

# 1st Annual Greater Grand Rapids Community Report Card

Improving by the Numbers...

NOVEMBER 1999

## What is a Community Report Card?

A Community Report Card contains *INDICATORS*—guides on the status of our community's quality of life—and *MEASUREMENTS*—numerical data that can tell us how we are doing on specific indicators over time.

The 1999 Community Report Card, concentrating on Kent County, gives us our starting point. It's a way of focusing our attention on where our priorities have been set and how they might be changed to improve our community. We can use these data to help an existing improvement effort. These data can help us see patterns and relationships that will lead us to create innovative partnerships and solutions, as well as identify new areas for community improvement.

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Delta Strategy encourages everyone in the community to become involved—to learn more about the Report Card, to help collect data, and to participate in problem-solving on important issues. Community Forums will be held in the fall of 1999 and the winter of 1999-2000.

Call (616) 234-4316 (fax: 234-3929) for more information or to participate. Check for more data at this website: [www4.gvsu.edu/philanthropy](http://www4.gvsu.edu/philanthropy) You can link to this website from: [www.deltastrategy.org](http://www.deltastrategy.org)

### THE HISTORY OF A MEASURE

Below is the process used to develop one of the measures in this Report Card—the *percentage of people living in poverty in Kent County*. Each measure was developed as a result of a fifteen-month process and the contributions of many, many committed community members.

**Summer, 1998** 4600 Community Members described their vision for the future of greater Grand Rapids. These were grouped along with previous community and organization visions into eight "vision areas" which included *Basic Human Needs*.

**October, 1998** Participants in our first Community Work Session developed draft goals for each vision area. The goal for Basic Human Needs was "A community that meets the needs of all people in regard to emotional and physical health, food, shelter and safety." The group developed draft indicators as well.

**Spring, 1999** Volunteers met to refine the indicator that would help us understand whether the community was meeting the goal. The list of indicators for the Basic Human Needs included:

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Healthy people         | F. Crime                  |
| B. Adequate housing       | G. Stable support systems |
| C. Sustainable income     | H. Quality health care    |
| D. Quality dependent care | I. Stable residence       |
| E. Affordable food        |                           |

**May, 1999** Participants in our second Community Work Session voted on three indicators in their assigned vision area and were given three votes to place on any indicators in any of the vision areas. For Basic Human Needs, the combination of these two voting processes produced these choices:

- Sustainable income
- Healthy people
- Stable support systems

**Summer, 1999** Groups of community volunteers for each vision area focused on selecting three measures that would mark progress on each indicator. For the indicator, sustainable income, one measure selected was the number of working poor in Kent County. This data was not available, but a reasonable substitute was the percentage of people living in poverty in Kent County.

### A CAUTION

This first annual Community Report Card uses only existing community data that we were able to locate. Unfortunately, the best data do not exist for some of the things we would like to measure. For this year, we've included some data that are not as helpful as they could be. In the future, we will work with the community to produce and collect additional meaningful data.

The Report Card is intended to encourage thoughtful analysis and meaningful action; it is not intended to blame anyone or any institution. The goal is that, as we move forward, individuals and their organizations will be more comfortable in making data available to the community. As we work together to solve problems, we will discover that no individual or organization is solely responsible for a measurement area, but that it is a shared accountability.

### AN INVITATION

There are other measures that community residents will want to add and other data we need to obtain or begin to collect. The Delta Strategy urges those with suggested improvements to the Report Card to join the teams that will develop next year's Report Card. We also encourage groups to share their data with each other and to improve their data collection efforts so the improvement work of this community is based on the best possible information.



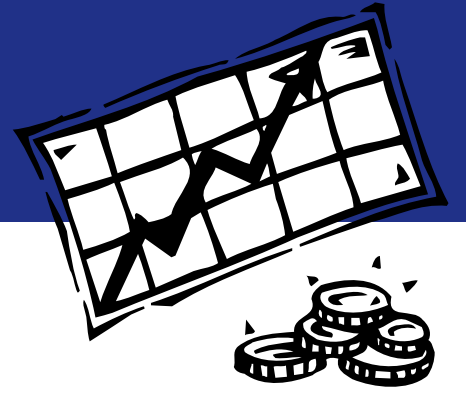
### WHAT IS THE DELTA STRATEGY?

The Delta Strategy is a network of community members, initiatives and organizations driven by a common vision of a community that works for every one of our residents. The Delta Strategy is committed to helping greater Grand Rapids address our toughest problems by—

- Gathering visions to determine what kind of community we want to create
- Working with community teams to identify and update measurements to chart our progress
- Developing, communicating and helping to implement an improvement process that can be used by any group in the community.

# Economy

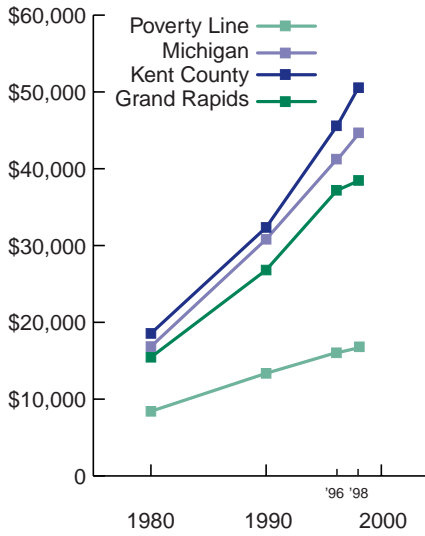
**GOAL:** A community that fosters and sustains a strong, diverse economy where everyone has the opportunity to prosper.



**INDICATOR: Strong, Diverse Industry**  
**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

## Median Household Income

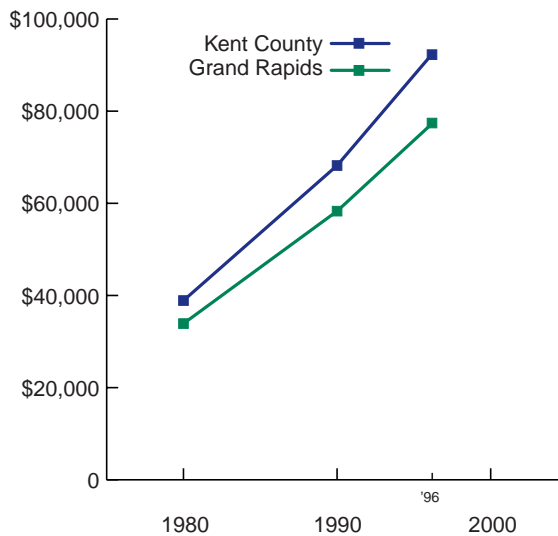
Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics



In 1998, half of all Kent County households had an income of more than \$50,553 last year compared to \$38,474 for Grand Rapids. Federal guidelines defined poverty as \$16,813 for a family of four. A full-time job paying minimum wage (\$5.15) would provide an annual income of \$10,712.

## Median Housing Values

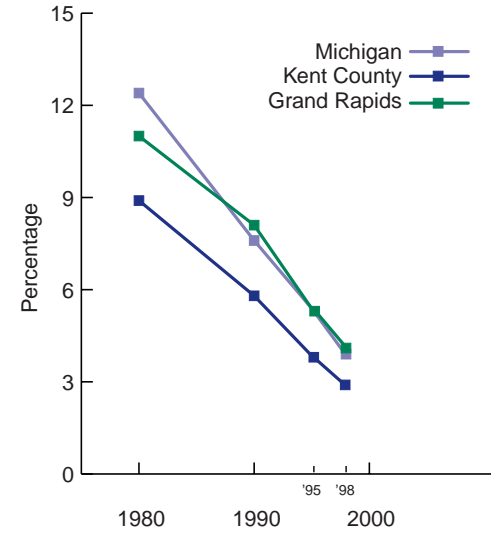
Source: U.S. Census; Claritas



Last year half of the homes in Kent County were valued at more than \$92,265, compared to \$77,420 in Grand Rapids.

## Unemployment Rate

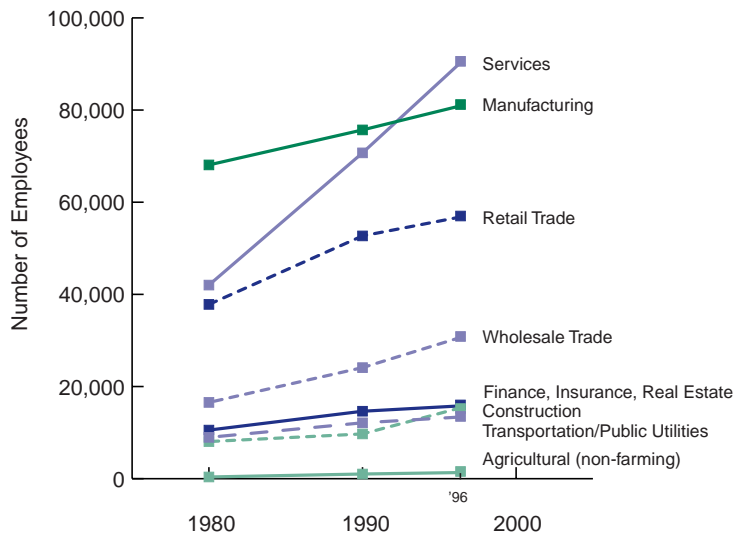
Source: Michigan Department of Career Development



The unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing for both Kent County and Grand Rapids. Unemployment in the city is considerably higher than in the county.

## Employees Per Economic Sector in Kent County

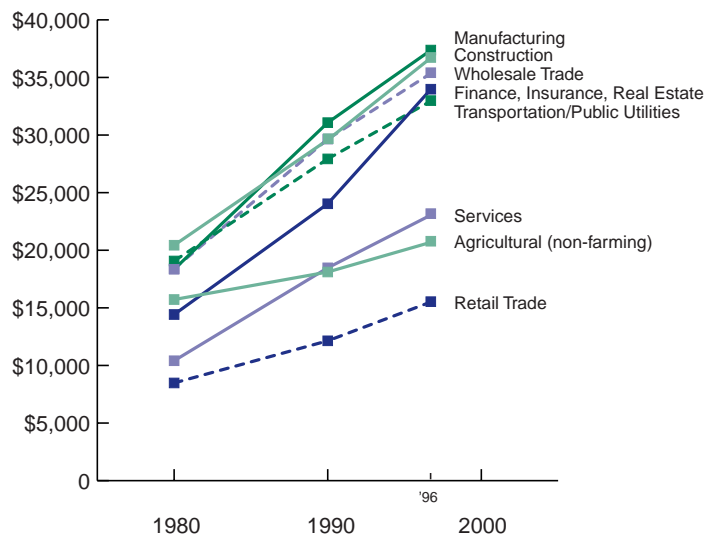
Source: U.S. Census County Business Patterns



In 1996, average wages in the above industry sectors were \$28,387. Lowest wages (\$15,537) were reported for retail trade, a sector in which the number of jobs has increased by 51% since 1980.

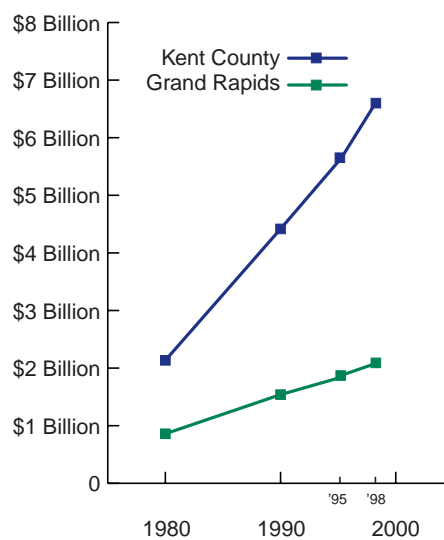
## Average Wages Per Economic Sector in Kent County

Source: Michigan Department of Career Development



## Total Retail Sales

Source: Market Statistics



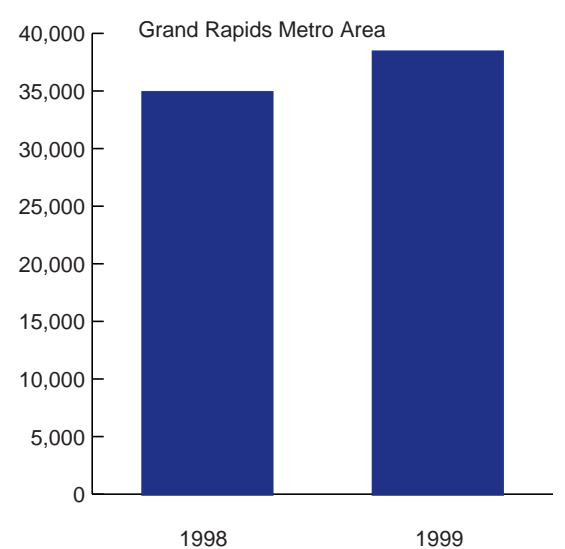
Since 1980 retail sales in Kent County have increased more rapidly than in Grand Rapids. Last year retail sales per capita for Grand Rapids were \$11,156 compared to \$12,151 for the county.

## INDICATOR: Citizens can Develop Employable Skills and Lifelong Learning

**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

## Adults in Continuing Education

Source: Scarborough Report



According to a 1999 telephone survey, 38,380 adults are involved in some form of continuing education.

# Urban Environment

GOAL: Urban communities that create and sustain an environment where people find it attractive to live, learn, play and work.\*



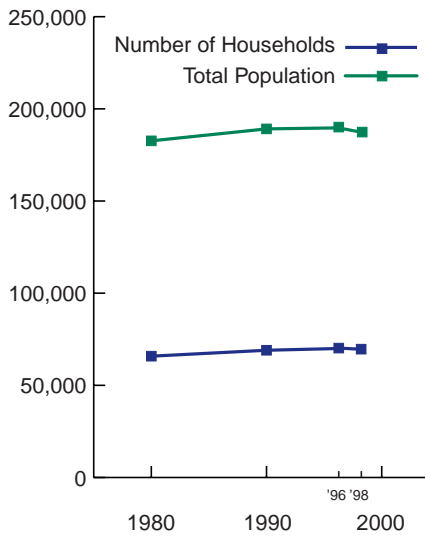
\*At this time, Urban Environment only includes the City of Grand Rapids data; in the future, it will include other urban areas in Kent County.

## INDICATOR: Population

### MEASURES INCLUDE...

#### Growth & Decline

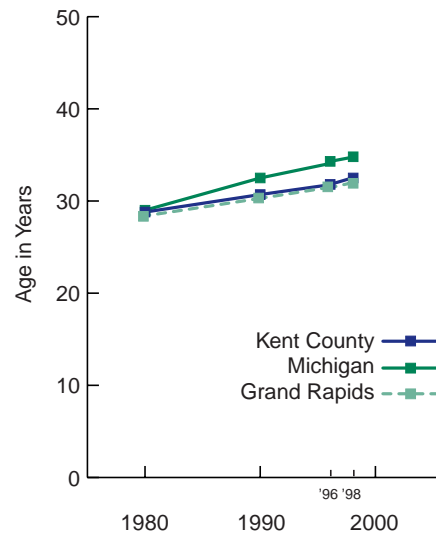
Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics



The individual population in Grand Rapids is declining slightly; the number of households is staying about the same.

#### Age Trends

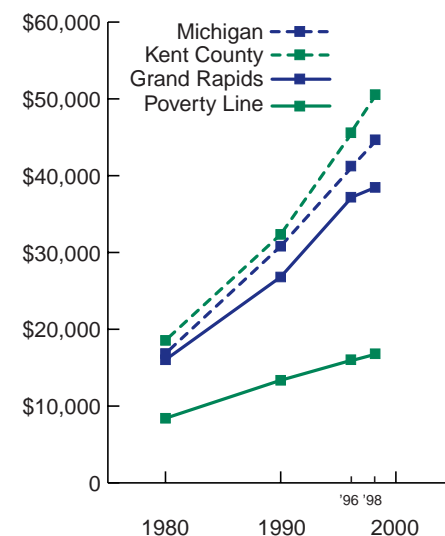
Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics



The median age is slightly younger in Grand Rapids than in Kent County. (31.4 yrs compared to 32.5 yrs.); one quarter of the city's population is under 18.

#### Median Household Income

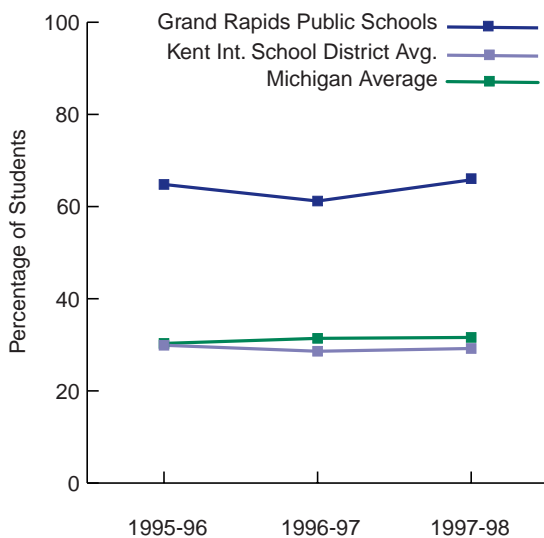
Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics



Median household income is lower in Grand Rapids than in Kent County and Michigan.

## Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch

Source: Michigan Department of Education



Students qualify for a free lunch if their family income is at or below \$21,857 (130% of the federal poverty level for a family of four). A reduced price lunch is provided for students whose family income is at or below \$31,104 (185% of the poverty level).

## INDICATOR: Participation in Community

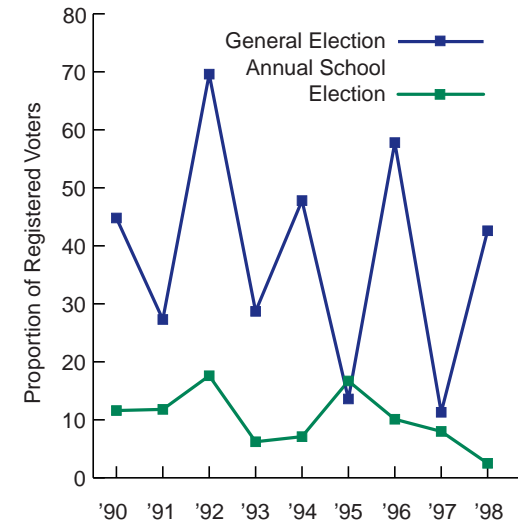
### MEASURES INCLUDE...

#### FUTURE MEASURES...

Volunteer Activity  
Key Services Available  
Effectiveness / Involvement of Neighborhood

## Voting Participation

Source: Grand Rapids City Clerk



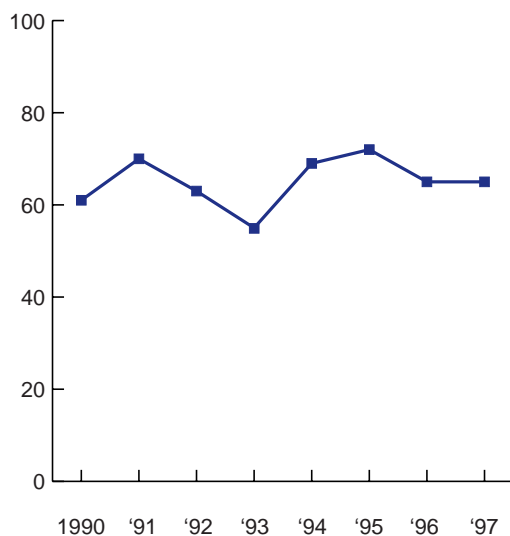
Presidential elections draw the largest number of voters to the poll (70% in 1992 and 58% in 1996). Participation in the annual school board elections has been steadily declining for the past four years.

## INDICATOR: Safety in the City of Grand Rapids

### MEASURES INCLUDE...

#### Accidental Deaths

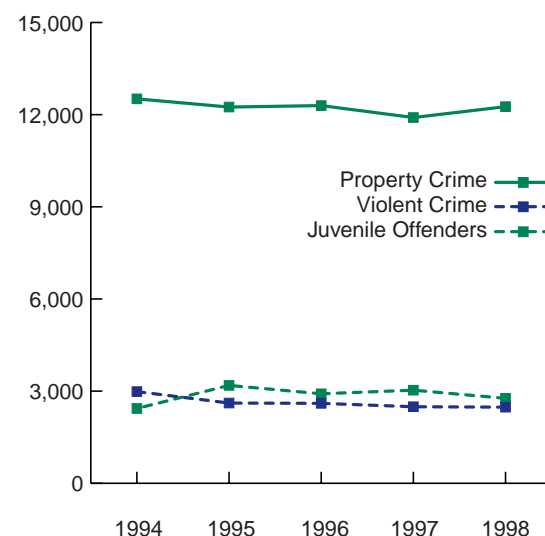
Source: Michigan Department of Community Health



Accidental deaths have ranged from 54 to 72 since 1990. The major causes of death are motor vehicle accidents and falls.

#### Reported Incidents of Crime

Source: Grand Rapids Police Department



Violent Crimes: Murder, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault. Property Crimes: Burglary, Larceny, Motor Vehicle Theft, Arson

#### FUTURE MEASURES:

Number of People Who Feel Safe Walking at Night

Violent crime has been decreasing slightly for the past five years; juvenile crime has remained stable. On a typical day in Michigan, 58 children (aged 10-17) are arrested, according to Kids Count.

# Basic Human Needs

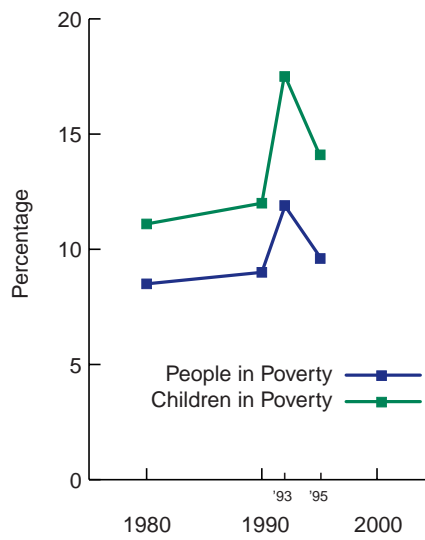
GOAL: A community that meets the needs of all people in regard to emotional and physical health, food, shelter and safety.

## INDICATOR: Sustainable Income

MEASURES INCLUDE...

### People in Poverty—Kent County

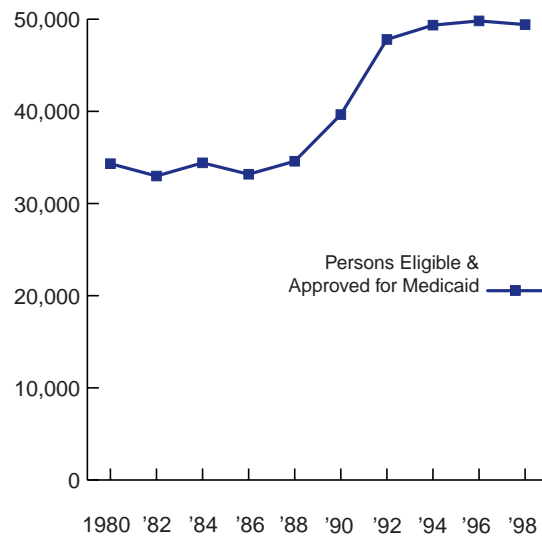
Source: U.S. Census, Kids Count



Despite the strong economy and low unemployment rate, 14.1% of Kent County's children live in poverty.

### Medicaid Enrollment—Kent County

Source: Family Independence Agency



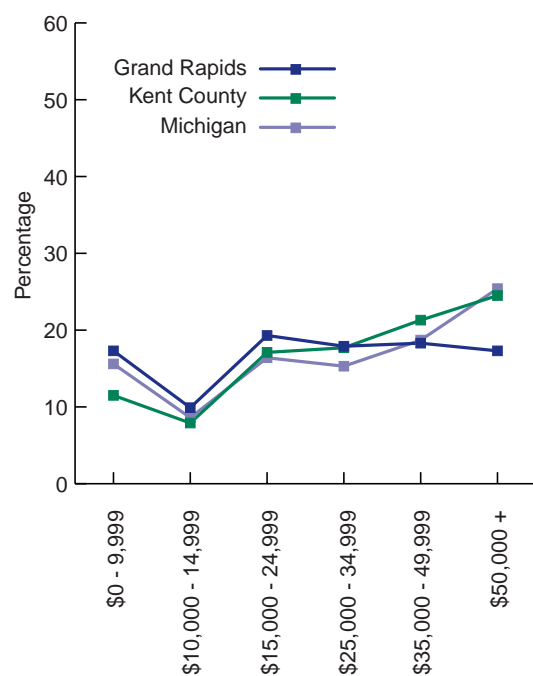
Medicaid is a government-sponsored health insurance program for eligible children, families, and elderly nursing home residents. These numbers do not include MICHild or the uninsured population.

### FUTURE MEASURES:

% Working in Permanent vs. Temporary Employment  
Number of Working Poor

### 1990 Household Income

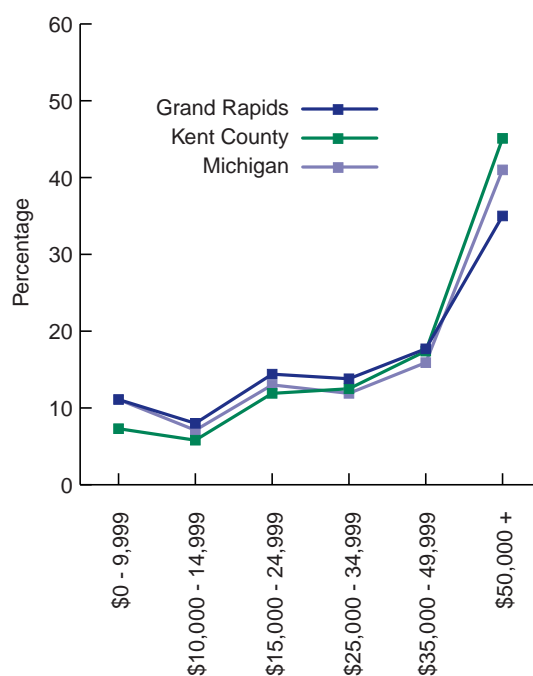
Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics



The biggest differences in household incomes between the city and the county remain at the extremes of high and low.

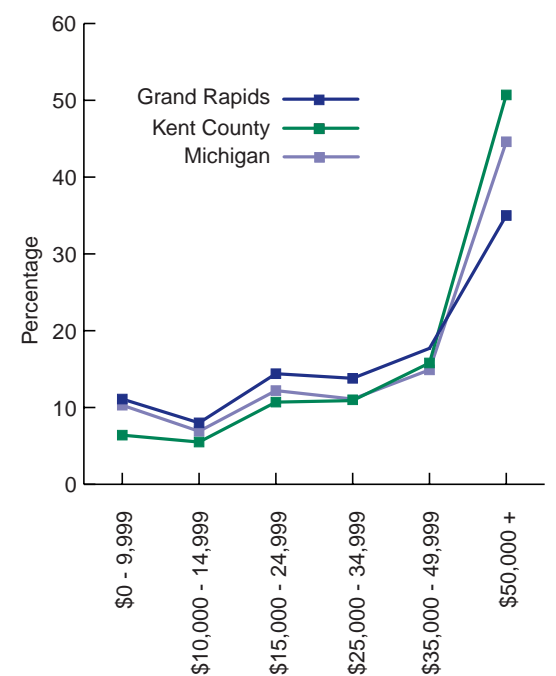
### 1996 Household Income

Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics



### 1998 Household Income

Source: U.S. Census; Market Statistics

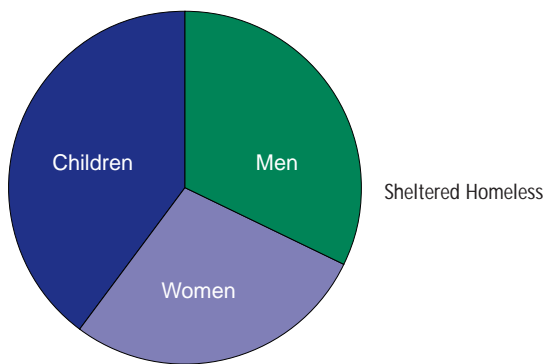


## INDICATOR: Stable Support System

MEASURES INCLUDE...

### Homelessness

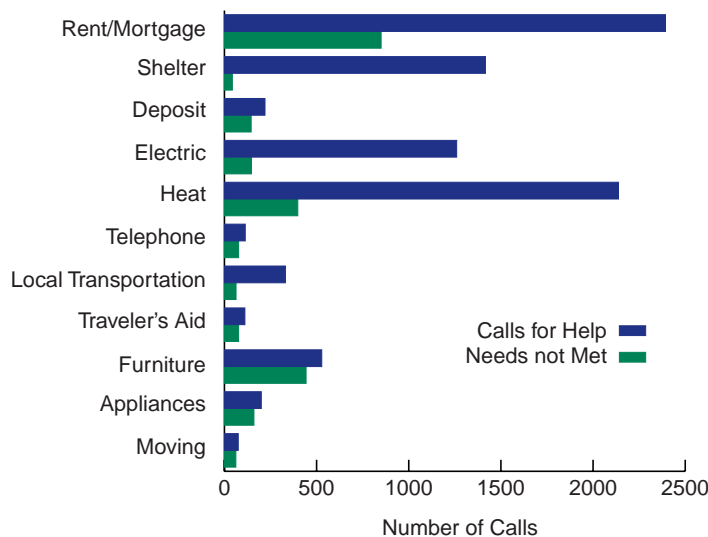
Source: Salvation Army



On the third Thursday of each month, a count is taken of persons sheltered in emergency and transitional facilities in the community. In 1998, an average of 653 people were sheltered each month. 68% were women and children. The unsheltered homeless are not included in this count.

### Calls to United Way's "First Call for Help"

Source: Heart of West Michigan United Way



In 1998, 6685 calls were made to First Call for Help at the United Way. The majority of the calls were for financial assistance with rent or mortgage and heat. One third of needs were not met due to lack of available resources or ineligibility for assistance.

### FUTURE MEASURES:

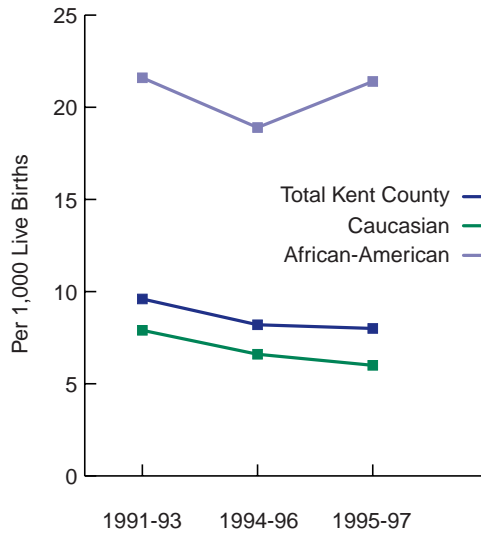
Number of People Using Food Pantries



**INDICATOR: Healthy People**  
**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

**Infant Mortality Rate**

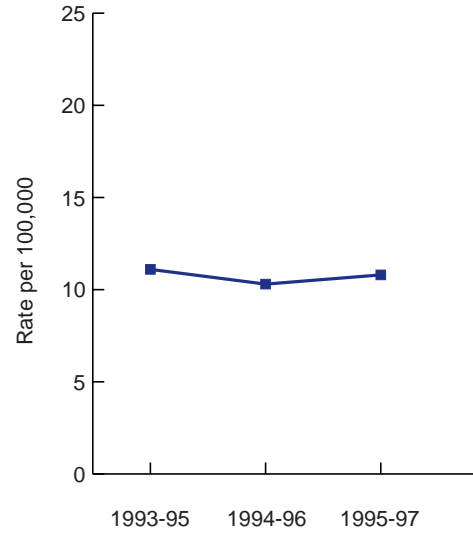
Source: Kent County Health Department



African-American infants die at about four times the rate of white infants.

**Drug-Related Deaths**

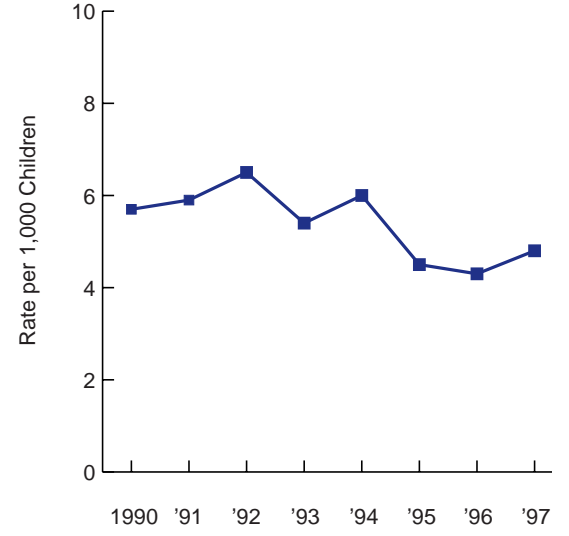
Source: Kent County Health Department



The rate of drug-related deaths has remained stable at an average rate of approximately 11 deaths per 100,000 population. Death may be the result of substance abuse or chronic use of alcohol or other drugs.

**Child Abuse & Neglect**

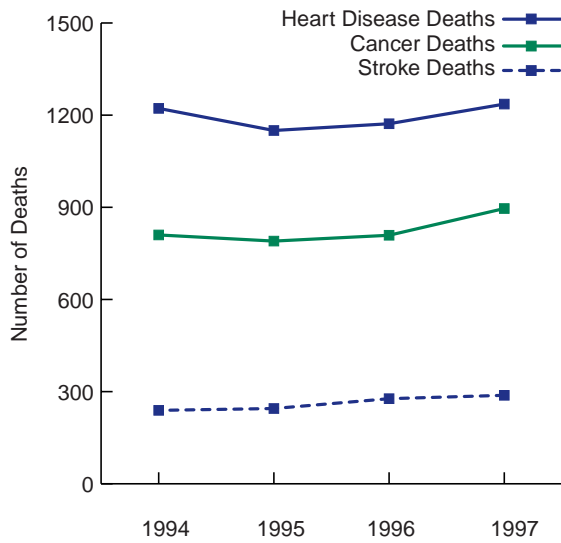
Source: Michigan Kids Count 1999



The rate of substantiated child abuse or neglect has declined slightly from 5.7 children per 1,000 in 1990 to 4.8 in 1997. Last year, 304 children in Kent County were removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect.

**Leading Causes of Death**

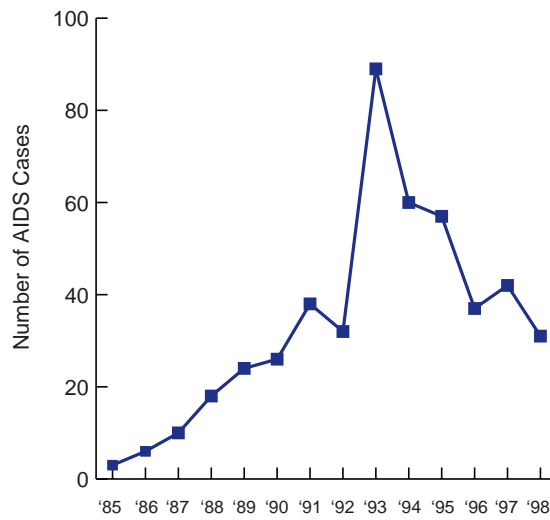
Source: Kent County Health Department



Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death in Kent County. Cerebrovascular disease (stroke) is the third leading cause.

**New AIDS Cases**

Source: Kent County Health Department

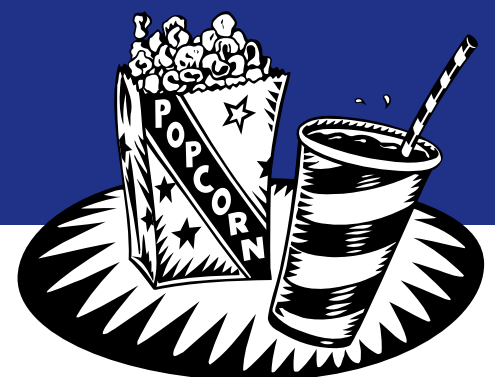


New cases of AIDS have been declining for the past several years.

**FUTURE MEASURES:**  
**Substance Abuse**  
**Violence**

# Activities

**GOAL:** A community that provides a range of year-round and accessible cultural, recreational and entertainment activities.



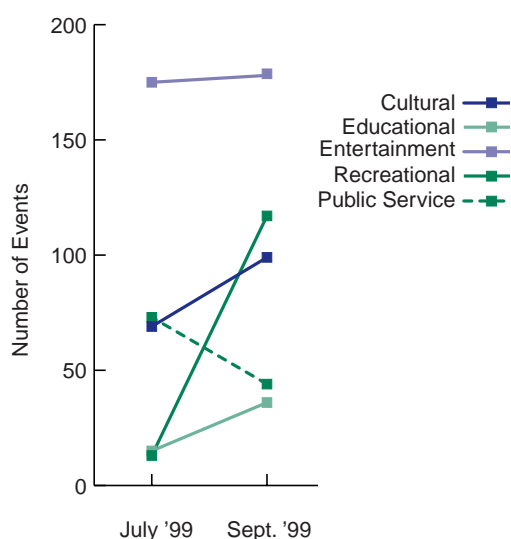
**INDICATOR: Diversity & Number of Events**

**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

**Seasonal Activities**

Source: VanAndel-Grand Center website; The Weekend Magazine, Grand Rapids Press; Kent District Library System website; Grand Happenings website; Convention & Visitors Bureau website; On The Town Magazine

In general, there are more entertainment activities than other types.



**Activity Participation**

Data not available at this time.

**INDICATOR: Funding Support for Activities**  
**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

Data not available at this time.

# Equality

GOAL: A community that values and respects diversity by providing equal choice, opportunity, and treatment for all its residents.



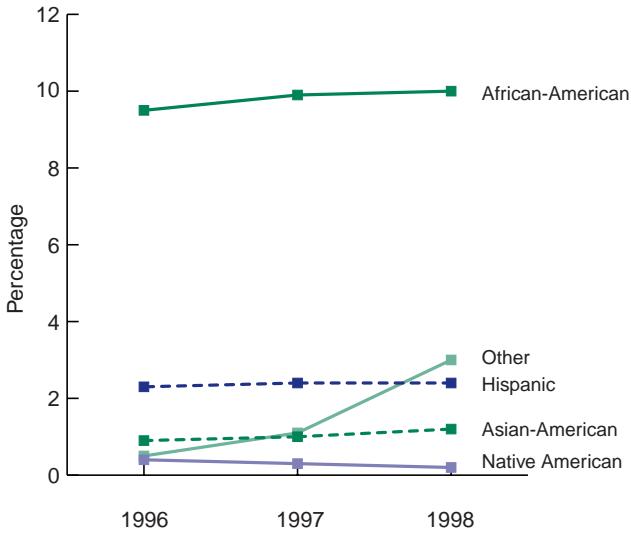
## INDICATOR: Community Involvement

MEASURES INCLUDE...

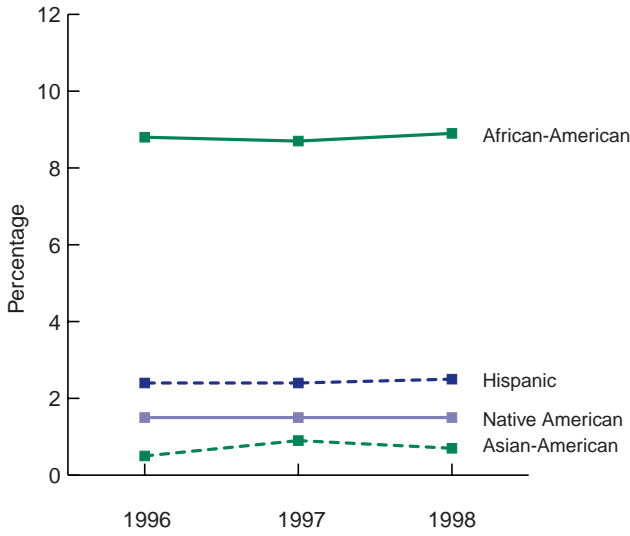
### Staff Diversity in Public Organizations

Source: Kent County; City of Grand Rapids Workforce

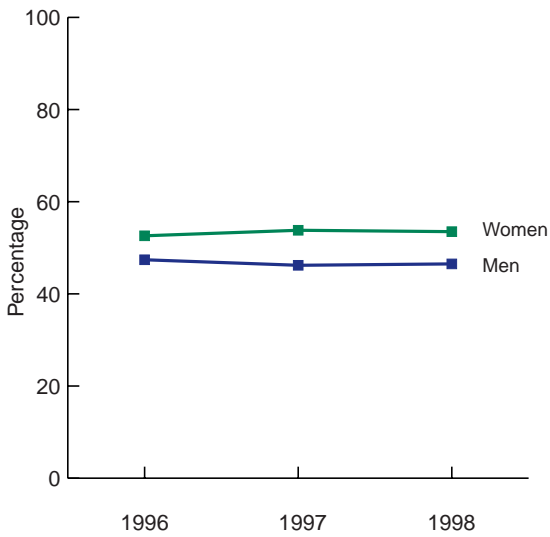
#### % of Minorities in the Kent County Government Workforce



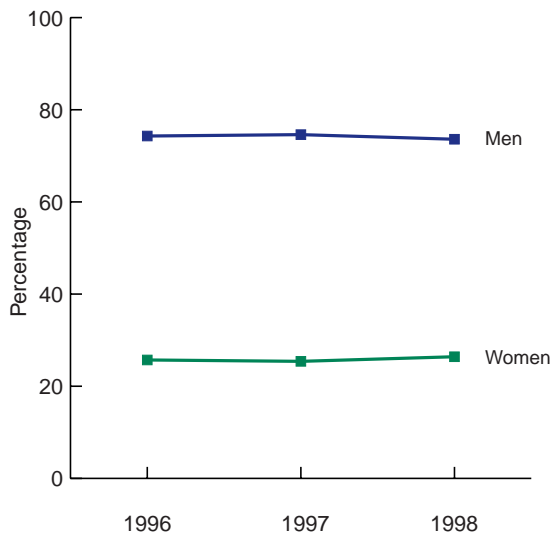
#### % of Minorities in the Grand Rapids City Government Workforce



#### % of Men/Women in the Kent County Government Workforce



#### % of Men/Women in the Grand Rapids City Government Workforce

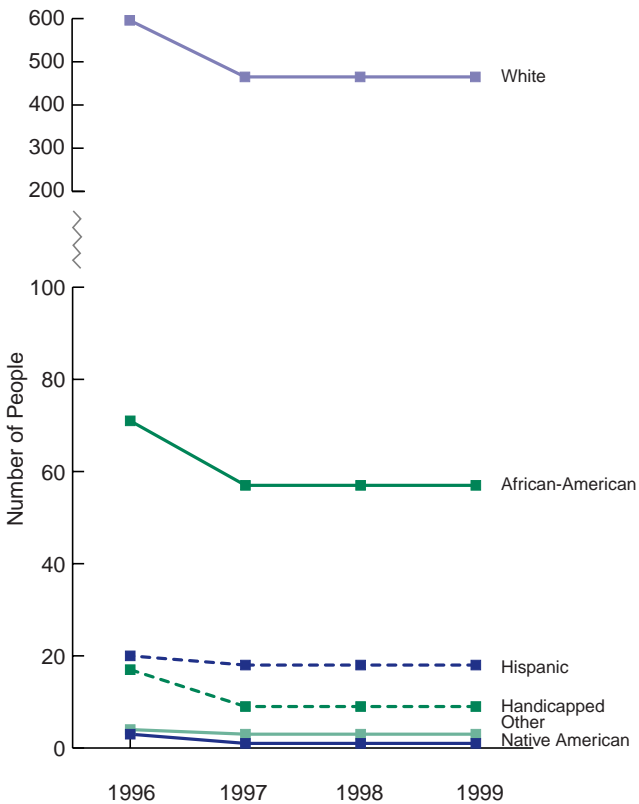


Approximately 14% of city and county employees are minorities. Gender differences, while different in the city and county, have remained about the same for the past three years.

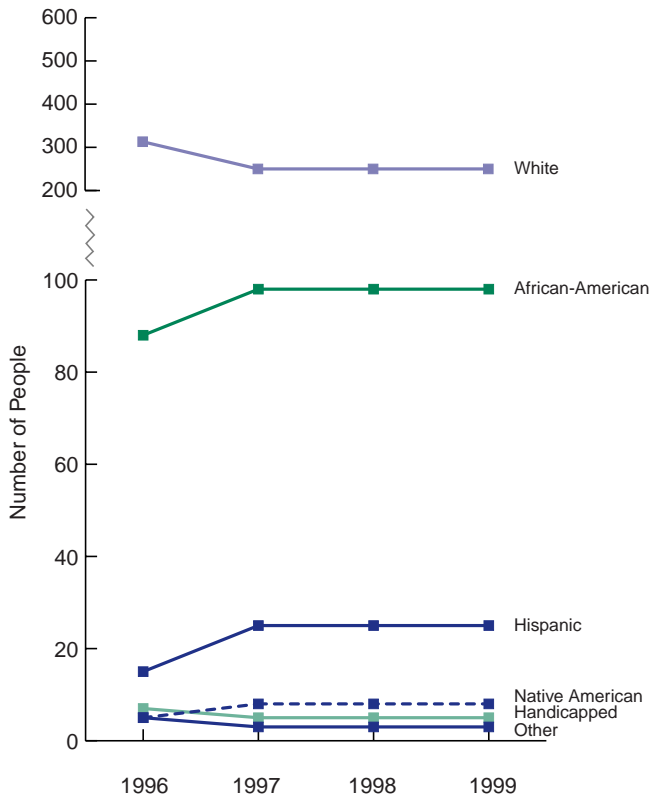
### Composition of Selected Community Boards

Source: Heart of West Michigan United Way

#### Male Participation



#### Female Participation



These data reflect the participation rates on selected nonprofit boards in Kent County.

### Diversity of Candidates for Public Office

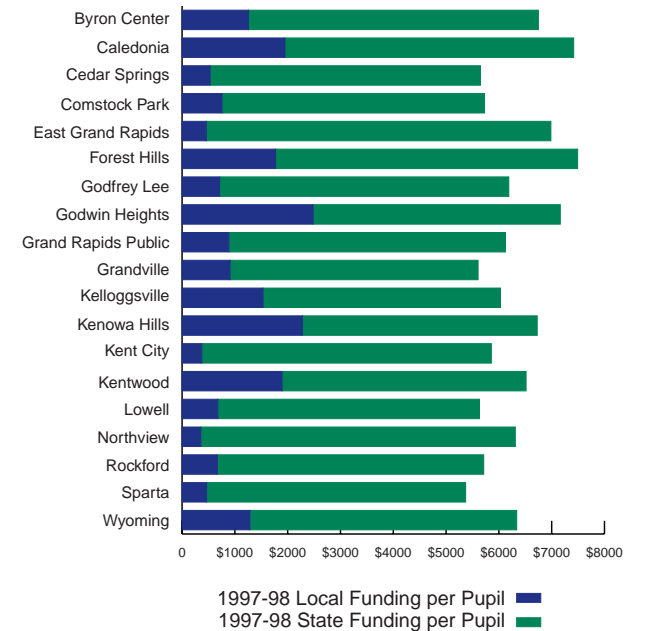
To our knowledge, these data are not currently being compiled.

## INDICATOR: Educational Opportunities, Resources and Performance

MEASURES INCLUDE...

### State & Local Dollars Spent Per Pupil

Source: Michigan Department of Education



The general property tax is the major source of local revenue. The major source of state revenue in most districts is the state foundation allowance. From 1995-1996 to 1997-98, the average foundation allowance per pupil for Michigan and Kent County districts increased 7%.

### FUTURE MEASURES:

#### Diversity of Educators and Students

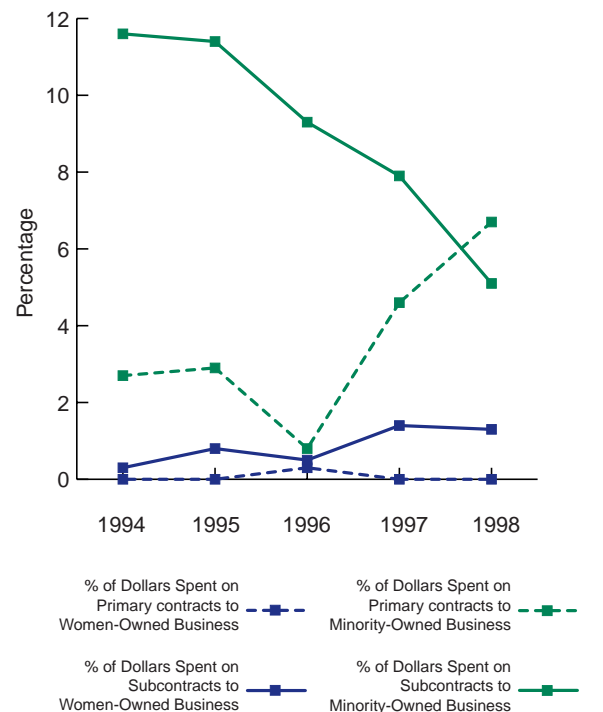
Future reports will attempt to include aggregate data for K-12 and higher education institutions.

## INDICATOR: Employment / Business Ownership

MEASURES INCLUDE...

### Participation Rate of Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses in City-Funded Construction Projects

Source: City of Grand Rapids



Primary contracts to minority-owned businesses have increased. Subcontracts to women-owned businesses have averaged about 1% per year.

### Equity in Representation on Corporate Boards

To our knowledge, these data are not currently being compiled.

### Equity in Positions

These data will be available in the 2000 census.

# Natural Environment

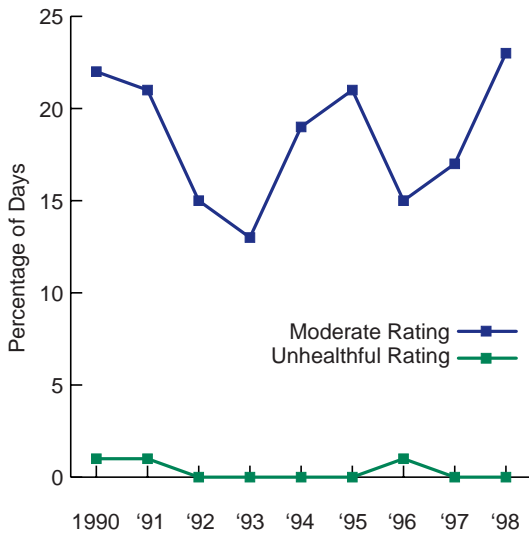
GOAL: A community that provides access to a clean, natural environment for all current and future residents.



INDICATOR: Air Quality  
MEASURES INCLUDE...

## Pollutant Standards Index

Source: U.S. EPA-AIR Data Monitor PSA Report  
(www.epa.gov/aqspubl1/air\_quality\_tables.html)



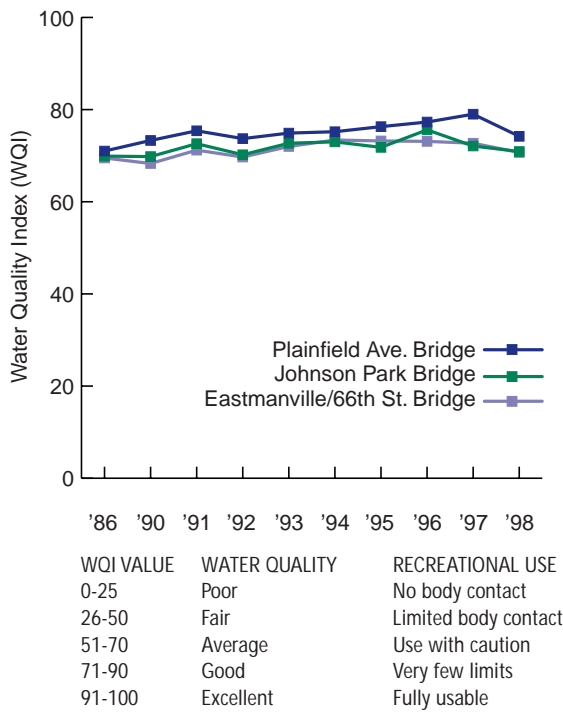
Moderate Rating: Few or no cautions for the general public.

Unhealthy Rating: Mild aggravation of symptoms among susceptible people, with irritation symptoms in the healthy population. Persons with existing heart or respiratory ailments should reduce physical exertion and outdoor activity. General population should reduce vigorous outdoor activity.

INDICATOR: Environmental Stewardship  
MEASURES INCLUDE...

## Grand River Water Quality Index

Source: Grand Rapids Environmental Protection Department

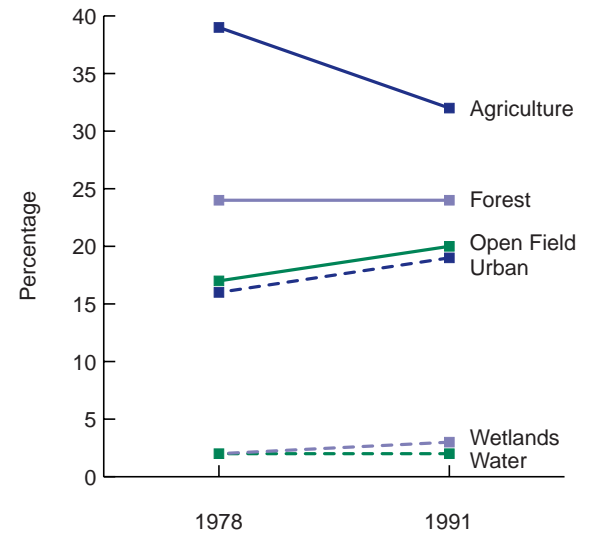


The overall water quality in the Grand River is on an upward trend.

INDICATOR: Acres of Preserved Natural Habitats  
MEASURES INCLUDE...

## Kent County Land Use

Source: Water Resources Institute, Grand Valley State University



The proportion of land in agriculture continues to decline.

## FUTURE MEASURES:

Recycling, Waste Management

# Education

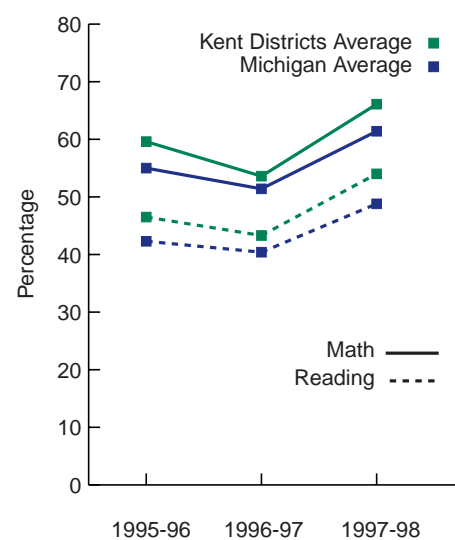
GOAL: A community that provides equal access and quality of learning opportunities over the lifetime of its residents.



INDICATOR: Quality Education  
MEASURES INCLUDE...

## % of 7th Graders with Satisfactory MEAP Scores

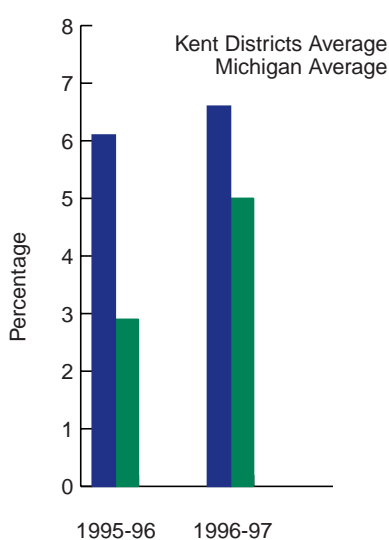
Source: Michigan Department of Education (www.mde.state.mi.us)



MEAP Scores increased from 1997 to 1998 for 7th graders in Kent County and in Michigan as a whole. Math scores are higher than reading scores.

## Drop-out Rates

Source: Michigan Department of Education (www.mde.state.mi.us)

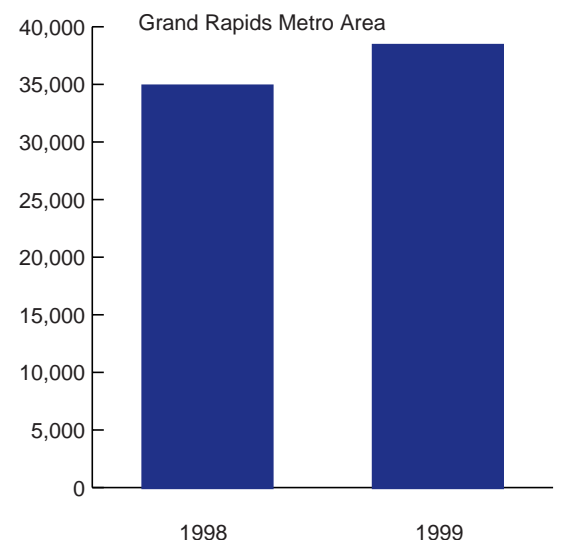


Each year, Kent County loses about 5% of its students in grades 9-12. In other words, of all 9th graders who started high school, 81% graduated in 1996-97.

INDICATOR: Adult Learning Opportunities  
MEASURES INCLUDE...

## Adult Continuing Education

Source: Scarborough Report



According to a 1999 telephone survey, 38,380 adults in the metropolitan area are involved in some form of continuing education.

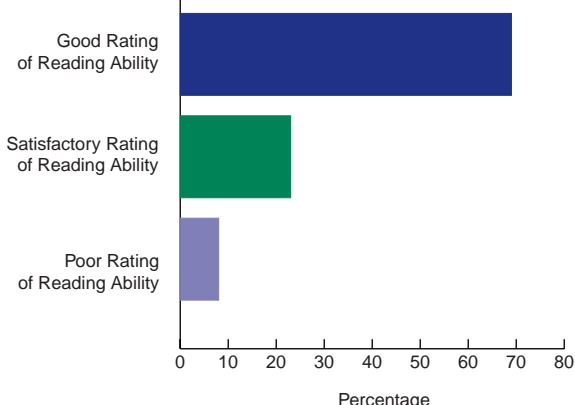
INDICATOR: Literacy  
MEASURES INCLUDE...

## Adult Literacy

Source: Heart of West Michigan United Way Problem Profiles

69% of telephone survey respondents in 1994 rated their reading ability as "good."

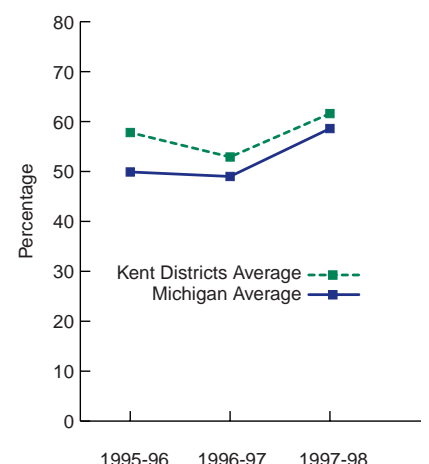
According to the 1990 census, at least 19,000 adults in Kent County are functionally illiterate.



## % of 4th Graders with Satisfactory MEAP Reading Scores

Source: Michigan Department of Education (www.mde.state.mi.us)

Fourth grade MEAP scores have improved for both Kent County and Michigan.



# Transportation

**GOAL:** A community that meets the needs of its residents in getting people, goods and services from one location to another.

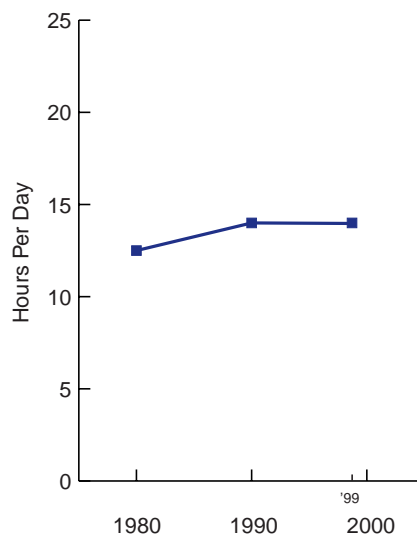


**INDICATOR:** People Can Get Where They Want to Go When They Want to Go

**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

## Bus Service Availability: Hours of Bus Service per Day (6 day week)

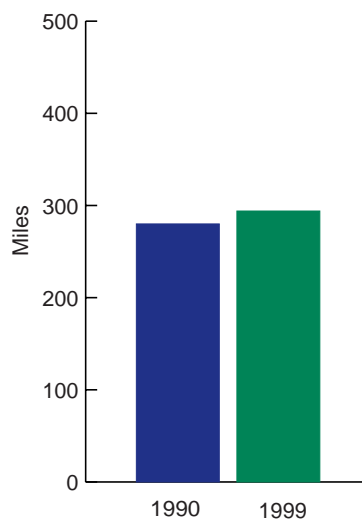
Source: GRATA



Bus service is available 14 hours per day.

## Bus Service Availability: Miles Covered by Bus Service (one direction)

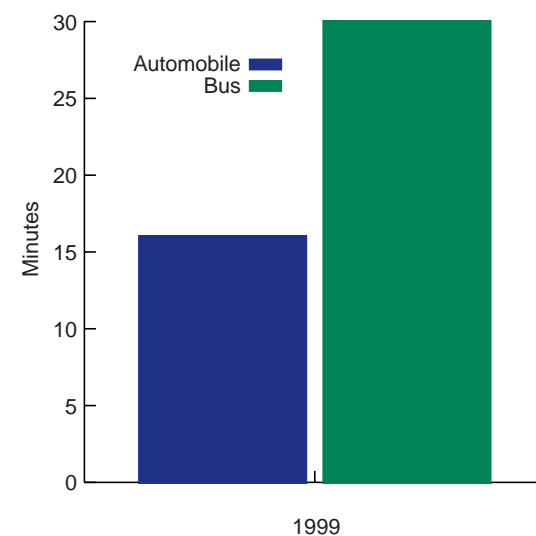
Source: GRATA



In 1999, one directional bus service covers 294 miles (excluding areas that overlap).

## Average Trip Time

Source: Wirthlin Worldwide Survey



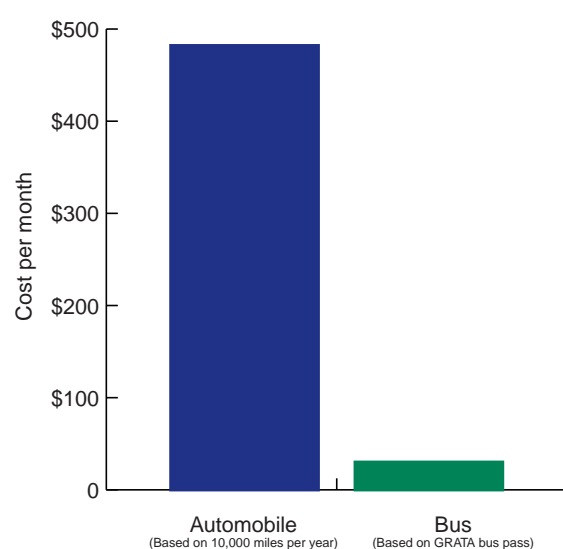
The average bus trip is 30 minutes, compared to 15 minutes for car trips.

## INDICATOR: Linkages Between All Types of Transportation

**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

### Monthly Cost of Public Transit vs. Vehicle Ownership

Source: AAA Michigan, 1999 Report on Driving Costs



### Carpool Lots and Spaces

Source: GRATA

In 1999, MDOT reports that there are 36 car pool lots with 2,160 spaces in Kent County.

### Number of Bus Routes to Airports and Bus/Train Stations

Source: GRATA

There are currently 2 bus routes that go to the airport and 2 routes that go to train or bus stations.

### Bike Racks at Bus Stops

Source: GRATA

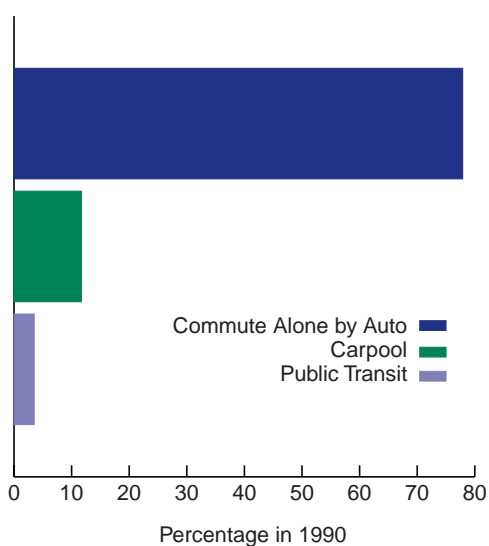
There are currently no bike racks at bus stops. As of spring 2000, all buses on all routes will be bike-rack equipped.

## INDICATOR: Public Transit is the Transportation of Choice

**MEASURES INCLUDE...**

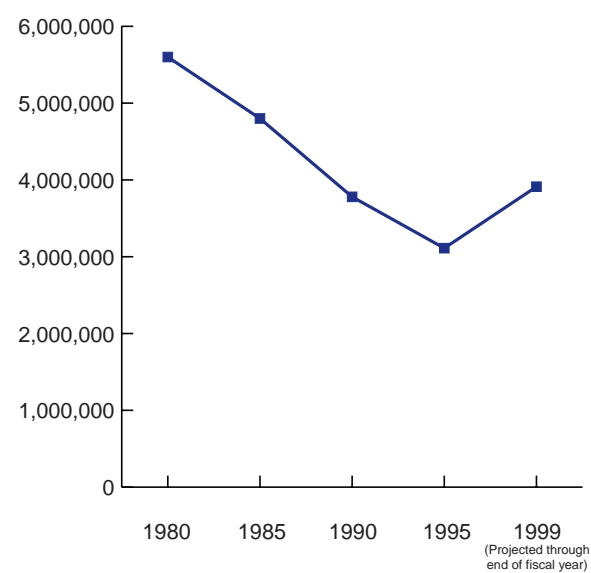
### Proportion of Employees Who Use Public Transit

Source: U.S. Census



### Annual Bus Ridership

Source: GRATA



These numbers include the Downtown Area Shuttle—DASH. Federal operating funds were discontinued in 1995.

## A SPECIAL THANK-YOU!

This Community Report Card would not be possible without the generous support of the Frey Foundation as well as the work and support of hundreds of Grand Rapids area residents and representatives from community organizations and businesses.