



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Definition: The highest level of education attained by adults of working age – between the ages of 25 to 64. The results are provided in two categories: 1) the proportion of the adults with a high school degree or greater. Adults that have completed a general equivalency diploma (GED) are included in these figures and 2) the proportion of adults with a bachelor’s degree or greater.

Rationale: The benefits of having an educated population are numerous. Among the most obvious is the relationship between education and income. Among adults between 25 and 64 that worked during the past year, average earnings ranged from \$18,900 for high school dropouts to \$25,900 for high school graduates, \$45,400 for college graduates, and \$99,300 for workers with professional degrees (Day & Newburger, 2002). It is widely recognized that Michigan’s prosperity enjoyed in the last century was built primarily on well-paying manufacturing jobs that required little education. It widely accepted that such positions are never to return (Glazer & Grimes, 2011). As a result, education levels are increasingly important for the future as the world flattens and work can be increasingly done anywhere by anyone. Globalization and technology have been and most likely will be the forces that continue to transform the economy well into the future. These knowledge-based economies require high levels of education and skill. In addition to higher earnings and better job prospects, individuals with higher levels of education also likely to make positive contributions to the communities in which they reside. For example, higher levels of education as associated with greater civic engagement, such as volunteering, giving and voting (Putnam, 2000).

Analysis: The proportion of the population of working age with a high school degree or more education was unchanged (approximately 85%) between 2007 and 2010 in Newaygo County. Likewise, the proportion of the population with a bachelor’s degree or more education was also unchanged (approximately 13%) over this same time period. When comparing the educational attainment of the population in Newaygo County to that of the United States and the state of Michigan, Newaygo County trails these benchmarks. Although there were no differences between the US and Newaygo County in the proportion of the population with a high school degree or more in 2010, Newaygo County is significantly lower than the state of Michigan in this key metric (85.4% versus 88.4%). Among those with a bachelor’s degree or more, Newaygo County fares much worse. The proportion of the population in Newaygo County with a bachelor’s degree or more (13.3%) is significantly lower than that of the US (28.0%) and the state of Michigan (25.0%).

Table 1: Educational Attainment of the Population of Working Age (25 – 64): ACS 2007 to 2010 Trend

Measure	ACS 3 Year Estimates		Trend*
	2005-07	2008-10	
High School Diploma or Greater	84.2%	85.4%	
Bachelor's Degree or Greater	13.6%	13.3%	

* Key to interpreting Trend



Improving – Statistically significant increase when comparing to 2007 and 2010







No Change - No statistically significant change when comparing 2007 and 2010



Declining – Statistically significant decrease when comparing to 2007 and 2010

**Table 2: Educational Attainment of the Population of Working Age (25 – 64):
2010 ACS Comparisons to US and Michigan**

Comparison Groups	ACS 2008 – 2010 Estimate	Newaygo County Compared to Benchmark*
High School Diploma or Greater	85.4%	
USA	85.3%	
Michigan	88.4%	
Bachelor's Degree or Greater	13.3%	
USA	28.0%	
Michigan	25.0%	

* Key to interpreting Benchmark



Better – Newaygo County is performing statistically better when compared to benchmark

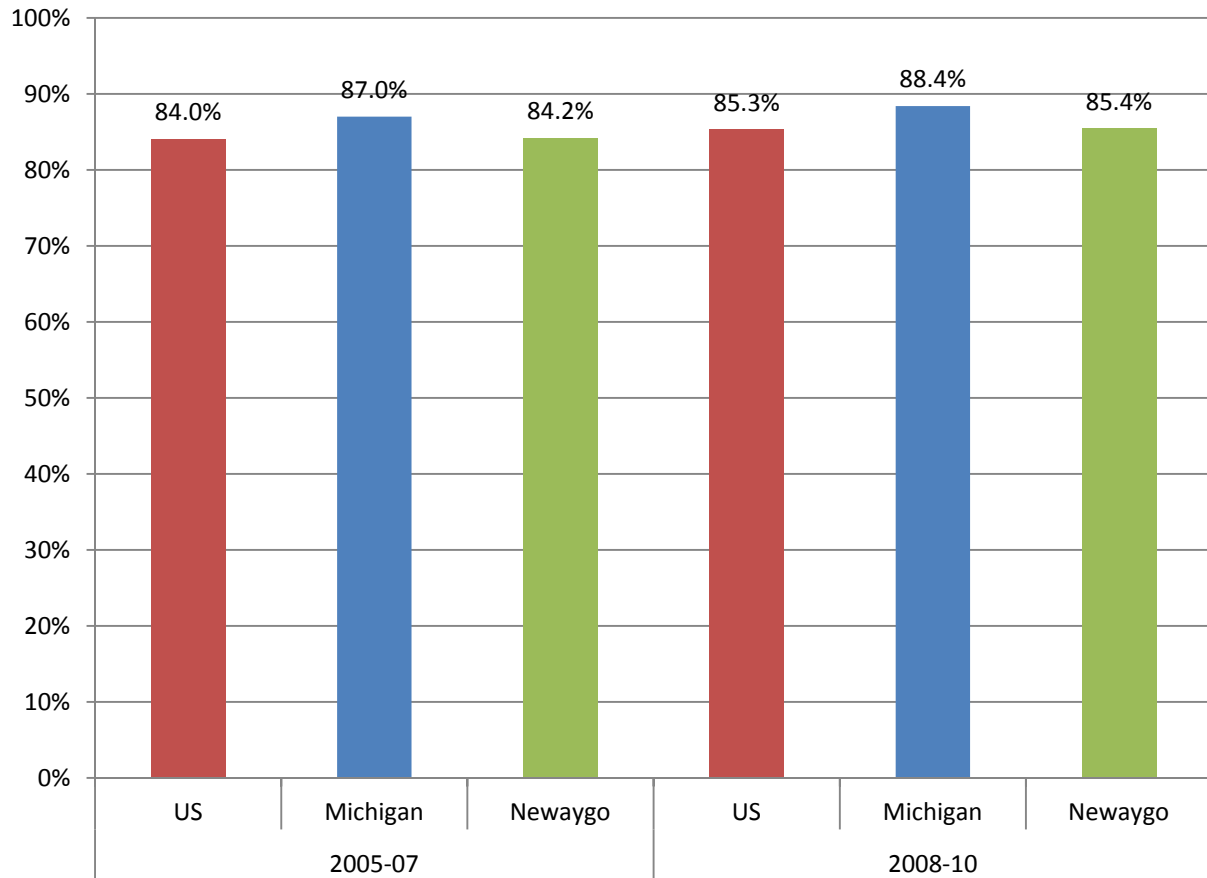


No Difference - there is no statistically significant difference between Newaygo County and benchmark



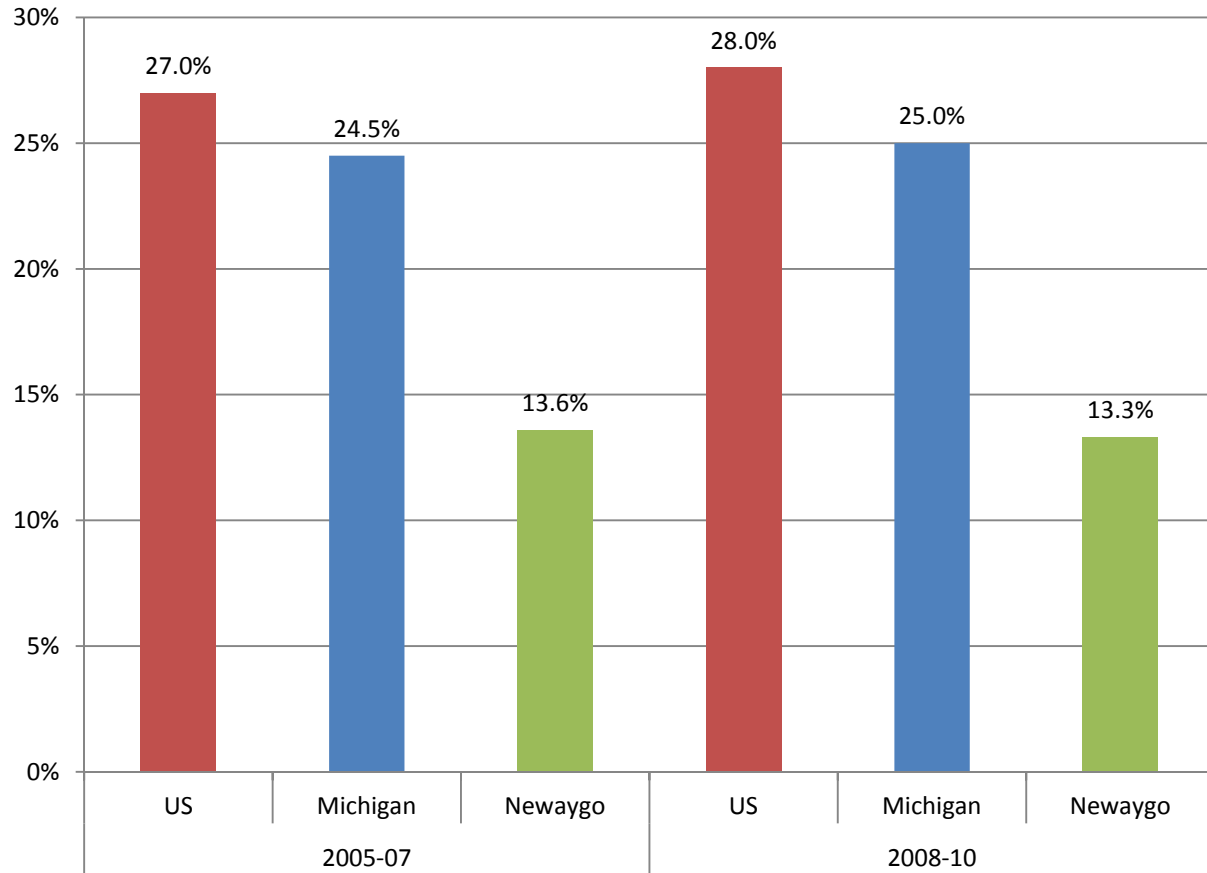
Worse – Newaygo County is performing statistically worse when compared to benchmark

Figure 1: High School Diploma or Higher: United States, Michigan, and Newaygo County – 2007 & 2010 Estimates



Source: American Community Survey

Figure 2: Bachelor's Degree or Higher: United States, Michigan, and Newaygo County – 2007 & 2010 Estimates



Source: American Community Survey

References

Day, J., & Newburger, E. (2002). *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

Glazer, L., & Grimes, D. (2011). *Michigan's Transition to a Knowledge-Based Economy: Fourth Annual Progress Report*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Research on Labor, Employment and the Economy - University of Michigan.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.