



**Debb Brunell, CEO**

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# Long-Term Population Trends



## MEDIAN AGE

Median age in the U.P. is **over 42**, which is 3 years more than the **US median age of 39**



## AGE GROUPS

**23% over 65** versus 18% in the state and 17% nationally



## PRIME AGE

Prime age workers (aged 25-54) represent **only 33% of the population** compared to 37% in the state and 39% nationally



## AGE SHIFTS

The U.P. lost **8.5% of its prime-age population** while gaining 18.5% in the 65+ category



# Age Composition and Workforce Pipeline

## Older Age Structure

The U.P. has a significantly older population compared to Michigan and the national average, with 23% aged 65 or older in 2023.

## Declining Prime-age Workforce

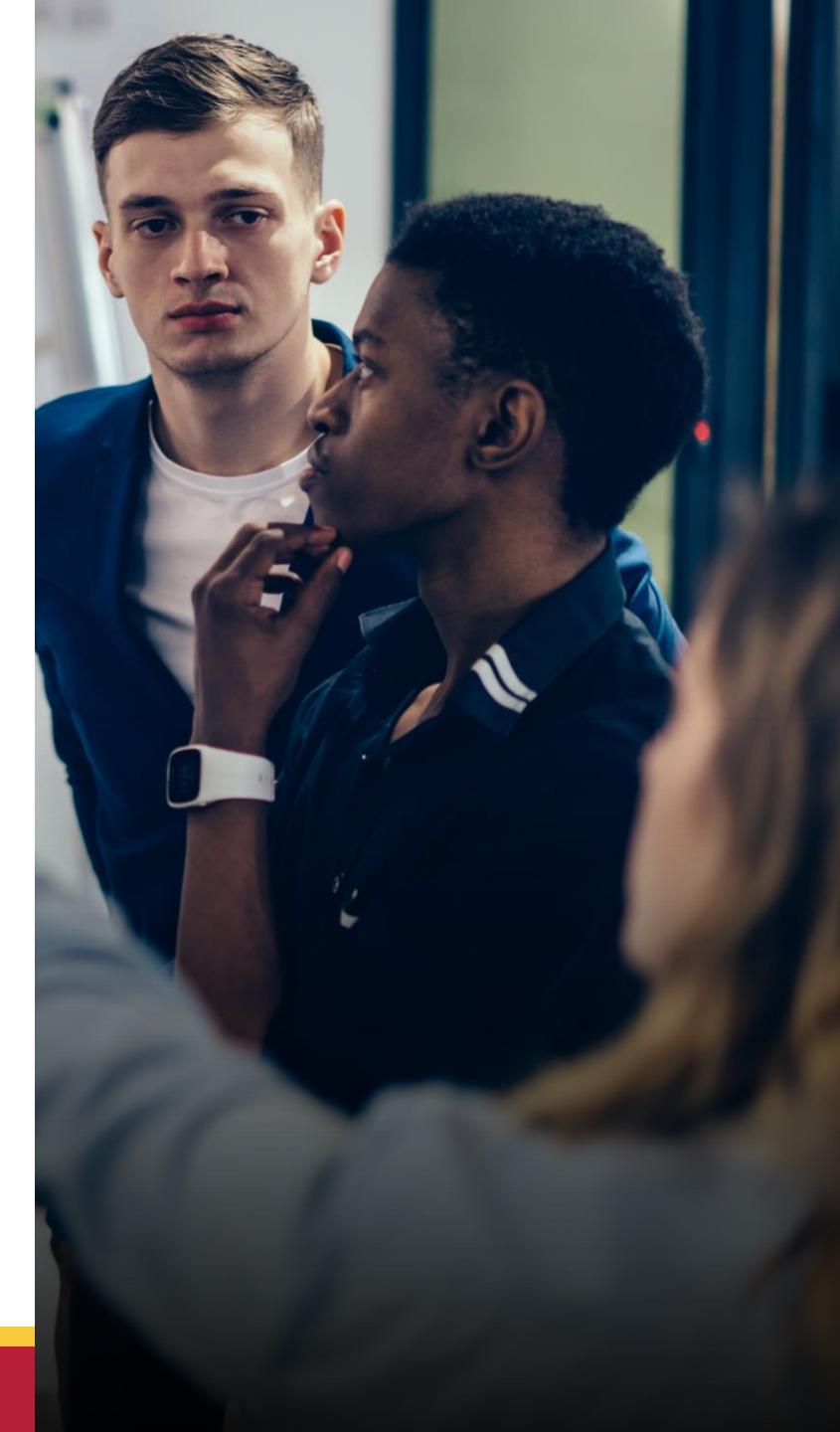
The prime-age workforce (25-34) in the U.P. is shrinking, representing only 33% of the population, lowering workforce availability.

## Impact on Workforce and Healthcare

These demographic shifts increase workforce shortages and healthcare demand, especially for elder services in the region.

## Strategies for the Future

Retention of younger workers and economic engagement of older adults are key strategies to address demographic challenges.

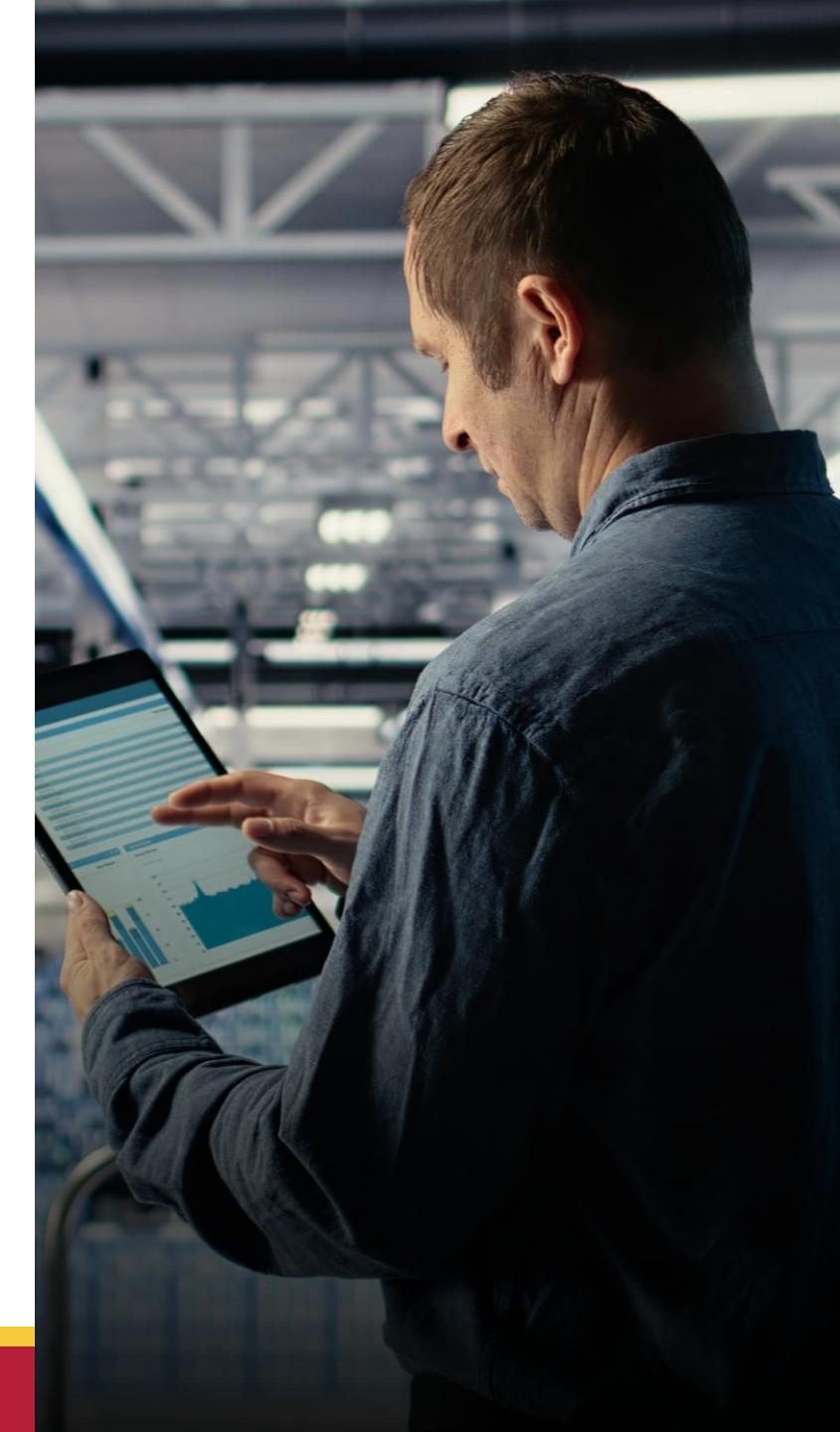


# Federal Policy and Regional Uncertainty



## Healthcare Access Risks

Medicaid work requirements starting in 2027 risk limiting healthcare access and impact labor participation.



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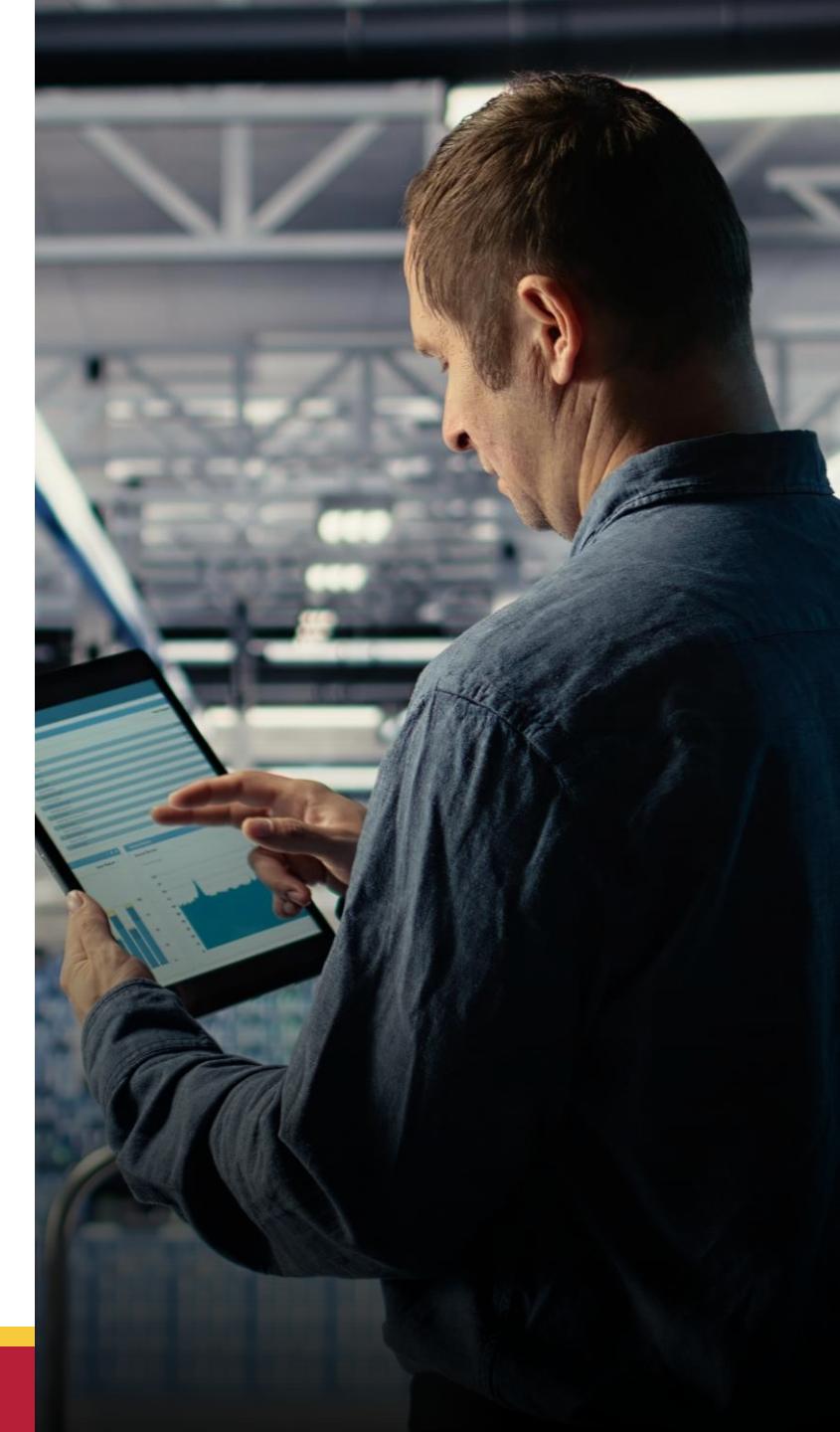


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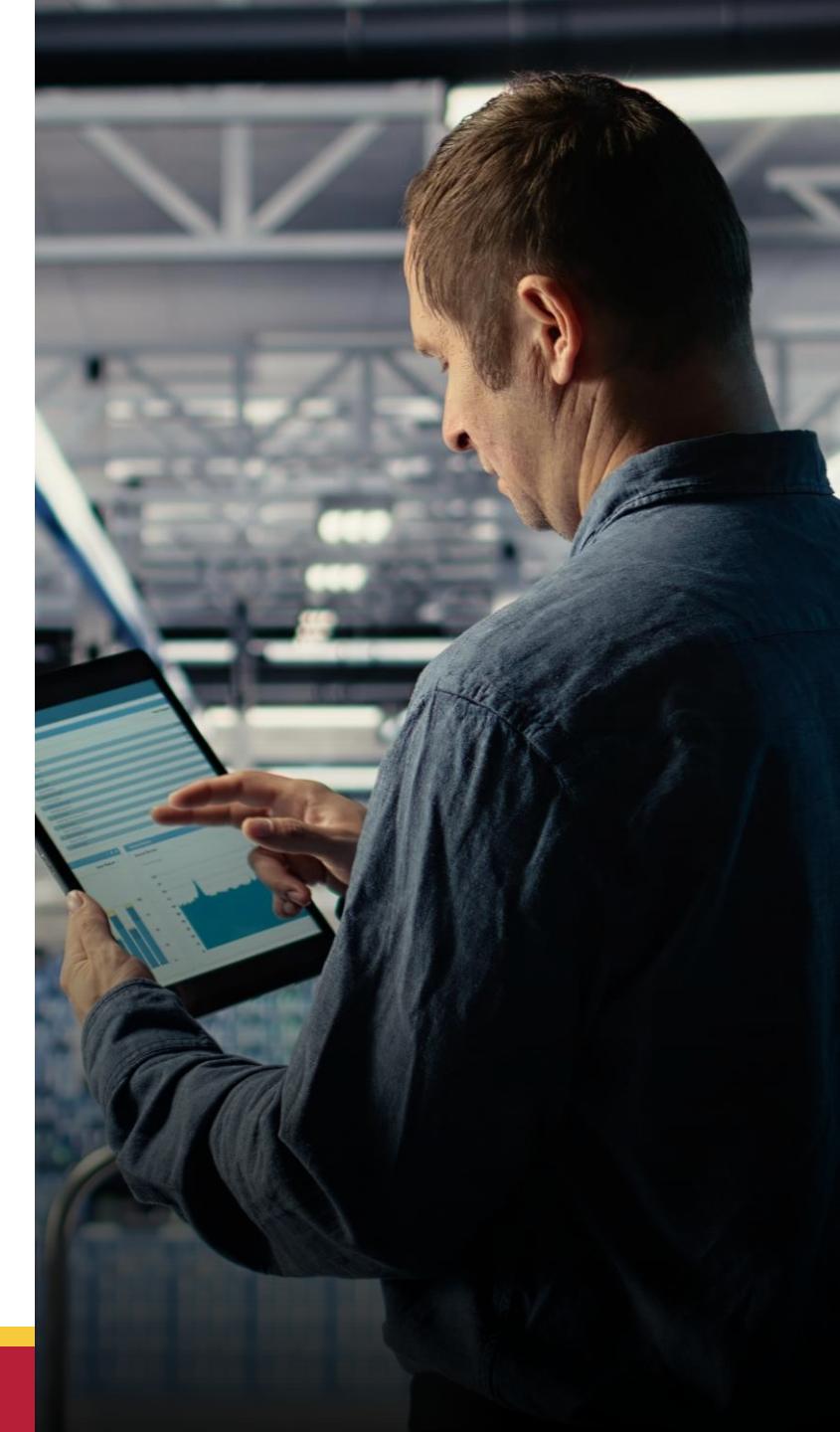
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## Mining Sector Uncertainty

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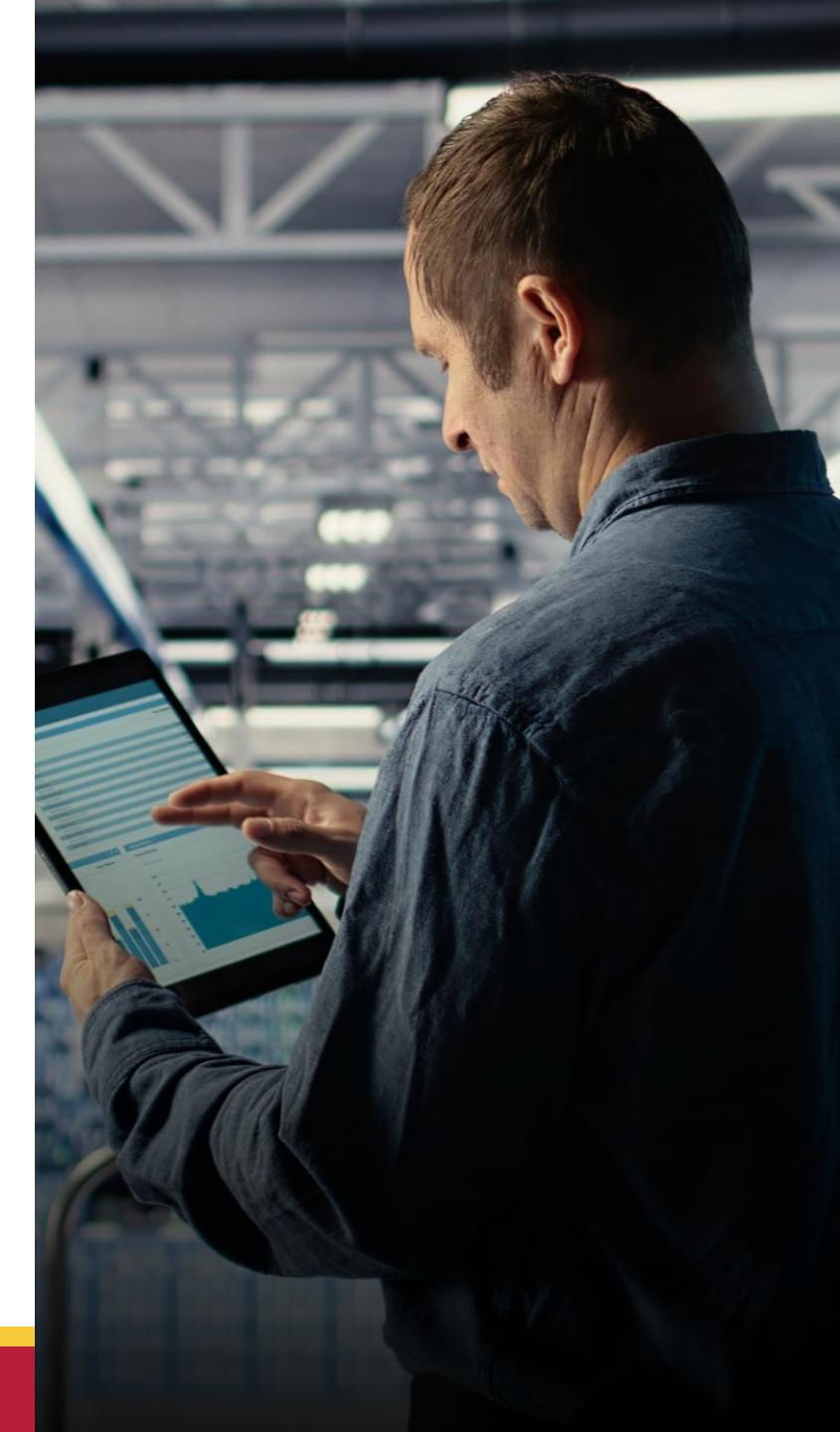
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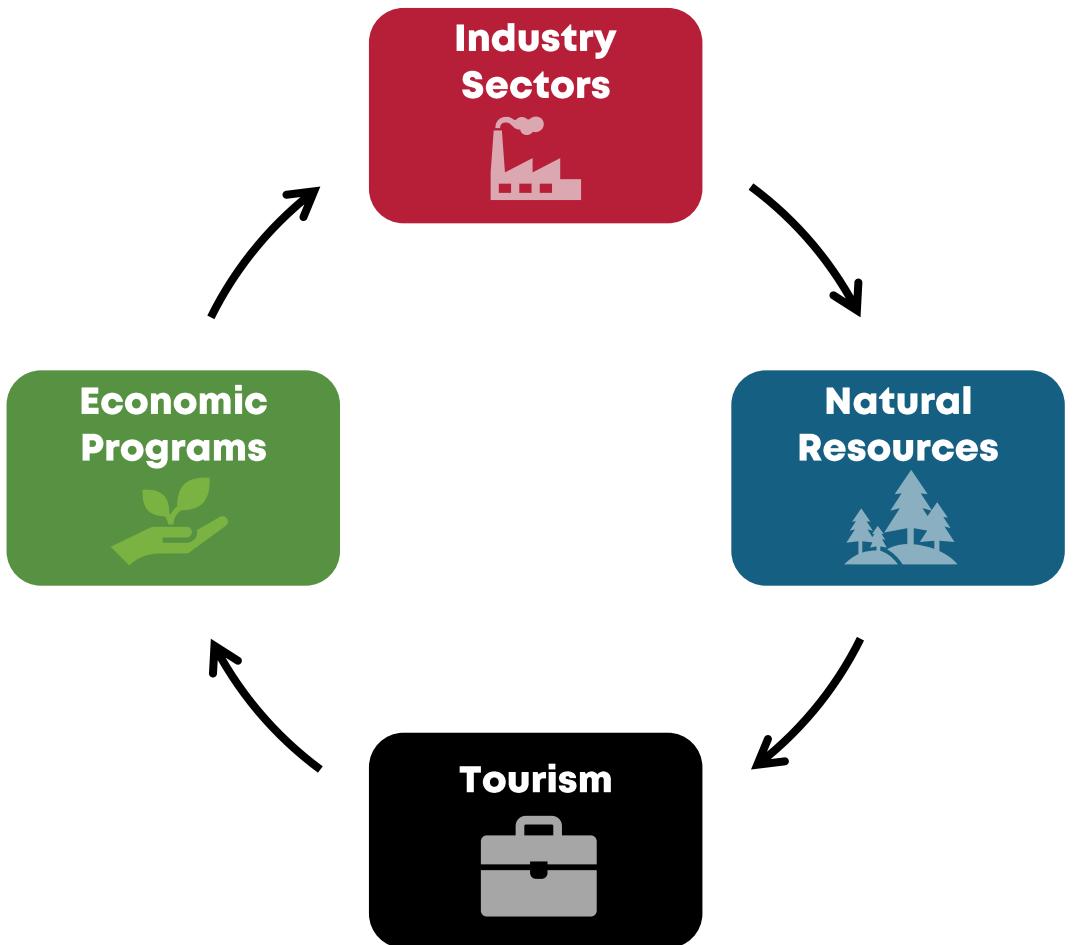
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## Housing and Energy Strains

Housing shortages and rising energy costs add pressure on workforce retention and community stability.



# Economic Drivers & Opportunities



# Economic Realities of Tourism



## Economic Impact

Tourism contributes **\$1.6 billion annually** to the U.P. economy, accounting for **5.5% of Michigan's visitor spending**.



## Visitor Statistics

Pictured Rocks had over **910,000 visitors in 2024**, while Isle Royale saw around **29,000 visits in 2023**, boosting local economies.



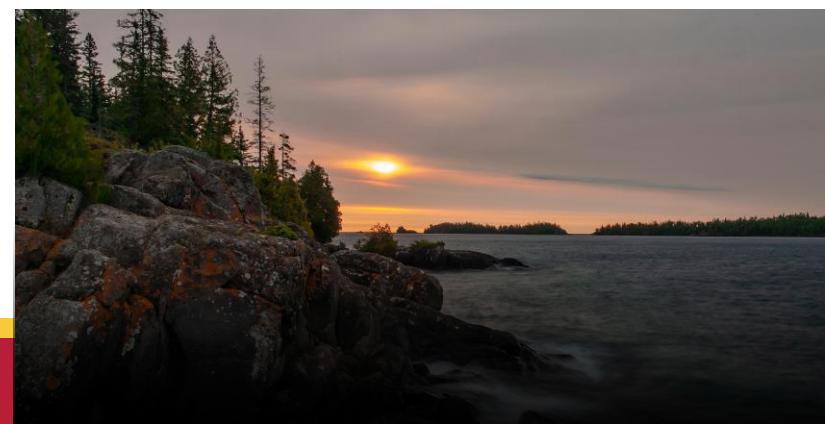
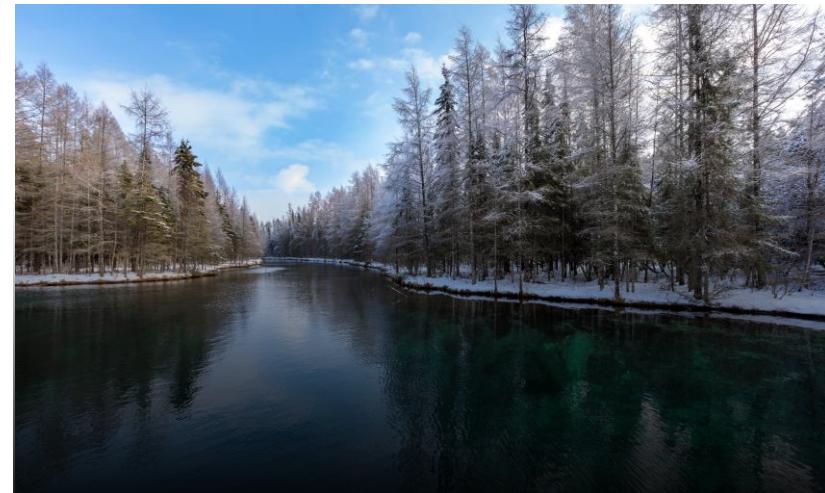
## Seasonal Employment Challenges

Seasonal tourism creates jobs but poses challenges like workforce continuity and housing shortages in peak seasons.



## Strategic Solutions

Strategies include **off-season training and infrastructure investment** to balance tourism benefits and mitigate volatility.



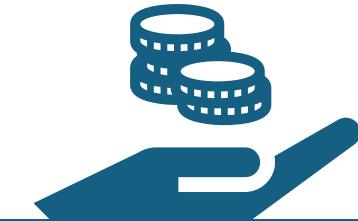
# Economic Programs



INVEST UP™



A **for-profit seed fund** that would be a complement to our economic development seed fund, further signaling to innovators and entrepreneurs that the Upper Peninsula is leading rural communities with early-stage funding.



A **first-of-its-kind philanthropic foundation** seeded with a significant private sector investment that will be focused on economic and community development opportunities and hopefully inspire charitable, strategic investment from across the region.



A **dynamic vision that would engage higher education** with a real and focused investment to improve the quality of life in rural communities and create solutions for rural challenges through collaborative partnerships and cutting-edge research.



# Strategies for Workforce/Economic Stability



Wraparound-first WIOA Execution



Flexible work for 65+



Career change bridges



Medicaid triage system



Focus on Youth receiving work-based learning opportunities



# Current Activities Making a Difference



## Going PRO Talent Fund

The Going PRO Talent Fund is a highly effective way to train and upskill workers to assist business growth.



## Partnerships with Labor Organizations

We've been successful with creative ways to attract young people into skilled trades, creating on-ramps into registered apprenticeships through Summer Trades Camps and Construction Connect.



## Non-traditional apprenticeship pathways

Our efforts developing non-traditional apprenticeships is building the talent pipelines to help U.P. employers thrive.





# Thank you!

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Please visit [www.UPMichiganWorks.org](http://www.UPMichiganWorks.org) for more information. Follow us on social media at @UPMichiganWorks.

**Sources:**

- W.E.Upjohn Institute for Employment Research presentation to InvestUP CEO Summitt. Dr. Iryna Lendel, Sr. Director of Regional Economic and Community Development
- Beyond the Buzz, Lightcast, 2025 – this report highlights the effects of AI on Marketing, Public Relations, and Science & Research



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