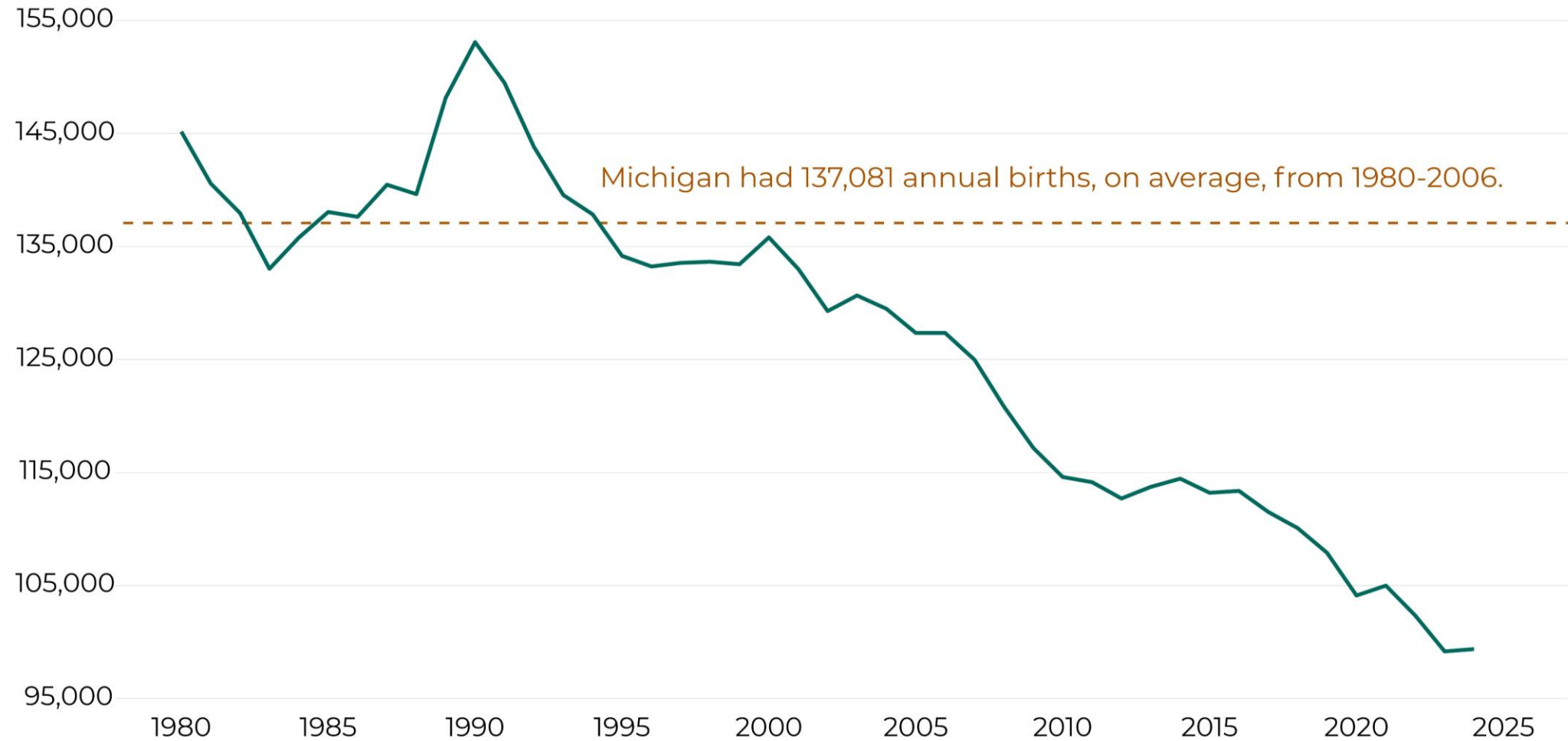


In the short term, Michigan's potential population growth is sensitive to migration.

- International migration was already leveling off in 2025.
- Michigan's recent domestic migration improvements are likely due to reduced outflows to other states (fewer people leaving).
- When comparing trends across U.S. regions in the 2020s, net domestic migration is net negative in the Northeast and West, **improved but near net zero in the Midwest**, and high but leveling off in the South.

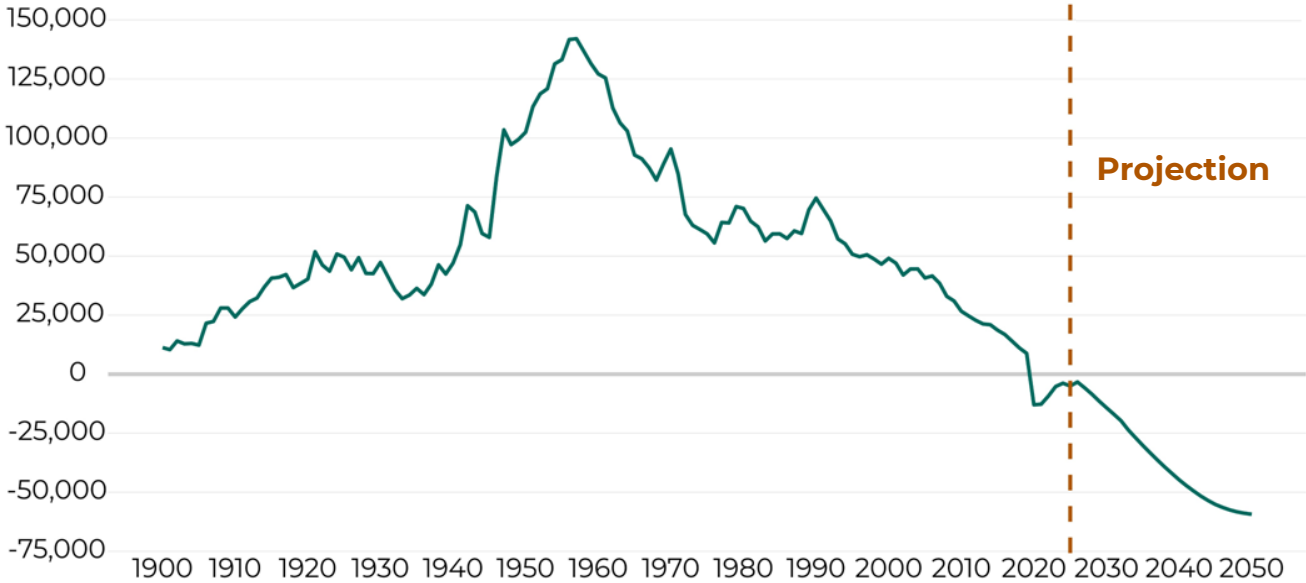
Births

Michigan's decline in births has been pronounced since 2007.



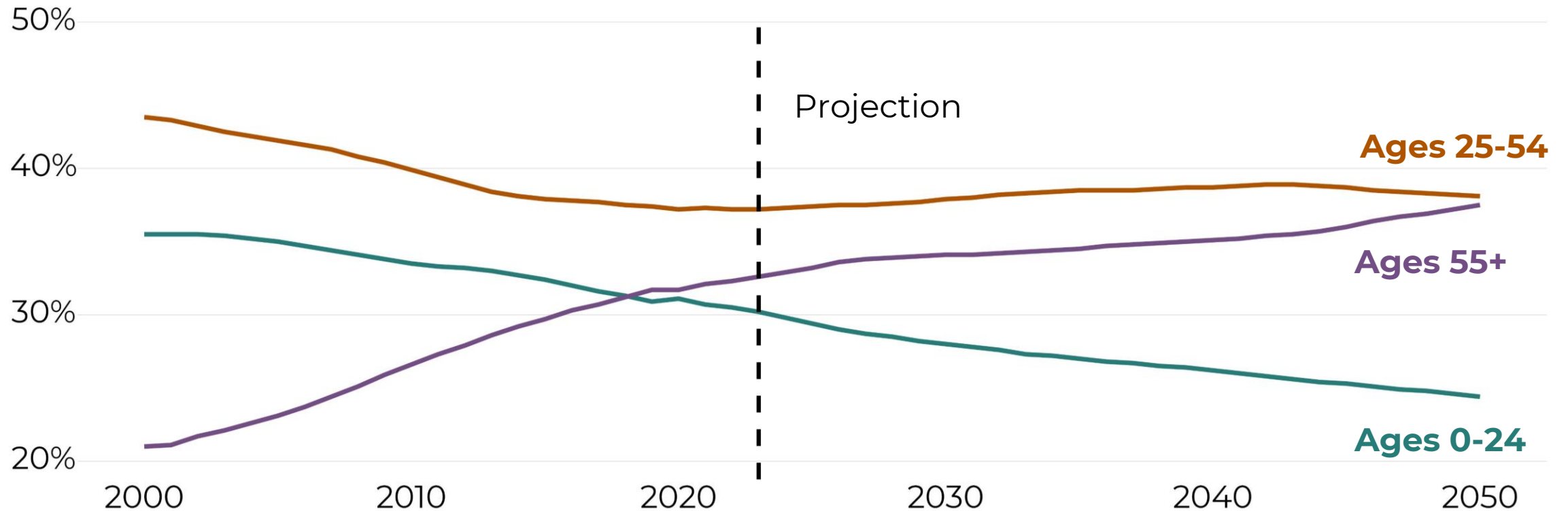
Population growth in the long term would require consistent and higher migration to offset steepening natural decrease.

The state's pronounced birth decline since 2007 and increasing deaths are "baked in" the population structure.



Source: 1920–2022, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; 2023–2025, U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program; 2026–2050, Vintage 2024 Population Projections, Net Positive Migration Scenario, Michigan Center for Data and Analytics

The share of Michigan's working-age adults is projected to remain flat or decline while the share of older adults increases.

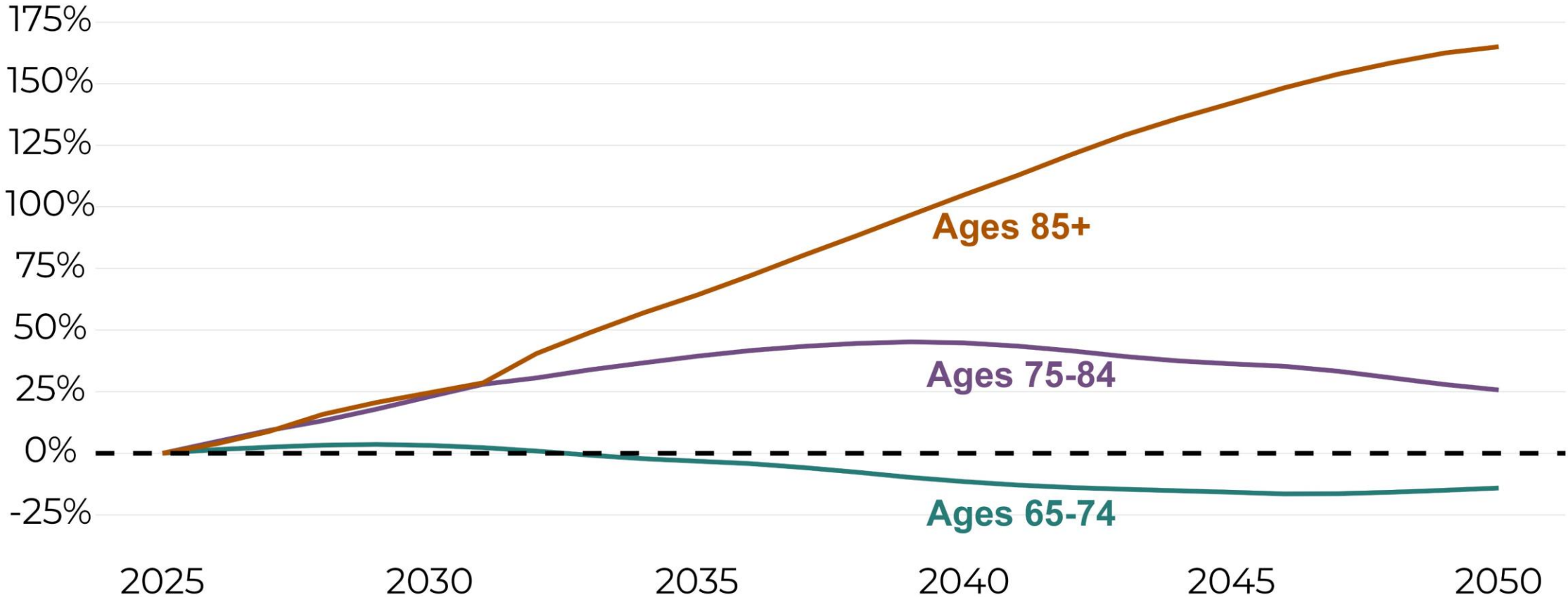


Source: 2000-2010 Intercensal Estimates, Vintage 2020 and Vintage 2023 Population Estimates, Population Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau; Vintage 2024 Population Projections, Net Positive Migration Scenario, Michigan Center for Data and Analytics

Projected Increases in the Oldest Adults (Ages 75+)

The growth rate among Michigan's 75-plus population is projected to outpace that of younger seniors.

Projected within-group percent change in population for 65+ age groups.



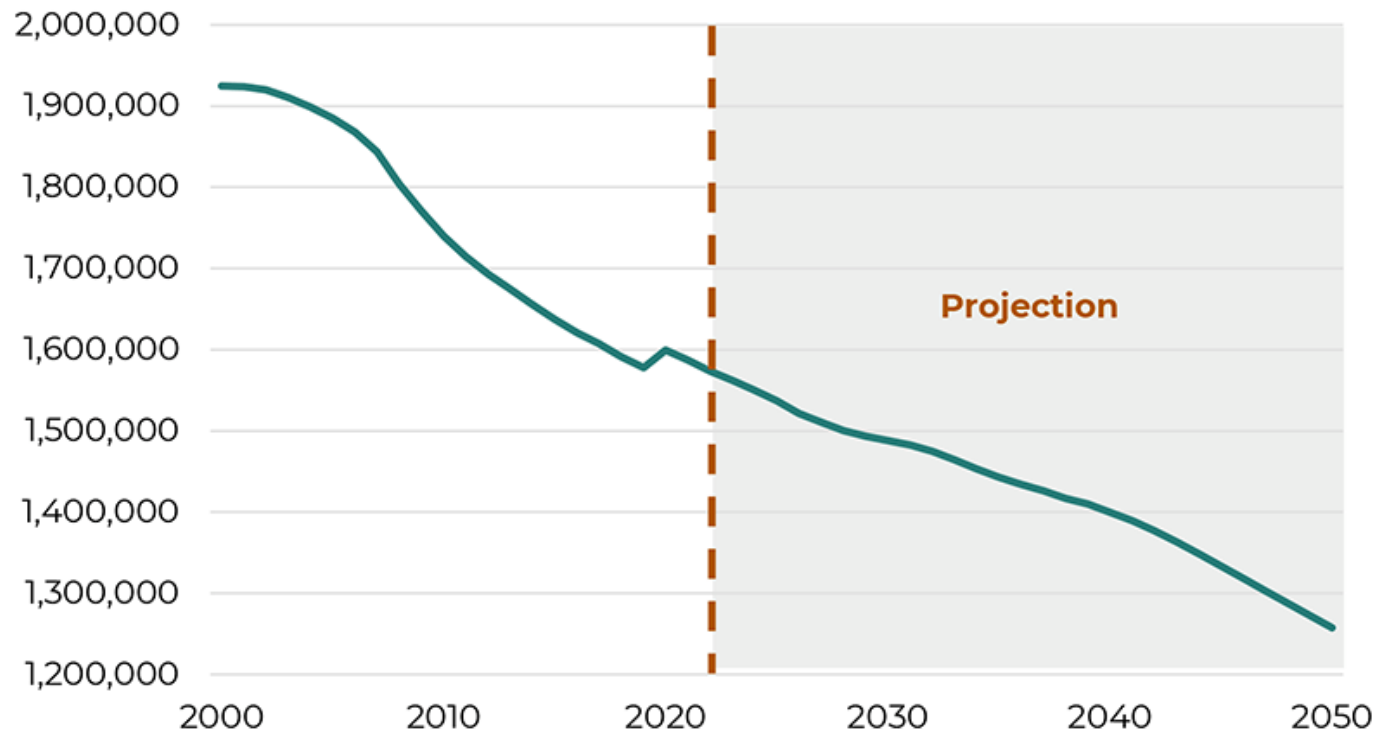
Source: Vintage 2024 Population Projections, Net Positive Migration Scenario, Michigan Center for Data and Analytics

Michigan faces growing eldercare demands as its senior population increases.

- Eldercare occupations are projected to have high growth in [MCDA's 2022-2032 employment projections](#) for Michigan.
- However, Michigan could have labor shortages if growth in the working-age population remains flat or declines and the healthcare and eldercare industries cannot keep pace with increases in the oldest adult population.

Implications of Michigan's Population Trends

The five- to 17-year-old population is projected to decline by another 280,000 children (18 percent) by 2050.



Source: 2024 Vintage Population Projections, Net Positive Migration Scenario, Michigan Center for Data and Analytics; Leach, Alan. "[Michigan's K-12 Population Decline Likely to Continue.](#)" July 23, 2025.

About 80 percent of Michigan school districts have experienced enrollment reductions since 2009.

Population aging will continue impacting the labor force and potential tax revenues.

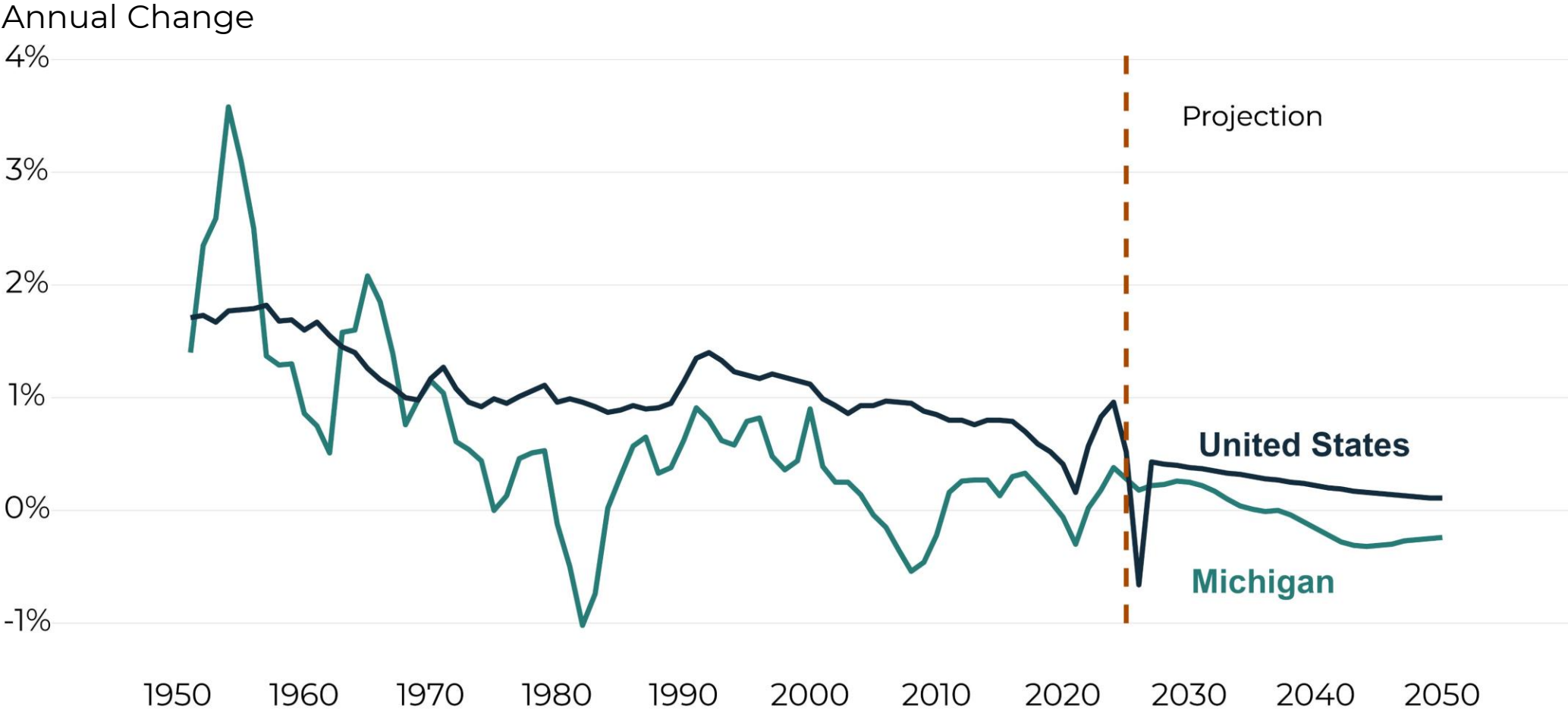
1. Population aging strains programs and populations that are sensitive to age distributions (e.g., healthcare, social insurance programs, formal and informal caregiving).
2. Baby boomers are continuing to age out of the workforce and there will likely be fewer workers per retiree.
3. Less income and assets subject to taxation (e.g., less revenue from payroll jobs, using age deduction and other related tax reductions)

Michigan, the Census, and Funding

The census is used to direct billions of federal dollars to the states through programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

Michigan also uses the census to distribute billions of state dollars to local governments every year through state-revenue sharing and transportation funding.

Michigan's growth rate is projected to remain lower than the nation through 2030.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program; 2024 Vintage Population Projections, Net Positive Migration Scenario, Michigan Center for Data and Analytics

Headwinds going into Michigan's 2030 Census

- Michigan had five consecutive years of natural decrease from July 2020 to June 2025.
 - This is the first time in Michigan's recorded history where the state had even one year of natural decrease heading into the census.
- Michigan's self-response rates for most federal surveys have been declining in the 2020s.

Updating the Census Address List is one of the most direct and efficient ways to improve the census count.

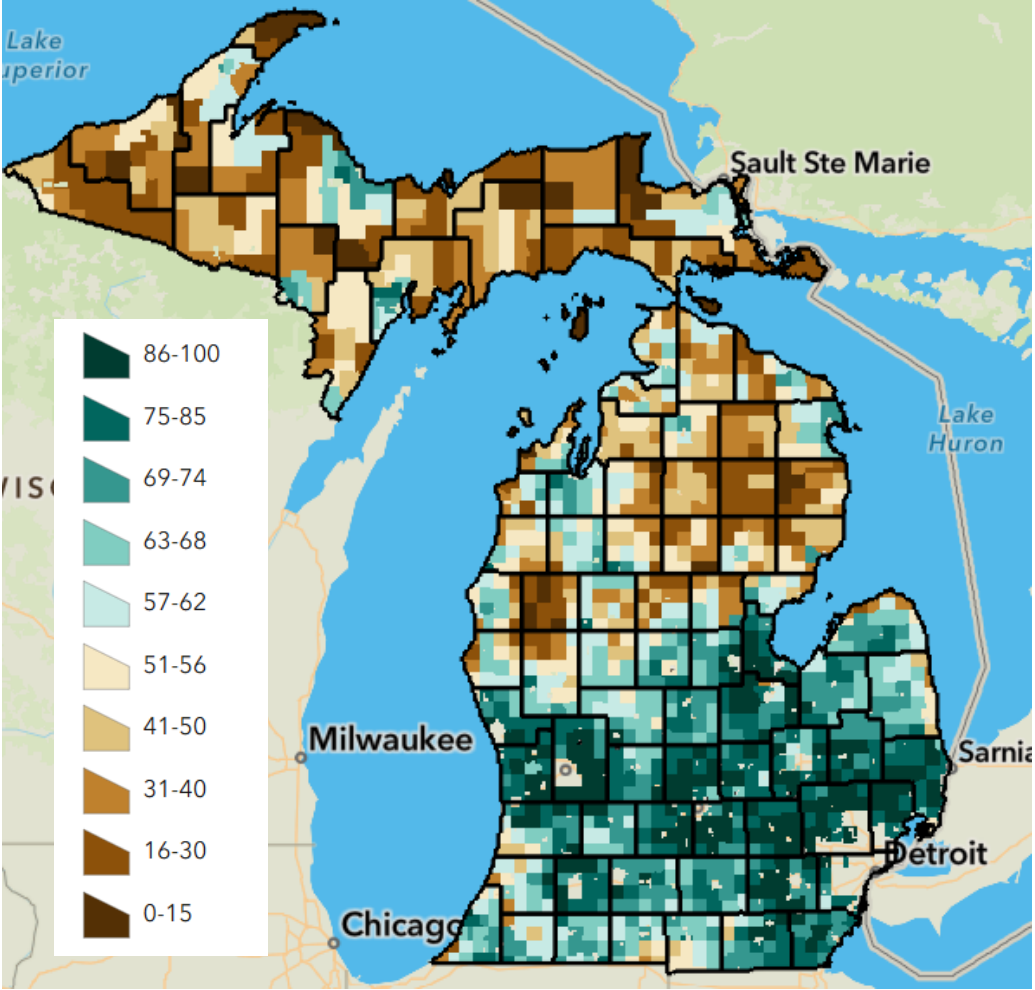
The Local Update to Census Addresses (LUCA) operation starts next year.

An updated address list helps the Census Bureau identify where people live and enumerate areas with low self-response rates.

Household self-response rate to the 2020 Census (%) for townships

The following governments are eligible to participate in LUCA: the state, tribal nations, counties, cities, villages, and townships.

MCDA is working to coordinate a **strong, strategic, and streamlined** LUCA submission across the state.



Source: [Decennial Self-Response Rates 2020](#)

Population Key Takeaways

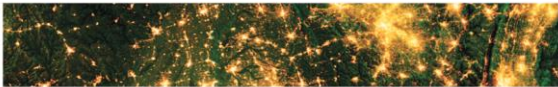
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Additional Resources



Michigan Statewide Population Projections through 2050

April 2024



Subscribe to the population and demography emails at michigan.gov/MCDASubscribe.

Analyses and articles at <https://www.michigan.gov/mcda/population>

Population projections data in the [MCDA data search tool](#)

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Thank You!

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