



June - July 2026

LAKESHORE REGION BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY: HOUSING & WORKFORCE IMPACT

As part of its ongoing commitment to making the region a business and talent magnet, Lakeshore Advantage surveyed leaders across Allegan and Ottawa counties to better understand the workforce impacts of housing availability and affordability, as well as employers' willingness to engage in solutions. Twenty-nine respondents representing primary employers, government agencies, and educational institutions participated.

86%

of respondents identify housing as a barrier to growth

Employers are interested in contributing to closing the housing gap through **employee education, community organization partnerships, and advocacy.**

HOW HOUSING IS IMPACTING THE WORKFORCE

- **76%** identified pressure to increase wages due to an increased cost of living driven by home prices.
- **59%** identified increased employee commuting from outside the region impacting their workforce.
- **24%** expressed difficulty recruiting candidates to the region due to housing availability.

SOME ARE ALREADY ENGAGING

Employers are currently supporting the following activities

- **29%** of respondents currently partner with community organizations to support housing.
- **29%** attend public meetings to show support for housing developments.
- **25%** participate in housing forums and roundtables.
- **21%** have written letters of support for housing projects.

OTHERS ARE WILLING TO GET MORE INVOLVED

Employers indicated a willingness to support in the following ways

- **50%** indicated a willingness to attend public meetings and provide letters of support for local housing development projects
- **45%** indicated an interest in partnering with local housing community organizations and/or providing homebuyer education to employees.
- **12%** are willing to explore down payment or closing cost assistance.

GET INVOLVED

Employers have an opportunity to help close the region's housing gap for incoming talent by engaging in local housing solutions. To learn how your organization can support attainable workforce housing development efforts in your community, contact Chris Marco, Community Development Director.

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