



The Functioning of Democracy at the Local Level (updated for 2024)

A compendium of findings from the
Michigan Public Policy Survey of local leaders

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This review presents a summary of various survey questions touching upon issues of democracy and democratic governance asked of Michigan's local government leaders over 16 years of Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) waves, 2009–2024. Topic areas include local officials' assessments of the functioning of democracy at the national, state, and local levels, reports on election administration and election security, citizen engagement, local officials' trust in other levels of government and in their citizens, relationships and communication between the state government and its local jurisdictions, relationships between local officials themselves, and between local governments and their citizens, civil civic discourse, and more.



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1. Introduction

The health of democracy in the United States and around the world has been a topic of significant concern in recent years. Headlines across the U.S. have been filled with stories on challenges to core democratic institutions, from protests,¹ to the media,² the courts, the ballot box,³ and more. The January 6th, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol building was a watershed event in the nation's history peaceful transition of political power, and political observers are increasingly focused on the current health of democracy in the United States, and many have concluded that America's system of governance is in decline.⁴

Concerns about the functioning of American democracy are not new,⁵ but in recent years they have spread to a wide variety of facets and measures. In 2016 the Economist's annual "Democracy Index" downgraded the U.S. from "full democracy" to "flawed democracy", and we remain a "flawed democracy" in the 2023 Index as the result of a decade of declining ratings on a number of the 60 different indicators they track.⁶ U.S. residents also recognize mounting dangers to our political system. A January 2022 Quinnipiac poll found that 53% of Americans expect political divisions in the country to worsen in their lifetime, while just 15% expected them to ease.⁷ The same poll found that 76% of Americans say that political instability in the U.S. is a bigger danger to the nation than that presented by other countries that are adversaries of the U.S.

Surveys of political scientists⁸ and scholars who specifically study democratic decline⁹ sound similar alarms about the decline in a variety of American democratic institutions and norms. These concerns are not limited to national politics, but among the states as well. The March 2019 Bright Line Watch survey of experts found just 15 American states rated at higher than 75 on a 100-point scale assessing the quality of state-level democracy.¹⁰ And although Michigan's nickname as "The Arsenal of Democracy" dates to World War II, it has experienced its own recent successes and challenges. For example, on one hand, the state's voters have recently amended the state constitution to expand voting access and to end partisan gerrymandering by handing the redistricting process to a new Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission.¹¹ On the other hand, as recently as 2023, Michigan scored worst in the nation on measures of state government accountability, ethics enforcement, and transparency.¹²

With much of this discussion of democratic decline centered on the national and state levels, much less attention has been given to governance at the local level. How well is democracy functioning at the grass roots?

The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) is one source of information to help investigate this question. Over the past sixteen years, the MPPS has gathered the opinions of elected and appointed leaders from all 1,856 of Michigan's general purpose local governments. During that time, various MPPS survey waves have explored a wide-ranging collection of topics related to the functioning of democracy and political participation in local governments statewide. This compendium of MPPS findings summarizes this research, and while the surveys have uncovered numerous areas of concern, the overarching picture it paints is one where local government leaders in Michigan are—generally—positive about institutions, relationships, and attitudes associated with local democratic governance. Furthermore, in many cases, this contrasts with a greater level of skepticism about the related elements of democracy at the state and federal levels.

Although there are many ways to conceptualize American democracy, one way the MPPS survey has engaged with the concept is through local officials' assessments of local democratic institutions and processes like elections as well as formal rules that regulate and allow citizen participation in governance. And when it comes to institutions, Michigan's local officials tend to believe they are strong at the local level. For example, when asked about the core issue of local election administration, local leaders' confidence in their ability to conduct elections—including accuracy of counts, election security, and successful recounts—is exceptionally high.

In terms of citizen participation in governance, a majority of local leaders statewide also say their jurisdictions offer a great deal of opportunities for citizens to engage in local policymaking and/or operations, while only a handful say they offer few or no opportunities. Many also express interest in seeing more engagement from their residents, despite concerns that a good number of citizens don't take the time to become well informed, and mostly show up to complain rather than find solutions. And while local leaders increasingly thought between 2012 and 2016 that they themselves (as opposed to their residents) should be in charge of making controversial decisions in their communities, nonetheless they also expressed increasing levels of trust between 2012 and 2020 in their citizens to be responsible participants in local governance.

Ethics in government are another aspect of the functioning of democracy explored on the MPPS. Belief in local rules around ethics is robust as well, with the vast majority of local leaders expressing satisfaction with the policies and practices governing ethics in their jurisdictions as well as the ethical behavior of their own officials, while having significantly higher concerns about ethical issues among state-level actors.

When it comes to relationships between democratic actors, the MPPS has found Michigan local officials to be relatively optimistic about relationships at the local level, while, again, being more skeptical about the state-local relationship. The vast majority of Michigan local officials report that elected officials have good working relationships in their jurisdiction, including nearly one in four who say those relationships are excellent. By contrast, many feel that state government officials do not value input from local governments, that the State holds local governments to a higher standard than it holds itself to, and that the State unfairly treats some jurisdictions better than others.

Meanwhile, again at the local level, officials have very positive views on the tone of public discourse between local officials themselves and with their residents, by wide margins reporting it is constructive rather than divisive. That said, a majority of local leaders do report that members of their local government (elected officials or staff) have experienced harassment, threats, or even violence over the past few years, and that this harassment has had negative impacts on the willingness of people to work or serve in the jurisdiction's government, residents' civic engagement, and the ability of jurisdiction personnel to do their jobs well. Increasing numbers of local leaders believe that national partisan politics hurts civic relationships among their residents, as well as relationships among members of their governing board or council.

On the foundational democratic issue of trust in government, local government officials also report high levels of trust in other Michigan local governments that have persisted and even increased across the decade of MPPS surveys, while expressing significantly lower trust in the state government, and little trust at all in the federal government.

And finally, the MPPS tracks local officials' assessments about the essential functioning of democracy at the federal, state, and local levels, while thinking about a wide range of factors that comprise democracy. In keeping with their views as found on many individual aspects of democracy, Michigan's local leaders responded with high ratings for democracy in their own local jurisdictions, but substantially lower marks for the health of democracy in the state of Michigan and the U.S. as a whole. It's important to note, however, that the high ratings for the local level have dipped slightly in the past two years.

Of course there are nuances to all of these issues, with variations among officials from different kinds of jurisdictions and different individual perspectives. More detail on each of these topics can be found in reports and data tables linked at the end of each section of the compendium that follows.



2. The Functioning of Democracy

What's at Issue:

In a time when there are growing concerns about the health of American democracy, much of the focus tends to be on national-level institutions and norms. But, of course, American democracy operates in a federal system, with equally important aspects at the national, state, and local levels. How do Michigan's local leaders assess the overall functioning of democracy in their own jurisdictions, compared with at the state and national levels?

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Michigan's local leaders are significantly more positive about the functioning of democracy in their jurisdictions than they are about democracy at the state or federal levels.
- Statewide, 79% of local leaders rate democracy in their jurisdiction at 7 or higher on a 10-point scale, compared to just 28% for democracy in Michigan overall, and just 11% for democracy across the U.S.
- Partisan identification plays a larger role in assessments of the functioning of democracy at the state and national levels than locally.
- Local officials' assessments of democracy in their own communities have declined slightly from 84% with positive assessments in 2020-2022 to 79% in 2023 and 2024.

Deeper Dive:

Each spring since the 2020 wave, the MPPS has asked local leaders for their opinions regarding the state of America's democracy as a system of government, prompting them to think about such issues as free and fair elections, rule of law, an unbiased free press, balanced relationships between levels and branches of government, ethical and transparent governance, an informed and engaged electorate, etc. Local officials were asked to evaluate the functioning of democracy on a 1 to 10 scale—with 1 as a total breakdown of democracy and 10 as perfectly functioning democracy—for three specific levels of governance: in their own jurisdiction, in the state of Michigan overall, and in the United States overall.

In 2024, as shown in **Table 2.1**, nearly one in six (17%) local leaders rate the state of democracy in their own jurisdictions as a perfect 10 on the 1-10 scale, and the mean assessment statewide is 7.9 out of 10. Only 7% rate the state of democracy in their communities as less than a 5 on the 10-point scale.

By comparison, the mean assessment on the 10-point scale for democracy in the State of Michigan as a whole is 5.0, and only 2% of local leaders give Michigan democracy a perfect 10. At the other end of the scale, 38% rate Michigan's democracy below a 5 on the 10-point scale, including 9% who rate Michigan at 1 on the scale, that is, experiencing a total breakdown of democracy.

Ratings for democracy at the federal level are even more pessimistic. Among local officials statewide, the mean rating of the current state of democracy in the U.S. is below the halfway point of the scale, at 3.6, with over half (65%) giving U.S. democracy a rating lower than 5. Less than 1% say it is perfectly functioning, and 19% believe U.S. democracy is in a state of total breakdown.

Regardless of their partisan identification, local leaders of all types are highly positive about democracy in their own jurisdictions. **Table 2.2** displays how significant majorities among Democrats (79%), Independents (78%), and Republicans (83%) consider their jurisdictions to have highly functioning democracy (scores of 7–10). But, as seen in **Table 2.3**, when it comes to rating the current health of democracy at the state level in Michigan—with a Democratic governor and legislature currently in control of state government— 61% of Democratic local leaders say Michigan has high functioning democracy, compared to just 35% of Independents 18% of Republicans. Now at the federal level, with the U.S. presidency held by Democratic President Joe Biden, the partisan pattern is similar. As shown in **Table 2.4**, Democratic local officials (24%) tend to give higher ratings than Independents (8%) or Republicans (6%) for democracy in the United States as a whole, although these percentages are all quite low.

Table 2.1

Now we’re asking more broadly about your opinion of the state of our democracy as a system of government.

This would include basic issues such as free and fair elections, rule of law, an unbiased free press, balanced relationships between levels and branches of government, ethical and transparent governance, an informed and engaged electorate, etc.

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a total breakdown of democracy and 10 is perfectly functioning democracy, how would you rate the functioning of democracy today in...

	Your jurisdiction	The state of Michigan	The U.S.
1: Total breakdown of democracy	1%	9%	19%
2	2%	8%	19%
3	3%	10%	15%
4	2%	11%	12%
5	6%	15%	12%
6	3%	14%	8%
7	11%	13%	6%
8	25%	9%	3%
9	27%	5%	1%
10: Perfectly functioning democracy	17%	2%	1%

Table 2.2

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a total breakdown of democracy and 10 is perfectly functioning democracy, how would you rate the functioning of democracy today in your jurisdiction?

	Republicans			Independents			Democrats		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Poor functioning (1-4)	3%	4%	7%	3%	3%	5%	8%	3%	8%
Medium functioning (5-6)	9%	13%	8%	10%	18%	13%	9%	12%	10%
High functioning (7-10)	86%	82%	83%	82%	77%	78%	83%	84%	79%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	4%	3%	4%	0%	1%	3%

Table 2.3

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a total breakdown of democracy and 10 is perfectly functioning democracy, how would you rate the functioning of democracy today in the state of Michigan?

	Republicans			Independents			Democrats		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Poor functioning (1-4)	39%	44%	49%	25%	27%	34%	18%	8%	8%
Medium functioning (5-6)	36%	35%	30%	43%	40%	27%	36%	27%	28%
High functioning (7-10)	23%	20%	18%	27%	28%	35%	45%	64%	61%
Don't know	2%	1%	3%	5%	5%	4%	2%	1%	3%

Table 2.4

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a total breakdown of democracy and 10 is perfectly functioning democracy, how would you rate the functioning of democracy today in the U.S.?

	Republicans			Independents			Democrats		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Poor functioning (1-4)	69%	69%	74%	61%	63%	65%	47%	40%	44%
Medium functioning (5-6)	19%	21%	17%	27%	23%	22%	33%	33%	28%
High functioning (7-10)	10%	8%	6%	8%	9%	8%	20%	26%	24%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%	5%	6%	4%	1%	2%	4%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- **Table 2.1:**

- » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q51a>
- » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q51b>
- » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q51c>
- » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q49a>
- » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q49b>
- » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q49c>
- » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q49a>
- » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q49b>
- » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q49c>
- » 2023: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q31a>
- » 2023: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q31b>
- » 2023: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q31c>
- » 2024: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2024-data/q38a>
- » 2024: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2024-data/q38b>
- » 2024: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2024-data/q38c>

Reports

- [Michigan local government leaders' concerns about the health of democracy edge upward, including at local level \(2024\)](#)
- [Michigan local government leaders' assessments of democratic functioning improve from 2021 low, but first signs of trouble at local level emerge \(2023\)](#)
- [Michigan local leaders' concerns about U.S. democracy at state and federal levels ease somewhat, but remain grim \(2022\)](#)
- [Michigan local officials' assessments of American democracy at the state and federal levels decline sharply \(2021\)](#)
- [Michigan local leaders say local democracy is strong, as their trust in government and citizens rises \(2020\)](#)



3. Citizen Engagement and Public Participation in Local Government Decision Making

What's at Issue:

Democracy, at its core, means having citizens involved in the processes of governance, to at least some extent. The idea that elected officials and public administrators have both an obligation and self-interest to engage the citizens in their communities is routinely promoted by good governance efforts nationwide.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- When it comes to local leaders' views on the role their citizens should play in the local policymaking process—from just staying informed on the low end, to helping make decisions on the high end—interest in a more active role for citizens increased between 2012 and 2016. While 17% of Michigan's local leaders believed the proper role of citizen engagement efforts was only to keep citizens informed about issues facing their jurisdictions as of 2012, this dropped to just 4% by 2016. Meanwhile, the percentage who believed citizens should recommend specific decisions for their jurisdictions doubled, from 12% in 2012 to 25% in 2016.
- In the Fall 2016 MPPS, when asked about opportunities for citizens to engage with their local government, a majority (54%) of Michigan local government leaders reported that their jurisdictions offer a great deal of opportunities, but only 10% said their citizens are very involved.
- There was a drop of approximately 10 percentage points between 2012 and 2016 in reported citizen involvement in local issues, and a similar drop in officials' satisfaction with citizen involvement.
- There was no noticeable difference between 2012 and 2016 in reported opportunities for citizens to participate in government decision-making.

Deeper Dive:

One way to think about the role of citizen engagement is along a spectrum from low engagement to high engagement. At the low end, a jurisdiction's citizen engagement efforts might focus just on keeping citizens informed about issues facing the local government. At the high end, citizens would actually make decisions for the jurisdiction. The 2012 and 2016 MPPS surveys asked local leaders where they believe the proper role for citizen engagement in local governance is, on that spectrum. As shown in **Table 3.1**, 17% of local officials in 2012 thought that citizens should simply be kept informed, and only 10% thought they should recommend (9%) or make decisions (1%). However, on the 2016 survey, only 4% of local leaders said citizens should merely be kept informed, while 28% wanted to give them a say in recommending (25%) and even making decisions (3%) for the jurisdiction.

In both 2012 and 2016, the MPPS also asked local government officials how they would describe citizen engagement in their jurisdictions. Compared to responses in 2012, local officials in 2016 were 9 percentage points less likely to say citizens were somewhat engaged, as shown in **Table 3.2**. A similar decline was found regarding local officials' satisfaction with their citizens' participation in the policymaking process (**Table 3.3**).

Interestingly, however, very little change was found between 2012 and 2016 in officials reporting that their jurisdiction provides opportunities for citizens to be engaged, with nearly 95% of respondents reporting that their jurisdiction provides opportunities either "a great deal" or "somewhat" (**Table 3.4**). Along this trend, 78% of respondents in both 2012 and 2016 either strongly or somewhat agreed that their jurisdiction makes opportunities for citizens to get involved, but the citizens do not take advantage of these opportunities (**Table 3.5**).

Table 3.1

While it might differ depending on the topic, in general, what do you personally believe is the proper role for citizen engagement in local governance?

	2012	2016
Keep citizens informed	17%	4%
Have citizens provide input/identify specific policy options	71%	64%
Have citizens recommend decisions	9%	25%
Have citizens make decisions	1%	3%
Don't Know	2%	2%

Table 3.2

We want to start by getting a very broad sense of citizen engagement with your local government. How would you describe citizen engagement — whatever that means to you — with your jurisdiction? Overall, citizens in your jurisdiction are...

	2012	2016
Very Engaged	10%	10%
Somewhat Engaged	55%	46%
Not Very Engaged	31%	36%
Not At All Engaged	3%	7%
Don't Know	0%	2%

Table 3.3

Overall, how satisfied are you regarding citizen engagement in your jurisdiction's policymaking and/or operations today?

	2012	2016
Very Satisfied	16%	11%
Somewhat Satisfied	42%	40%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	22%	25%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	14%	16%
Very Dissatisfied	4%	7%
Don't Know	1%	2%

Table 3.4

To what extent do you feel your jurisdiction offers opportunities to citizens for engagement with your jurisdiction in its policymaking and/or operations?

	2012	2016
A Great Deal	53%	54%
Somewhat	44%	39%
Little, if Any (2012) or Very Little/Not at all (2016)	3%	5%
Don't Know	0%	2%

**Table 3.5**

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you make opportunities for engagement available, but your citizens rarely take advantage of them?

	2012	2016
Strongly Agree	37%	32%
Somewhat Agree	41%	46%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12%	11%
Somewhat Disagree	7%	6%
Strongly Disagree	4%	3%
Don't Know	0%	2%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 3.1
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q25>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q20d>
- Table 3.2
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q20>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q02>
- Table 3.3
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q26>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q23>
- Table 3.4
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q21>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q03>
- Table 3.5
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q22a>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q14b>

Reports

- [Michigan local leaders want their citizens to play a larger role in policymaking, but report declining engagement \(2017\)](#)
- [Citizen engagement in the view of Michigan's local government leaders \(2013\)](#)

4. Officials' Opinions of Their Residents' Input

What's at Issue:

Who should decide key policy issues? The MPPS asked local officials in both 2012 and 2016 to give assessments on who should have a say in significant decisions and whether citizens are responsible participants in policymaking.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Between 2012 and 2016, belief that public officials, rather than citizens, should be in charge of making controversial decisions increased among Michigan local leaders.
- Officials from jurisdictions with smaller populations were more likely to say that citizens should be in charge of making controversial decisions.
- Michigan's local leaders reported increasingly negative views about a number of specific attitudes and behaviors they perceive among their citizens. In 2016, over three-quarters (77%) of local leaders said that most of their citizens were not willing to take the time to become well informed on issues facing the jurisdiction, up from 67% in 2012.
- Compared with their views in 2012, local officials were significantly more likely to believe in 2016 that citizens were more interested in just complaining than in finding solutions.
- Despite these concerns, there was a significant increase from 2012 to 2020 regarding officials' trust in citizens to be responsible participants in policymaking, with 16% of local leaders in 2020 saying they trust their residents nearly always (up from 11% in 2012) and another 49% trusting them most of the time (compared with 42% in 2012).

Deeper Dive:

As shown in **Table 4.1**, the MPPS carried a similarly worded question in both 2012 and 2016 regarding officials' opinions on who should have the final say in controversial decisions: citizens or public officials. In those four years, belief by elected officials around Michigan that public officials should be in charge of controversial decisions increased (from 61% to 72%), while beliefs that citizens should be in charge of these decisions decreased (from 24% to 20%). In both years, leaders from jurisdictions with smaller populations were much more likely to believe citizens should make controversial decisions compared with those from larger jurisdictions.

In addition, local leaders were asked in both 2012 and 2016 to what extent they agree or disagree that most of their citizens are more interested in complaining than finding solutions (as displayed in **Table 4.2**). By 2016, officials were far more likely to say that they either somewhat or strongly agree (69%) that their citizens are more interested in complaining than finding solutions, compared with their views in 2012, when 50% felt this way.

As seen in **Table 4.3**, public officials' trust in citizens to be responsible participants while engaging with the jurisdictions' policymaking and operations remained steady between 2012 and 2016, but then saw a sharp uptick in 2020. In both 2012 and 2016, just 13% of respondents said that they felt they could "seldom" or "almost never" trust their citizens, compared to a combined total of 53% in 2012 and 54% in 2016 that felt they could trust their citizens "nearly always" or "most of the time." By 2020, only 11% expressed distrust, while the percentage saying they could trust their citizens "nearly always" or "most of the time" rose to 65%.

**Table 4.1**

Thinking about controversial issues in your community, in general, who do you think should have the final say on your jurisdiction's most controversial decisions — citizens or public officials?

	2012	2016
Citizens	24%	20%
Public Officials	61%	72%
Not Applicable	6%	--
Don't Know	9%	8%

Table 4.2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that most citizens you hear from are more interested in complaining than in finding solutions?

	2012	2016
Strongly Agree	14%	29%
Somewhat Agree	36%	40%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	25%	17%
Somewhat Disagree	16%	10%
Strongly Disagree	8%	2%
Don't Know	0%	1%

Table 4.3

In terms of their engagement in your jurisdiction's policymaking and/or operations, how much of the time do you think you can trust the citizens in your community to be responsible participants?

	2012	2016	2020
Nearly Always	11%	11%	16%
Most of the Time	42%	43%	49%
Some of the Time	32%	31%	23%
Seldom	10%	10%	8%
Almost Never	3%	3%	3%
Don't Know	1%	2%	2%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 4.1
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q25>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q17>
- Table 4.2
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q22c>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q14>
- Table 4.3
 - » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q50>
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q23>
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q15>

Reports

- [Michigan local leaders say local democracy is strong, as their trust in government and citizens rises \(2020\)](#)
- [Michigan local leaders want their citizens to play a larger role in policymaking, but report declining engagement \(2017\)](#)
- [Citizen engagement in the view of Michigan's local government leaders \(2013\)](#)
- [Beyond trust in government: government trust in citizens? \(2013\)](#)



5. Civic Discourse in Local Communities

What's at Issue:

Conventional wisdom in recent years has highlighted a decrease in civility in public discourse around a wide range of national issues, but is that the case at the local level as well? The MPPS asked local government leaders in 2012, 2018, 2021, and 2022 to evaluate the tone of discourse in their community.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Michigan's local officials see their communities' public discourse to be primarily constructive.
- Assessments of relations *among local elected officials* themselves remain stable and generally strong. Statewide in 2022, 70% said discourse among their own jurisdiction's elected officials on local policy issues is constructive, and a large majority (84%) rated the relationships among their elected officials as good or excellent.
- Although assessments of discourse *between local elected officials and residents* have worsened slightly, two-thirds of local officials still say this discourse is primarily constructive, while 82% rate relationships between officials and residents as good or excellent.
- Assessments of discourse *among residents* themselves improved from 2018-2022.
- The majority of local leaders in 2021 believe that national partisan politics hurts civic relationships among their residents, and just under a majority believe national partisan politics hurts relationships among members of their board/ council (up from just 15% who said the same in 2018).

Deeper Dive:

Tracking questions that were carried in 2012, 2018 and 2021, the MPPS in 2022 asked government leaders throughout Michigan to rate the state of public discourse regarding local policy issues in their jurisdictions on a scale from "very constructive" to "very divisive." This question was asked regarding three different groups: public discourse among officials themselves, between officials and residents in their jurisdictions, and among residents themselves. Overall, as seen in **Table 5.1**, officials ranked the state of discourse to be primarily constructive for all three groups, with little to no change from 2021 to 2022.

In **Table 5.1a**, the ranking for constructive discourse among local officials has remained more or less similar over the last decade, in the range of 41% (2022) to 42% (2012). Overall, in 2022 we can see the trend shifting more towards mixed and divisive than the previous year, and there is little variation among officials from jurisdictions of various population sizes rating discourse to be constructive.

Now looking at **Table 5.1b**, for 2022 we can see an increase of 3% from 2021 in the discourse ranking for very constructive between elected officials and residents. More than half of the respondents rate the discourse as very constructive or somewhat constructive.

In **Table 5.1c** the largest change seen between 2021 and 2022 was in discourse between residents themselves, where there was an uptick of 7% in constructive ratings cumulatively, with a slight decline in percentages ranking discourse as "mixed." There was no change in assessments between 2021 and 2022 on the "divisive" end of the scale.

In 2012, shown in **Table 5.2a**, local leaders were likely to say civic discourse in their communities was either becoming more civil or maintaining the same level of civility. And **Table 5.2b** shows that ratings in 2018 of changes over time in civility also tended to be more positive than negative, although positive and negative change was more closely balanced in ratings of discourse between residents.

The MPPS also asked Michigan's local leaders whether they think the current environment of national partisan politics helps or hurts relationships among those same three groups within their jurisdictions. In this case, local leaders express widespread apprehension about the negative effects of national politics in their own communities. As shown in **Table 5.3a**, only a third (33%) of local leaders in 2021 said national partisan politics has no impact on the working relationships between members of their local board or council. That drops to 21% when it comes to civic relationships between elected officials and residents, and just 9% for relationships among local residents themselves. Meanwhile, fewer than 10% statewide believe national party politics has a positive impact on any of these various relationships. Nearly half (45%) believe it has a negative impact on the working relationships on their board or council, more than half (54%), say the same regarding relationships between local elected officials and residents, and fully 61% say the same regarding relationships among their communities' residents.

Concerns over these negative impacts of national partisan politics have risen significantly over a short period of time. Looking specifically at relationships among the jurisdiction's elected officials—the one local officials say is *least* affected by national partisan politics—in 2018 just 15% said national (and state) partisan politics somewhat or significantly hurt board or council relationships, as shown in **Table 5.3b**. However, by 2021 that percentage had tripled, to 45%. Substantial increases are found among local leaders from jurisdictions of all sizes, but notably more than two-thirds (68%) of leaders of the state's largest jurisdictions say current national partisan politics hurts board or council relationships, compared to 37% who said the same three years ago.

Table 5.1

Overall, thinking about relationships between people in your community and the tone of discussions that take place around local policy issues, how would you describe the general state of public discourse between the following groups within your jurisdiction:

Table 5.1a: Among public officials themselves

	2012	2018	2021	2022
Very constructive	42%	41%	40%	41%
Somewhat constructive	32%	30%	33%	29%
Mixed	19%	20%	17%	18%
Somewhat divisive	4%	5%	4%	5%
Very divisive	2%	3%	2%	3%
Don't know	1%	2%	3%	4%

Table 5.1b: Between elected officials and residents

	2012	2018	2021	2022
Very constructive	22%	27%	25%	28%
Somewhat constructive	48%	40%	45%	38%
Mixed	25%	26%	20%	24%
Somewhat divisive	2%	4%	4%	4%
Very divisive	1%	1%	1%	2%
Don't know	2%	3%	5%	4%

Table 5.1c: Among residents themselves

	2012	2018	2021	2022
Very constructive	7%	10%	8%	13%
Somewhat constructive	23%	28%	27%	29%
Mixed	50%	39%	37%	36%
Somewhat divisive	9%	9%	10%	9%
Very divisive	2%	2%	4%	4%
Don't know	9%	12%	14%	9%

Table 5.2a

Thinking in general about how things have changed in your jurisdiction over the last ten years or so – if at all – how are citizens’ interactions with your local government different now than they were before: Is political discourse about local issues more or less civil? (2012)

	2012
More civil	25%
Neither More nor Less	55%
Less civil	13%
Don't Know	7%

Table 5.2b

Would you say the tone of discussion and communication among these groups is more or less civil than it was five years ago? (2018)

	Among elected officials themselves	Between elected officials and residents	Among residents themselves
Significantly More Civil	16%	13%	7%
Somewhat More Civil	20%	21%	17%
Neither More nor Less Civil	45%	50%	46%
Somewhat Less Civil	9%	8%	14%
Significantly Less Civil	4%	2%	4%
Don't Know	5%	6%	13%

Table 5.3a

Would you say that the current environment of national partisan politics helps or hurts relationships among the following groups within your jurisdiction? (2021)

	Among elected officials themselves	Between elected officials and residents	Among residents themselves
No Impact on Relationships	33%	21%	9%
Significantly Help	2%	2%	2%
Somewhat Help	7%	7%	6%
Somewhat Hurt	31%	37%	32%
Significantly Hurt	14%	17%	29%
Don't Know	14%	17%	23%

**Table 5.3b**

To what extent, if at all, would you say overall the following factors help or hurt relationships among the members of your jurisdiction's Board/Council? State and national partisan politics (2018) or national partisan politics (2021)

	2018	2021
No Impact on Relationships	56%	33%
Significantly Help	6%	2%
Somewhat Help	9%	7%
Somewhat Hurt	12%	31%
Significantly Hurt	3%	14%
Don't Know	15%	14%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 5.1a
 - » 2012: N/A
 - » 2018: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q13a>
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q46a>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q44a>
- Table 5.1b
 - » 2012: N/A
 - » 2018: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q13b>
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q46b>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q44b>
- Table 5.1c
 - » 2012: N/A
 - » 2018: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q13c>
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q46c>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q44c>
- Table 5.2a
 - » 2012: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2012-data/q19c>
- Table 5.2b
 - 2018:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q14a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q14b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q14c>
- Table 5.3a
 - 2021:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q47a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q47b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q47c>

- Table 5.3b
 - » 2018: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q12f>
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q12f>

Reports

- [Michigan local government leaders say civic relationships and civil discourse remain healthy, despite worsening national politics \(2022\)](#)
- [Michigan local leaders report little change in the tone of civic discourse in their communities, but are concerned about local impacts of increasingly hostile national partisan politics \(2021\)](#)
- [The state of community civic discourse, according to Michigan's local government leaders \(2018\)](#)



6. Harassment experienced by Local Officials and other Public Employees

What's at Issue:

Although Michigan local leaders report civic discourse in their communities is generally constructive, there have been high-profile reports of increasingly hostile relations between government officials and the public, with government officials too often facing verbal and even physical abuse. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, such incidents of hostility involving public health officials received particular attention, and in the wake of false accusations of voter fraud in the 2020 election, local election officials have been another target of abuse. The Spring 2022 MPPS sought to measure officials' experiences with harassment in their role as local government leaders and reports of harassment of other members of their local government.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Officials from a majority of Michigan counties, cities, villages, and townships report harassment, threats, or violence against members of the local government over the past few years, including 47% personally experiencing online or in-person harassment themselves.
- Officials from larger jurisdictions are more likely to report actual threats, with 33% from communities with more than 30,000 residents who report experiencing threats and 7% who report violent actions.
- Officials from 44% of Michigan local governments see negative impacts from the worsening political climate on the willingness of people to work or serve in the jurisdiction's government.

Deeper Dive:

The Spring 2022 MPPS asked local leaders for their opinions about any harassment that they faced in their role at the jurisdiction government. Local officials were asked to select the type of harassment from a list ranging from online and in-person to violent actions, and threats. They were also asked if they faced no harassment or know if they faced any form of harassment in their role in the local government.

As shown in **Table 6.1**, 50% of local leaders statewide report that they have personally faced no harassment in their role in local government. Meanwhile, 39% say that they have faced harassment in-person and 31% say they faced it online. When it comes to more dangerous types of harassment, 15% report facing and another 3% statewide have faced specific violent actions in the past few years. Harassment is most common in jurisdictions with more than 5,000 residents, where about two-thirds of top officials report such problems (not shown). Meanwhile, officials from urban or mostly urban jurisdictions are significantly more likely to report harassment than those from rural places, though four in ten rural leaders report these problems as well.

The MPPS also asked Michigan's local leaders if other local officials or jurisdiction personnel experienced harassment, threats, or violence as a part of their roles in local government. **Table 6.2** displays that statewide, a significant proportion of MPPS survey respondents are also aware of abuse perpetrated against other individuals within their local government, including reports of abuse against the county, city, or township clerk, their election staff, or other election workers (29%), other members of their Board or Council (28%), and other jurisdiction employees or volunteers (26%). Meanwhile, 16% are unsure of abuse towards other jurisdiction representatives beyond themselves.

When it comes to perceived impacts of harassment against local government personnel, as shown in **Table 6.3**, 44% of local governments report negative impacts from the worsening political climate on the willingness of people to work or serve in the jurisdiction’s government. Even in jurisdictions where officials do not report harassment, threats, or violence, more than a quarter (28%) say simply the possibility of abuse is having a negative effect (not shown). Statewide, 32% also report that the climate of abuse toward local government personnel is having a negative impact on residents’ civic engagement—such as speaking at meetings and serving on committees—including 23% in jurisdictions that have not reported harassment, threats, or violence. In addition, 29% of local leaders statewide say abuse affects the ability of jurisdiction personnel to do their jobs well, and 27% say it affects their Board’s or Council’s decision-making process on potentially contentious issues such as public health policy, local planning and zoning issues, and so on.

Table 6.1

Over the last few years, have you personally experienced any of the following as a part of your role in local government?

	2022
Online harassment (e.g., disrespectful or hostile comments, graphic language or slurs, etc.)	31%
In-person harassment (e.g., disrespectful or hostile comments, graphic language or slurs, shouting, rude or aggressive gestures, etc., either when you are on or off the job)	39%
Threats (e.g., statements of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage to you or others, or other overtly hostile action)	15%
Violent actions (e.g., destruction of property, physical or armed assault)	3%
None of the above	50%
Don't know	2%

Table 6.2

As far as you know, have other local officials or jurisdiction personnel experienced harassment, threats, or violence as a part of their roles in local government?

	2022
Jurisdiction clerk, election staff, and other election workers*	29%
Members of your jurisdiction’s Board or Council	28%
Other jurisdiction personnel (e.g., other employees, volunteers, etc.)	26%
None of the above	42%
Don't know	16%

*Responses from village officials not included in calculation for election staff/workers as villages in Michigan do not administer elections

**Table 6.3**

Regardless of whether you or other jurisdiction personnel have recently experienced these things, as far as you know, would you say harassment, threats, or violence have had a negative impact on any of the following?

	2022
Willingness of people to work or serve in the jurisdiction's government	44%
Willingness of residents to engage (e.g., speak at meetings, serve on committees, etc.)	32%
Ability of jurisdiction personnel to do their jobs well	29%
Board/Council decision-making process on potentially contentious issues (e.g., public health policy, planning and zoning issues, etc.)	27%
No impact on the above	36%
Don't know	10%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 6.1:
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q46a>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q46b>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q46c>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q46d>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q46e>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q46f>
- Table 6.2:
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q47a>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q47b>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q47c>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q47d>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q47e>
- Table 6.3:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q48a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q48b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q48c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q48d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q48e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q48f>

Reports

- [Statewide survey finds a majority of Michigan local governments experiencing harassment or other abuse \(2022\)](#)

7. Working Relationships among Local and State Leaders

What's at Issue:

Bitter partisan infighting in Washington, DC in recent years has been a hallmark of dysfunction and gridlock at the national level. How have working relationships affected local government in Michigan? Beyond issues of civil discourse with and incidents of harassment by the public, as reviewed above, the MPPS also asked local elected officials in 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2023 a variety of questions regarding their overall working relationships with each other, with state officials, and with local residents.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- The vast majority of Michigan local officials report that they have positive discourse and good working relationships with other officials and employees in their jurisdiction.
- There are lukewarm feelings regarding whether state government officials value local leaders' input.
- Local officials feel that state officials hold them to higher standards than they hold themselves and believe state officials unfairly favor certain jurisdictions over others.
- There has been a decrease in the feeling that individual jurisdictions have a good or excellent relationship with the state government, from 46% saying their jurisdiction's relationship with the state is good or excellent in 2016 to 34% in 2023.

Deeper Dive:

As shown in **Table 7.1**, 84% of surveyed officials in 2022 report that relationships among elected officials in their jurisdiction are either "excellent" or "good". Although reports of positive relationships are down slightly from the 86% who said the same in 2021, the percent who rate working relationships as "excellent" has increased somewhat over time, to 45% in 2022 from 42% in 2021 and 38% in 2018. Meanwhile, in 2022, 15% say relationships among elected officials in their jurisdiction are only fair (11%) or outright poor (4%).

When asked about relationships between elected officials and other jurisdiction employees on the 2018 MPPS, the majority of local leaders report positive relationships, as seen in **Table 7.2**. Nearly a third (27%) statewide say official/employee relations in their jurisdiction are excellent and over half (45%) say they are good. By comparison, only 15% say relationships between their elected officials and employees are fair or poor. (It is also worth noting that 12% of respondents reported this question to not be applicable to them, reflecting the fact that among many of the smallest Michigan jurisdictions, the local government has no appointed employees, only elected officials).

Assessments of local government relations with the State of Michigan are much less rosy. As shown in **Table 7.3**, over half (56%) of Michigan local officials currently rate their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the state government as just fair (42%) or even poor (14%). Meanwhile 32% of local officials say it is good (32%) and just 2% say it is excellent. These views have become somewhat more pessimistic since the last time the question was asked in 2016, when 49% statewide said their government's overall relations with the State were only fair or poor compared with 46% who said they were good or excellent. However, one factor in that decline may be the shift from Republican to Democratic control of the Governor's office and state legislature, with local leaders' partisan assessments essentially flipping.



In both 2016 and 2023, the MPPS asked about detailed aspects of state-local relations in Michigan and found concerns remain high in several areas while increasing in others. The largest shift in opinion over the last seven years comes among local officials who say the State does not value local input. **Table 7.4** shows how, in 2016, local leaders were more likely to believe the state government valued input from local governments (43%) than thought it did not (35%). Today, just 27% statewide say the state government values local opinion, while nearly half (47%) say it does not.

As shown in **Table 7.5**, in 2023, 70% of local officials say that the State is taking too much decision-making authority away from local governments, essentially unchanged since 2016.

Yet the percentage who believe that the State holds local governments to a higher standard than it holds for itself (61%) is down from 67% who said the same in 2016. Meanwhile, a majority of local leaders (57%) believe the State does not treat jurisdictions fairly across the board, similar to assessments in 2016. And today, local leaders are slightly more likely to say State decision-making is not transparent (54% in 2023 vs. 50% in 2016).

Table 7.1

Overall, how would you rate the relationships among elected officials in your jurisdiction?

	2018	2021	2022
Excellent	38%	42%	45%
Good	43%	44%	39%
Fair	14%	10%	11%
Poor	5%	3%	4%
Don't Know	0%	1%	1%

Table 7.2

Overall, how would you rate the relationships among elected officials and other employees in your jurisdiction?

	2018
Excellent	27%
Good	45%
Fair	12%
Poor	3%
Not Applicable	12%
Don't Know	1%

Table 7.3

How would you describe the overall relationship between the State government and your jurisdiction in particular?

	2016	2023
Excellent	6%	2%
Good	40%	32%
Fair	36%	42%
Poor	13%	14%
Don't Know	6%	9%

Table 7.4

Thinking about the relationship between the State government and local jurisdictions, overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Michigan state government officials value input from local government officials?

	2016	2023
Strongly Agree	6%	2%
Somewhat Agree	37%	25%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%	21%
Somewhat Disagree	23%	27%
Strongly Disagree	12%	20%
Don't Know	2%	5%

Table 7.5

Thinking about the relationship between the State government and local jurisdictions, overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the State is taking too much decision-making authority away from local governments? The State holds local governments to a higher standard than it holds itself to? The State unfairly treats some jurisdictions (or types of jurisdictions) better than others? The State's decision-making is transparent to local officials?

	Taking too much decision-making authority		Higher standard		Treats some jurisdictions unfairly		State's decision-making is transparent	
	2016	2023	2016	2023	2016	2023	2016	2023
Strongly Agree	28%	30%	34%	29%	22%	25%	3%	1%
Somewhat Agree	42%	40%	33%	32%	35%	32%	16%	13%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5%	4%	21%	24%	28%	26%	28%	27%
Somewhat Disagree	3%	2%	5%	4%	5%	3%	32%	31%
Strongly Disagree	28%	30%	4%	4%	2%	2%	18%	23%
Don't Know	42%	40%	3%	7%	9%	12%	3%	5%



Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 7.1
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q45a>
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q48a>
 - » 2018: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q16a>
- Table 7.2
 - » 2018: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2018-data/q16c>
- Table 7.3
 - » 2023: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q30>
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q09a>
- Table 7.4
 - » 2023: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q29a>
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q02a>
- Table 7.5
 - » 2023
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q29b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q29c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q29d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2023-data/q29e>
 - » 2016:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q02b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q02c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q02e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q02d>

Reports

- [Improving communication, building trust are seen as keys to fixing relationships between local jurisdictions and the State government \(2016\)](#)
- [Michigan local government leaders say civic relationships and civil discourse remain healthy, despite worsening national politics \(2022\)](#)
- [Challenges continue for state-local relations, according to Michigan local government leaders \(2023\)](#)

8. Trust in Government

What's At Issue:

Studies of public trust toward the U.S. federal government have revealed significant changes in trust over time, with occasional increases and decreases woven into an overall pattern of steep decline since the 1950s. In addition to understanding citizen trust in government, it can also be valuable to examine local government leaders' trust or distrust in government, because of their "insider knowledge" and because of the central role they play, interacting with citizens as well as with officials and agencies at various levels of government. The MPPS tracks Michigan's local government officials trust in various levels of government, repeating these questions over time to better understand this key aspect of the functioning of democracy.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Local government officials tend to trust other Michigan local governments to do what's right, and that trust has remained consistently high over the past decade, with an uptick in 2020.
- Fewer local officials express trust in the state government, but that trust has also seen improvement from 2009-2020.
- Trust in the federal government remains very low, with 41% of local leaders in 2020 saying they seldom or almost never trust the federal government.
- Michigan local officials do not feel that State officials trust local governments to do what's right.

Deeper Dive:

In 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2020 the MPPS asked local leaders throughout Michigan about their trust in various levels of government to do the right thing. In contrast with generally declining public trust in government at all levels, the surveys have found local leaders' trust in government has been steady or even slightly increased over that time span. **Table 8.1** illustrates that local leaders' trust is highest in other local governments. Statewide, 72% of Michigan local leaders today trust other local governments "nearly always" or "most of the time," Meanwhile, 23% trust other local governments some of the time, and just 3% say they seldom or almost never trust other local governments. The 72% with high levels of trust is an increase from the consistent ratings of 65-66% saying the same from 2009 to 2016.

Trust in Michigan's state government, while lower, also increased slightly in 2020. Overall, a quarter of Michigan's local officials said in 2020 that they trust the state government nearly always or most of the time to do what is right, as shown in **Table 8.2**. Trust in the State has seen a gradual increase since 2009, when just 9% of local leaders had high levels of trust. Meanwhile, distrust in the state has declined precipitously. While nearly half of local leaders seldom or almost never trusted the State in 2009, only 19% said the same in 2020.

Lastly, just 12% of local leaders in 2020 believe nearly always or most of the time that the federal government will do what is right, an increase over the low point (6%) in 2013, but relatively unchanged since 2016. (**Table 8.3**)

As a way of gauging feelings of reciprocated trust, in 2016, the survey asked local officials whether they believed that state government officials in Lansing trusted local governments to do what is right. As shown in **Table 8.4**, only 3% of respondents felt state government officials trust local government nearly always, while another quarter of respondents said state officials trust them most of the time. Compared to local government trust in the state, assessments going the other direction are much more spread across various levels of trust, including approximately one in five respondents who said the State trusts them seldom, and 5% who said the State never trusts local governments to do what is right.

Table 8.1

How much of the time do you think you can trust other local governments to do what is right?

	2009	2013	2016	2020
Nearly Always	11%	9%	9%	10%
Most of the Time	55%	56%	57%	62%
Some of the Time	28%	30%	27%	23%
Seldom	4%	3%	2%	2%
Almost Never	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't Know	2%	2%	4%	3%

Table 8.2

How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Lansing to do what is right?

	2009	2013	2016	2020
Nearly Always	0%	1%	1%	1%
Most of the Time	9%	18%	21%	24%
Some of the Time	41%	52%	51%	54%
Seldom	31%	20%	19%	14%
Almost Never	17%	8%	6%	5%
Don't Know	2%	1%	1%	3%

Table 8.3

How much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in Washington to do what is right?

	2009	2013	2016	2020
Nearly Always	0%	0%	1%	1%
Most of the Time	10%	6%	10%	11%
Some of the Time	42%	35%	42%	44%
Seldom	30%	36%	30%	28%
Almost Never	16%	22%	16%	13%
Don't Know	2%	1%	2%	3%

Table 8.4

How much of the time do you think Michigan's state officials trust local governments to do what is right?

	2018
Nearly Always	3%
Most of the Time	26%
Some of the Time	38%
Seldom	18%
Almost Never	5%
Don't Know	9%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 8.1
 - » 2009: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2009-data/q19>
 - » 2013: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2013-data/q59>
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q05c>
 - » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q49>
- Table 8.2
 - » 2009: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2009-data/q18>
 - » 2013: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2013-data/q58>
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q05b>
 - » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q48>
- Table 8.3
 - » 2009: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2009-data/q17>
 - » 2013: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2013-data/q57>
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q05a>
 - » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q47>
- Table 8.4
 - » 2016: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2016-data/q04>

Reports

- [Michigan local leaders say local democracy is strong, as their trust in government and citizens rises \(2020\)](#)
- [Improving communication, building trust are seen as keys to fixing relationships between local jurisdictions and the State government \(2017\)](#)
- [Trust in government among Michigan's local leaders and citizens \(2013\)](#)



9. Confidence in U.S. Institutions

What's at Issue:

A number of long-term public opinion polls have tracked a decline in American's confidence in political and social institutions over the last two decades, which can increase distrust in political actors and outcomes, alienate people from the political process, and make it harder to resolve society issues. Is widespread skepticism also found among local elected and appointed leaders in Michigan?

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Most Michigan local government officials have high or complete confidence in law enforcement and the military, but less than a majority express high confidence in other key institutions such as K-12 education, colleges and universities, scientific research, banks and the financial system, the U.S. and Michigan Supreme Courts, or the criminal justice system.
- Some of the lowest levels of confidence are expressed for the U.S. Congress and the Presidency, while very few express confidence in the news media or in social media.

Deeper Dive:

The Spring 2021 MPPS asked local leaders for their opinions about their confidence in the institutions of the American society. The list ranged from national and state institutions to those at the local level.

As shown in **Table 9.1**, some of the highest confidence ratings are given to Michigan local elections (88% complete or high confidence), which of course, are controlled by local leaders themselves. However, less than a majority (48%) express high confidence in elections across Michigan as a whole, and just 26% express high confidence in elections in other states. In fact, nearly a third (32%) of Michigan local leaders express low or no confidence in elections in other states, which is cause for concern.

The military (74%) receives high marks from Michigan local leaders, and the police as an institution receives high or complete confidence ratings from 61% statewide. That said, only 7% report low or no confidence in the police, so the remaining sentiments are more neutral than negative.

Confidence in the courts is also lukewarm, with less than a majority of Michigan local leaders saying they have high or complete confidence in the U.S. Supreme Court (40%) or the Michigan Supreme Court (27%). Meanwhile, confidence in the criminal justice system is underwater, with just 20% having high or complete confidence in it, compared to 28% with low or no confidence.

Sentiments regarding educational institutions are also mixed. Statewide, a quarter (25%) of local leaders have high or complete confidence in K-12 education, while just over another quarter (27%) have low or no confidence. Similarly, just 23% have high confidence in colleges and universities, while a third (33%) have low or no confidence.

Majorities have low or no confidence in both the US Congress (67%) and the Presidency (57%), while few have high confidence in either institution. Meanwhile, local leaders report the lowest levels of confidence in national media (71%) and social media (88%), and even when it comes to local news media, 44% have low or no confidence while just 15% say they have high confidence in their local news.

Table 9.1

Below is a list of institutions in American society. Please indicate how much confidence, if any, you have in each one.

	Complete confidence	High confidence	Medium amount of confidence	Low confidence	No confidence	Don't know
The U.S. Supreme Court	6%	34%	41%	12%	3%	5%
Congress	0%	3%	25%	45%	22%	4%
The presidency	3%	15%	21%	22%	35%	4%
The Michigan Supreme Court	2%	25%	45%	15%	4%	9%
The criminal justice system	1%	19%	47%	21%	7%	5%
The police	13%	48%	28%	6%	1%	3%
The military	23%	51%	20%	2%	0%	4%
Banks and the financial system	3%	27%	48%	16%	3%	4%
Scientific research	8%	38%	32%	12%	4%	5%
K-12 public schools	3%	22%	44%	21%	6%	4%
Colleges and universities	3%	20%	40%	22%	11%	4%
Local news media	1%	14%	39%	26%	18%	3%
National news media	0%	5%	21%	28%	43%	3%
Social media platforms	0%	0%	7%	35%	53%	4%
Elections in your jurisdiction	49%	39%	8%	1%	0%	2%
Elections in Michigan	21%	27%	24%	16%	9%	3%
Elections in other states	7%	19%	26%	22%	10%	16%



Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 9.1 2021:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50f>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50g>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50h>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50i>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50j>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50k>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50l>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50m>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50n>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50o>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50p>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q50q>

Reports

- [Local Government Leaders' Confidence in Institutions of Democracy \(2022\)](#)

10. Government Ethics

What's at Issue:

The expectation of ethical behavior among public officials is a cornerstone of democratic governance. No single set of rules can dictate all of the ethical decisions officials should make, given the complex and sometimes competing values—such as fairness, liberty, or common good—that officials face in their role as government leaders. However, laws related to transparency and ethical conduct are important for setting appropriate standards. Michigan's rules regarding public sector ethics lag behind many other states. As recently as 2015, Michigan was scored worst in the nation by the Center for Public Integrity on measures of state government accountability, ethics enforcement, and transparency. The MPPS asked Michigan's local government officials about a variety of issues regarding ethics at the state and local levels, including how ethical they believe Michigan's state and local government leaders are, what types of ethics policies are needed, and what types are already in place in their jurisdictions.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- When asked about the state of ethics and integrity in Michigan government at various levels, local government officials ranked their own jurisdiction as being most ethical, followed by other local jurisdictions across the state, Michigan's executive branch of state government, and in last place, the Michigan Legislature.
- A slight majority of local officials report that their jurisdiction has a formal code of ethics while a notable number do not know if their jurisdiction has such a code.
- The majority are satisfied with their jurisdiction's policies surrounding ethics.
- Statewide, 13% of local officials said they have felt pressured to do something unethical in their official government capacity.

Deeper Dive:

The MPPS covered issues of government ethics in a single survey conducted in the Fall of 2014, and will return to the topic in a future wave to investigate changes over time.

Table 10.1 displays responses to a series of questions asking local government leaders how ethical or unethical other officials are at various levels of government across the state of Michigan. Unsurprisingly, respondents viewed the elected and appointed officials in their own jurisdictions with the highest ratings, with 88% believing their officials were either very (53%) or mostly (35%) ethical. Michigan's state legislators were seen as the least ethical, with less than half of respondents viewing legislators as very (5%) or mostly (43%) ethical, and approximately a third of respondents (32%) saying they are equally ethical and unethical.

Table 10.2 shows that, in 2014, 59% of local government leaders reported their jurisdiction's local government had a formal code of ethics with guidelines for their personnel that can cover a broad range of ethics issues. Meanwhile, 29% said their jurisdiction did not have a code of ethics, and 12% didn't know if they had a code of ethics. As local government representatives, it can be argued that not knowing whether there is a code of ethics they are supposed to be following might raise as much concern as not having a code at all.



Table 10.3 displays respondents’ satisfaction levels with their jurisdictions ethics practices and policies, showing that 59% are very satisfied while 24% are mostly satisfied. Only 5% of responding local government officials reported any level of dissatisfaction with their policies and practices, despite 41% of respondents in **Table 2** stating their jurisdiction either doesn’t have a code of ethics or they don’t know if they have one.

Finally, the MPPS asked local officials whether they had felt pressured in their official government role to do anything that felt unethical in the preceding five years (2009–2014). **Table 10.4** shows that 85% stated that they had not ever felt such pressure, while 13% of responding officials stated that they had indeed been pressured in these ways.

Table 10.1

First of all, we are interested in your general opinions about the state of ethics and integrity in Michigan government. In general, how would you rate each group overall in terms of ethical behavior in their official positions?

	Michigan State Legislators	Michigan State Executive Branch	Elected and Appointed Officials in Your Jurisdiction	Local Government Elected and Appointed Officials Across the State
Very Ethical	5%	14%	53%	15%
Mostly Ethical	43%	43%	35%	55%
Equally Ethical and Unethical	32%	24%	8%	18%
Mostly Unethical	10%	9%	1%	2%
Very Unethical	3%	3%	1%	0%
Don't Know	7%	7%	3%	9%

Table 10.2

Does your jurisdiction’s local government have a code of ethics?

Yes	59%
No	29%
Don't Know	12%

Table 10.3

Overall, how satisfied are you with your jurisdiction's policies and practices governing ethics?

Very Satisfied	59%
Somewhat Satisfied	24%
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	9%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3%
Very Dissatisfied	2%
Don't Know	3%

Table 10.4

Thinking back over the past five years, have you in your role as a local official ever come under pressure to do something that you felt might be unethical?

Yes	13%
No	85%
Don't Know	2%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 10.1 2014:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q36a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q36b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q36c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q36d>
- Table 10.2 2014
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q41>
- Table 10.3 2014
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q46>
- Table 10.4 2014
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/fall-2014-data/q44>

Reports

- [Michigan local leaders see need for state and local ethics reform](#) (2015)



11. Voting and Election Administration

What's at Issue:

Whether elections are fair, accurate, and efficient has become a focus of debate in recent years, with confidence in elections being extraordinarily tested in the wake of the 2020 presidential election. Voting is a core tenant of democracy, and the ability for jurisdictions on local levels to accurately administer elections is critical to maintaining democracy. In the spring of 2022, the MPPS asked local officials about their expectations regarding election administration in their jurisdictions for the November 2022 election. These questionnaire items mirrored questions that were asked prospectively in spring 2020, looking ahead to the November 2022 election, and retrospectively in spring 2017, looking back at problems local officials may have experienced in the November 2016 election.

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- Confidence among Michigan's local officials in their ability to administer accurate elections, including their election security and their ability to complete an accurate recount, if necessary, has been very high in surveys conducted in 2017, 2020 and 2022.
- However, local leaders expected potential election problems to be more common in 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, than what they reported experiencing in 2016 or expected in 2022.

Deeper Dive:

Table 11.1 looks at the confidence among city and township officials—those units in Michigan which are responsible for conducting elections—in their jurisdiction's ability to hold accurate elections. While the vast majority of officials were "very confident" in their ability to administer an accurate election, approximately one in ten officials statewide were only somewhat or very confident. While election confidence levels between 2017, 2020 and 2022 are quite similar, there was a four percentage-point drop in officials responding "very confident" between 2017 and 2020—when communities were faced with conducting elections during the COVID-19 pandemic—but then a rebound in 2022 with an increase in "very confident" back to 92% statewide.

Similarly, **Table 11.2** looks at local officials' confidence in the ability of their county clerk's office to conduct an accurate recount should it be necessary. While nearly every city and township official was either "somewhat" or "very" confident that their county clerk would be able to accurately recount, it is worth noting that, again, confidence decreased slightly between 2017 and 2020, only to regain the confidence in 2022.

In spring 2022, the MPPS asked city and township officials about their confidence that their jurisdiction's voting machines, voter rolls, and/or final tallies will not be compromised (i.e., tampered with or hacked) in the November 2022 general election. The vast majority (85%) statewide are very confident (85%) that final vote tallies or results, voting machines, and voter rolls will not be compromised, as shown in **Table 11.3**. This represents a significant improvement over views in 2020, when local officials were asked about their confidence in each element of security separately and were significantly less confident in each case. Looking at views on all three of elements together—the security of voting machines, voter rolls, and final tallies— only 63% of officials were very confident prior to the election in 2020 compared with 85% in 2022.

Local leaders were also more confident in 2022 than they were in 2020 in their jurisdiction’s ability to detect compromised election security. As shown in **Table 11.4**, 78% were very confident they would know whether their election systems (including voting machines and technology, rolls, or tallies) had been compromised in November 2022. By comparison, in 2020, just 54% were very confident they would know if their systems had been compromised before or during the election, and 58% were very confident they’d know after the election was completed. Notably, only 2% of local leaders in 2022 said they didn’t know whether their jurisdiction would be able to detect compromised election security, down substantially from the 10–11% who said so in 2020.

When asked in 2022 about their own residents’ confidence in local elections, as shown in **Table 11.5**, just over half (52%) of local officials statewide believed their residents were very confident in the accuracy of their jurisdiction’s elections. Meanwhile, 37% believed their residents were somewhat confident, just 4% believed they were not very confident, and 1% believed they were not confident at all. Statewide, 6% of local leaders were unsure of their residents’ confidence in local elections.

Table 11.6 displays a number of possible problems with election administration, asked as a retrospective question in 2017 looking back at the 2016 general election, and as prospective questions looking ahead to the 2020 and 2022 elections. Michigan local officials statewide tended to be less concerned about potential administration problems in 2022 compared to the lead up to November 2020. In particular, the percentage who reported somewhat or significant potential problems declined by more than half for three categories: equipment malfunctions or failures (19% to 7%); poll worker errors (12% to 2%); and inaccurate voter registration lists (13% to 6%). Additionally, concerns over poll worker recruitment decreased substantially, although still nearly a third of cities and townships (32%) said finding poll workers for the November 2022 general election was a problem.

Two areas of concern increased slightly in 2022. When it came to potential problems with intentional disinformation targeted at citizens about voting procedures or other election issues, 19% of Michigan city and township leaders viewed this as a potential problem in November 2022, compared with 18% who said the same in 2020. In addition, 9% expected disturbances at polling places, including inappropriate campaigning or voter intimidation, would be somewhat of a problem or a significant problem, up from 6% in 2020.

One additional item asked in 2022 that was not included in 2020 addressed potential concerns about election administration processes after polls close (for example, counting absentee ballots, precinct reconciliation, certifying the final tally, etc.). In spring 2022, just 3% of local leaders expected administrative problems with these activities these after polls closed in November, equating to approximately 46 cities and townships statewide.

Table 11.1

Overall, to what extent would you say you are confident in the ability of your jurisdiction to administer an accurate election?

	2017	2020	2022
Very Confident	91%	87%	92%
Somewhat Confident	8%	11%	7%
Not Very Confident	1%	1%	1%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%



Table 11.2

Overall, to what extent would you say you are confident in the ability of the County Clerk’s office to administer an accurate recount, if needed?

	2017	2020	2022
Very Confident	80%	75%	80%
Somewhat Confident	16%	19%	15%
Not Very Confident	2%	2%	3%
Not Confident At All	1%	0%	1%
Don't Know	2%	4%	2%

Table 11.3

Now, thinking specifically about election security for the upcoming November [2020/2022] general election, how confident are you that...

% very confident	2020	2022
Jurisdiction’s voting machines will not be compromised	70%	
Jurisdiction's voter rolls will not be compromised	68%	
Jurisdiction's vote tallies/results will not be compromised	76%	
Jurisdiction’s voting machines, voter rolls, and/or final tallies will not be compromised		85%

Table 11.4

Now, thinking specifically about election security for the upcoming November [2020/2022] general election, how confident are you that...

% very confident	2020	2022
Jurisdiction officials would know prior to or during the election whether their local election has been compromised (including voting machines/technology, rolls, or tallies)?	54%	
Jurisdiction officials would know after the election whether their local election has been compromised (including voting machines/technology, rolls, or tallies)?	58%	
Jurisdiction officials would know whether the local election (including voting machines/technology, rolls, or tallies) has been compromised?		78%

Table 11.5

How confident would you say the majority of your residents are in the accuracy of your elections?

	2022
Very Confident	52%
Somewhat Confident	37%
Not Very Confident	4%
Not Confident At All	1%
Don't Know	6%

Table 11.6

Thinking ahead to the November 2022 general election, to what extent, if any, do you expect the following will or will not be problems with election administration in your jurisdiction? (prospective Spring 2022 questionnaire language)

Still thinking ahead to the November 2020 general election, to what extent, if any, do you expect the following will or will not be problems with election administration in your jurisdiction? (prospective Spring 2020 questionnaire language)

To what extent, if any, would you say the following have or have not recently been problems with election administration in your jurisdiction? (retrospective Fall 2017 questionnaire language)

The cost of election administration on your jurisdictions budget		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2020	18%	37%	31%	10%	4%
	2017	28%	45%	22%	3%	2%
Long wait times for any voters		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2020	29%	43%	17%	7%	5%
	2017	58%	36%	4%	0%	1%
Election equipment failures/malfunctions		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2022	52%	36%	6%	1%	5%
	2020	22%	50%	15%	4%	9%
	2017	36%	45%	14%	3%	2%
Inaccurate voter registration lists		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2022	60%	30%	4%	2%	3%
	2020	33%	46%	10%	3%	8%
	2017	58%	35%	3%	0%	3%
Reliable internet connectivity for community with SOS		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2020	26%	40%	16%	10%	8%
	2017	46%	31%	10%	5%	8%
Disturbances at polling places (i.e. inappropriate campaigning, voter intimidation, etc)		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2022	53%	34%	8%	1%	4%
	2020	46%	44%	5%	1%	4%
	2017	73%	24%	2%	0%	1%

Recruiting poll workers and other election staff (with necessary skills)		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2022	33%	34%	26%	6%	1%
	2020	21%	31%	32%	13%	2%
	2017	32%	38%	25%	4%	1%
Poll worker errors in following election procedures		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2022	61%	34%	2%	0%	3%
	2020	32%	52%	10%	2%	5%
	2017	48%	44%	5%	1%	3%
Intentional disinformation targeted at your jurisdictions citizens about voting procedures or other election issues		Not a problem at all	Not much of a problem	Somewhat of a problem	A significant problem	Don't know
	2022	48%	28%	13%	6%	5%
	2020	37%	37%	12%	6%	8%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 11.1
 - » 2017: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q12a>
 - » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q29a>
- Table 11.2
 - » 2017: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q12b>
 - » 2020: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q29c>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q26b>
- Table 11.3 2020:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q25a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q25b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q25c>
- Table 11.3 2022:
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q24a>
- Table 11.4 2020:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q25d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q25e>
- Table 11.4 2022:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q24b>

- Table 11.5 2022:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q27>
- Table 11.6 2017:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10f>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10h>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2017-data/q10i>
- Table 11.6 2020:
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24a>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24b>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24c>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24d>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24e>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24f>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24h>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24i>
 - » o <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q24j>
- Table 11.6 2022:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23f>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q23g>

Reports

- [Michigan local government leaders remain confident about their election security and administration, though concerns about disinformation increase \(2022\)](#)
- [Michigan local leaders expect mixed impacts from expanded voter registration and absentee voting reforms \(2020\)](#)
- [Local leaders' views on elections in Michigan: accuracy, problems, and reform options \(2017\)](#)



12. The U.S. Census

What's at Issue:

The Constitution mandates that a census be completed every ten years across the country. It is one of the most clearly stated responsibilities of American democracy, but is nevertheless a constant source of controversy, due to its impact on allocation of resources, voting districts, and representation. What do Michigan local leaders think about the Census, and how have local governments supported it?

Overview and Key MPPS Findings:

- As of spring 2020, few local government leaders were very confident that the 2020 Census statewide count in Michigan would be accurate, and over a third (34%) were not very confident or not at all confident, slightly more pessimistic than 2019 assessments.
- Local leaders' confidence in the accuracy of their own local community count in 2020 was somewhat higher than for the statewide count, but also down compared to expectations when asked in 2019.
- When it comes to undercounts, local officials are most concerned about accurately counting non-homeowners and citizens who split where they live amongst multiple homes.
- In 2020, more than two-thirds of Michigan local governments reported taking actions to encourage their residents to complete their Census forms, up 14 percentage points from the percentage who responded similarly in 2010.
- The most common actions local governments reported taking in 2020 included encouraging residents to complete the Census online, direct communications to residents (25%) and collaboration with other organizations (17%) to boost residents' participation.

Deeper Dive:

In 2010, 2019, and 2020, the MPPS asked local leaders a series of questions about the Census, including how confident they were that it would be accurate, whether they were concerned about undercounting particular groups of residents, and whether their jurisdictions were taking action to promote participation.

Table 12.1 shows local leaders' confidence for the pending Census counts in their own jurisdiction and for the state as a whole. Local leaders grew less confident between the spring of 2019 and the spring of 2020 that the Census would be accurate in their own jurisdiction, or for the state as a whole. In addition, although local leaders were more confident about the count for their own community than for other communities, few expressed high confidence in either count. In particular, just 5% said they were very confident the statewide count would be accurate.

Table 12.2 shows which groups of residents local leaders were particularly concerned might be undercounted in their community during the 2020 Census. While the national narrative surrounding the Census often reflected concerns about accurately counting minority populations with limited English proficiency or without citizenship, local leaders in Michigan most commonly cited non-home owners and those who own a second home as groups who might be undercounted in their communities.

Table 12.3 shows whether Michigan jurisdictions planned to take any particular actions to encourage residents to participate in the Census, in both 2010 and 2020. In fact, there was a significant 14 percentage point increase in the number of jurisdictions that did plan such actions, between the 2010 and 2020 counts.

Finally, **Table 12.4** shows the types of actions that Michigan local governments planned to take, to encourage participation in 2020 (note: this question was not asked as a closed-end response on the 2010 MPPS).

Table 12.1

At this time, how confident overall are you that there will be an accurate 2020 Census count in....?

	Your Jurisdiction		Statewide in Michigan	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Very Confident	15%	15%	5%	5%
Somewhat Confident	66%	58%	56%	51%
Not Very Confident	14%	15%	26%	28%
Not Confident At All	2%	5%	4%	6%
Don't Know	4%	7%	9%	10%

Table 12.2

Which of the following groups within your jurisdiction, if any, are you concerned may be hard to count in the 2020 Census?

	2020
Elderly Residents	29%
Children Under the Age of 5	12%
People With Limited English Proficiency	15%
Non-Home Owners (renters, residents with no fixed place of residence, college students, etc.)	43%
Non-Citizens	17%
Residents Living in Poverty	24%
Residents With Little/No Internet Access	34%
Residents With a Secondary Home Where They Live a Significant Amount of the Year	39%

Table 12.3

Now, thinking about issues related to the U.S. Census, has your jurisdiction done anything specifically to encourage its citizens to complete their census forms? (2010)

As far as you know, is your jurisdiction doing any of the following to encourage its residents to complete their census forms in 2020? (2020)

	2010	2020
Yes (2010) Planning any action (2020)	54%	68%
No (2010) Not taking any action (2020)	43%	24%
Don't Know	4%	9%

**Table 12.4**

As far as you know, is your jurisdiction doing any of the following to encourage its residents to complete their census forms in 2020?

	2020
Encouraging residents to complete census online	59%
Planning direct communications to residents	25%
Collaborating with other organizations	17%
Providing space in local facilities for Census workers or training activities	10%
Planning to run or participate in a "Complete Count Committee"	10%
Working to boost the number of local residents who work as Census Enumerators	9%
Providing or facilitating kiosks, laptop stations, etc. for residents without good internet access	5%
Not planning any actions related to 2020 Census	24%
Don't know	9%

Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 12.1 2019:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q35a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q35b>
- Table 12.1 2020:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q40b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q40a>
- Table 12.2 2019:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34f>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34g>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34h>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2019-data/q34i>
- Table 12.3 2010:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2010-data/q35>
- Table 12.3 2020:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39i>
- Table 12.4 2020:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39b>

- » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39d>
- » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39e>
- » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39f>
- » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39g>
- » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39h>
- » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2020-data/q39i>

Reports

- [Confidence in the accuracy of Michigan's 2020 Census count among local leaders was not very high, slips further \(2020\)](#)
- [Michigan local government preparations and concerns regarding the 2020 U.S. Census \(2019\)](#)
- [Michigan local governments actively promote U.S. Census participation \(2010\)](#)



13. Redistricting

What's at Issue:

Every ten years after the U.S. census, each state redraws the boundaries of its congressional and state legislative electoral districts. Redistricting impacts which party controls Congress and state and local governments across the country, and also affects how the nation's diverse communities are represented in its legislative bodies. In Michigan, state lawmakers were in charge of this process following the census counts in 2000 and 2010. However, in 2018 Michigan voters approved a Constitutional amendment that placed the redistricting process instead in the hands of the new Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC). What do local leaders think of this new process for redistricting in the state?

Overview and Key MPSS Findings:

- Among local government leaders who paid at least some attention to the MICRC's work in redrawing the electoral maps, 24% are satisfied with the MICRC's process overall and 22% are dissatisfied.
- Local government leaders who have paid attention to the MICRC are more likely to be critical than complementary of the Commission's performance on a variety of elements, but even among those paying attention, approximately a third don't know how to rate its performance across most of these measures.
- Satisfaction among local leaders with the final maps adopted by the MICRC is mixed.
- Preference for the MICRC over the Legislature for drawing electoral districts is also mixed, and has become more strongly associated with partisan identification over time.

Deeper Dive:

The Spring 2022 MPSS started by establishing whether local leaders were even aware that there was a new redistricting process taking place. As shown in **Table 13.1**, statewide, 91% of local government leaders had at least some familiarity in 2022 with the change to the MICRC drawing lines, rather than the Legislature. Among those, 10% reported that they paid a great deal of attention to the process, while another 46% paid some attention to the MICRC's work in redrawing the state's electoral maps, as shown in **Table 13.2**.

After the redistricting process was complete and new maps had been adopted, 39% believed the MICRC is a better approach to redistricting compared with having lines drawn by the Legislature, with 12% saying it was significantly better. By comparison, 18% of local officials in 2021 said the MICRC is a worse approach, and 29% were neutral, and 15% say they are unsure, as shown in **Table 13.3**. This represents a small decline in support for the MICRC compared with 2021 (before the maps were drawn), when 42% said the MICRC was a better approach (including 18% who said it was significantly better).

As shown in **Table 13.4**, local government leaders who paid attention to the MICRC were more likely to be critical than complementary of the Commission's performance on a variety of elements. For instance, 28% rated the transparency of the MICRC's work as "good" or "excellent," compared with 43% said it is just "fair" or "poor." The percentages changed somewhat on other elements of the MICRC's work, but they each fall in this pattern, including ratings for public engagement opportunities, valuing public input, ensuring no unfair advantage for political parties or particular candidates, and drawing districts that protect "communities of interest," reflect local government boundaries, are compact, and follow the Voting Rights Act protections for minority voters. The highest

percentage of excellent/good ratings went to the MICRC’s public engagement opportunities (29%), while the most fair/poor ratings went to drawing districts that reflect local county, city, village, or township boundary lines (47%). Meanwhile, even among those local leaders who paid attention to the MICRC, approximately a third (from 29% to 43%, depending on the issue) didn’t know how to rate its performance across most of these measures, which is quite high for questions carried on the MPPS surveys.

Finally, when it comes to counties in Michigan, county apportionment commissions typically consist of five members: the county clerk, treasurer, prosecuting attorney, and the county chairpersons of the two major political parties. In 2021, the MPPS asked whether local leaders support or oppose changing this approach to have a local Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission for their county redistricting instead. **Table 13.8** shows that just over a quarter (29%) supports a change to county independent commissions, just under a quarter opposes it (23%), while the other half are either neutral (26%) or unsure (22%).

Table 13.1

In 2018, Michigan voters approved a Constitutional amendment that created an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (Proposal 2). How familiar are you with this new approach to redistricting in the state?

	2021	2022
Very familiar – I know a great deal about it	9%	19%
Somewhat familiar – I have heard of it, and understand it fairly well, but don’t know many details	45%	51%
Mostly unfamiliar – I have heard of it, but know very little about it	33%	21%
Completely unfamiliar – I have never heard of it before	8%	6%
Don’t know	5%	3%

Table 13.2

How much attention would you say you paid to the Michigan Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission's work in redrawing the state's electoral maps in 2020-21?

	2022
Very close attention	10%
Some attention	46%
Not too much attention	34%
No attention at all	8%
Don’t know	3%

Table 13.3

Given what you know about it, overall, do you believe Michigan's new approach of having districts drawn by an independent citizen's commission is a better or worse approach than having them drawn by the legislature? (Among officials who are not completely unfamiliar with Michigan's new approach to redistricting)

	2021	2022
Significantly better	18%	12%
Somewhat better	24%	27%
Neither better nor worse	21%	29%
Somewhat worse	10%	11%
Significantly worse	8%	8%
Don't know	19%	15%

Table 13.4

In your opinion, how would you rate the performance of the Michigan Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission on...

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Transparency	5%	23%	27%	16%	29%
Public engagement opportunities	6%	23%	28%	14%	29%
Valuing public input	4%	18%	26%	18%	34%
Ensuring no political party received an unfair advantage	6%	17%	28%	18%	31%
Drawing districts that protect Communities of Interest	2%	18%	27%	16%	37%
Drawing districts that reflect local county, city, village, or township boundary lines	3%	19%	26%	21%	30%
Drawing compact districts	2%	15%	26%	15%	41%
Drawing districts that do not favor or disfavor any particular incumbent or candidate	3%	17%	26%	17%	37%
Following Voting Rights Act protections for minority voters	3%	18%	25%	10%	43%

Table 13.5

Thinking about the entire process the Michigan Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission followed throughout redistricting — such as gathering public input, debate among commission members, taking legal and other advice from its consultants, etc. — how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with its process, overall? (Among officials who report paying any attention to the MICRC's work in 2020-21)

	2022
Very satisfied	6%
Somewhat satisfied	18%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	33%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%
Very dissatisfied	8%
Don't know	20%

Table 13.6

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the final maps adopted by the Michigan Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission for...

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
US Congressional Districts	6%	16%	35%	14%	7%	22%
State Senate Districts	6%	15%	34%	15%	8%	22%
State House Districts	6%	16%	32%	15%	10%	22%

Table 13.7

Some criteria for drawing electoral districts are required by federal law, such as equal population across districts, districts being geographically contiguous, and protections for minority voters in the Voting Rights Act. Others are up to individual states to determine. In your opinion, how important do you think the following criteria should be for creating electoral district maps?

	Very important	Somewhat important
Creating reasonably compact districts	21%	44%
Reflecting current local county, city, village, or township boundary lines	44%	35%
Ensuring no political party receives an unfair advantage	63%	18%
Grouping together Communities of Interest (e.g., groups that share cultural, economic, historic bonds, etc.)	20%	35%
Drawing districts that do not favor or disfavor any particular incumbent or candidate	56%	22%

Table 13.8

When it comes to counties in Michigan, county apportionment commissions typically consist of five members: the county clerk, treasurer, prosecuting attorney, and the county chairpersons of the two major political parties. If allowed, would you support or oppose changing this approach to have a local Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission for your county redistricting instead?

	2021
Strongly Support	13%
Somewhat support	16%
Neither Support nor Oppose	26%
Somewhat Oppose	9%
Strongly Oppose	14%
Don't know	22%



Resources and links:

Data tables

- Table 13.1:
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q34>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q29>
- Table 13.2:
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q31>
- Table 13.3:
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q35>
 - » 2022: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q30>
- Table 13.4:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32e>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32f>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32g>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32h>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q32i>
- Table 13.5:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q33>
- Table 13.6:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q34a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q34b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q34c>
- Table 13.7:
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q35a>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q35b>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q35c>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q35d>
 - » <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2022-data/q35e>
- Table 13.8:
 - » 2021: <https://closup.umich.edu/data-table/michigan-public-policy-survey-mpps/spring-2021-data/q36>

Reports:

- [Local government officials give mixed reviews to Michigan's new approach to redistricting \(2022\)](#)
- [Michigan local leaders' views on state's new approach to electoral redistricting \(2021\)](#)

Notes

1. Khorshid, S. (2020, June 12). The world is watching America's reaction to the George Floyd protests. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/12/egypt-democracy-human-rights-the-world-is-watching-americas-reaction-to-the-george-floyd-protests/>
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Survey Background and Methodology

The MPPS was launched in 2009 by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan and is conducted in partnership with the Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Municipal League, and Michigan Townships Association. It is an ongoing survey program, interviewing the leaders of Michigan's 1,856 units of general purpose local government. Surveys are conducted each spring (and prior to 2018, were also conducted each fall). The program has covered a wide range of policy topics, and includes longitudinal tracking data on "core" fiscal, budgetary and operational policy questions and designed to build-up a multi-year time-series.

The survey is administered via the internet and hardcopy, and is sent to top elected and appointed officials (including county administrators and board chairs; city mayors and managers; village presidents, clerks, and managers; and township supervisors, clerks, and managers) from all 83 counties, 280 cities, 253 villages, and 1,240 townships in the state of Michigan.

Most waves of the MPPS achieve greater than a 70% response rate by unit. Please see individual survey pages for more information on survey response and methodology, as well as hardcopy questionnaires and detailed tables of the data broken down by jurisdiction type (county, city, township, or village), by population size of the respondent's community, and by the region of the respondent's jurisdiction: <http://closup.umich.edu/mpps.php>.

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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The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP), housed at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, conducts and supports applied policy research designed to inform state, local, and urban policy issues. Through integrated research, teaching, and outreach involving academic researchers, students, policymakers and practitioners, CLOSUP seeks to foster understanding of today's state and local policy problems, and to find effective solutions to those problems.

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