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COVID-19's Effects on Local Governments From the Perspective of Local Government Officials

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**COVID-19's Effects on Local Governments From the Perspective of Local Government
Officials**

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Independent Study
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Introduction

Every year, the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) sends the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) to local government officials all over the state. The MPPS is a program of state-wide surveys of local government leaders in Michigan with the goal of filling an important information gap in the policy maker process.¹ In the Spring 2020 MPPS, questions related to COVID-19 were added for local government officials to answer. From closed businesses to packed hospitals, local governments have been dealing with many problems in their jurisdictions. Using data from the Spring 2020 Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), this paper will analyze the responses of local government officials to determine how the pandemic has impacted local jurisdictions. Specifically, the paper will focus on how COVID-19 has impacted three areas of concern for local governments: economic conditions, emergency planning, and local or regional emergency response capabilities. In each of these areas, there will be background information, along with findings of the MPPS. Through this analysis on the effects of COVID-19 from the perspective of local government officials, we hope that this research can help local jurisdictions all over Michigan be better prepared for future emergencies.

¹Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), CLOSUP. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey>

Economic Conditions

There is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted Michigan, including local governments. One of the areas that COVID-19 has most affected is Michigan's economic conditions. Based on the Spring 2020 MPPS data, an overwhelming number of local government officials have reported that COVID-19 has had a significant or crisis-level impact on economic conditions in their area. Furthermore, jurisdictions with larger populations face a greater severity of economic conditions. It has been nearly a year since the Spring 2020 MPPS was sent out, and since then, many businesses have closed permanently.² With numerous stay-at-home orders or continuous business restrictions, COVID-19 has greatly impacted Michigan's economic conditions.³

This was especially disappointing because, after a “disappointing” year for the economy in 2019, many experts expected the Michigan economy to grow in 2020.⁴ COVID-19 had other plans. While it may seem like forever ago, 2019 consisted of the six-week General Motors (GM) strike, job cuts at GM and Ford, a slowing manufacturing sector, and relatively low auto sales. The GM strike alone took over 31,000 payroll jobs out of the economy in 2019, affecting GM's supply chain as well.⁵ Furthermore, the state's real GDP grew only 0.4 percent in 2019 – the lowest annual growth since the Great Recession. Nevertheless, In December of 2019, Michigan's unemployment rate was 3.8 percent, the lowest it had been in over a decade,⁶ but still slightly higher than the national rate of 3.5 percent.⁷ The unemployment rate continued to decrease, reaching a low of 3.6 percent in February. Then came March of 2020.

A recent survey revealed that Michigan faces a greater economic impact compared to other states across the country.⁸ After record-low unemployment numbers in 2019, the jobless rate hit 24 percent in April of 2020 – higher than the worst month of the Great Recession: 14.6 percent in June 2009 and higher than the

²Slone Terranella, *One year later: Here's a list of metro Detroit businesses we lost to the COVID-19 pandemic*, Detroit Free Press, 2021. Available at [One year later: Here's a list of metro Detroit businesses we lost to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

³Byron Tau, *Why Coronavirus Hit Michigan's Economy Harder, Longer*, The Wall Street Journal, 2020. Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-coronavirus-hit-michigans-economy-harder-longer-11588248001>

⁴Mark Sanchez, *Michigan Economic Outlook: After 'disappointing' year, Michigan economy poised to grow in 2020*, MiBiz, 2019. Available at <https://mibiz.com/sections/finance/michigan-economic-outlook-after-disappointing-year-michigan-economy-poised-to-grow-in-2020>

⁵Mark Sanchez, *Michigan Economic Outlook: After 'disappointing' year, Michigan economy poised to grow in 2020*, MiBiz, 2019.

⁶Nisa Khan, *Michigan economy: Tracking the recovery from coronavirus*, Detroit Free Press, 2020. Available at <https://www.freep.com/in-depth/money/business/2020/07/24/michigan-unemployment-economy-recovery-coronavirus-covid-19/5460934002/>

⁷*Unemployment rates in 15 states were lower than the 3.5-percent U.S. rate in December 2019*, TED: The Economics Daily, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020. Available at <https://www-bls-gov.proxy.lib.umich.edu/opub/ted/2020/unemployment-rates-in-15-states-were-lower-than-the-3-point-5-percent-u-s-rate-in-december-2019.htm>

⁸*Michigan Feels the Weight of the Pandemic*, Comerica, 2020. Available at <https://www.comerica.com/insights/economic-commentary/august-2020-michigan-state-outlook.html>

peak overall US rate of 14.7 percent in April 2020.⁹ Furthermore, a forecast estimate from the University of Michigan found that Michigan may not return to pre-pandemic employment levels until 2024.¹⁰ Michigan has been hit harder and longer than other states because its economy is more cyclical as it relies on auto manufacturing.¹¹ Additionally, the high number of COVID-19 cases forced Michigan to implement quarantine restrictions and stay at home orders that were stricter than other states.¹²

While Michigan's economy has made progress since the first two quarters of 2020, the numbers are still worrisome. At the end of 2020, the unemployment rate was 7.5 percent, according to the Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget.¹³ Additionally, total employment fell by 154,000, unemployment rose by 14,000, and Michigan's workforce decreased by a staggering 141,000 in December 2020 alone. However, experts are cautiously optimistic about Michigan's economy in the coming years. According to the University of Michigan's Research Center for Quantitative Economics (RSQE), the job recovery should continue, but at a slower pace.¹⁴ Job recovery continues as Michigan's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 5.1 percent in March of 2020, where total employment increased by 12,000 and unemployment fell by 4,000.¹⁵ However, the unemployment rate doesn't tell the whole story: Economists say that low-wage workers will find far fewer jobs, further widening the economic divide between low-skilled jobs and high-skilled jobs.¹⁶

Michigan Public Policy Survey Findings

Question 2c of the Spring 2020 MPPS aims to assess the potential effects of COVID-19 on economics in local jurisdictions (businesses closing, unemployment, etc.) by asking: *Thinking about potential effects of COVID-19 in your community and in Michigan overall, please identify the impacts so far (or those you expect to hit soon) on economic conditions in your community (businesses closing, unemployment, etc.).* Local government leaders could answer this question in the following ways: *Crisis-level impact, A significant impact, Somewhat of an impact, Very little or no impact at all, Don't know at all.* The analysis

⁹Unemployment rates down over the month in 38 states in May 2020, TED: The Economics Daily, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 202. Available at https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/unemployment-rates-down-over-the-month-in-38-states-in-may-2020.htm?view_full

¹⁰Jacob T. Burton, Gabriel M. Ehrlich, Donald R. Grimes, Owen Kay, Daniil Manaenkov, Michael R. McWilliams, and Aditi Thapar, *The Detroit Economic Outlook for 2019–2024*, Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics, University of Michigan, 2020. Available at [https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/econ-assets/Econdocs/RSQE%20PDFs/Detroit_Forecast_\(2020.08\).pdf](https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/econ-assets/Econdocs/RSQE%20PDFs/Detroit_Forecast_(2020.08).pdf)

¹¹Byron Tau, *Why Coronavirus Hit Michigan's Economy Harder, Longer*, The Wall Street Journal, 2020. Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-coronavirus-hit-michigans-economy-harder-longer-11588248001>

¹²Jacob Gershman, *A Guide to State Coronavirus Reopenings and Lockdowns*, The Wall Street Journal, 2020. Available at https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-state-by-state-guide-to-coronavirus-lockdowns-11584749351?mod=article_inline

¹³Caleb Buhs, *Michigan jobless rate increases during December*, Department of Technology, Management and Budget, 2020. Available at <https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/0,5552,7-358-99723-550124--,00.html>

¹⁴Paula Gardner, *Forecasts say Michigan's economy will still be recovering in 2023*, Bridge Michigan, 2020. Available at <https://www.bridgemi.com/business-watch/forecasts-say-michigans-economy-will-still-be-recovering-2023>

¹⁵TV6 News Team, *Michigan jobless rate edges down in March*, TV6, 2021. Available at <https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/2021/04/14/michigan-jobless-rate-edges-down-in-march/>

¹⁶Paula Gardner, *Forecasts say Michigan's economy will still be recovering in 2023*, Bridge Michigan, 2020.

below describes how the responses to these questions break down according to the following categories: jurisdiction type (city, village, township, county), population size, and Michigan region.

Figure 1: Mostly a crisis-level or significant impact on economic conditions

Percentage of total local officials’ responses to Question 2c of the MPPS: *Thinking about potential effects of COVID-19 in your community and in Michigan overall, please identify the impacts so far (or those you expect to hit soon) on economic conditions in your community (businesses closing, unemployment, etc.).*

Responses on COVID-19’s Effects on Economic Conditions
MPPS Spring 2020

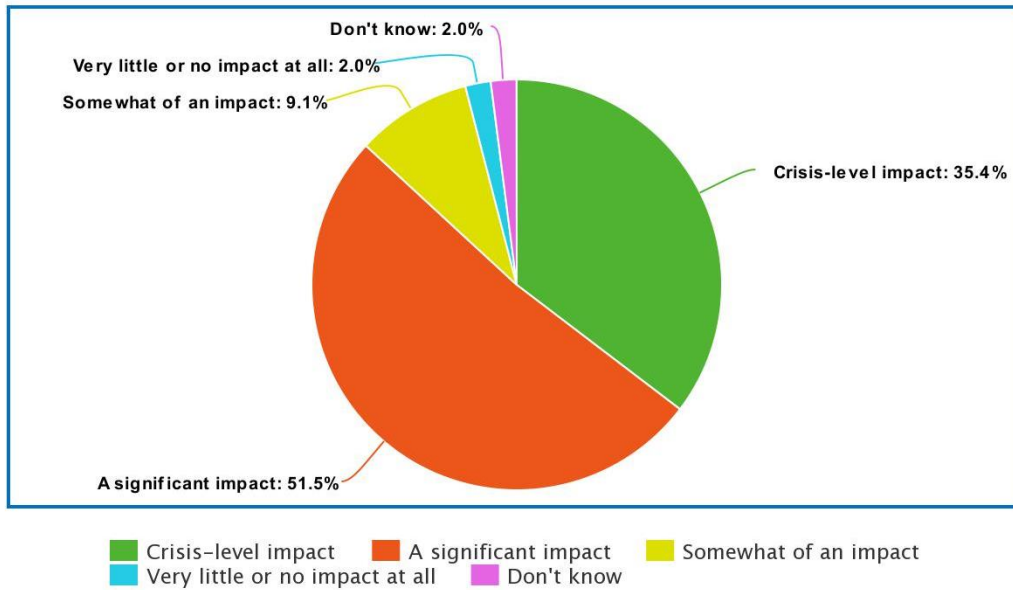


Figure 1 reflects the overall responses to Question 2c of the MPPS. Based on these responses, in an overwhelming majority of local jurisdictions, COVID-19 was reported to have had either a crisis-level or significant impact on their economic conditions.

Jurisdiction

Table 1: Counties and cities had greater economic condition challenges

Responses to question 2c broken down by jurisdiction type (% within jurisdiction type)¹⁷

	Jurisdiction type				Total
	County	Township	City	Village	
Crisis-level impact	59%	29%	55%	34%	35%
A significant impact	41%	54%	38%	53%	51%
Somewhat of an impact	0%	11%	4%	10%	9%

¹⁷Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q2c.php>

Very little or no impact at all	0%	3%	0%	1%	2%
Don't know	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%

Table 1 breaks down responses by jurisdiction type. Counties and cities had more of an anticipated crisis-level impact than townships and villages. Cities, for example, experience greater challenges because of their population density and because of the nature of population crowding in more populous areas. Research shows that crowding in enclosed areas like hospital, places of worship, and public transportation can explain easier virus transmission.¹⁸ In Detroit, for example, 17,000 citizens use public transportation every day because they don't have the types of jobs that can be done remotely and they don't have a car.¹⁹

Population

Table 2: Population centers felt greater economic impact

Responses to question 2c broken down by population size (% within population size)²⁰

	Population Size					Total
	<1500	1,500-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-30,000	>30,000	
Crisis-level impact	28%	33%	39%	52%	67%	35%
A significant impact	53%	52%	54%	44%	32%	51%
Somewhat of an impact	13%	10%	4%	2%	1%	9%
Very little or no impact at all	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Don't know	3%	3%	1%	2%	0%	2%

As shown in Table 2, the greater the population size, the higher the crisis level impact on economic conditions. While smaller populations still faced a significant impact from COVID-19, the reported impact was more severe for jurisdictions with larger populations, which were the first to see surges in COVID cases as the survey was in the field during the spring of 2020. For example, according to an annual report from the Detroit Regional Chamber, metro Detroit's economy has been hit extremely hard. In addition to the effects on the automotive and manufacturing sectors, small businesses and the leisure

¹⁸Yu Zhong and Bertrand Teirlinck, *Density and its Effect on COVID-19 Spread, Economic Research & Policy Group*. Available at <https://edc.nyc/insights/density-and-its-effect-on-covid-19-spread>

¹⁹Francis X. Donnelly, *Detroit bus riders choose between lives, livelihoods amid COVID-19 pandemic*, The Detroit News, 2020. Available at <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2020/05/28/detroit-bus-riders-choose-between-lives-and-livelihoods-because-covid/5266466002/>

²⁰Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q2c.php>

and hospitality industries have been hurting as well.²¹ The report showed that hotel occupancy rates declined 35.5 percent in December 2020 compared to December 2019. Additionally, the transportation and arts, entertainment, and recreation industries saw a staggering 60 percent decline by the end of December compared to the beginning of 2020. These industries are more prevalent in cities compared to townships and villages. While these industries have been hit hard, we have learned over time that the pandemic has affected industries differently. For example, the online shopping industry has grown throughout the pandemic, with Amazon having more than 3,500 jobs available in Michigan in the fall of 2020.²² On the other hand, the movie theater industry has been impacted negatively by the pandemic. For example, the Cadillac 4 Theater announced in May of 2020 that they would be closing permanently due to the pandemic after over a century of service.²³

Region

Table 3: Consistent economic impact across Michigan regions

Responses to question 2c broken down by region of Michigan (% within Michigan region)²⁴

	Michigan Region						
	Upper Peninsula	Northern Lower Peninsula	West Central Lower Peninsula	East Central Lower Peninsula	Southwest Lower Peninsula	Southeast Lower Peninsula	Total
Crisis-level impact	31%	40%	36%	33%	31%	39%	35%
A significant impact	59%	49%	49%	51%	52%	48%	51%
Somewhat of an impact	8%	6%	11%	12%	10%	8%	9%
Very little or no impact at all	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Don't know	1%	2%	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%

As seen in Table 3, perceptions of economic impacts are relatively consistent across regions. In fact, in all six regions, the most frequent response to question 2c was *A significant impact*. This information makes

²¹Adrienne Roberts, *Metro Detroit economy hit hard by COVID-19: New report shows where it hurt the most*, Detroit Free Press, 2021. Available at <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2021/02/25/detroit-economy-coronavirus/6807859002/>

²²Adrienne Roberts, *Not all job news is bad. For these industries, jobs are growing in Michigan*, Detroit Free Press, 2020. Available at <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2020/10/27/michigan-jobs-retail-online-coronavirus-marijuana/3726768001/>

²³Christine Kanerva and Jacob Johnson, *Movie Theaters Struggle During COVID-19 Pandemic*, 9&10 News, 2020. Available at <https://www.9and10news.com/2020/05/11/cadillac-4-closes-movie-theaters-struggle-to-get-through-covid-19-pandemic/>

²⁴Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q2c.php>

sense because the pandemic hasn't discriminated against specific regions. Nearly all aspects of our economic lives have changed since March 2020. Whether you're a small business owner in Grand Rapids or Mount Pleasant, you have dealt with restrictions that have impacted your community.

Looking Ahead

Local government officials also had the opportunity to forecast how long economic conditions in their communities would be ravaged by COVID-19. Question 7b of the Spring 2020 MPPS asked: *While circumstances can change rapidly, based on what you know today, how much longer do you think any significant negative impacts from COVID-19 will last on economic conditions in your community (business closings, unemployment, etc.)?* Local government officials could answer question 7b in the following ways: *More than a year from now, 7-12 more months, 4-6 more months, 2-3 more months, less than 2 months, and Don't know.*

Figure 2: Majority of jurisdictions expected negative effects on economic conditions to last beyond 4-6 months

Percentage of total local officials' responses to Question 7b of the MPPS: *While circumstances can change rapidly, based on what you know today, how much longer do you think any significant negative impacts from COVID-19 will last on economic conditions in your community (business closings, unemployment, etc.)?*

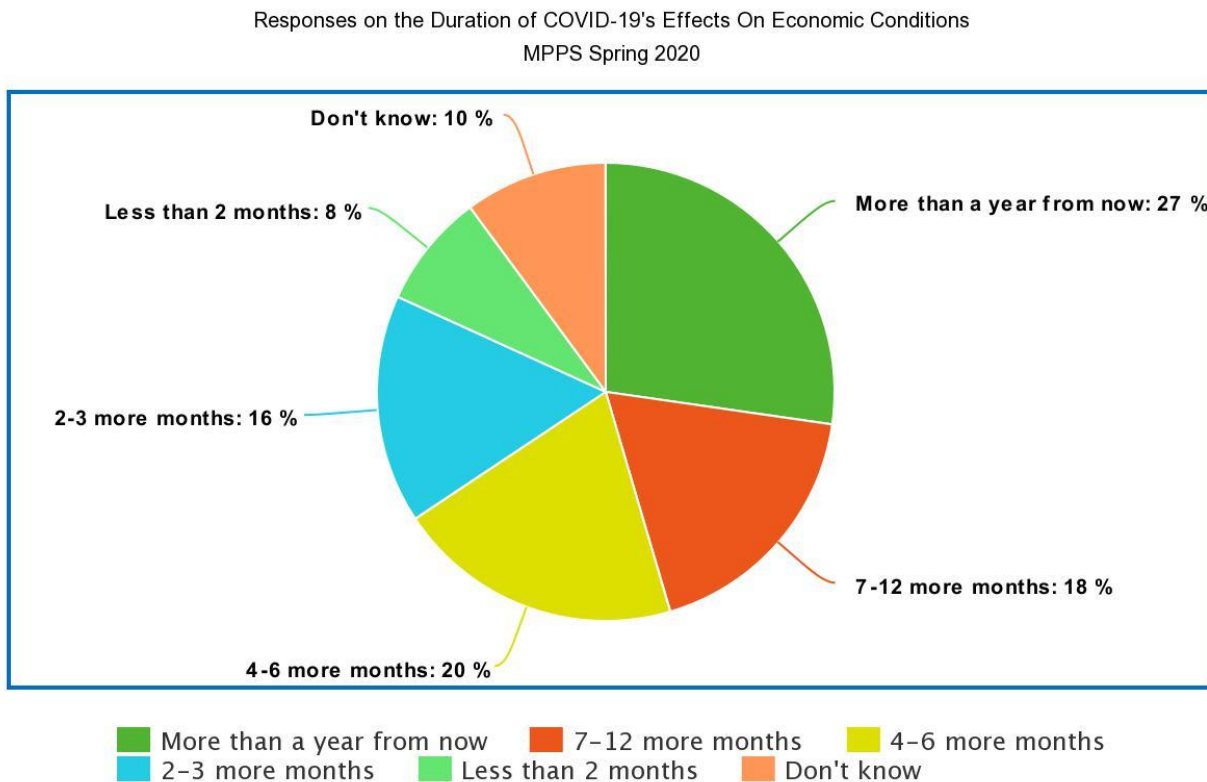


Figure 2 represents the total responses to question 7b. Based on the responses, nearly two-thirds of government officials anticipated the negative impacts from COVID-19 on their economic conditions to

last over 4-6 more months.²⁵ Because this question was answered during the early stages of the pandemic, local government officials probably underestimated the lasting effects of COVID-19 on their economic conditions. However, it is important to note that the most common response for question 7b was *more than a year from now*. This indicates that even with premature pandemic impacts, most government officials anticipated it to have long-term effects on their communities.

Local Emergency Planning

Another area of vulnerability that COVID-19 has exposed in local jurisdictions in Michigan is the status of emergency planning. Emergency plans are developed to reduce the harmful effects of emergencies and are key to local government responsibilities. COVID-19 has stretched the resources of local governments, and now is the time to assess whether emergency plans were beneficial in dealing with the pandemic across the state. Based on the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) data, most jurisdictions did not have emergency plans in place prior to the pandemic. However, more populous and urban jurisdictions were more prepared with plans compared to less populous and rural jurisdictions. Further, of the jurisdictions that did have emergency plans in place, most were deemed at least somewhat effective. Only time will help paint a better picture of the effectiveness of these emergency plans.

Emergency Management Background

Emergency planning and response planning begin at the local level. This is mostly because localities are closest to individuals and communities most impacted by emergencies like natural disasters, pandemics, terrorist attacks, chemical spills. Local governments can, therefore, plan in advance with local resources and respond much faster than higher levels of government. The American emergency management and public health preparedness system is a complex system of systems. There are approximately ten systems for each locality, including a public safety system (e.g., the local emergency management department) and a public health system (e.g., the local public health department which is present at the federal, state, and local government levels).²⁶

In Michigan, the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MPS/EMHSD) is responsible for Local Emergency Management Programs.²⁷ Additionally, the Division of Emergency Preparedness & Response is the emergency preparedness and response arm of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.²⁸ This complex emergency system is a bottom-up

²⁵Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q7b.php>

²⁶Susan Wolf-Fordham, *Integrating Government Silos: Local Emergency Management and Public Health Department Collaboration for Emergency Planning and Response*, Sage Journals, 2020. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0275074020943706>

²⁷Local Emergency Management Programs, Michigan State Police. Available at https://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,4643,7-123-72297_60152_66814---,00.html

²⁸Division of Emergency Preparedness & Response, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services. Available at https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71548_54783_54826---,00.html

system, which means that when a lower government level becomes overwhelmed, that level requests assistance from a higher level.

In accordance with the 1976 Michigan Public Act 390 (Emergency Management Act), the Michigan Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) is developed and maintained by the MSP/EMHSD. The current plan was approved by Governor Rick Snyder in 2018 for emergency operations within the State of Michigan.²⁹ The MEMP consists of over 300 pages, including definitions, procedures, and additional plans. The MEMP also requires each county to appoint an emergency management coordinator.³⁰ Emergency management coordinators have responsibilities that include planning for hazard mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in local communities. Therefore, localities can have their own emergency plans in addition to the MEMP.

Question 3 of the MPPS aims to address the status of emergency preparedness and planning in local jurisdictions. Specifically, the question asks: *Even before the arrival of COVID-19, some local jurisdictions already had existing emergency preparedness or response plans in place, while others did not. Which of the following best describes your jurisdiction's status?* Local government leaders could answer this question in the following ways: *Our jurisdiction already had a formal emergency response plan in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, We didn't have a formal plan before, but adopted one in response to the COVID-19 epidemic, We don't have a formal plan but we are currently developing one, We don't have a formal plan but hope to develop one soon, We don't have a formal emergency response plan and don't anticipate developing one for our jurisdiction, and Don't know.* The following analysis describes how the responses to these questions break down according to the following categories: jurisdiction type (city, village, township, county), population, urban/rural characterization, region, and fiscal stress level.

²⁹Michigan Emergency Management Plan, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, Michigan Department of State Police. 2019. Available at https://www.michigan.gov/documents/msp/MEMP_portfolio_for_web_383520_7.pdf

³⁰Local Emergency Management Programs, Michigan State Police. Available at https://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,4643,7-123-72297_60152_66814---,00.html

Figure 3: Majority of local jurisdictions did not have a formal emergency plan prior to COVID-19
 Percentage of total local officials' responses to Question 3 of the MPPS: *Even before the arrival of COVID-19, some local jurisdictions already had existing emergency preparedness or response plans in place, while others did not. Which of the following best describes your jurisdiction's status?*

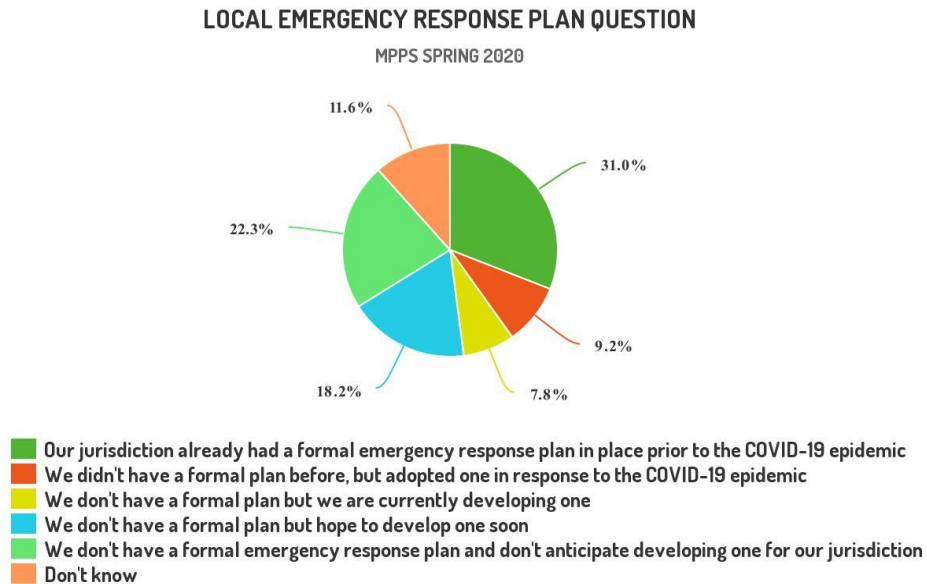


Figure 3 reflects the overall responses to Question 3 of the MPPS. Based on these responses, the majority of local jurisdictions did not have a formal emergency response plan in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over one third of local governments have either adopted or plan to adopt an emergency response plan in response to COVID-19, with only 22 percent reporting that they do not have a plan and do not anticipate adopting one.

Jurisdiction

Table 4: Most counties and cities already had formal emergency plans prior to COVID-19

Responses to question 3 broken down by jurisdiction type (% within jurisdiction type)³¹

	Jurisdiction Type				Total
	County	Township	City	Village	
Our jurisdiction already had a formal emergency response plan(s) in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic	70%	21%	57%	23%	29%
We didn't have a formal plan before, but adopted one in response to the COVID-19 epidemic	13%	8%	13%	12%	10%
We don't have a formal plan but we are currently developing one	6%	7%	10%	12%	8%
We don't have a formal plan but hope to develop one soon	7%	21%	10%	27%	19%
We don't have a formal emergency response plan and don't anticipate developing one for our jurisdiction	0%	29%	6%	14%	22%
Don't know	3%	14%	5%	12%	12%

As demonstrated in Table 4, most counties and cities already had formal emergency plans in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, while most townships and villages did not. Based on data from the MPPS, just over 70 percent of counties and 57 percent of cities that responded to the survey said that their jurisdiction already had a formal emergency response plan prior to the epidemic. 65 percent of townships and villages did not have a formal plan before the pandemic. However, 27 percent of villages that did not have emergency plans in place hoped to develop a formal emergency plan, while 29 percent of townships did not anticipate developing one for their jurisdictions.

³¹Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q3.php>

Population

Table 5: More populous jurisdictions were more likely to have emergency plans prior to COVID-19
Responses to question 3 broken down by population size (% within population size)³²

	Population Size					Total
	<1500	1500-5000	5001-10000	10001-30000	>30000	
Our jurisdiction already had a formal emergency response plan(s) in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic	15%	22%	44%	69%	89%	29%
We didn't have a formal plan before, but adopted one in response to the COVID-19 epidemic	7%	12%	12%	13%	5%	10%
We don't have a formal plan but we are currently developing one	9%	10%	5%	2%	5%	8%
We don't have a formal plan but hope to develop one soon	22%	21%	19%	12%	0%	19%
We don't have a formal emergency response plan and don't anticipate developing one for our jurisdiction	32%	23%	13%	1%	1%	22%
Don't know	15%	12%	8%	3%	1%	12%

Table 5 shows that jurisdictions with more people were more likely to have formal emergency plans than those with a smaller population. Just 69 percent of populations between 10,001 and 30,000 people and 89 percent of jurisdictions with populations over 30,000 people had formal emergency plans in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic. On the other hand, just 66 percent of populations between 1,500 and 5,000 people and 70 percent of populations with less than 1,500 people did not have a formal emergency response plan prior to the public health epidemic.

³²Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q3.php>

Rural/Urban Jurisdiction Characterization

Table 6: Rural jurisdictions had fewer emergency plans in place than urban jurisdictions prior to COVID-19

Responses to question 3 broken down by rural or urban characterization (% within rural or urban jurisdiction)³³

	How would you characterize your jurisdiction					Total
	Rural	Mostly rural	Mostly urban	Urban	Don't Know	
Our jurisdiction already had a formal emergency response plan(s) in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic	18.22%	31.53%	67.76%	88.47%	28.94%	29.31%
We didn't have a formal plan before, but adopted one in response to the COVID-19 epidemic	8.71%	13.40%	7.56%	2.91%	13.25%	9.82%
We don't have a formal plan but we are currently developing one	8.88%	8.57%	4.60%	1.46%	0.00%	8.06%
We don't have a formal plan but hope to develop one soon	23.08%	16.52%	10.31%	5.71%	11.26%	19.24%
We don't have a formal emergency response plan and don't anticipate developing one for our jurisdiction	28.62%	21.71%	3.17%	0.00%	0.00%	23.06%
Don't know	12.49%	8.29%	6.59%	1.46%	46.55%	10.52%

Local government officials self-selected their rural and urban characterizations in the following ways: *Rural, Mostly rural, Mostly urban, Urban, and Don't know*. As shown in table 6, jurisdictions with urban characterization were more prepared with formal emergency plans in place than those with rural characterization. About 60 percent of mostly rural jurisdictions and nearly 70 percent of rural jurisdictions did not have a formal emergency plan in place prior to COVID-19. In the opposite direction, nearly 68 percent (67.76) of mostly urban jurisdictions and nearly 89 percent (88.47) of urban jurisdictions already had formal emergency response plans prior to the epidemic.

³³Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020.

Region

Table 7: Less of an association between region and emergency preparedness

Responses to question 3 broken down by region of Michigan (% within Michigan region)³⁴

	Region of Michigan						Total
	Upper Peninsula	Northern Lower Peninsula	West Central Lower Peninsula	East Central Lower Peninsula	Southwest Lower Peninsula	Southeast Lower Peninsula	
Our jurisdiction already had a formal emergency response plan(s) in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic	23%	19%	26%	25%	25%	54%	29%
We didn't have a formal plan before, but adopted one in response to the COVID-19 epidemic	9%	9%	11%	8%	11%	10%	10%
We don't have a formal plan but we are currently developing one	8%	8%	7%	9%	8%	7%	8%
We don't have a formal plan but hope to develop one soon	22%	21%	17%	23%	20%	13%	19%
We don't have a formal emergency response plan and don't anticipate developing one for our jurisdiction	27%	31%	29%	20%	22%	8%	22%
Don't know	11%	12%	10%	15%	13%	8%	12%

The Michigan regions used in the MPPS were based on the State of the State Survey.³⁵ Unlike jurisdiction population, there was less of an association between region and emergency preparedness. However, regions with more urban jurisdictions were more prepared, while regions with more rural populations had fewer emergency plans in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic. For example, almost 54 percent of jurisdictions in the southeastern region of the Lower Peninsula, which is where Michigan's biggest city is located, already had a formal emergency response plan in place prior to the pandemic. Conversely, 66 percent of jurisdictions in the Upper Peninsula and 69 percent of jurisdictions in the Northern Lower Peninsula, which happen to be less populated, had no emergency plans in place prior to the pandemic.

Fiscal Stress Index

Jurisdictions were also categorized in regards to their fiscal stress index: *Low-stress (1-4)*, *Medium-stress (5-6)*, or *High-stress (7-10)*. A fiscal stress index represents the government's self-assessed fiscal health with the lower the index representing better fiscal health. High-stress jurisdictions were more likely to

³⁴Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q3.php>

³⁵State of the State Survey, Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, Michigan State University, <http://ippsr.msu.edu/soss/>

have plans (33.38 percent) compared to both low (31.40 percent) and medium (26.91 percent) stress jurisdictions. This is interesting because one may think that governments with a low fiscal index will be more prepared because they are in better fiscal shape. However, high-stress jurisdictions may actually be more prepared to prevent further fiscal damage. As shown in Table 8, the only consistent figure from this specific category is that the majority (nearly 60 percent) of jurisdictions in low, medium, and high stress did not have an emergency response plan in place prior to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Table 8: Majority of jurisdictions in low, medium, and high stress fiscal index did not have an emergency plan in place prior to the pandemic

Percentage of local officials' response to Question 3 of the MPPS, categorized by Fiscal Stress Index³⁶

Fiscal Stress Index Today, 3 categories					
	Low-stress (1-4) (828 jurisdictions)	Medium stress (5-6) (296 jurisdictions)	High-stress (7- 10) (108 jurisdictions)	Don't Know	Total
Jurisdiction had formal emergency response plan prior to COVID-19 epidemic	31.40%	26.91%	33.38%	12.95%	29.60%
We didn't have a formal plan before, but adopted one in response to the COVID-19 epidemic	9.78%	9.69%	12.41%	12.37%	10.10%
We don't have a formal plan but we are currently developing one	6.95%	8.78%	13.36%	6.59%	7.85%
We don't have a formal plan but hope to develop one soon	17.99%	23.54%	16.93%	13.76%	18.96%
We don't have a formal emergency response plan and don't anticipate developing one for our jurisdiction	23.97%	20.53%	14.10%	28.26%	22.63%
Don't know	9.89%	10.56%	9.82%	26.07%	10.86%

Effectiveness

Local officials' were also able to evaluate the effectiveness of their emergency response plans. As shown in Table 9, of the jurisdictions that did have an emergency response plan prior to COVID-19, 62 percent of jurisdictions deemed their emergency plan either somewhat effective or very effective. Over time, local jurisdictions will have a better understanding of how effective their emergency plans really were.

³⁶Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020.

Table 9: Majority of jurisdictions with emergency plans deem them at least somewhat effective

Percentage of local officials’ response to the emergency plan effectiveness question³⁷

<i>If your jurisdiction has activated or drawn upon its emergency response plan, how effective or ineffective has it been so far in your efforts to address the COVID-19 epidemic?</i>					
<i>We have not drawn upon our emergency response plan to date</i>	<i>Very effective</i>	<i>Somewhat effective</i>	<i>Not very effective</i>	<i>Not effective at all</i>	<i>Don’t know</i>
27%	37%	25%	3%	1%	8%

Even though jurisdictions had formal emergency plans in place prior to the pandemic, some jurisdictions did not draw upon their emergency response plan at the time of the survey. Taking a deeper look at the emergency plan effectiveness question, less populous jurisdictions were less likely to have used their emergency response plan at the time of the survey. In terms of population, 38 percent of jurisdictions with less than 1,500 people did not draw upon their emergency response plan.³⁸ In fact, as the population categories increased, the percentage of jurisdictions that used their emergency response plans increased. Furthermore, as the population categories increased, the number of jurisdictions that considered their emergency plans effective also increased, hence revealing a positive association between population and effective emergency plans.³⁹

Best Practices

To continue their basic business operations during and immediately after disruptive events/emergencies, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that governments develop, test, and maintain an emergency plan.⁴⁰ In order to continue to function during a crisis, governments must be able to foresee problems, detect threats, and determine effective proactive measures. State and local governments must be prepared to react to various disasters immediately, understanding that support from the federal government may not come immediately.

During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, natural and other disasters, best practices include “whole community” and “whole government approaches,” involving all parts of the government, community organizations, institutions, and businesses with representation from diverse community stakeholders. The “whole of government” approach refers to public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to

³⁷Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q4.php>

³⁸Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q4.php>

³⁹Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q4.php>

⁴⁰Business Preparedness and Continuity Guidelines, Government Finance Officers Association, 2020. Available at <https://www.gfoa.org/materials/business-preparedness-and-continuity-guidelines>

achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response. Approaches can be formal and informal and include government partners at federal, state, tribal/territorial, and local levels.

Local emergency management and public health agencies are at the foundation of emergency planning and response. In fact, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)'s 2018 Public Health Preparedness Landscape survey reports that 93 percent of respondent local public health departments reported having a "good" or "excellent" partnership with local emergency management.⁴¹ The same study found that 88 percent of local public health department respondents reported local emergency management participation in federally funded regional public health preparedness coalitions in which the public health department also participated.

Local or Regional Emergency Response Capability

The third and probably most directly affected area by COVID-19 is local or regional emergency response capability. Essentially, local emergency response capability is how public safety, healthcare, and public health come together. From maxed out hospital capacities to state police enforcing COVID-19 executive orders,⁴² there is no doubt that local emergency response capabilities have been affected by COVID-19 all across the Great Lakes State. Based on state-wide surveys of local government leaders in Michigan, the majority of local government officials reported that COVID-19 has had at least somewhat of an impact on local or regional emergency response capabilities, such as law enforcement, hospitals, and paramedics. Furthermore, jurisdictions with larger populations face a greater impact on local emergency response capabilities.

Local emergency response capabilities involve law enforcement, hospitals, and emergency medical services (EMS). Actors within local emergency response capabilities include police officers, firefighters, hospital workers, such as doctors and nurses, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians (EMT). Especially as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic, these actors have been all-hands-on-deck in tackling the devastating pandemic and its lasting impacts on their jobs and communities.

Police

One important challenge that law enforcement has dealt with revolves around the many COVID-19 executive orders and restrictions that Governor Whitmer put in place. For example, one of the first restrictions from March 2020 required that everyone stay home unless except for "essential" workers. But many police officers wondered who exactly were "essential" workers, as they were expected to enforce the governor's executive orders. Bob Stevenson, a retired Livonia police officer who now leads the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, made it clear that local police chiefs would try not to get involved in defining the governor's orders. "I know there's a lot of confusion out there, but as far as I

⁴¹*Local Emergency Management and Public Health Department Collaboration for Emergency Planning and Response*, Sage Journals, 2020.

⁴²Riley Beggin, *Michigan Gov. Whitmer orders state police to enforce COVID executive orders*, Bridge Michigan, 2020. Available at <https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/michigan-gov-whitmer-orders-state-police-enforce-covid-executive-orders>

know, the local chiefs are not going to be getting involved in determining who is and who is not essential personnel,” Stevenson said.⁴³

On top of the effects of the pandemic, law enforcement in Michigan has also dealt with rising crime⁴⁴ and many protests. In over more than 100 days in Michigan, racial justice and police brutality protests have resulted in more than 500 arrests, nearly 150 injuries, and 12 officers injured in 2020.⁴⁵ While these racial justice protests across the state are separate issues from COVID-19, the pandemic has aggravated many inequalities that people were protesting. For example, Michigan’s African-American population is 13.7 percent, yet in April of 2020, they accounted for nearly 43 percent of COVID-19 deaths.⁴⁶

The COVID-19 pandemic has added more challenges to the already difficult job of those who put on the blue uniform. Detroit Police Chief James Craig claimed that at one point, there were 650 members of the Detroit Police Department that were quarantined. In addition to the effects of Chief Craig’s police department, he also was directly hit by the virus. “That was during a time when I was battling COVID,” said the Detroit Police Chief.⁴⁷ Although Chief Craig survived COVID, two members of the Detroit Police Department didn’t. Craig’s childhood friend and mentor, Wayne County Sheriff Benny Napoleon, was not as fortunate as Craig. Even when dealing with a difficult situation, including losing a police officer, Craig says that “...people look to me for strength, stability.” “I’m human. It doesn’t mean I don’t feel the pain.”

Hospitals

Hospitals are also crucial to the functioning of local governments and community emergency response. Michigan has public and nonpublic hospitals⁴⁸ – where public hospitals are run by local governments. Michigan hospitals have been dramatically affected since the first COVID-19 cases in March 2020. For example, in November 2020, six Michigan hospitals were at 100 percent capacity, and 18 more were at 90 percent or more capacity.⁴⁹ Even with these troubling capacity numbers, the main issue that hospitals have been dealing with is inadequate staffing. According to Laura Appel, senior vice president of the Michigan

⁴³Jonathan Oosting, *Police: Don’t expect us to enforce Michigan’s confusing coronavirus lockdown*, Bridge Michigan, 2020. Available at <https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/police-dont-expect-us-enforce-michigans-confusing-coronavirus-lockdown>

⁴⁴Sarah Cwiek, *Detroit 2020 violent crime spike led by homicides, shootings*, Michigan Radio, 2021. Available at <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/detroit-2020-violent-crime-spike-led-homicides-shootings>

⁴⁵Gus Burns, *For 110 days, protesters have called for police reforms in Michigan. Nothing has changed*, MLive, 2020. Available at <https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/09/for-110-days-protesters-have-called-for-police-reforms-in-michigan-nothing-has-changed.html>

⁴⁶Clara Hendrickson and Kristen Jordan Shamus, *Why are racial disparities in Michigan’s COVID-19 cases and deaths shrinking?*, Detroit Free Press, 2021. Available at <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/01/22/covid-19-deaths-racial-disparities/4244324001/>

⁴⁷Carolyn Clifford, *COVID-19 and its impact on the law enforcement community*, 2021. Available at <https://www.wxyz.com/rebound/covid-19-and-its-impact-on-the-law-enforcement-community>

⁴⁸*Our Hospitals: Serving Communities Across Michigan*, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, 2021. Available at <https://www.mha.org/Our-Hospitals>

⁴⁹Julie Mack, *6 Michigan hospitals at 100% capacity; 18 more at 90% or higher as coronavirus crisis deepens*, MLive, 2020. Available at <https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/11/6-michigan-hospitals-at-100-capacity-18-more-at-90-or-higher-as-coronavirus-crisis-deepens.html>

Health and Hospital Association, you can buy beds, but you “...can’t make workers overnight.” Additionally, hospital employees are catching the virus or quarantining, which further exacerbates the staffing problem. As if that wasn’t enough, hospital employees are burnt out from facing the daily horrors of the virus. For example, Ali Rizvi, a traveling physician in Michigan, had to take a break from medicine in August of 2020 for his mental health. “I’m just really tired...I have been working almost nonstop.”⁵⁰

Michigan hospitals have also incurred severe financial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a report from the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Michigan hospitals have suffered financial losses that are nearing \$3.2 billion and a financial deficit of nearly \$1.1 billion.⁵¹ This financial impact includes exponential costs associated with preparing for a surge of patients, delaying non-emergency care for months, and treating an increasing population of unemployed patients who have lost private insurance coverage.⁵²

EMS

Emergency medical services have also been hit hard by the pandemic. Financially, the Michigan Association of Ambulance Services (MAAS) and the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs (MAFC) are calling for a \$10 million increase in state funding to adequately fund EMS in Michigan.⁵³ Generally, EMS is paid for by local taxes, municipal budgets, and by billing insurance companies, such as Medicare and Medicaid for transporting patients.⁵⁴ Vice president of operations for Mobile Medical Response, which provides medical support for much of Wexford county, Jason MacDonald, said that Medicaid reimbursements are the biggest obstacle in terms of funding for their services.⁵⁵ Although most third-party insurance companies cover most of an ambulance ride’s cost, Medicaid only covers a small portion and they can’t charge the patient for the remaining costs. Furthermore, incurring these additional costs has become more difficult as almost every aspect of the EMS job is more expensive, such as medical supplies, liability insurance, and fuel costs. Because of these costs, EMS providers have to pay their employees less money,⁵⁶ which makes it difficult to attract new employees.

According to Jack Fisher, MAAS president and executive director of Medic 1 Ambulance in Berrien County, EMS has been facing funding issues for years, but COVID-19 has exposed major flaws in the

⁵⁰Dustin Dwyer and Kate Wells, *Michigan hospital workers face burnout as public support fades, COVID-19 cases rise*, Detroit Free Press, 2020. Available at <https://www.freep.com/story/news/health/2020/11/21/michigan-hospitals-covid-19-pandemic/6374114002/>

⁵¹*COVID-19 Impact Report: Michigan’s Front Line of Defense*, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, 2020. Available at <https://www.mha.org/Newsroom/COVID-19-Impact-Report>

⁵²*COVID-19 Impact Report: Michigan’s Front Line of Defense*, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, 2020.

⁵³TV6 News Team, *EMS is on life support: Ambulance association says it’s time to properly fund EMS in Michigan*, TV6, 2021. Available at <https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/2021/02/25/ems-is-on-life-support-ambulance-association-says-its-time-to-properly-fund-ems-in-michigan/>

⁵⁴*What is EMS?*, National Association of Emergency Technicians (NAEMT). Available at <http://www.naemt.org/docs/default-source/about-ems/what-is-ems-for-web-04-17-2017.pdf?status=Temp&sfvrsn=0.46038588091233634>

⁵⁵Chris Lamphere, *Local officials say EMS service on life support, funding change needed*, Cadillac News, 2021. Available at https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/local-officials-say-ems-service-on-life-support-funding-change-needed/article_81ed5f1d-d8e3-5b0a-b8f6-1dfe4cbd4d91.html

⁵⁶Chris Lamphere, *Local officials say EMS service on life support, funding change needed*, Cadillac News, 2021.

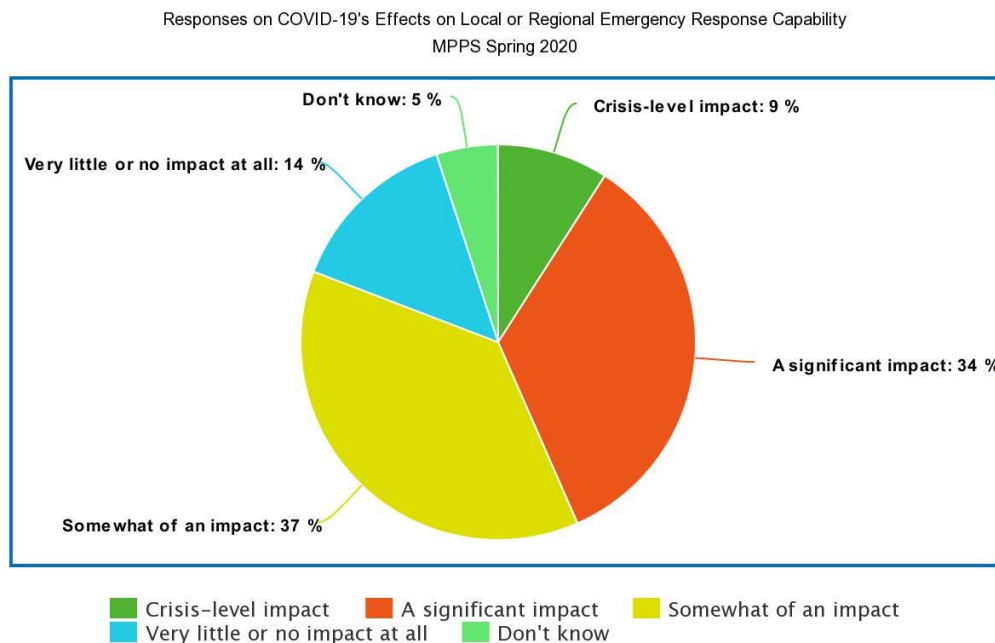
system that need to be addressed now. “This severe underfunding, combined with additional pandemic-related costs we have incurred, have pushed EMS to the brink. The answer is proper funding and we are asking our state leaders to prioritize EMS in the state budget,” Fisher said. Furthermore, the pandemic has affected the ability of paramedics to respond to other emergency situations. Tommy Begres, a firefighter-paramedic near Detroit, said that COVID-19 precautionary measures, such as decontamination, are slowing down the overall response times.⁵⁷ This troubles pandemic responders because there are other dire situations that need attention as well.

Michigan Public Policy Survey Findings

Question 2e of the MPPS aims to assess the potential effects of COVID-19 on local or regional emergency response capability. Specifically, the question asks: *Thinking about potential effects of COVID-19 in your community and in Michigan overall, please identify the impacts so far (or those you expect to hit soon) on local or regional emergency response capability (police/sheriff, EMS, hospitals, etc.).* Local government leaders could answer this question in the following ways: *Crisis-level impact, A significant impact, Somewhat of an impact, Very little or no impact at all, Don't know at all.* This memo describes how the responses to these questions break down according to the following categories: jurisdiction type (city, village, township, county), population size, and Michigan region.

Figure 4: Majority of local officials anticipated COVID-19 to have at least somewhat of an impact on local emergency response capability

Percentage of total local officials’ responses to Question 2e of the MPPS: *Thinking about potential effects of COVID-19 in your community and in Michigan overall, please identify the impacts so far (or those you expect to hit soon) on local or regional emergency response capability (police/sheriff, EMS, hospitals, etc.).*



⁵⁷Katelyn Newman, *How the Coronavirus Has Impacted Paramedic Duties*, U.S. News, 2020. Available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2020-04-20/for-michigan-paramedic-pandemics-impact-extends-beyond-covid-19>

Figure 4 reflects the overall responses to Question 2e of the MPPS. In a vast majority (80 percent) of local jurisdictions, COVID-19 was anticipated to have at least somewhat of an impact on local or regional emergency response capability, with 43 percent anticipating a “significant” or “crisis-level” impact.

Jurisdiction

Table 10: Across jurisdiction types, the majority of local officials anticipated COVID-19 to have somewhat of or a significant impact on local emergency response capability

Responses to question 2e broken down by jurisdiction type (% within jurisdiction type)⁵⁸

	Jurisdiction type				Total
	County	Township	City	Village	
Crisis-level impact	7%	8%	18%	7%	9%
A significant impact	43%	35%	36%	25%	34%
Somewhat of an impact	43%	35%	34%	48%	37%
Very little or no impact at all	6%	15%	9%	15%	14%
Don't know	2%	6%	3%	4%	5%

Table 10 breaks down responses by jurisdiction type. Across all jurisdiction types, the majority of responses fell in the *Somewhat of an impact* and *A significant impact* categories. Although there are no noticeable trends in table 1, the numbers are consistent with the total percentage of local official’s responses to question 2e (Figure 4).

⁵⁸Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q2e.php>

Population

Table 11: More populous jurisdictions anticipated a greater impact on local emergency response capability

Responses to question 2e broken down by population size (% within population size)⁵⁹

	Population Size					Total
	<1500	1,500-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-30,000	>30,000	
Crisis-level impact	8%	9%	11%	15%	16%	9%
A significant impact	30%	36%	31%	38%	49%	34%
Somewhat of an impact	38%	36%	44%	35%	30%	37%
Very little or no impact at all	16%	15%	11%	9%	4%	14%
Don't know	8%	5%	2%	2%	1%	5%

As shown in Table 11, jurisdictions with over 10,000 anticipated a greater impact on local or regional emergency response capability than jurisdictions with smaller population sizes. This could be explained by the pandemic's initial severity in more populated areas, like Detroit.⁶⁰ Additionally, because more populous jurisdictions were hit hard first, jurisdictions with smaller populations may have also underscored the severity of the pandemic when filling out the MPPS.

⁵⁹Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q2e.php>

⁶⁰Katelyn Newman, *How the Coronavirus Has Impacted Paramedic Duties*, U.S. News, 2020.

Region

Table 12: Consistent responses to question 2e among regions of Michigan

Responses to question 2e broken down by region of Michigan (% within Michigan region)⁶¹

	Michigan Region						Total
	Upper Peninsula	Northern Lower Peninsula	West Central Lower Peninsula	East Central Lower Peninsula	Southwest Lower Peninsula	Southeast Lower Peninsula	
Crisis-level impact	10%	10%	10%	7%	8%	12%	9%
A significant impact	34%	32%	33%	38%	29%	38%	34%
Somewhat of an impact	35%	38%	38%	35%	41%	35%	37%
Very little or no impact at all	15%	13%	12%	17%	15%	12%	14%
Don't know	6%	7%	6%	3%	7%	3%	5%

As seen in Table 12, perceptions of COVID-19's effects on local emergency response capability are relatively consistent across regions. This information makes sense because the pandemic hasn't treated regions differently; it affects everyone regardless of geography. Whether you're the Police Chief in Detroit or a paramedic in Ionia, Michigan, it is clear that COVID-19 has changed the duties of those in local emergency response capability.

Conclusion

⁶¹Michigan Public Policy Survey, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, Spring 2020. Available at <http://closup.umich.edu/sites/closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2020-data/q2e.php>

Thanks to local government officials and their responses to the MPPS, it is clear that COVID-19 has greatly impacted local jurisdictions all over Michigan. Especially in terms of economic conditions, emergency response planning, and local emergency response capability, the pandemic has exposed many issues, such as lack of funding for EMS or not enough emergency plans in place, that local officials have now been facing for over a year. We hope that local governments can use this research to make changes for the betterment of their jurisdictions. Even though more and more people are getting vaccinated against COVID-19, local governments will deal with the consequences of the pandemic for years to come. As policymakers, it is important to constantly analyze institutions and processes to be aware of needed change. Through this research, it is clear that many changes are needed to better handle a pandemic, or any emergency, in the future.