

W.E. UPJOHN INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH



Vice President and Director of Research

OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

The W.E. Upjohn Institute (“Institute”), a private, not-for-profit, nonpartisan, independent research organization, has been studying policy-related issues of employment and unemployment since its founding in 1932. With approximately 120 staff members and a budget of \$22 million, the Institute is headquartered in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The Institute traces its roots to the concerns of a Kalamazoo industrialist and philanthropist for the well-being of laid-off workers and their families during the Great Depression. In 1932, Dr. W. E. Upjohn, a physician and founder of the Upjohn Company, embarked on a grand experiment of providing land for displaced workers in the community to cultivate gardens or work at the farm co-op he created to provide for themselves and their families. To support the initiative for future generations, Dr. Upjohn created the

W.E. Upjohn Unemployment Trustee Corporation and donated 1,100 acres of land and shares of company stock to the Trustee Corporation.

Today, Institute research focuses on labor markets, addressing several core areas:

- The causes of unemployment and the effectiveness of social safety net programs in mitigating its effects;
- Education and training systems to improve workers' employability and earnings;
- The influence of state and local economic development policies on local labor markets; and
- The emerging trends affecting workers and labor markets in the Institute's core research areas.

The Institute carries out its mission by disseminating its research and through direct services. The communications team ensures Institute insights reach the researchers, policymakers, advocates, and practitioners who can put it to use. In addition, the Center for Workforce Innovation and Solutions administers federal and state-funded employment and training programs for disadvantaged and dislocated workers in Southwest Michigan.

MISSION AND VISION

The Institute's mission is to conduct research into the causes and effects of unemployment and to study and investigate the feasibility and methods of insuring against unemployment. Charged with devising ways and means of preventing and alleviating the distress and hardship caused by unemployment, the Institute supports creativity, experimentation, and taking action to implement any plan or device that the Board of Trustees may determine feasible to accomplish said purposes.

This mission underscores the importance of incorporating three essential elements to address the causes and consequences of unemployment effectively. These include the fundamental need to conduct rigorous, high-quality research; the importance of experimenting with new ideas; and the necessity of disseminating research findings and providing technical assistance to those who make policy decisions and to those who administer the programs that provide services to workers and the unemployed who need assistance.

The Institute also embraces a vision to be nationally renowned for research on the causes and consequences of unemployment and the changing nature of employment and for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies to alleviate unemployment and improve the quality of work. The Institute's work is guided by a seven-point strategic plan, established in 2020, to expand the Institute's impact and influence; encourage effective and efficient growth of projects and programs; and ensure work and culture are aligned with the Institute's mission, vision, and values.

INSTITUTIONAL WORK

The work of the Institute is carried out by three main divisions: Research, the Center for Workforce Innovation and Solutions, and Regional Economic and Community Development.

RESEARCH

Institute [research](#) is primarily focused on U.S. labor markets and addresses several core areas:

- [Economic Development](#): Through the study of specific industries, local labor markets, regional policy and planning, and transportation and infrastructure, Institute research offers insights at all

levels and from both the supply and demand sides. Focal areas include manufacturing, tax incentives, and regional collaboration.

- [Education & Workforce Development](#): From early childhood education through postsecondary education and public training programs, the Institute's research elucidates how each learning stage and program contributes to a strong workforce.
- [Labor Market Issues](#): As jobs are changing and the future of work is uncertain due to many pressures, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute studies evolving struggles over wages, inequality, immigration, regulations, automation, offshoring, and gig work.
- [Social Safety Net](#): Central to the Institute's mission to address causes and solutions to unemployment is the examination of social safety net programs. The Institute focuses explicitly on poverty and income support, unemployment insurance, and worker's compensation and disability benefits. Research assesses the effectiveness of current social insurance programs and explores other strategies to keep people in stable jobs and minimize the effect of economic downturns.

These topics often call for an integrated approach that brings together various strains of research and diverse methodologies, resulting in targeted [Major Initiatives](#), including:

- [The Promise: Investing in Community](#): This initiative brings together Institute expertise on place-based scholarships and local labor market issues, including economic development policies such as tax incentives and customized business services.
- [Outsourcing: Impacts on the U.S. Workforce](#): This initiative highlights research and researchers examining outsourcing and its implications for workers. The Research Network on Outsourcing supports convenings to discuss new topical research.

Teams led by Ph.D.-level staff and supported by a dedicated corps of research analysts and research assistants, some of whom have master's degrees and over ten years of experience, undertake the Institute's research. The Institute promotes a healthy exchange of ideas through frequent internal seminars and has a seminar series that hosts numerous outside speakers during the year. The former allows research staff to receive feedback from colleagues on preliminary work, while the latter provides the opportunity for intellectual exchange between Institute staff and outside scholars.

Work by visiting scholars, non-resident affiliates, and post-doctoral fellows supplements the Institute's in-house research team. The Institute is also committed to building a network of early career scholars through annual grant programs like the Early Career Research Awards and the Dissertation Awards.

Data and Tools

The Institute invests in state-of-the-art computing resources, large administrative and specialty datasets, and related information capabilities. This investment allows the Institute's researchers to access vast troves of data, the ability to execute sophisticated data analysis, and the software platform to collaborate locally and across the globe. The in-house technical staff maintains systems, provides technical assistance, and keeps abreast of ever-evolving tools and technologies necessary for conducting Institute projects. The Institute's Information Center staff offer research support, provide ready access to most of the literature relevant to carrying out the Institute's research, maintain all Institute research products in its repository, and compile periodic information updates. Due to this infrastructure and expertise, the Institute has served as a data repository for many projects sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, hosts an [interactive map](#) containing all of the nation's Workforce Investment Areas, and tracks several [usage and success measures](#) of the Kalamazoo Promise.

Furthermore, the Institute maintains three interactive databases:

- The [Panel Database on Incentives and Taxation](#), which provides comprehensive information on business incentives for economic development provided by state and local governments;
- The [New Hires Quality Index](#), a consistent way of measuring the earnings power of people taking new jobs each month, allowing comparisons over time; and
- The place-based college-scholarship [Promise Programs Database](#), which details promise scholarship programs across the country.

THE CENTER FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND SOLUTIONS

The second of the Institute's three divisions, the [Center for Workforce Innovation and Solutions](#) (the Workforce Center) currently supports direct services through several initiatives. These include the [Michigan Works! Southwest](#) service centers in the Kalamazoo region; an [Employer Resource Network](#) of assistance to local employers and workers; [Neighborhood Hubs](#), located in high-poverty areas to provide wrap-around services to remove barriers to employment; and the [Pulse](#) center for collaborative and policy research on child-care and school readiness issues.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Rounding out the Institute's divisions is [Regional Economic and Community Development](#). Two teams comprise this division; the Regional Economic Development team focuses on applied economic and technical assistance and addresses issues in regional economies, economic development, workforce/occupational development, evaluation, and economic impact modeling and analysis. The regional team provides economic outlook presentations inside and outside of Michigan and annual economic and employment forecasts for Southwest Michigan's metropolitan regions. The Community Development team leads collaborative efforts in communities in Southwest Michigan, working in a variety of areas, including education, poverty reduction, and housing, among others. Through the Community Development team, the Institute supports the [Kalamazoo Promise](#). The team also works closely with the City of Kalamazoo on the development of a very innovative administrative longitudinal database called the Community Data System. Community Development also oversees the [Southcentral Michigan Planning Council](#) (SMPC), which is one of 14 regional planning organizations in Michigan established by state legislation.

PUBLICATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Institute has a long history of disseminating its work through traditional academic channels of books, working papers, newsletters, and peer-reviewed publications. [Upjohn Press](#), the Institute's publication program, helps accomplish this by producing books and ebooks that offer rigorous yet accessible exploration of topical, policy-relevant issues. The Institute is also home to [Economic Development Quarterly \(EDQ\)](#). EDQ is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing and bringing to the attention of policymakers, decision-makers, and researchers the latest quality research findings in economic development.

As part of the strategic planning process, the Institute created a new Senior Director of Media and Publications Strategy position, who serves as a member of the executive team. The Institute also welcomed a full communications staff, which has been working to revamp the Institute's approach to communications strategy with a focus on digital excellence. Plans are in place to relaunch upjohn.org to allow for enhanced integration of the work of various Institute teams, as well as the ability to establish

wide-reaching content and product strategies. In recent years, the Institute has also furthered its social media presence, created shorter formats such as policy briefs for Institute research products, and used webinars and interactive databases for significant releases. Additionally, the Institute has built relationships with other organizations that share its interests and, through coordinated efforts, help amplify the Institute's message.

FINANCES

Dr. W.E. Upjohn's generous gift in creating the Trustee Corporation has provided the primary financial means to support the Institute's activities. The endowment, valued at approximately \$220 million today, provides the Institute with unique opportunities for long-term sustainability, consistency in purpose, and the freedom to research issues and experiment with innovative approaches deemed most pertinent to its mission.

The organization has annual outlays of approximately \$22 million. Because of the endowment, the Institute enjoys a level of independence from funders that gives its work an extra level of credibility. Since its inception, the Upjohn Institute has used that independence responsibly to conduct research and disseminate its findings.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Institute is fully committed to sustaining and continuing to build an environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recent accomplishments include the establishment of an active Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, new and updated employee policies, comprehensive organization-wide training, an analysis of position requirements to ensure opportunities are open and accessible to all candidates, and continued development of collaborative communication strategies within the organization.

Institute Human Resources staff are currently implementing a new evidence-based hiring practice focused on eliminating bias. This ongoing work includes developing strategic processes to evaluate applicant pools for all positions, creating structured new employee onboarding to support individuals as they join the organization, and prioritizing DEI education and training as part of management development.

KALAMAZOO AND THE REGION

Kalamazoo is a diverse and progressive metropolitan area in southwest Michigan, halfway between Chicago and Detroit. Located 35 miles east of Lake Michigan, Kalamazoo is nestled amid rolling hills, woodlands, and inland lakes and near numerous amenities. *The New Yorker* dubbed Kalamazoo "a little Athens" because of the variety and vitality of cultural activities found in the city. The area boasts theater productions, a highly acclaimed symphony, chamber music, choral festivals, and the internationally renowned Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. These cultural activities take place within a county with a population of roughly 265,000.

The Institute sits amid a rich educational community that includes several institutions of higher education: [Kalamazoo College](#), a small, private residential liberal arts college; [Western Michigan University](#), a large public research institution with a nationally-recognized medical school; and [Kalamazoo Valley Community College](#), a two-year public institution. With a diverse range of scholars and researchers at its fingertips, the Institute's location is ideal for continued partnerships that benefit both the nation and the community in which the Institute was born.

GOVERNANCE

A ten-member [Board of Trustees](#) governs the Upjohn Institute. Board membership consists of leaders in education, business, law, human resources, philanthropy, and healthcare and are individuals who reflect both regional and national perspectives.

Senior Leadership

[Michael Horrigan](#) took over as the Upjohn Institute's President in March 2019. In the last four years, he has overseen the development of a strategic plan for the Institute, introduced numerous new and innovative workplace practices, and created several new management structures to help guide the work of the Institute. An expert in education, workforce development, and labor market issues, he recently oversaw a significant study developing an index of demand for Career and Technical Education courses related to in-demand occupations.

Prior to joining the Institute, Mike worked for over 32 years at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). During his career, he ran a number of survey programs, including Surveys of Employer Provided Training, the National Longitudinal Surveys, and Occupational Employment and Projections. As a senior executive, he headed up the Bureau's inflation programs and the employment/unemployment survey programs.

[Susan Houseman](#) is the outgoing Vice President and Director of Research (VPDR). She is a labor economist whose recent research focuses on temporary and contract employment arrangements, domestic outsourcing, offshoring, manufacturing, and measurement issues in economic statistics. She co-directs the Outsourcing Research Network, chairs the Technical Advisory Committee to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and co-directs the Labor Statistics Program at the Institute of Labor Economics (IZA) in Bonn, Germany.

THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Reporting to the President of the Upjohn Institute, Michael Horrigan, the Vice President and Director of Research (VPDR) is responsible for creating and implementing a strategic vision through working closely with staff to determine the direction of the Institute's research. The VPDR provides direct supervision and support to the staff of the Research Department, which currently consists of [14 researchers](#) and support staff, and will also have the opportunity to maintain a personal research agenda. The incumbent works collaboratively with both external stakeholders and all Institute staff. Additionally, the VPDR will take on the following opportunities and challenges:

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- **Serve as a strategic and valuable member of the Institute's leadership team:** In concert with the Board, the President, and other members of the senior leadership team, the VPDR will play a leading role in developing the long- and short-term strategic direction for the Institute. While embracing the Institute's roots and core commitments, the VPDR will support taking informed risks to achieve even greater success and impact in all areas of the Institute's work.
- **Shape the future of research at the Institute:** As Director of Research, the VPDR will shape the future directions of the Institute's research agenda. While supporting the independent and individual interests of researchers, the VPDR will help forge collaborative research priorities that

align with overall institutional priorities. The VPDR will have the opportunity to hire additional researchers in the years to come, and thus will be able to select for expertise that aligns with the directions in which the Institute wishes to head. The VPDR will provide leadership through influence, akin to the impact an academic department's chairperson can have on the research foci within the department.

- **Increase external funding:** As described, the Institute benefits from endowment funding, which enables researchers to pursue the projects they feel are most worthy rather than being tied to parameters stipulated by a grant funder. However, in maintaining the long-term viability of the endowment, spending is capped at a four percent annual draw. The support of external parties aligned with Institute priorities can supplement and complement research funding, helping to increase the reach and impact of Institute research. While seeking grants will not be a major portion of the VPDR's portfolio, the VPDR will have the opportunity to seek and help secure specific, targeted grants that will bolster the support for the research the Institute wishes to pursue. Grants also can support convenings and events that germinate new studies and elevate awareness of research findings among scholars, policymakers, and the public.
- **Champion diversity, equity, and inclusion:** The next VPDR will contribute to the Institute's efforts to maintain and enhance an environment that is diverse, welcoming, and inclusive. While professionally demonstrating a commitment to these values broadly, the VPDR will also support the recruitment, retention, and professional development of staff from all backgrounds. Furthermore, the VPDR will bring a DEI lens to Institute's research focus areas to aid in serving the needs of an ever-diversifying public.
- **Expand the Institute's visibility:** As the country and globe emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute is thinking ahead to its long-term influence on the workplace and employment. The impact of the Institute's research partially is determined by how widely it is disseminated. The VPDR will bolster the reach of the Institute's research by promoting the exploration of strategies to improve outreach efforts, to reach more stakeholders, and to provide the most timely and relevant information. The ideal VPDR candidate should enjoy "spreading the word" of the Institute's efforts to its audiences and partners. Furthermore, the VPDR will work to have Institute research circulated not just in scholarly settings but also disseminated in mainstream media outlets.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The incoming VPDR will bring an expertise in and passion for the Institute's areas of focus and will demonstrate a deep understanding of the national dialogue around issues of labor and unemployment. The successful candidate will have a distinguished record of scholarship, and a Ph.D. in economics, public policy, or a related field along with at least eight years of relevant work experience, or they will hold a master's degree and at least ten years of relevant work experience. Additionally, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following qualities and characteristics:

- Excellent organizational skills, including strong leadership acumen and judgment;
- Experience with change management leadership;
- Honed quantitative abilities, including financial management and oversight experience;
- The capacity to provide intellectual leadership and collaborative and empowering support to fellow researchers;

- Ability to maintain and enhance a cohesive team within a hybrid work environment;
- A deep and active record of research and publication in an employment-related field;
- A desire to embrace interdisciplinary and creative research, including the perspectives of social scientists outside of economics; and,
- Intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for the work.

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. The salary range for this role is \$250,000-\$275,000 with a generous benefits package.

For best consideration, please send all nominations and expressions of interest to:



Jim Sirianni, Managing Director
Anne Koellhoffer, Managing Associate
Storbeck Search
UpjohnVPDR@StorbeckSearch.com

For more information, please visit Upjohn Institute's home page at upjohn.org.

The Upjohn Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer and as such, is committed to affirmative action steps to help achieve a goal of equality in the treatment of employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, age height, weight, national origin, veteran or disability status in hiring, promotion training and development, compensation, transfer, termination, disciplinary action, and all other personnel actions and Institute related functions and activities.