

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Living on the Lakeshore is provided by [Lakeshore Advantage](#)
and [Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce](#).



Living On The Best Coast

Whether your passion is hiking and biking or shopping and dining out, West Michigan's Lakeshore area is the perfect place. Our backyard is home to the beaches and dunes of Lake Michigan, which rival any beach in the world for swimming, watersports, or simply a sunset stroll. We are located within one of the largest concentration of microbreweries in the country, as well as several wineries and vineyards. Explore the Lakeshore area for yourself. Take in a concert. Enjoy four seasons of sports. When you move here, you never have to go far to find fun.

While it's never hard to find ways to unwind on the Lakeshore, we work as hard as we play. Our local economy is thriving, and when combined with below-average home prices and cost of living, your money works harder for you here. It's one of the reasons Lakeshore companies have been rapidly growing and attracting nationally recognized talent in high-tech and emerging fields. When you work here, you will make an impact on a global scale, because local companies have recently increased their international sales more than three times the national average.

With rewarding recreational and career opportunities, as well as easy access to a world-class health care system, dozens of colleges and universities, trendy restaurants, a variety of museums and much more, you'll find that the Lakeshore area has all the benefits of a big city, while keeping the appeal of a small town. The following sections will define the landscape of the place we are proud to call home, but we invite you to come see the Lakeshore area for yourself. Once you're here, we're confident you'll want to become a permanent part of our community.

LEARN MORE

Holland
Grand Rapids
Zeeland

Grand Haven
South Haven
Saugatuck/Douglas



Finding Your Community

Whatever type of community you prefer, you can find it here. Holland was recently named the most secure mid-sized city in America, due to its thriving economy, low crime rates, and affordable cost of living. Holland was also voted the second most philanthropic community in the country. Zeeland is an ideal place for people looking for the charm of a small town. Saugatuck is a noted art community and home to miles of beautiful beaches and dozens of galleries. Grand Haven — Coast Guard City USA — is perfect for those seeking a classic coastal lifestyle. Grand Rapids is the second largest city in the state and the home of ArtPrize, the largest open art competition in the world. These communities are joined by fast growing cities such as; Allendale, Coopersville, Hudsonville and Jenison, that bridge the urban center to the Lakeshore.

Holland | www.enjoyhollandmichigan.com |  **View Video**

- Ranked 2nd healthiest and happiest American town by the Well-Being Index
- Forbes Top Five safest cities in the US

Zeeland | www.feelthezeel.com

- Small town charm, with easy access to beaches and big city fun
- Popular events such as Pumpkin Fest and holiday parades

Grand Haven | www.visitgrandhaven.com

- Good Morning America's Top Five American Beaches
- Over 100 miles of scenic bike trails

Grand Rapids | www.experiencegr.com |  **View Video**

- Forbes Best Cities For Raising A Family
- RelocateAmerica's Top Ten Cities To Live In

Saugatuck | www.saugatuckcity.com

- #4 Coolest Small Town in America according to Budget Travel
- One of Huffington Post's 10 Sleepy Beach Towns Perfect For Fall

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HelloWestMichigan.com

PureMichigan.com

Ottawa County



Putting Your Talents To Work

The Lakeshore includes a highly concentrated area of global leaders in advanced manufacturing, engineering, design, agriculture, tourism, healthcare, recreation and sustainability. With hundreds of innovative companies constantly investing in human capital and growing well above the national average, West Michigan has formed the framework for ongoing innovation. West Michigan is the fastest growing region in Michigan, with more than a million people living and working in high-tech industries. Given the support and collaborative nature of area businesses, it's easy to see why the area is thriving.

Continually Improving, Innovating & Growing

- The Lakeshore area recently topped the nation in overall job growth
- Over the last decade, the region sustained double-digit population growth
- From 2012-2013, high-tech companies in the Lakeshore area announced \$385M in expansions, and created 2,263 new jobs
- Nearly 20% of locally-produced goods are exported internationally

- The Lakeshore is home to more than twice the number of sustainable and clean energy companies, compared to the national average
- On average, Lakeshore employees hold three times the number of patents versus the rest of the country
- West Michigan is considered the Furniture Capital of the World
- Organizations such as TedX Macatawa, NewNorth Center for Design in Business, and Design West Michigan spur new growth and innovation
- Our 8% growth in advanced manufacturing in 2012 was the highest of any region in Michigan

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HelloWestMichigan.com

LakeshoreAdvantage.com

MichiganWestCoastChamber.org

MiTalent.org



Getting More For Less

A growing economy, outstanding health care and award-winning public schools and are just a few reasons why people choose the Lakeshore area. When you look at the bottom line, our cost of living is nearly 11% less than the national average. West Michigan boasts

a low cost of living - lower than the national average for the composite index and in nearly every sub-category. With such a low cost of living, it's no wonder we are living so well.

COST OF LIVING INDEX

INDEX	WEST MICHIGAN	CHICAGO, IL	MADISON, WI	MINNEAPOLIS, MN	NATIONAL
Composite (100%)	89.4	115.5	108.9	110.3	100.0
Grocery (13.31%)	97.8	112.8	101.5	107.8	100.0
Housing (29.27%)	76.0	135.3	112.8	118.1	100.0
Utilities (10.22%)	90.8	99.8	103.9	101.4	100.0
Transportation (9.86%)	95.0	115	109.3	105	100.0
Health (4.23%)	95.6	106.2	119	102.8	100.0

Source: ACCRA Cost of Living Index

The ACCRA Cost of Living Index provides a useful and reasonably accurate measure to compare cost of living differences among urban areas. Items on which the Index is based have been carefully chosen to reflect the different categories of consumer expenditures. Weights assigned to relative costs are based on government survey data on expenditure patterns for midmanagement households. All items are priced in each place at a specified time and according to standardized specifications.

The average for all participating places, both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan, equals 100, and each participant's index is read as a percentage of the average for all places. Data represents the index calculated for Q1 2012 - Q1 2011.



Creating A Strong Foundation

Education is a top priority – and our schools rank in the top 25% of the country. West Michigan offers leading private, public and charter schools throughout the region. Want to continue your education? West Michigan is home to more than 20 colleges and universities — including three of the top ranked liberal arts colleges in the nation — enrolling 125,000 students.

Go From Learning To Earning

- 17 Lakeshore area high schools ranked in Michigan's top 100, including two of the top 10 [// MORE //](#)
- The Lakeshore area is in the top 25% of school districts in the country, according to US News and World Report
- FuturePrep Connections is an unprecedented system-wide partnership linking local businesses with school districts to inspire and prepare students for career exploration during middle and high school years
- Roughly one-third of Lakeshore residents aged 25-44 hold a Bachelor's degree

- Several area universities offer online or accelerated MBA programs
- Lakeshore students score above the state averages on the ACT, PSAT, and AP tests
- 84% of Lakeshore area students pursue education beyond high school

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Ottawa Area ISD
Doing More Together
Hope College

Grand Valley State University
Davenport University
Western Michigan University



Experiencing A World Of Entertainment

Alluring Lake Michigan sunsets, cities bursting with activities, live theater, entertainment districts teeming with nightlife and music, and ArtPrize, the world’s largest open art competition — West Michigan offers something for everyone. Summer days come alive with beaches, water sports and festivals like **Grand Haven’s Coast Guard Festival**, **Holland’s Tulip Festival** and the **South Haven’s Waterfront Film Festival**. Or if a pub crawl is more your style, head to Grand Rapids, named **Beer City USA** two years in a row. When it comes to entertainment, West Michigan is where it’s at.

The Lakeshore Offers Something For Everyone

- ArtPrize, the world’s largest open art competition featuring over 1,500 artists from around the world [// MORE //](#)
- John Ball Zoo, a classic urban zoo home to more than 1,100 animals and a four-story zipline [// MORE //](#)
- Home of “Five Festivals You Don’t Want To Miss Worldwide” by Time Magazine.
- Holland Street Performer series, featuring circus acts, magicians, comedians, and live entertainment
- Holland Groovewalk, a citywide concert festival at multiple venues [// MORE //](#)

- Hundreds of restaurants of all types of cuisine, in the heart of one of the fastest growing regions in the world
- The Grand Rapids Art Museum, home to an impressive permanent collection and several international traveling exhibits [// MORE //](#)
- The Zeeland PumpkinFest, a three-day festival full of family fun [// MORE //](#)
- Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, 132 acres of natural wetlands, woodlands, meadows and display gardens [// MORE //](#)
- Van Andel Arena, a sports and concert venue hosting the hottest sports and entertainment events
- LaughFest, a 10-day comedy festival featuring the biggest names in stand-up comedy [// MORE //](#)

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www.DowntownHolland.com
www.ExperienceGR.com
www.Holland.org



Enjoying The Great Outdoors

West Michigan offers a work/play balance unlike any other. Just minutes from Lake Michigan, the Lakeshore enjoys everything that miles of beaches has to offer in the summer — activities like swimming and boating — as well as sledding and ice fishing when the temperature drops. We are rated the 8th best golf region in the country, offer nine ski resorts within a 3-hour drive, have several hundred miles of bike trails, 18 world-class beaches, hundreds of inland lakes and have the most outdoor sports activities ranked in the Top 50 in Lifestyle Market Profiles than any other region in the country. The list goes on, but we think the lists others have put the Lakeshore on are more impressive.

Michigan State Park System Best in Nation Michigan's 99 state park and recreation areas are popular destinations for residents and visitors alike. The state parks offer 22 million annual visitors access to more than 13,000 campsites, trails, inland lakes, rivers and the Great Lakes. [// MORE //](#)

Best Town for Mountain Biking With 75+ miles of trails in eight locations within a 45 minutes drive, it's no wonder why Grand Rapids was recognized by Outside Magazine as one of the best mountain biking towns in the U.S. [// MORE //](#)

Grand Haven State Park Grand Haven State Park was nationally recognized for having one of the top 5 beaches in the United States by Good Morning America. [// MORE //](#)

Holland State Park Holland State Park is the most visited park in the Michigan State Park system. [// MORE //](#)

Great Places to Live and Boat Powerboat magazine rated West Michigan as one of the top 10 places for power boaters to live and boat.

Play For an Hour, or a Weekend

- The best indoor public swimming facility in the country according to Aquatics International Magazine [// MORE //](#)
- 12 months of fishing in deep water or shallow rivers, charter fishing opportunities, and a wide variety of native fish species
- Nationally-ranked golf courses, including several that host professional tour stops [// MORE //](#)

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www.WMTA.org