



### MPPS Policy Brief

## Most Michigan local officials believe their government workforce reflects their community, less so in urban areas

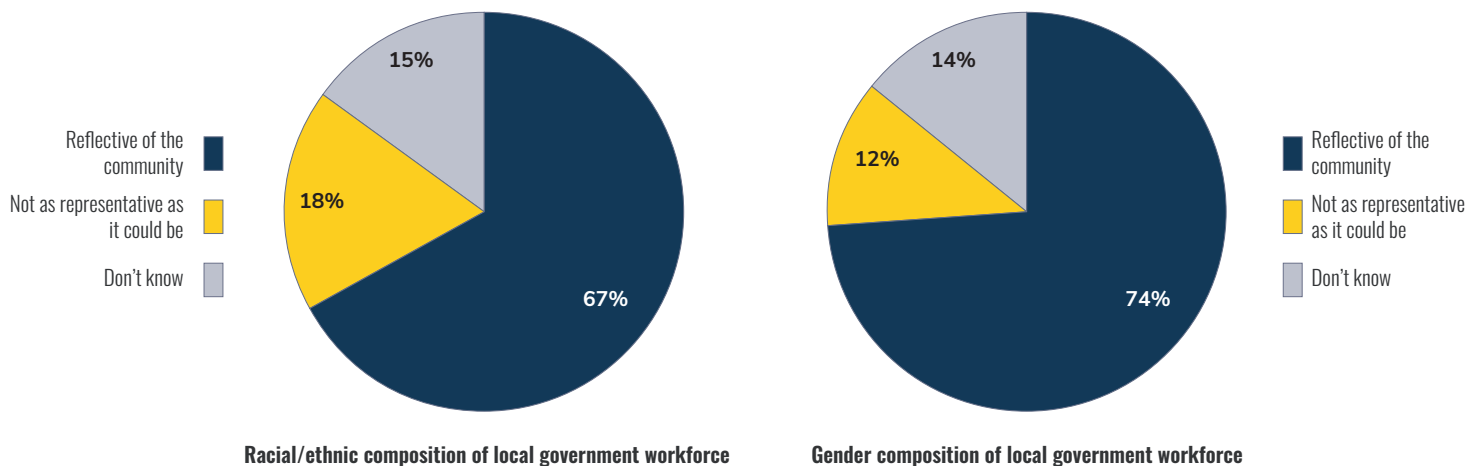
By Debra Horner, Thomas Ivacko, and Om Shah

Statewide, 92% of Michigan local governments report having some type of paid employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal, or temporary), beyond their elected officials.<sup>1</sup> Among these jurisdictions, the Spring 2022 Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) asked local leaders to assess the composition of their local government's workforce compared to their community's population. Statewide, two-thirds (67%) say their government's workforce is generally reflective of the community's racial and/or ethnic composition and three-quarters (74%) say it is reflective of the community's gender makeup (see *Figure 1*). By comparison, 18% say the workforce is not as representative of the community as it could be, while 12% say the same in terms of gender composition.

These assessments in Michigan align closely with those of local government leaders across the country. According to a survey conducted in December 2021-January 2022 by MissionSquare Research Institute, 63% of local government respondents nationwide feel that their workforce reflects the racial or ethnic makeup of the community they serve very well or somewhat well. Similarly, 76% believe their workforce reflects the gender makeup of their communities.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1**

Local officials' assessments of whether their jurisdiction's workforce is reflective of the community population (among jurisdictions with employees)



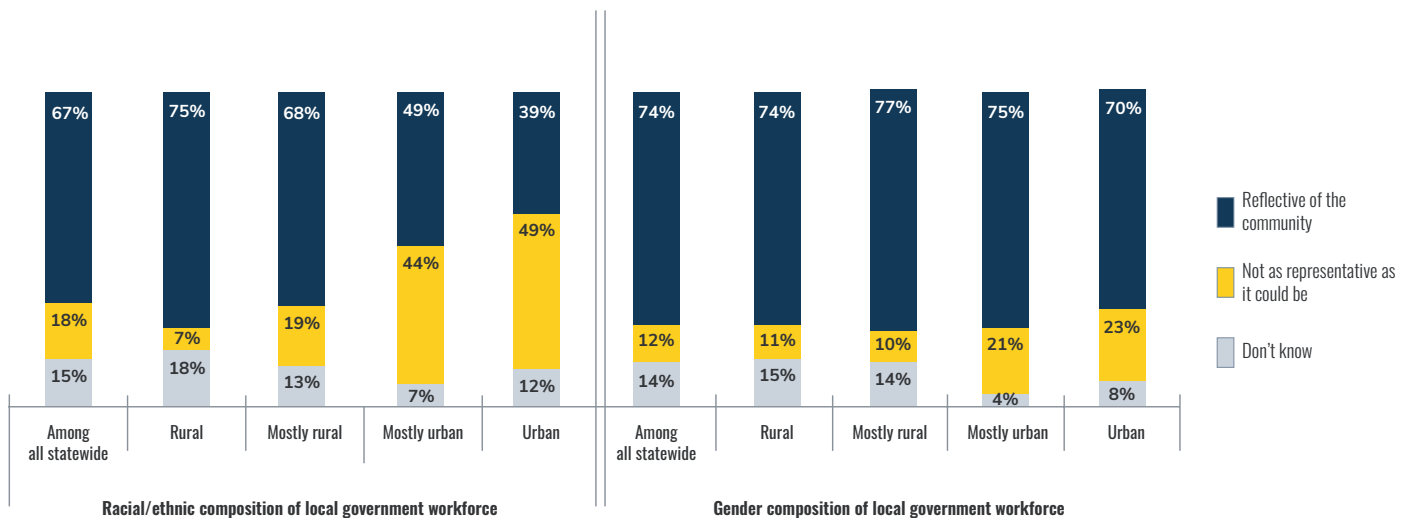
Differences exist between types of jurisdictions in Michigan, with officials who describe their jurisdiction as fully rural (75%) and mostly rural (68%) significantly more likely to say their local government workforce is reflective of the community’s racial/ethnic composition compared with those from mostly urban (49%) or fully urban (39%) communities (see *Figure 2*). Nearly half (49%) of officials from Michigan’s fully urban jurisdictions believe their government’s workforce is not as representative of the community’s racial composition as it could be.

Urban communities tend to have more heterogeneous racial and ethnic populations compared with rural communities, which may make hiring a reflective workforce more challenging. This is reflected on the next page, which shows urban places are more likely to report having policies to encourage diverse hiring.

Meanwhile, 21% of Michigan officials in mostly urban jurisdictions and 23% in fully urban jurisdictions say the gender balance in their government’s workforce is not as reflective of the community as it could be. This is double the percentage of those in mostly rural (10%) or fully rural (11%) jurisdictions, though it is worth noting that more officials in these rural jurisdictions don’t know how closely their workforce reflects the community’s gender composition.

**Figure 2**

Local officials’ assessments of whether their jurisdiction’s workforce is reflective of the community population (among jurisdictions with employees), by urban-rural self-identification

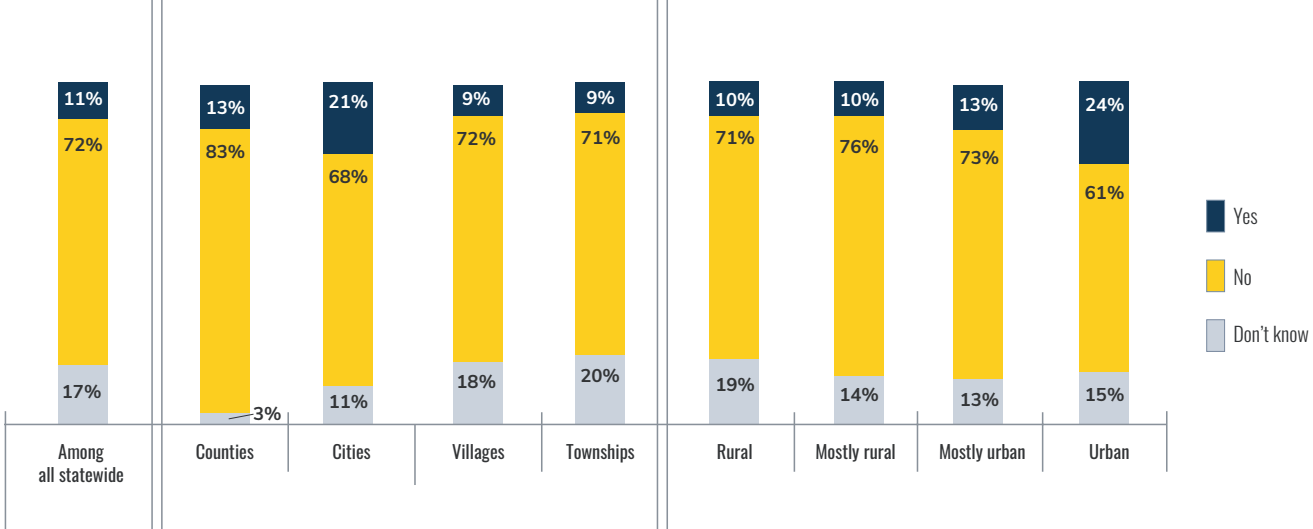


# Relatively few Michigan local governments have specific policies or practices for recruiting or retaining a workforce reflective of the community

Statewide, just 11% of jurisdictions report having policies or practices for recruiting or retaining a workforce reflective of its community (see *Figure 3*). Cities (21%) are more likely to implement these measures than counties (13%), villages (9%), or townships (9%). Officials representing townships (20%) and villages (18%) were more likely to say they “don’t know” if their jurisdiction has these measures, compared with those from cities (11%) and counties (3%).

Self-described urban (24%) jurisdictions were significantly more likely to have these measures than mostly urban (13%), mostly rural (10%), and fully rural (10%) jurisdictions.

**Figure 3**  
Percent of jurisdictions with policies or practices for recruiting or retaining a workforce reflective of the community (among jurisdictions with employees)



## Notes

1. Horner, D., Ivacko, T., & Fitzpatrick, N. (2023, February). Michigan local government leaders report increased problems with workforce recruitment, retention, and other issues. Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan. Retrieved from: <https://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/110/michigan-local-government-leaders-report-increased-problems-workforce-recruitment>
2. Young, G. (2022, May). Managing Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Local Government. MissionSquare Research Institute. Retrieved from: [https://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/managing-lg-workforce-dei-part1\\_survey-data.pdf](https://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/managing-lg-workforce-dei-part1_survey-data.pdf)

## Survey Background and Methodology

These findings come from the Spring 2022 Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS). The MPPS is an ongoing census survey of all 1,856 general purpose local governments in Michigan conducted since 2009 by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. The program is a partnership with Michigan's local government associations. The Spring 2022 wave was conducted April 4 – June 6, 2022. Respondents include county administrators, board chairs, and clerks; city mayors, managers, and clerks; village presidents, managers, and clerks; and township supervisors, managers, and clerks from 1,327 jurisdictions across the state, resulting in a 71% response rate by unit. More information is available at <https://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/mpps-2022-spring>.

See CLOSUP's website for the full question text on the survey questionnaire. Detailed tables of the data in this report, including breakdowns by various community characteristics, are available at <http://mpps.umich.edu>.

*The survey responses presented here are those of local Michigan officials, while further analysis represents the views of the authors. Neither necessarily reflects the views of the University of Michigan, or of other partners in the MPPS.*



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