



Recycling Issues, Policies, and Practices among Michigan Local Governments

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This report presents the views of Michigan's local government leaders regarding a variety of recycling issues and policies in their jurisdictions, including what types of recycling services are offered in communities across the state, changes to local recycling services in the past few years, local government funding sources and staffing for recycling, assessments of residents' interest in new recycling services not currently offered, and more. These findings are based on statewide surveys of local government leaders in the Fall 2021 wave of the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), as part of the Michigan Local Recycling Policy Project.

The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) is an ongoing census survey of all 1,856 general purpose local governments in Michigan conducted since 2009 by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP). Respondents for the Fall 2021 wave of the MPPS include county administrators, board chairs, and clerks; city mayors, managers, and clerks; village presidents, managers, and clerks; and township supervisors, managers, and clerks from 1,356 jurisdictions across the state.



Key Findings

- Statewide, 86% of Michigan local leaders report that recycling is somewhat (39%) or very (47%) important to their community members, with 65% of officials from state's largest jurisdictions—those with over 30,000 residents—saying recycling issues are *very* important in their communities.
- Among cities, villages, and townships, 79% report that residents have at least some access to various recycling services, including drop-off facilities for recycling (49%), curbside recycling (43%), household hazardous waste collection (42%), e-waste collection (34%), collection of yard waste material for composting (33%), and on-site recycling services for businesses (20%).
 - » Almost all county officials report there is access to at least some recycling in their county, including 78% that have at least some access to drop-off facilities and 77% that have household hazardous waste collection available.
- When it comes to service providers, local leaders report that drop-off facilities as well as e-waste and hazardous household materials collection are most commonly run by the county government alone or as joint/regional collaborations, while curbside recycling is most commonly provided by private contractors, and yard waste collection for composting is most likely to be run by cities, villages, and townships themselves.
- Despite the challenges to local governments during the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly two-thirds (63%) say there has been no substantial change over the past two years in recycling services or programs offered to residents. Meanwhile 14% report expanding services, while 11% report reducing them in this time frame.
- When asked about their jurisdiction's current spending levels on recycling, a majority of local leaders (63%) in communities where at least some recycling is offered feel that their jurisdiction is spending about the right amount on recycling, while more say they currently spend too little (14%) than say they are spending too much (9%).
- Finally, two-thirds (67%) of local leaders statewide from jurisdictions with at least some recycling services are either somewhat (37%) or very (30%) satisfied with the current recycling opportunities available. By contrast, just under a quarter (24%) from communities with no access to recycling services are somewhat (18%) or very (6%) satisfied with their lack of services.

Background

Michigan has a long and complex history with recycling policy. For example, in the 1970s, Michigan was one of the first states to introduce a deposit law for bottles and cans to encourage recycling and keep them out of landfills.¹ However, in the past few years, voices have begun to call for reform of Michigan's signature deposit law, both in favor of expansion on one side² and reform or elimination on the other.³ And although Michigan residents manage to return almost 90% of eligible containers—higher than any of the other nine states that have deposit laws—the state currently lags substantially behind others nationwide on wider issues of recycling, with an estimated overall rate for Michigan of only around 18% of recyclable waste, compared with a national average of around 32%.⁴

In response to that low rate, the State of Michigan launched a statewide initiative in 2015 aimed at achieving convenient access for all residents and doubling the state recycling rate. Stakeholder groups including the Governor's Recycling Council (GRC)⁵ and the Solid Waste and Sustainability Advisory Panel (SWSAP)⁶ were also convened to generate recommendations for improving and increasing recycling. More recently, Michigan has established a statewide goal of tripling its current recycling rate to 45%⁷ and in 2018, the Renew Michigan Fund was established in part to support the expansion of recycling and sustainable materials management. Additionally, the Michigan Legislature is currently considering a bipartisan package of bills proposing broad reforms and updates to the Michigan Solid Waste Law,⁸ in order to provide additional funding, support, and incentives for recycling statewide.

Michigan's local governments are key stakeholders in the state's materials management and recycling policies and practices. Counties are required to have solid waste management plans, and these are increasingly shifting away from a primary focus simply on waste disposal to an increased emphasis on recycling, organics management, and waste reduction opportunities.⁹ Local units of all sizes statewide, working alone or in conjunction with other units and regional organizations, may be involved in providing, funding, or coordinating such services as curbside recycling collection, drop-off programs for general recycling, household hazardous waste, source separated organics, scrap tires, metals, or electronics, education and outreach to residents about recycling, and more.

In Fall 2021, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) sponsored a special wave of CLOSUP's ongoing Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) to better understand local officials' assessments of current recycling programs, policies, and issues in their local communities. The following report is the first in a series that explores the survey findings.

Local leaders statewide say recycling is important to their community members

The MPPS asked local leaders for a general assessment of how important topics related to recycling are to members of their community, even if they believe these topics are not applicable to their own jurisdiction's government operations. Overall, 86% of local officials say that recycling is somewhat (39%) or very (47%) important to their community members (see *Figure 1a*). In jurisdictions where residents currently have access to at least some recycling services, a majority (53%) of local leaders say that recycling is very important to their community. And even in communities where there is currently no recycling access, a quarter (25%) report that recycling is very important. Statewide, only 9% of local leaders report that recycling is not very important to their community members, and just 2% believe it is not at all important.

Officials from Michigan's smallest jurisdictions—those with 1,500 or fewer residents—are significantly less likely to say recycling is somewhat or very important compared to larger jurisdictions. However, even in these smaller communities, 79% of local officials say recycling is somewhat (41%) or very (38%) important, and only 15% say it is not very or not at all important (see *Figure 1b*). By contrast, in Michigan's largest communities—those with more than 30,000 residents—nearly two-thirds (65%) say recycling is very important to community members.

By region, local leaders in the Southeast (61%) and the Northern Lower Peninsula (58%) are the most likely to say that recycling issues are very important in their community (see *Figure 1c*). Officials from the Upper Peninsula (17%) and the East Central Lower Peninsula (16%) are the most likely to report that recycling issues are not very or not at all important to their community.

Figure 1a
Local official's assessments of the local importance of recycling issues

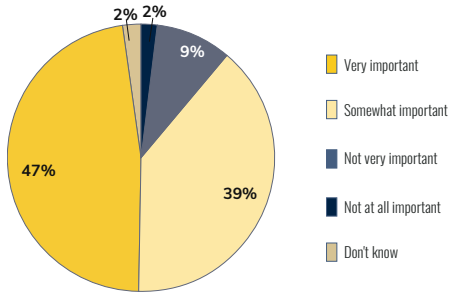


Figure 1b
Local official's assessments of the local importance of recycling issues, by jurisdiction size

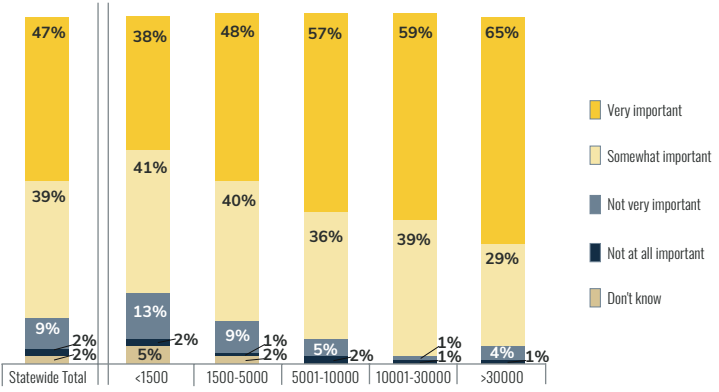
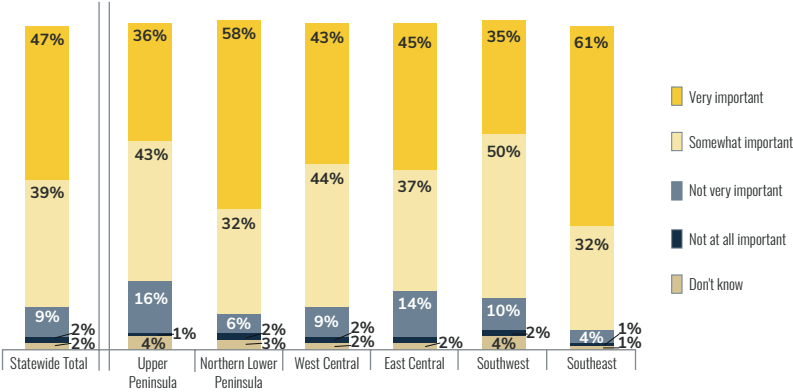


Figure 1c
Local official's assessments of the local importance of recycling issues, by region



Nearly 80% of jurisdictions report their residents have access to at least some recycling services or programs, most commonly drop-off recycling facilities

The MPPS asked local leaders about access in their jurisdictions to six general types of recycling services or programs: curbside recycling collection for residents, on-site recycling collection for local businesses (e.g., curbside, dumpsters, etc.), access to a drop-off recycling facility (for residents and/or businesses, either free or for a fee), household hazardous waste collection opportunities, household electronic equipment collection opportunities (i.e., e-waste), and collection of yard waste material for composting.

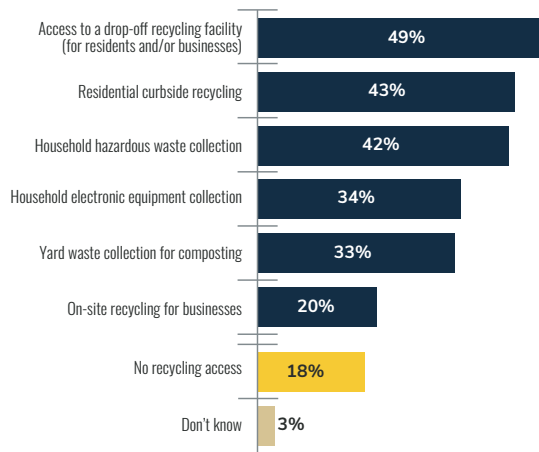
The following analysis regarding provision of specific services breaks out the responses from city, village, and township officials separately from responses by county officials, in order to avoid double-counting local and county-provided services.

As shown in *Figure 2*, 18% of leaders from cities, villages, and townships statewide report that residents in their jurisdictions do not have access to any of these recycling services or programs. Meanwhile, residents in 79% of Michigan’s cities, villages, and townships have access to at least one of the recycling services listed in *Figure 2*, including drop-off facilities for recycling (accessible to residents in 49% of jurisdictions), curbside recycling (43%), household hazardous waste collection (42%), e-waste collection (34%), and collection of yard waste material for composting (33%). Significantly fewer cities, villages, and townships (20%) report that businesses in their jurisdictions have access to on-site recycling services.

At the county level, availability of at least some types of recycling is reported by almost all county officials, including 78% that have at least some access to drop-off facilities and 77% that have household hazardous waste collection available.

See *Appendix A* at the end of this report for breakdowns of access to various types of recycling services by jurisdiction population size.

Figure 2
Percent that report various recycling services are available in their jurisdiction (among cities, villages, and townships)



Relatively few jurisdictions run their own recycling services, many rely on private contractors or joint agreements

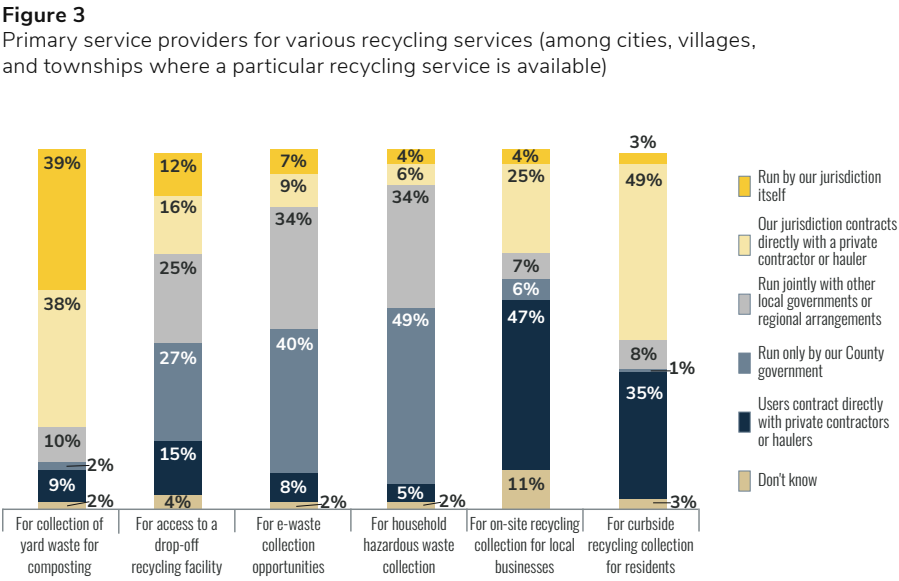
Local leaders were asked to indicate the *primary* service provider for each type of service that is available in their jurisdiction. Among the six types of recycling services, yard waste collection for composting is the most likely to be run by cities, villages, and townships themselves, with 39% of communities where this service is available reporting that the jurisdiction itself is the primary provider (see *Figure 3*). Another 38% of communities that have yard waste collection indicate that the jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor, while 9% say their residents contract directly with contractors. Finally, 12% say these services are provided via either joint local government or regional arrangements (10%) or by their county government (2%).

Among the 49% of cities, villages, and townships where a drop-off recycling facility is available, 27% are run by the county government, while 25% are provided through joint/regional collaborations with other local governments, and 12% are run by the jurisdictions themselves. Finally, in 31% of cities, villages, and townships, drop-off recycling facilities are provided through private contractors or haulers, either contracted by the jurisdiction (16%) or by the residents directly (15%).

E-waste collection opportunities and household hazardous waste collection are most likely to be provided by either the county government or through regional or intergovernmental arrangements.

Meanwhile, among the 43% of cities, villages, and townships where curbside recycling is available, it is most commonly provided by private contractors or haulers, either through the jurisdiction contracting directly (49%) or by users contracting directly (35%). Few governments run their own curbside recycling (3%) or run it jointly with other local governments or via regional arrangements (8%), and just 1% say it is run only by the county government. Similarly, in cities, villages, and townships where businesses have access to on-site recycling collection, most are provided through arrangements with private contractors.

See *Appendix B* for breakdowns of local recycling service providers by jurisdiction population size.



Despite challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, more jurisdictions report expanding than contracting recycling services

Although many employers struggled with service provision during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, this doesn't appear to have been a significant statewide issue for local recycling services. When asked whether there have been changes in recycling in local communities over the past two years, 14% of cities, townships, and villages report at least some expansion of recycling services in their jurisdictions, while 11% say there has been some reduction, and 4% say there has been a mixture of expansion and reduction (see *Figure 4*). Meanwhile, nearly two-thirds (63%) say there has been no substantial change in recycling services or programs offered to residents over the past 2 years. There are few differences in reported changes by population size of the communities, although the largest jurisdictions are slightly more likely to have seen a mixture of both service expansion and reduction, perhaps not surprising as larger communities are more likely than smaller ones to have multiple types of services available.

Among the 15% of cities, villages, and townships that report a reduction or mixed expansion/reduction over the past two years, local leaders cite a variety of reasons for the changes. As shown in *Figure 5*, the most common reasons for service reductions are financial issues such as cost increases from service providers or expired grant funding (36%). Larger jurisdictions are more likely to cite impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and service cuts by the county government or other partners compared to smaller jurisdictions. Meanwhile, smaller jurisdictions are slightly more likely to report changes due to a lack of demand or participation by members of the community.

At the county-wide level, nearly a quarter of county officials report there has been some (21%) or significant (5%) expansion of recycling services within their county over the past two years. In addition, 12% of counties report at least some reduction, along with another 11% who say there have been mixed changes. When explaining those reductions, county officials are more likely to cite financial issues as well as impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and are less likely to cite lack of demand or participation.

Figure 4
Percent of jurisdictions that report change in recycling service provision in the last 2 years (among cities, villages, and townships)

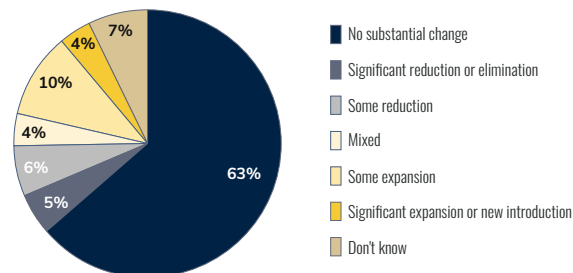
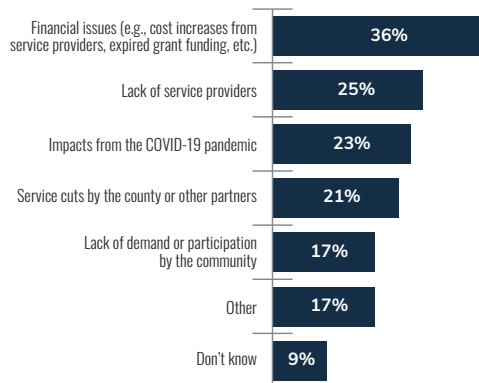


Figure 5
Reasons that recycling efforts in the jurisdiction have recently been reduced or even eliminated (among cities, villages, and townships where recycling efforts have been reduced)



Demand for new recycling services includes bulky item, paper shredding, and e-waste

Michigan’s local leaders were also asked whether there is demand from local residents or businesses for recycling services that are not currently available in their jurisdiction. Among jurisdictions (including counties) where at least some types of recycling are currently available, many respondents (31%) were unsure what new services may be in demand (see *Figure 6a*). Meanwhile, over a third (37%) believe there is significant interest among community members for services to recycle bulky or otherwise hard-to-recycle items, as well as interest in access to paper shredding (24%), and household electronic equipment (23%) and hazardous waste collection (19%), among other desired services, too.

See *Appendix C* for breakdowns by jurisdiction population size.

Among the 18% of jurisdictions statewide where there are currently no recycling opportunities available, local leaders believe there is primarily interest in introducing curbside (30%) or drop-off recycling services (28%), while just 15% say there is no demand in their community for new access to recycling services of any kind (see *Figure 6b*). However, again, a substantial proportion (36%) report they are uncertain about local demand for new services.

Figure 6a
Officials’ assessments of community’s desire for new access to recycling services (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)

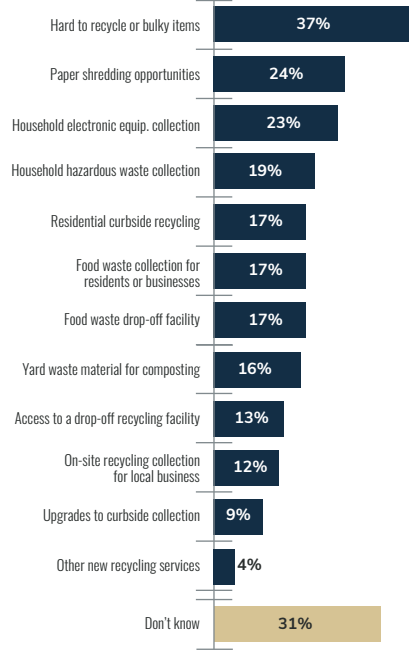
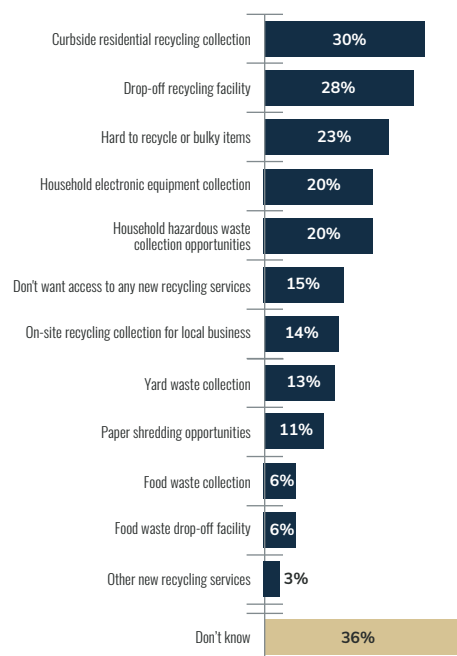


Figure 6b
Officials’ assessments of community’s desire for new access to recycling services (among all jurisdictions where no recycling is available)



Michigan’s largest jurisdictions are the most likely to have staff specifically devoted to recycling issues

Among jurisdictions statewide where any recycling services or programs are available, 70% report that they do not have anyone in the jurisdiction who is specifically responsible for recycling (see *Figure 7a*). However, while just 3% have staff whose sole responsibility is recycling, 18% do have staff with other responsibilities in addition to recycling services. Meanwhile, 7% of jurisdictions statewide report they have elected officials who are recycling “champions” in their local government, and another 5% have formal committees or boards that engage with recycling issues, such as a Materials Management Committee or citizen advisory committee.

Clearly, jurisdiction size plays a significant role in whether and how a local government devotes personnel to recycling programs or services. As shown in *Figure 7b*, only 22% of jurisdictions with greater than 30,000 residents report no personnel devoted to recycling. Meanwhile, among these largest jurisdictions, over half (54%) have staff with other job responsibilities in addition to handling recycling services and 11% report having jurisdiction staff whose sole job responsibility is for recycling services. In addition, 20% of the largest jurisdictions report having formal committees or boards that address recycling issues.

Figure 7a
Responsibility for recycling policy in local jurisdictions (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)

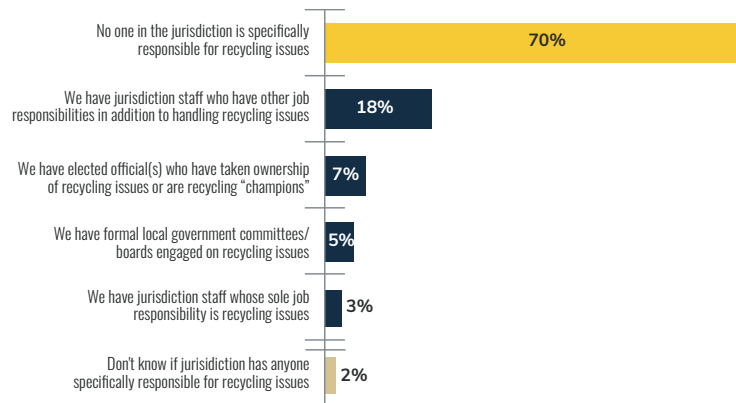
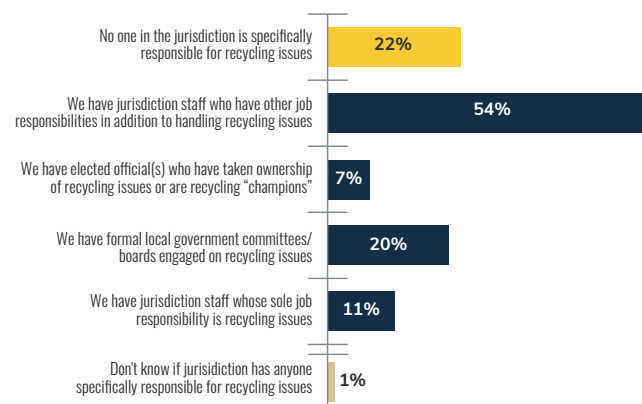


Figure 7b
Responsibility for recycling policy in local jurisdictions with over 30,000 residents (among those jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)



Most believe they are currently spending the right amount on recycling

A variety of local funding approaches are used to support recycling services across Michigan. On the one hand, among those where at least some services are provided to residents, 36% of jurisdictions note that they do not contribute any of their own local government funding for such services (see *Figure 8*). Meanwhile, 28% report contributing funds from the jurisdiction’s general funds. Other approaches include user fees (reported in 15% of jurisdictions), special assessments (11%), and dedicated millages (10%), among others.

There are significant differences by jurisdiction size, however, with 42% of the smallest communities reporting they contribute none of their own government’s funds, compared with just 13% of the largest communities.

See *Appendix D* for breakdowns by jurisdiction population size.

Regardless of whether the local jurisdiction’s government provides any funding support for local recycling services, officials were asked to evaluate the adequacy of their jurisdiction’s current spending (or lack thereof). Statewide, a majority of local leaders (63%) in communities where at least some recycling is available to residents feel that their jurisdiction is spending about the right amount on recycling (see *Figure 9*). Meanwhile, more say they currently spend too little (14%) than spend too much (9%), and 14% are unsure.

Local officials from jurisdictions that do not currently contribute any government funding to local recycling services are less likely to say they spend the right amount (56%) than are those from local governments that do contribute at least some jurisdiction funding (71%). Meanwhile, 22% of officials from local governments that do not contribute any jurisdiction funding feel they spend *too little*, compared with just 12% from places that are contributing at least some funds to local recycling.

Figure 8
Percent of jurisdictions reporting various types of funding support for local recycling services (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)

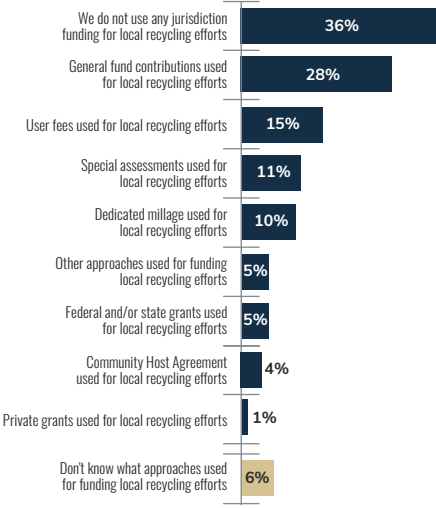
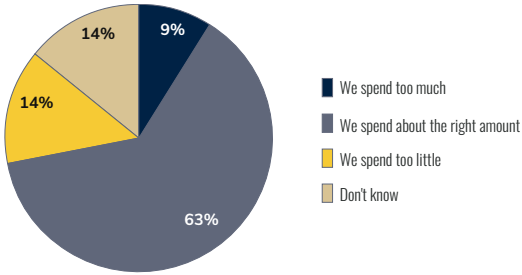


Figure 9
Officials’ assessments of local levels of recycling funding (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)



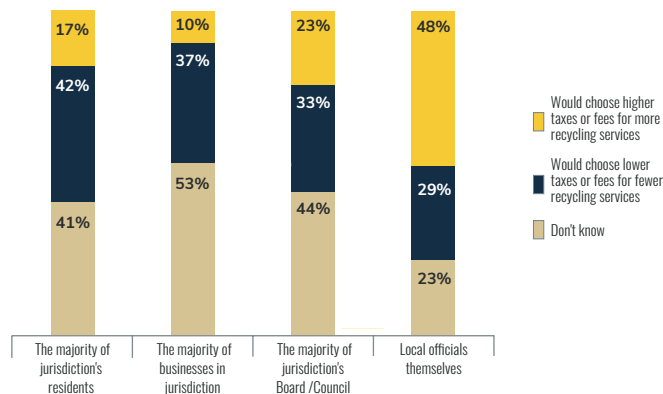
Local leaders more likely to say community would choose lower taxes and fewer recycling services instead of higher taxes and more services, but many are uncertain

The MPPS asked local leaders in jurisdictions where at least some recycling services are currently offered whether they think their community members would choose higher taxes or fees for more (or improved) services, or whether they would choose lower taxes or fees and have fewer (or no) recycling services. On this question, there is a great deal of uncertainty, with 41% of officials statewide saying they “don’t know” which their residents would choose (see *Figure 10*). That is a remarkably high percentage of “don’t know” responses, compared with a range of topics across previous MPPS surveys. However, among those who did have a sense of their residents’ preferences, 42% believe their residents would choose lower taxes and fewer services, compared with only 17% who say their residents would prefer paying higher taxes and getting improved or expanded recycling services. Similarly, while many local leaders were uncertain about the preferences of local businesses (53% don’t know) or of their government’s Board or Council (44% don’t know), they were more likely to say those groups would choose lower taxes and fewer recycling services. The high “don’t know” percentages may indicate that this has not been a prominent topic of conversation in many places. Still, when it comes to the local leaders’ own opinions, even here nearly a quarter (23%) don’t know which way they would choose. Meanwhile, 29% say they personally—in their role as a local official—would choose lower taxes and decreased recycling services, while a significantly higher percentage (48%) would choose higher taxes or fees for improved services.

Looking at differences across jurisdictions’ population size, leaders from larger jurisdictions are more likely than others to say their residents would choose higher taxes or fees for improved recycling services, but they are also more likely to say their local businesses would choose lower taxes or fees.

Separately, among local officials from places with no recycling services available currently, 21% say their residents and businesses would somewhat (19%) or strongly (2%) support higher taxes or fees in exchange for introducing recycling services, while a majority (52%) say their residents would somewhat (23%) or strongly (29%) oppose it. Still, they are more likely to say their local Board or Council (38%) and they themselves (54%) would support higher taxes or fees in order to introduce recycling services.

Figure 10
Officials’ assessments of community willingness to pay higher taxes for increased or improved recycling services (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)



Most local leaders are satisfied with current approach to local recycling, particularly in larger jurisdictions

In an overall assessment of their jurisdiction’s current approach to recycling, a majority (67%) of local leaders statewide from places with at least some recycling services are either somewhat (37%) or very (30%) satisfied with the current recycling services in their jurisdictions (see *Figure 11a*). Meanwhile, only 15% are somewhat (10%) or very (5%) dissatisfied.

Satisfaction is higher among local leaders from the state’s largest jurisdictions where recycling is currently offered. Over a third (38%) of local officials from the largest jurisdictions are *very* satisfied with their community’s current approach to recycling, compared to 27% of local leaders in the smallest jurisdictions (see *Figure 11b*).

By contrast, 24% of local leaders from places with no recycling services today are somewhat (18%) or very (6%) satisfied with their community’s current lack of services (see *Figure 12*). Meanwhile, 34% are ambivalent—neither satisfied nor dissatisfied—and another 32% say they are dissatisfied with their community’s current lack of recycling services.

Finally, the MPPS included an open-ended question that yielded responses from nearly 450 local leaders regarding what is working particularly well in their community’s recycling efforts, and other related issues they wanted to mention. As shown on the next page, many officials highlight recent changes that make recycling easier, such as curbside recycling or rolling carts or bins, as well as annual clean-up days that are marketed as community events, and successful collaboration efforts with other local governments.

Meanwhile, one of the most frequent comments about local recycling *challenges* involves incorrect recycling practices by those using the services (e.g., “wishful” recycling or contamination of recyclables with trash, by residents). Other common problems include funding, concerns about lack of end markets for recycled materials, and long distances to recycling drop-off facilities in rural areas.

Figure 11a
Officials’ satisfaction with jurisdiction’s current approach to recycling (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available)

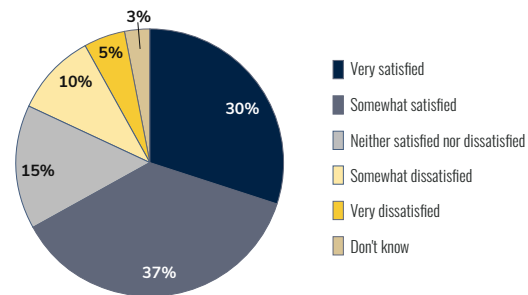


Figure 11b
Officials’ satisfaction with jurisdiction’s current approach to recycling (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available), by jurisdiction size

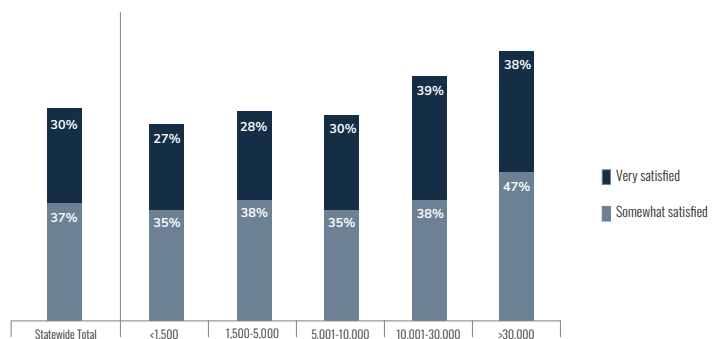
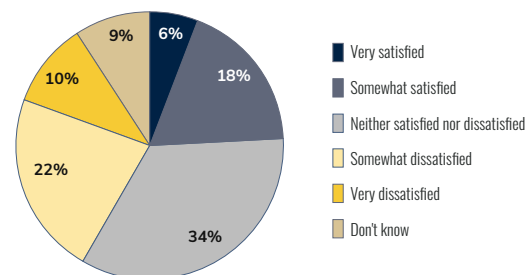


Figure 12
Officials’ satisfaction with jurisdiction’s current approach to recycling (among all jurisdictions where no recycling is available)



Voices Across Michigan

Quotes from local leaders regarding successes with local recycling services:

“After switching from 30-gallon bins picked bi-weekly to totes (96-gallon) picked up weekly, the number of residents using the curbside service more than quadrupled. Now the majority of households recycle, as opposed to... less under the old plan.”

“[Our] County uses county parks to host the various recycling events. That’s been well received by the public and does a nice job of “showing off” the park spaces.”

“I have completed the grant applications for EGLE and The Recycling Partnership to obtain recycling carts. We are very excited to have an opportunity to possibly be able to provide rolling carts to our residents to try to increase participation.”

“Let the private sector lead the way. I was [involved] when the County tried to get into this business. It was a huge mistake. The private sector stepped in and brought the County one of the most progressive facilities available.”

“Once a year the Township holds a ‘Clean-Up Day.’ This has been a great success, it’s like a holiday for the residents.”

“Our recycling is good because we have curbside recycling. The actual interest in recycling would be much less if we had just drop off. Convenience is what is doing it for us. Not the interest in it.”

“We have a robust team for our recycling efforts in collaboration with our County. Our issue would be if we were to lose any of these people. I couldn’t be prouder of these folks for what they do for us.”

Quotes from local leaders regarding challenges with local recycling services:

“Here in the Upper Peninsula the distance to markets, low population densities, seasonal road weight restrictions and recycled material worth has big impacts.”

“The biggest problem we have here is people dumping large, non-recyclable items outside the dumpsters ranging from mattresses to fertilizer bags. Not sure if it is lazy dumping or lack of knowledge, though I would bet the first. We often send email blasts with tips and tricks and try to communicate the abuses to the system.”

“Bins are constantly full; residents get frustrated and place items on ground next to bins; items turn recycling location into a blighted mess and blow through nearby neighborhoods.”

“The drop-off location in our Township is very highly used. While many residents would like curbside recycling, we are told by the private contractor that there are too many rural areas to provide that service.”

“The average person wants to do the right thing when it comes to recycling but there is no unified process to do it. A lot of misinformation out there.”



Conclusion

Local leaders report that the overwhelming majority (79%) of communities in Michigan currently have access to at least some recycling services. Nearly half of cities, villages, and townships indicate that their residents have access to drop-off facilities for recycling (49%), curbside recycling (43%), and/or household hazardous waste collection (42%). Approximately one third (33–34%) of jurisdictions statewide report that their residents have access to e-waste collection and/or collection of yard waste material for composting. Significantly fewer (20%) report that businesses in their jurisdictions have access to on-site recycling services. Meanwhile, 18% of jurisdictions statewide report none of these recycling services are currently available to their residents.

When asked whether there have been changes in recycling in local communities over the past two years, most cities, townships, and villages (63%) say there has been no substantial change in recycling services or programs offered to residents over the past 2 years. Meanwhile, 14% of report at least some expansion of recycling services in their jurisdictions, while 11% say there has been some reduction, and 4% say there has been a mixture of expansion and reduction. In communities that currently have at least some recycling services, many report interest among community members for new services such as bulky item pick-up (36%), paper shredding (24%), household electronic equipment (23%) and hazardous waste collection (19%). In places currently without any recycling services, local leaders believe there is primarily interest in introducing curbside (31%) or drop-off recycling services (28%), while just 15% say there is *no* demand in their community for new access to recycling services of any kind. However, on the question of what new services their community members might want, as well as on the question of whether residents or businesses would support higher taxes in order to increase local recycling services, an unusually high number local leaders expressed uncertainty, perhaps representing opportunities for additional outreach and dialog by jurisdictions and other stakeholders.

Overall, the vast majority of local leaders (86%) believe recycling is very (47%) or somewhat (39%) important to their community members. Meanwhile, among communities that currently have at least some recycling services provided, 67% of officials report they are satisfied those available services in their jurisdictions, and only 24% from places with no recycling services today are satisfied with their community's current lack of access to recycling services.

Notes

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Survey Background and Methodology

The MPPS is an ongoing survey program, interviewing the leaders of Michigan's 1,856 units of general purpose local government, conducted by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan in partnership with the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Townships Association, and Michigan Association of Counties. 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.

In the Fall 2021 iteration, surveys were sent by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) via the internet and hardcopy 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.

The Fall 2021 wave was conducted from October 4 – December 6, 2021. A total of 1,356 jurisdictions in the Fall 2021 wave returned valid surveys (62 counties, 209 cities, 171 villages, and 914 townships), resulting in a 73% response rate by unit. The margin

of error for the survey as a whole is +/- 1.37%. The key relationships discussed in the above report are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level or below, unless otherwise specified. Missing responses are not included in the tabulations, unless otherwise specified. Some report figures may not add to 100% due to rounding within response categories. Quantitative data are weighted to account for non-response. "Voices Across Michigan" verbatim responses, when included, may have been edited for clarity and brevity. Contact CLOSUP staff for more information.

Detailed tables of the data analyzed in this report broken down four ways—by jurisdiction type (county, city, township, or village); by population size, by the region, and by respondents' self-reports of whether jurisdictions are urban, mostly urban, mostly rural, or rural—soon will be available online at the MPPS homepage: <https://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey>

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.

Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

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Appendix A

Percent of jurisdictions reporting various recycling services are available in their jurisdiction (among cities, villages, and townships), by population size

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Residential curbside recycling	22%	44%	77%	86%	98%	43%
On-site recycling for businesses	10%	21%	27%	45%	51%	20%
Access to a drop-off recycling facility (for residents and/or businesses)	44%	53%	48%	56%	65%	49%
Household hazardous waste collection	29%	46%	46%	68%	82%	42%
Household electronic equipment collection	21%	38%	38%	57%	74%	34%
Yard waste collection for composting	20%	30%	43%	79%	95%	33%
None of the above	28%	14%	6%	1%	0%	18%
Don't know	4%	4%	1%	0%	0%	3%

Percent of counties reporting various recycling services are available in their county

	Total counties statewide
Residential curbside recycling	53%
On-site recycling for businesses	56%
Access to a drop-off recycling facility (for residents and/or businesses)	78%
Household hazardous waste collection	77%
Household electronic equipment collection	71%
Yard waste collection for composting	53%
None of the above	1%
Don't know	3%

Appendix B

Primary service providers for various recycling services (among cities, villages, and townships where that recycling service is available), by jurisdiction size

Primary service provider for curbside recycling collection for residents

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Run by our jurisdiction itself	1%	2%	1%	3%	12%	3%
Our jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor or hauler	50%	45%	43%	52%	78%	49%
Run jointly with other local governments or regional arrangements	8%	9%	5%	14%	2%	8%
Run only by our County government	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	1%
Users contract directly with private contractors or haulers	31%	40%	47%	29%	9%	35%
Don't know	9%	3%	2%	2%	0%	3%

Primary service provider for on-site recycling collection for local businesses

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Run by our jurisdiction itself	0%	4%	3%	0%	15%	4%
Our jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor or hauler	32%	22%	30%	22%	27%	25%
Run jointly with other local governments or regional arrangements	8%	6%	3%	13%	5%	7%
Run only by our County government	2%	11%	3%	4%	0%	6%
Users contract directly with private contractors or haulers	40%	48%	45%	56%	39%	47%
Don't know	18%	8%	15%	6%	14%	11%

Appendix B continued

Primary service provider for access to a drop-off recycling facility

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Run by our jurisdiction itself	10%	12%	20%	7%	25%	12%
Our jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor or hauler	14%	15%	17%	23%	20%	16%
Run jointly with other local governments or regional arrangements	25%	26%	23%	26%	30%	25%
Run only by our County government	32%	27%	18%	22%	19%	27%
Users contract directly with private contractors or haulers	15%	17%	19%	16%	2%	15%
Don't know	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%	4%

Primary service provider for household hazardous waste collection

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Run by our jurisdiction itself	2%	2%	5%	7%	13%	4%
Our jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor or hauler	5%	3%	12%	12%	10%	6%
Run jointly with other local governments or regional arrangements	37%	34%	26%	31%	46%	34%
Run only by our County government	49%	55%	49%	40%	28%	49%
Users contract directly with private contractors or haulers	6%	4%	5%	7%	2%	5%
Don't know	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	2%

Appendix B continued

Primary service provider for e-waste collection opportunities

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Run by our jurisdiction itself	6%	5%	8%	6%	13%	7%
Our jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor or hauler	9%	6%	13%	17%	10%	9%
Run jointly with other local governments or regional arrangements	33%	32%	31%	35%	53%	34%
Run only by our County government	41%	48%	40%	26%	19%	40%
Users contract directly with private contractors or haulers	8%	7%	4%	11%	5%	8%
Don't know	2%	2%	4%	4%	0%	2%

Primary service provider for collection of yard waste for composting

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Run by our jurisdiction itself	64%	40%	33%	21%	19%	39%
Our jurisdiction contracts directly with a private contractor or hauler	21%	29%	44%	58%	70%	38%
Run jointly with other local governments or regional arrangements	9%	15%	7%	8%	2%	10%
Run only by our County government	1%	5%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Users contract directly with private contractors or haulers	3%	10%	13%	12%	9%	9%
Don't know	2%	2%	4%	0%	0%	2%

Appendix C

Officials' assessments of community's desire for new access to recycling services (among all jurisdictions where at least some recycling is available), by jurisdiction size

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001-30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
Residents/businesses want new programs for hard to recycle or bulky items	37%	38%	40%	32%	32%	37%
Residents/businesses want new access to household electronic equip. collection	25%	21%	31%	26%	7%	23%
Residents/businesses want new access to paper shredding opportunities	21%	24%	25%	31%	21%	24%
Residents/businesses want new household hazardous waste collection opportunities	23%	17%	28%	20%	4%	19%
Residents/businesses want new curbside recycling collection for residents	23%	19%	9%	14%	1%	17%
Residents/businesses want new collection of yard waste material for composting	19%	18%	16%	13%	3%	16%
Residents/businesses want new access to food waste drop-off facility	14%	16%	13%	23%	34%	17%
Residents/businesses want new food waste collection for residents or businesses	12%	15%	16%	24%	36%	17%
Residents/businesses want new access to a drop-off recycling facility	12%	13%	16%	14%	9%	13%
Residents/businesses want new on-site recycling collection for local business	12%	13%	11%	15%	9%	12%
Residents/businesses want new upgrades to curbside collection from bins to carts	6%	10%	9%	9%	8%	9%
Residents/businesses want access to other new recycling services	6%	3%	3%	5%	9%	5%
Don't know what new recycling services residents/businesses want access to	35%	28%	30%	29%	30%	31%



Appendix D

Percent of jurisdictions reporting various types of funding support for local recycling services (among all jurisdictions where any recycling is available), by jurisdiction size

	Population <1,500	Population 1,501-5,000	Population 5,001-10,000	Population 10,001- 30,000	Population >30,000	Total statewide
We do not use any jurisdiction funding for local recycling efforts	42%	37%	36%	27%	13%	36%
General fund contributions used for local recycling efforts	23%	30%	36%	28%	33%	28%
User fees used for local recycling efforts	9%	14%	20%	24%	25%	15%
Special assessments used for local recycling efforts	11%	12%	9%	11%	10%	11%
Dedicated millage used for local recycling efforts	9%	7%	8%	18%	22%	10%
Other approaches used for funding local recycling efforts	6%	3%	6%	6%	3%	5%
Federal and/or state grants used for local recycling efforts	1%	5%	7%	11%	19%	5%
Community Host Agreement used for local recycling efforts	2%	4%	7%	2%	10%	4%
Private grants used for local recycling efforts	0%	2%	0%	4%	5%	2%
Don't know what approaches used for funding local recycling efforts	8%	6%	5%	3%	9%	6%

Previous MPPS reports

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 (January 2022)

Michigan local government officials report improved fiscal health after a year of COVID-19, but not yet back to pre-pandemic levels (December 2021)

Michigan local officials' assessments of American democracy at the state and federal levels decline sharply (November 2021)

The lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Michigan communities and local governments (October 2021)

Michigan local governments report fewer economic challenges one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, and describe efforts to support local businesses (September 2021)

Local leaders' views on Michigan's initial COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Spring 2021 (August 2021)

Local leaders' concerns about Michigan's direction spike, while evaluations of state leaders sink over the past year (July 2021)

Michigan local leaders' views on state's new approach to electoral redistricting (February 2021)

COVID-19 pandemic sparks Michigan local leaders' concerns for fiscal health (December 2020)

The functioning of democracy at the local level: a compendium of findings from the Michigan Public Policy Survey of local leaders (December 2020)

Energy Issues and Policies in Michigan Local Governments (October 2020)

Michigan local leaders expect increased challenges for the 2020 election, but are confident about administering accurate elections (October 2020)

Michigan Local Energy Survey (MiLES): Intergovernmental collaboration on sustainability and energy issues among Michigan local governments (September 2020)

Confidence in the accuracy of Michigan's 2020 Census count among local leaders was not very high, slips further (August 2020)

Michigan local leaders expect mixed impacts from expanded voter registration and absentee voting reforms (July 2020)

Local leaders' evaluations of Michigan's direction and Governor's performance during the COVID-19 pandemic's arrival (July 2020)

The initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Michigan communities and local governments (June 2020)

Energy policies and environmental leadership among Michigan's local governments (January 2020)

Mixed signals continue for Michigan local governments' fiscal health, while future outlooks worsen (December 2019)

Michigan local officials' views on the next recession: timing, concerns, and actions taken (October 2019)

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Positive working relationships reported among Michigan's local elected officials (June 2019)

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Despite sustained economic growth, Michigan local government fiscal health still lags (November 2018)

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Workforce issues and challenges for Michigan's local governments (January 2018)

Local leaders' views on elections in Michigan: accuracy, problems, and reform options (November 2017)

Michigan local government officials report complex mix of improvement and decline in fiscal health, but with overall trend moving slowly upward (October 2017)

Michigan local leaders want their citizens to play a larger role in policymaking, but report declining engagement (August 2017)



Michigan local leaders' views on state preemption and how to share policy authority (June 2017)

Improving communication, building trust are seen as keys to fixing relationships between local jurisdictions and the State government (May 2017)

Local leaders more likely to support than oppose Michigan's Emergency Manager law, but strongly favor reforms (February 2017)

Local government leaders' views on drinking water and water supply infrastructure in Michigan communities (November 2016)

Michigan local leaders say property tax appeals are common, disagree with 'dark stores' assessing (October 2016)

Local officials say Michigan's system of funding local government is broken, and seek State action to fix it (September 2016)

Michigan local governments report first declines in fiscal health trend since 2010 (August 2016)

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Hospital access primary emergency medical concern among many Michigan local officials (July 2016)

Firefighting services in Michigan: challenges and approaches among local governments (June 2016)

Most local officials are satisfied with law enforcement services, but almost half from largest jurisdictions say their funding is insufficient (April 2016)

Local leaders say police-community relations are good throughout Michigan, but those in large cities are concerned about potential civil unrest over police use-of-force (February 2016)

Report: Responding to budget surplus vs. deficit: the preferences of Michigan's local leaders and citizens (December 2015)

Michigan's local leaders concerned about retiree health care costs and their governments' ability to meet future obligations (October 2015)

Fiscal health rated relatively good for most jurisdictions, but improvement slows and decline continues for many (September 2015)

Confidence in Michigan's direction declines among state's local leaders (August 2015)

Michigan local government leaders' views on private roads (July 2015)

Few Michigan jurisdictions have adopted Complete Streets policies, though many see potential benefits (June 2015)

Michigan local leaders have positive views on relationships with county road agencies, despite some concerns (May 2015)

Michigan local government leaders say transit services are important, but lack of funding discourages their development (April 2015)

Michigan local leaders see need for state and local ethics reform (March 2015)

Local leaders say Michigan road funding needs major increase, but lack consensus on options that would raise the most revenue (February 2015)

Michigan local government leaders' views on employee pay and benefits (January 2015)

Despite increasingly formal financial management, relatively few Michigan local governments have adopted recommended policies (December 2014)

Most Michigan local officials are satisfied with their privatized services, but few seek to expand further (November 2014)

Michigan local governments finally pass fiscal health tipping point overall, but one in four still report decline (October 2014)

Beyond the coast, a tenuous relationship between Michigan local governments and the Great Lakes (September 2014)

Confidence in Michigan's direction holds steady among state's local leaders (August 2014)

Wind power as a community issue in Michigan (July 2014)

Fracking as a community issue in Michigan (June 2014)

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Michigan's local leaders generally support Detroit bankruptcy filing despite some concerns (February 2014)

Michigan local governments increasingly pursue placemaking for economic development (January 2014)

Views on right-to-work legislation among Michigan's local government leaders (December 2013)

Michigan local governments continue seeking, and receiving, union concessions (October 2013)

Michigan local government fiscal health continues gradual improvement, but smallest jurisdictions lagging (September 2013)

Local leaders evaluate state policymaker performance and whether Michigan is on the right track (August 2013)

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Citizen engagement in the view of Michigan's local government leaders (May 2013)

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Local leaders support reforming Michigan's system of funding local government (January 2013)

Local leaders support eliminating Michigan's Personal Property Tax if funds are replaced, but distrust state follow-through (November 2012)

Michigan's local leaders satisfied with union negotiations (October 2012)

Michigan's local leaders are divided over the state's emergency manager law (September 2012)

Fiscal stress continues for hundreds of Michigan jurisdictions, but conditions trend in positive direction overall (September 2012)

Michigan's local leaders more positive about Governor Snyder's performance, more optimistic about the state's direction (July 2012)

Data-driven decision-making in Michigan local government (June 2012)

State funding incentives increase local collaboration, but also raise concerns (March 2012)

Local officials react to state policy innovation tying revenue sharing to dashboards and incentive funding (January 2012)

MPPS finds fiscal health continues to decline across the state, though some negative trends eased in 2011 (October 2011)

Public sector unions in Michigan: their presence and impact according to local government leaders (August 2011)

Despite increased approval of state government performance, Michigan's local leaders are concerned about the state's direction (August 2011)

Local government and environmental leadership: views of Michigan's local leaders (July 2011)

Local leaders are mostly positive about intergovernmental cooperation and look to expand efforts (March 2011)

Local government leaders say most employees are not overpaid, though some benefits may be too generous (February 2011)

Local government leaders say economic gardening can help grow their economies (November 2010)

Local governments struggle to cope with fiscal, service, and staffing pressures (August 2010)

Michigan local governments actively promote U.S. Census participation (August 2010)

Fiscal stimulus package mostly ineffective for local economies (May 2010)

Fall 2009 key findings report: educational, economic, and workforce development issues at the local level (April 2010)

Local government officials give low marks to the performance of state officials and report low trust in Lansing (March 2010)

Local government fiscal and economic development issues (October 2009)

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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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