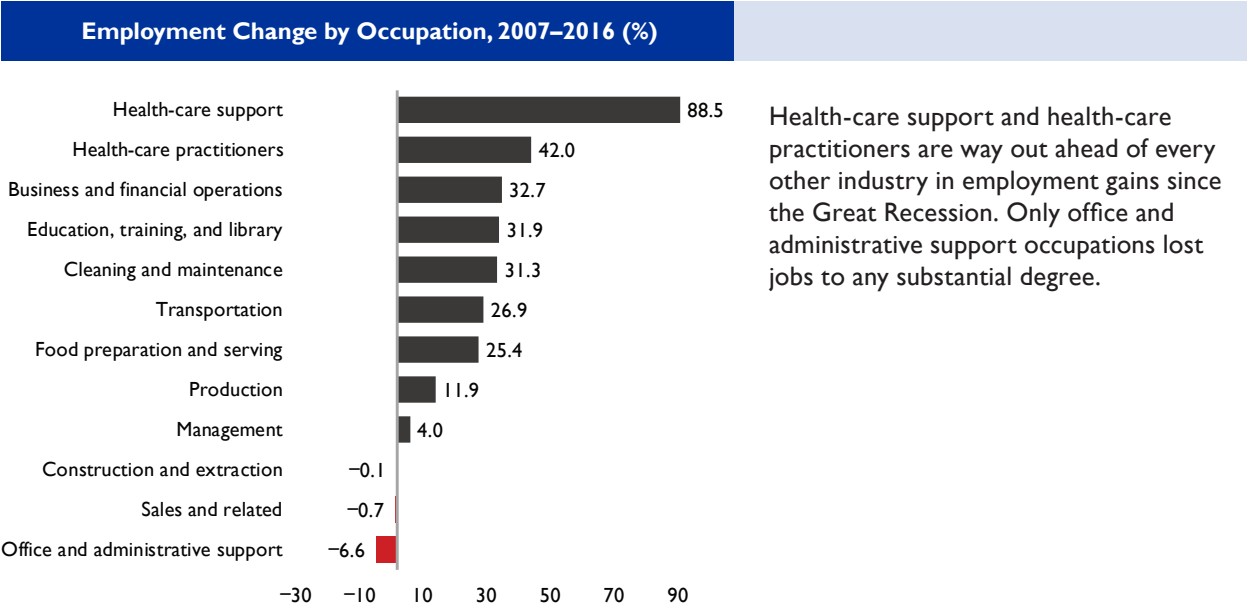


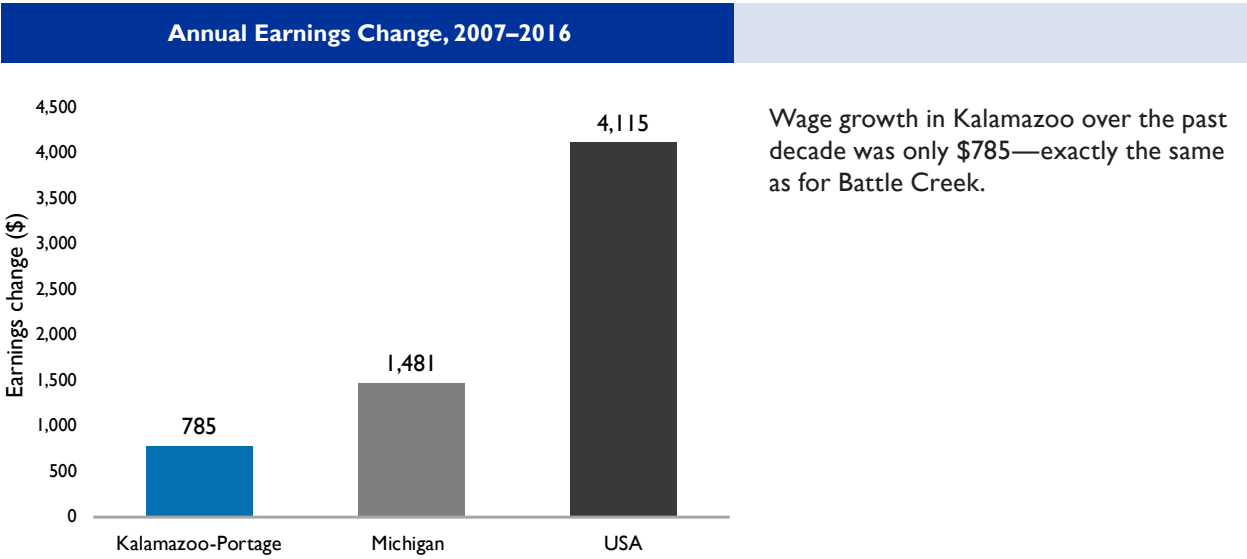
# KALAMAZOO-PORTAGE MSA

While occupational changes in the Kalamazoo-Portage MSA reflected fairly strong growth over the decade from 2007 to 2016, marking 10 years since the start of the Great Recession, wages did not—they demonstrated little growth over the decade. Indeed, nearly flat wage growth is a problem in many west Michigan areas. Nevertheless, most occupations either gained jobs or held even from where they were at the start of the recession.



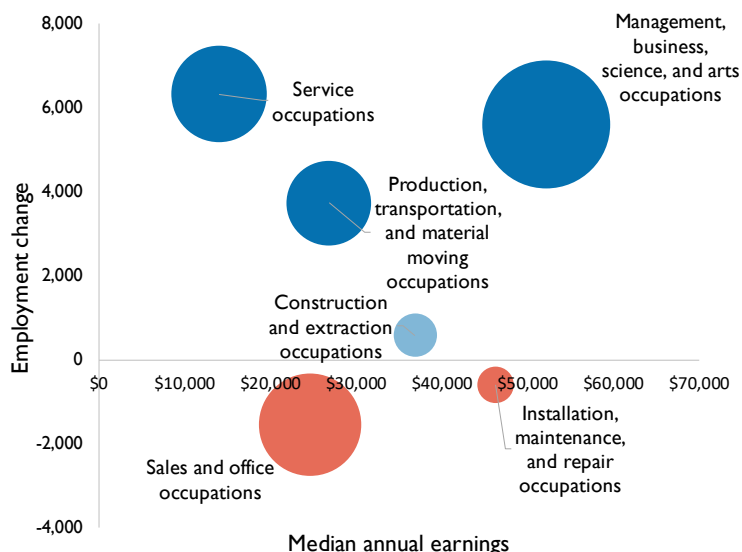
From 2007 to 2016, most occupations increased in the Kalamazoo area (figure above). Health-care occupations posted the largest gains. Health-care support, which includes nurses’ aides and orderlies, increased by over 88 percent. Health-care practitioners—doctors, nurses, and technicians—combine to form the second-largest growing occupation, increasing by about half as much. Sales and office occupations shrank slightly over the 10-year period.

Wage growth was less robust in the area: annual wages increased by \$785 from 2007 to 2016, which was far less than in the nation as a whole and only half as much as in the state of Michigan (figure below). These data



SOURCE: U.S. Census, American Community Survey.

## Employment Change and Median Annual Earnings, 2007–2016



Sales and office job losses in Kalamazoo were more than balanced out by big gains in service, blue-collar, and white-collar jobs since the Great Recession.

are not adjusted for inflation, which suggests that the Kalamazoo-Portage area may actually have shrunk in real terms, meaning relative to the cost of living.

The bubble figure (above) shows employment growth on the vertical axis and median wages for the occupation groups on the horizontal, with the size of the bubble representing the relative size of the industry. The relatively flat wages indicate that job growth and decline do not show any relationship to wages. Low-wage service occupations grew, as did high-wage management occupations. Mid-wage sales occupations, which represent a decent amount of the area's employment, contracted from 2007 to 2016.

Figures for 2017 from Labor Insight, a job-market data program from Burning Glass Technologies, show the top job postings from Internet sites (below). Health-care practitioners made up the largest percentage of job postings. Sales occupations were the second-largest. But sales and office occupational employment fell from 2007 to 2016, suggesting that the number of postings may reflect replacements and turnover, not job growth.

## Job Postings for 2017 (%)



Although sales occupations accounted for the second-highest share of Internet job postings in 2017, employment in sales and office jobs fell in the past decade (top figure, opposite page). Hence, the high number of postings may reflect turnover, not actual growth.