

iLabs, Office of Engagement and Impact
College of Business
University of Michigan-Dearborn

eCities is an annual research study that examines community-level factors that foster entrepreneurship and small business development. The focus is on entrepreneurship and small business growth because of their importance to the expansion and diversification of regional economies and job creation. The primary purpose of eCities is to understand the impact of the strategies and success stories of Michigan communities across the state. The data collected not only provides a means for benchmarking performance, but it also allows communities to learn from the qualities and efforts of their neighboring communities.

Background

Across the country, economic development activities are carried out by various entities, including state agencies, regional associations, and counties. While these broader organizations engage in promoting economic development in Michigan, similar activities are also undertaken by many townships, cities, and villages. Given this, the eCities project uses the community as the unit of measurement, and not a county or metropolitan area, as other studies have used.

The eCities project seeks to provide benchmarking tools and overview reports for participating communities and has incorporated new ways to learn from the success stories of local communities across the state. While there is no single solution for every community, the success stories allow communities to understand strategies that can be tailored to local resources and communities. Helping local communities, who often have the most impact on small and entrepreneurial firms, provides an opportunity to improve the environment for





2024 Five-Star and Four-Star Communities

182 communities were recognized as 5-star and 4-star communities. The 5-star and 4-star communities in the eCities project are part of a group of Michigan communities that have seen the strongest growth in business development over the past five years, while controlling the costs of doing business in town.

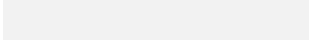
Five-Star Honored Communities

Ada Township



Four-Star Honored Communities

City of Adrian



Gaines Township

City of Oak Park



