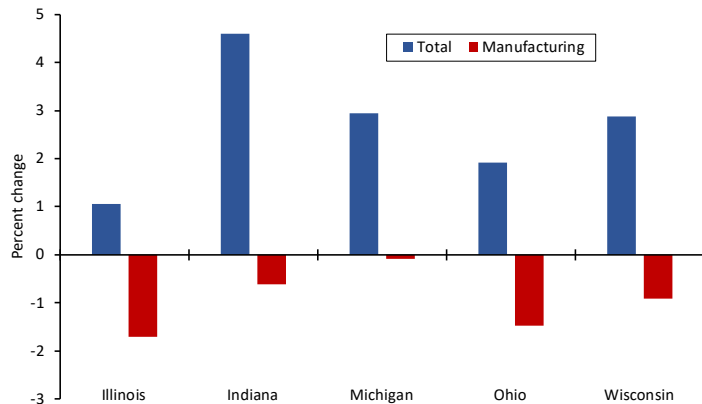


GREAT LAKES ECONOMY

All five states in the Great Lakes region have fully recovered from the Great Recession, at least in terms of overall employment numbers. The figure shows every state's employment level in 2017 as having risen above the baseline of 2007, the year the Great Recession started. Indiana has seen the largest employment growth in terms of percentage, at 4.6 percent. Michigan and Wisconsin had the second-highest gains, increasing by 2.9 percent. However, Michigan employment also had fallen the furthest prior to the Great Recession, shedding 9 percent of its jobs from 2001 to 2007. Illinois posted just a 1.1 percent gain since 2007. Ohio posted just a 1.1 percent gain since 2007.

2007 to 2017 Employment Change



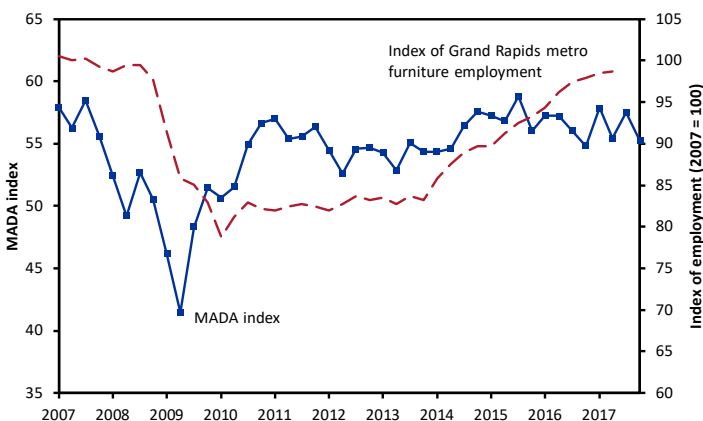
Manufacturing employment suffered during the Great Recession, losing 234,000 jobs. Whereas in total employment every state in the region made a full recovery and then some, no state fully recovered when only manufacturing employment was considered—all five have fewer manufacturing workers now than they did before the recession began. Michigan came the closest to returning to its 2007 level, at just 0.1 percent off the baseline.

OFFICE FURNITURE INDUSTRY

Since the end of the Great Recession, the furniture industry has been in a state of slow and steady growth. The Michael A. Dunlap and Associates (MADA) index fell steeply from 2007 to 2009, but it quickly rebounded as the expansion began in midyear 2009, returning to values over 50 (indicating growth in the global industry) by 2010 (figure below).

However, the employment situation in the Grand Rapids area has not been as responsive. The MADA index measures the worldwide industry, but the accompanying local employment index did not follow the global trend. Instead, it lagged behind, remaining at nearly 20 percent lower than the 2007 baseline until 2014. Only in late 2017 did employment in furniture production return to the baseline 2007 level.

MADA Office Furniture Industry Index and Index of West Michigan Furniture Industry Employment



The furniture industry has enjoyed a sustained period of growth that shows no sign of abating. The employment decline in Grand Rapids, however, trailed behind the global index decline by several quarters. The local employment index did not reach bottom until after the industry as a whole had begun to grow again. Now it has nearly reached its baseline, set before the last recession.