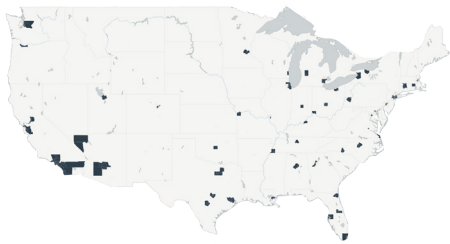
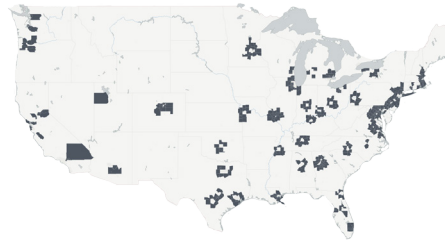


# PROMISING GAINS, PERSISTENT GAPS

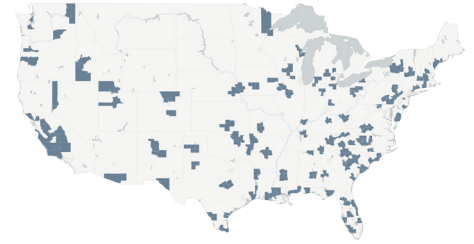
## YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA



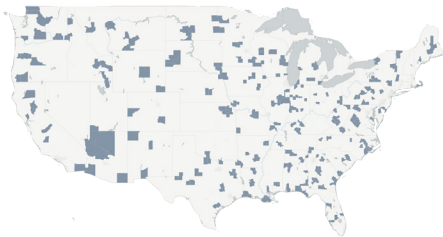
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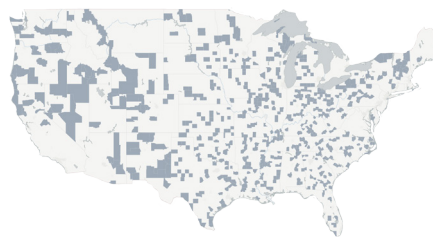
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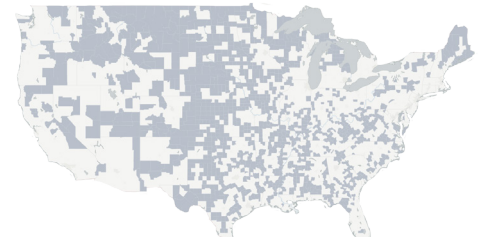
MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES



SMALL CITIES



TOWNS



COMPLETELY RURAL AREAS

**YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATES FOR STATES, METRO AREAS, RURAL AND URBAN AREAS, AND COUNTIES AS WELL AS BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY.**

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**Measure of America** is a nonpartisan project of the nonprofit Social Science Research Council founded in 2007 to create easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in America. Through reports, interactive apps, and custom-built dashboards, Measure of America works with partners to breathe life into numbers, using data to identify areas of highest need, pinpoint levers for change, and track progress over time.

The root of this work is the human development and capabilities approach, the brainchild of Harvard professor and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. Human development is about improving people’s well-being and expanding their choices and opportunities to live freely chosen lives of value. The period of young adulthood is critical in developing the capabilities required to live a good life: knowledge and credentials, social skills and networks, a sense of mastery and agency, an understanding of one’s strengths and preferences, and the ability to handle stressful events and regulate one’s emotions, to name just a few. Measure of America is thus concerned with addressing youth disconnection because it stunts human development, closing off some of life’s most rewarding and joyful paths and leading to a future of limited horizons and unrealized potential.

## PROMISING GAINS, PERSISTENT GAPS

### YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA



First, the good news: fewer young people are disconnected from school and work today than were before the Great Recession. The 2015 youth disconnection rate, 12.3 percent, is below the 2008 rate of 12.6 and well below the 2010 youth disconnection peak, 14.7 percent. **This 16 percent drop over five years translates to roughly 900,000 fewer young people cut off from pathways that lead to independent, rewarding adulthoods.**

Disconnected youth are teenagers and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor working. Being detached from both the educational system and the labor market during the pivotal years of emerging adulthood can be dispiriting and damaging to a young person, and the effects of youth disconnection have been shown to follow individuals for the rest of their lives, resulting in lower incomes, higher unemployment rates, and negative physical and mental health outcomes. The harms accrue not only to young people themselves, but reverberate across time and place, making youth disconnection a national concern that must be addressed by society at large.

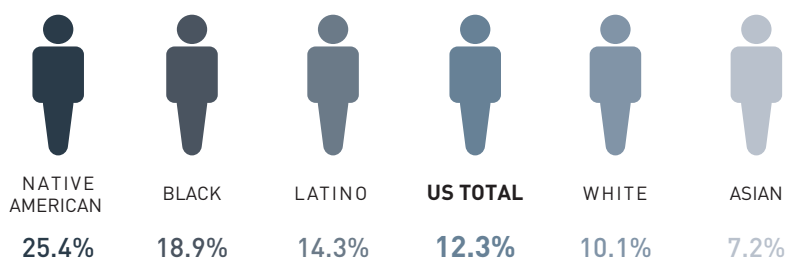
The five-year decline in the youth disconnection rate is certainly cause for celebration. For the many groups that have come together to address the issue—including federal, state, and local policymakers, large national companies and municipal business groups, nonprofit organizations, community-based groups, educators, and more—this will be welcome news. But the work is not over: there are still nearly **4.9 million** young people in the United States who are detached from both school and the workforce.

Just as the Great Recession swelled the ranks of disconnected young people, the economic recovery reduced them; at least part of the drop in youth disconnection is due to the nationwide decline in the unemployment rate for workers of all ages between 2010 and 2015. Thus, those who remain disconnected likely have higher barriers to reconnection than those whose fortunes responded more readily to an improving labor market, such as involvement with the criminal justice system, lack of a high school diploma, or caregiving responsibilities. In addition, looking only at the topline national rate masks great variation among demographic groups and geographic regions. This report seeks to highlight this variation, showing that while we should applaud the reduction in youth disconnection overall, it remains a serious problem for certain groups of young adults.

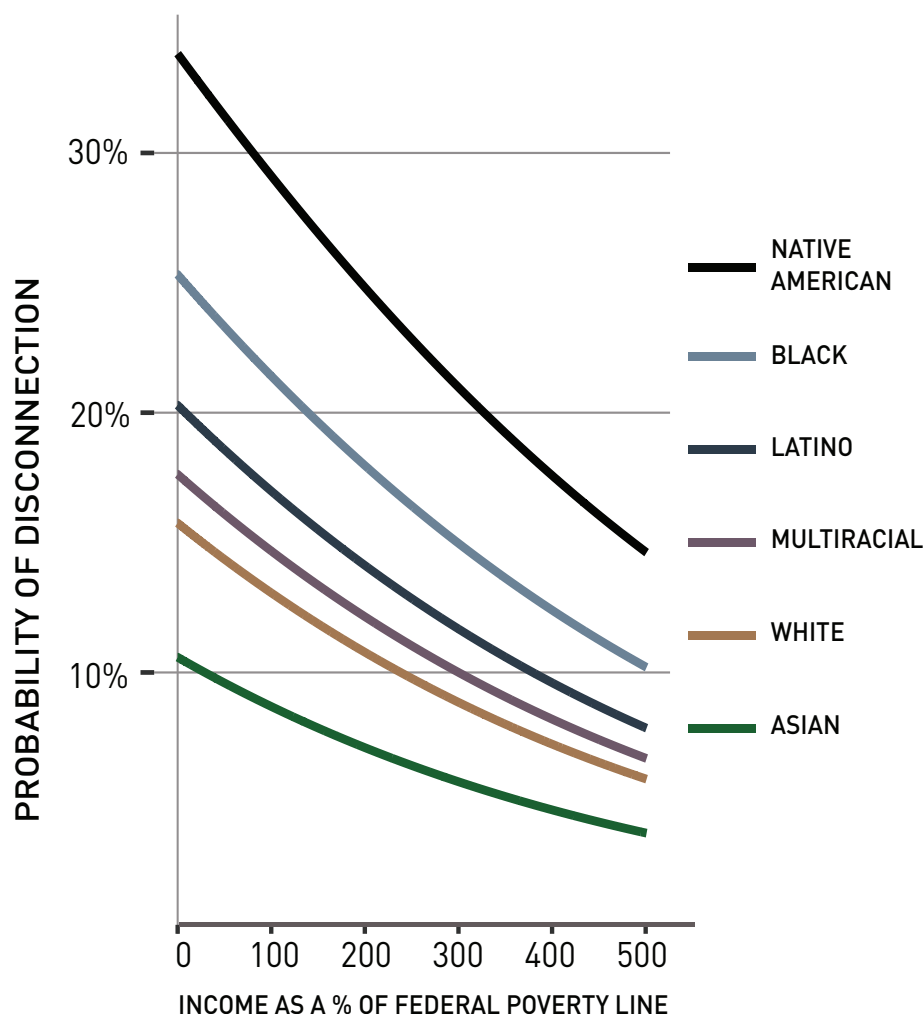
In *Promising Gains, Persistent Gaps: Youth Disconnection in America*, Measure of America (MOA) updates disconnection data since we last looked at this topic in the 2015 report *Zeroing In on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in American Cities* for key geographies (states, metro areas, and counties) as well as by race and ethnicity and gender. In addition, this report offers MOA's first-ever exploration of how youth disconnection differs in rural, suburban, and urban communities. Because a one-size-fits-all approach to engaging with disconnected youth won't work, MOA interrogates the data to probe key issues. What particular challenges do different groups of disconnected youth face? Where do they live? And what kind of support do they require in order to make successful transitions to adulthood and lead freely chosen lives of value?

## Key findings include:

- **Overall.** In 2015, 4.9 million young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 were disconnected—12.3 percent of American youth, about one in eight. This is a significant drop from the post-recession high of 14.7 percent, over 5.8 million youth, in 2010.
- **Rural-urban divide.** This research shows that **rural counties as a whole are faring considerably worse than more populous counties in terms of youth disconnection.** In completely rural counties, the youth disconnection rate is 20.3 percent, much higher than the rate for counties in urban centers (14.2 percent) or for suburban counties (12.3 percent). Rural counties in the South have a particularly high rate: 24.0 percent—double the national rate.
- **Race and ethnicity.** There is astonishing variation in disconnection rates by race and ethnicity, ranging from nearly one in fourteen Asian American youth to more than one in four Native American young people. The **Asian American** youth disconnection rate is 7.2 percent; the **white** rate is 10.1 percent; the **Latino** rate is 14.3 percent; the **black** rate is 18.9 percent; and the **Native American** rate is 25.4 percent. Though the rate varies among Asian subgroups, most are performing well on this indicator; only Hmong Americans have a rate of youth disconnection that surpasses the US average.



- **Women and men.** Nationally, girls and young women are slightly less likely to be disconnected than boys and young men, **12.0 percent** vs. **12.5 percent**, a small but statistically significant difference. The difference in youth disconnection rates between genders plays out differently for each racial or ethnic group.
- **States.** Young people are disconnected at rates that range from under 8 percent in some states (New Hampshire, Nebraska, North Dakota, Vermont, Minnesota, and Iowa) to over twice that in others, with New Mexico (17.4 percent), West Virginia (17.0 percent), and Mississippi (16.7 percent) facing the greatest challenges.
- **Black-white gaps.** Measure of America calculated the disconnection rate for blacks, Latinos, and whites at the state level when data allowed. The black-white disparity is so stark that even in states where white youth are faring the worst, they are still doing better than US blacks on average, and even in states where blacks are faring the best, they are still not doing as well as US whites on average.
- **Top and bottom metro areas.** Among the country's ninety-eight most populous **metro areas**, greater Albany, NY (6.5 percent), Grand Rapids, MI (6.8 percent), and Omaha, NE-IA (7.1 percent) had the lowest youth disconnection rates. The Bakersfield, CA (18.7 percent), McAllen, TX (19.7 percent), and Augusta, GA-SC (21.0 percent) metro areas had the highest rates.



• **Impact of poverty.** For young people of all races, the probability of disconnection falls as household incomes rise. White youth in affluent households are less likely to be disconnected than white youth in poor households, and the same is true for the other racial and ethnic groups; however, **blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans are more likely to be disconnected than whites and Asians given the same income level.** In fact, the rate of youth disconnection for Asian Americans in households with almost no income is the same as that for black youth in households with incomes close to five times the federal poverty line. Native American youth living in households with incomes at five times the poverty line face roughly the same probability of disconnection as white youth living in households with incomes well below the poverty line.

• **Biggest improvements.** Between 2010 and 2015, **Washington, DC** made the greatest progress, with a **43.9 percent** reduction in the rate of youth disconnection. **New Hampshire** had the second-largest drop, nearly **32 percent**, and now has the lowest rate of any state.

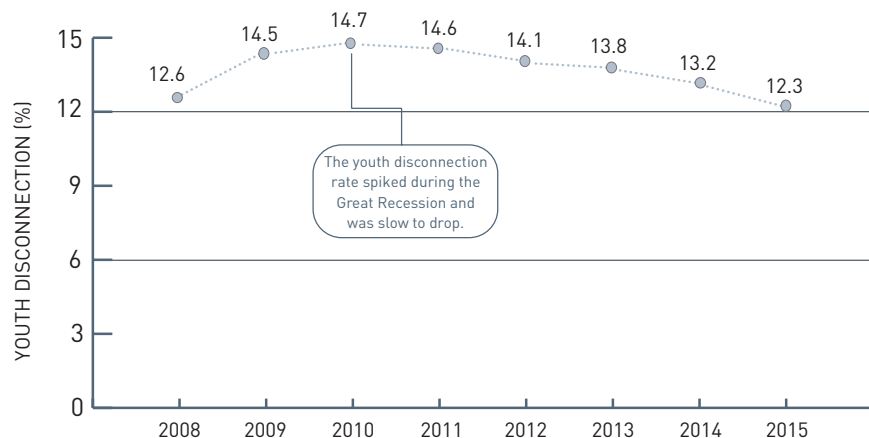
Though we have made great strides in reducing the youth disconnection rate since the Great Recession, the overall US rate is still nearly twice that of Germany.<sup>1</sup> Native American, black, and Latino young people face higher disconnection rates than whites and Asian Americans at every income level. And some parts of the country, including rural counties, many metro areas in the South and West, many states in the South, and segregated, low-income minority neighborhoods in America's big cities are being left behind.

We need to actively pursue policies that have been shown to prevent teenagers from becoming disconnected in the first place as well as to promote programs proven to reconnect youth. This report aims to help policymakers target interventions at the highest-risk groups of young people.

# Introduction

Since Measure of America first wrote about youth disconnection half a decade ago, public awareness of both the plight and the promise of young people who are neither in school nor the workforce has grown by leaps and bounds. Support for alternative school-to-work pathways like apprenticeships and career-technical education has seen a resurgence, the business-led 100,000 Opportunities Initiative met its goal to hire one hundred thousand disconnected youth well ahead of schedule, and at the time of writing, the Opening Doors for Youth Act of 2016 was introduced in Congress to make available significant federal investment to reconnect young people to school and employment.<sup>2</sup> National advocacy groups like the Opportunity Youth Network have raised awareness, spurred action, and promoted accountability for progress. Cities are spearheading collective impact efforts to support their vulnerable young people, harnessing the resources of civic groups, schools, police departments, faith communities, and businesses to help them imagine, prepare for, and achieve a successful transition to adulthood (see BOX 3). Across the country, there is a growing sense that disconnected youth—teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school (see BOX 1)—can be shifted from the “liability” side of the ledger to the “opportunity” side with targeted efforts, and that it is in all our interest to do so. This new optimism is reflected in the term many organizations use to refer to this group of young people: “opportunity youth.”

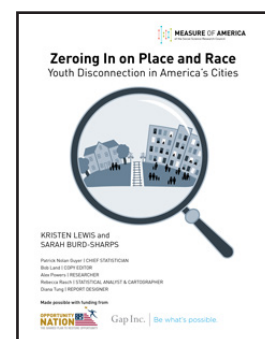
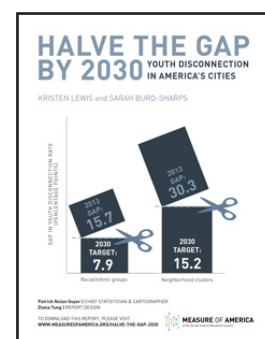
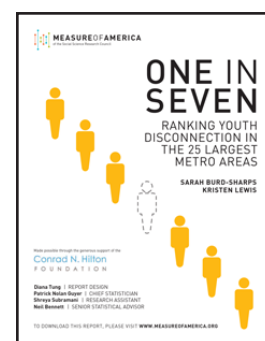
**FIGURE 1 Youth Disconnection since 2008**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, one-year estimates 2008 through 2015.

## MEASURE OF AMERICA'S YOUTH DISCONNECTION SERIES

This report is the fourth in the Measure of America Youth Disconnection series, which began in 2012.



Those delivering services to reduce social problems often talk about bending the curve; there is no doubt that the curve is bending. The 2008 financial crisis hit young people hard, spurring a spike in the youth disconnection rate that didn't start to ebb until 2011. But since then, post-recession employment gains for workers of all ages and consistent year-on-year national improvements in high school graduation rates have brought the number down.<sup>3</sup> The youth disconnection rate fell steadily every year between 2010 and 2015, and Measure of America's calculations of the most recent data show that **the rate has not only returned to where it was before the Great Recession, but has actually fallen slightly below the 2008 level** (12.6 percent). In 2015—the most recent year for which data are available—**12.3 percent** of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 were neither working nor in school—4.9 million young Americans. This figure represents a striking drop from the 2010 recession-fueled high of 14.7 percent, or over 5.8 million youth (see FIGURE 1).

#### BOX 1 Who Are Disconnected Youth?

Measure of America defines disconnected youth as teens and young adults ages 16 to 24 who are neither in school nor working. This is the definition that MOA has used in its data calculations and analysis on youth disconnection since its first report on the topic, *One in Seven*, published in 2012. It's also the foundation for most other youth disconnection estimates.

MOA's data come from the American Community Survey (ACS). The survey's main advantage over other sources is that its sample size is extremely large, making it possible to calculate youth disconnection rates nationally and by state, as well as for counties, metro areas, and even smaller geographic areas. The ACS also allows for disaggregation by race and ethnicity and by gender for geographies with sufficiently large populations.

DEFINITIONS	AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)
IN SCHOOL	Part-time or full-time students who have attended school or college in the past three months.
WORKING	Those who had any full- or part-time work in the previous week.
NOT WORKING	Unemployed in previous week or not in labor force and not looking for a job.
LIVING IN "GROUP QUARTERS"	Surveys people in non-household living arrangements such as correctional facilities, residential health facilities, dorms, etc. If enrolled in educational programs, they are considered connected.
MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES (group quarters)	Counted as employed and thus as connected.
HOMELESS (group quarters)	Surveyed but likely to be undercounted; surveying the homeless is difficult.

**Addressing youth disconnection is an urgent priority. Emerging adulthood—those intense, memorable years in our late teens and early twenties when we wrestle with who we are and who we want to become—is a profoundly consequential time.** Through their experiences in classes, sports, clubs, camps, faith-based groups, internships, and first jobs, connected young people lay the groundwork for freely chosen, rewarding lives. They refine their cognitive skills and gather credentials; they gain self-awareness and the ability to regulate their emotions; they learn soft skills like cooperation and leadership; they develop habits like punctuality; they learn how to present themselves in different settings; they build social networks and form romantic attachments; and they come to understand what they value. Ideally they learn not just the basics of how the world works, but also what their place in it might be.

Disconnected young people are cut off from these critical resources and experiences, from mentors and motivated peers to diplomas, certificates, and job contacts to positive experiences that foster feelings of dignity and belonging. Research shows that being disconnected as a young person has long-term consequences; it's associated with lower earnings, less education, worse health, and even less happiness in later adulthood.<sup>4</sup> And society as a whole pays a price in terms of reduced competitiveness, lower tax revenues, and higher health and criminal justice costs, to name just a few.<sup>5</sup>

Thanks to a greatly improved economy and efforts like those described above, the country has made real progress in tackling this important issue; this is good news we should all celebrate. But challenges remain: 4.9 million young women and men are still disconnected from the educational and employment opportunities required for rewarding, productive lives. If all disconnected youth lived together in a single state, that state **would have roughly the population of South Carolina or Colorado. This report takes a look at who comprises this remaining group, what particular challenges they face, and what strategies have been shown to work.**

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**This report slices the data on youth disconnection in a variety of ways and is organized as follows:**

**Section 1, “Youth Disconnection in the Country as a Whole,”** explores how different groups of young people are faring at the national level. For the first time, Measure of America will present data on youth disconnection for rural areas. The section also presents updated data on youth disconnection by race and ethnicity and by gender. Unfortunately, due to data limitations, the report does not present disconnection rates for LGBTQ youth (see BOX 2).

**Section 2, “Youth Disconnection by State,”** provides the latest youth disconnection rates for the fifty states and Washington, DC as well as for racial and ethnic groups within the states. It also looks at how state rates have changed since the high point of 2010.

**Section 3, “Youth Disconnection by Place and Race: Ranking America’s Metro Areas,”** provides the latest youth disconnection rates for the ninety-eight most populous metro areas in the United States as well as for the racial and ethnic groups within them.

**Section 4, “Conclusion,”** outlines what evidence suggests are key priorities moving forward.

#### **BOX 2 Youth Disconnection among LGBTQ Youth**

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an essential tool for planning, allocating resources, and understanding the assets and challenges of our communities. It has continually evolved since the mid-1990s to provide information on new issues. The survey does not currently ask questions about either sexual orientation or gender identity; thus Measure of America cannot provide youth disconnection rates for LGBTQ young people. In addition, male and female are the only gender options available on the ACS, which is problematic for young people who are transgender or who identify as no gender, as a gender other than male or female, or as more than one gender.

Such data would be very useful for those working to understand and address youth disconnection, as research suggests that LGBTQ youth disproportionately experience harassment and discrimination in schools and workplaces. In 2013, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), a research and advocacy organization, surveyed approximately 8,000 LGBTQ students in grades six through twelve and found that 7.6 percent of transgender youth were unsure if they would complete high school; by comparison, just over 2 percent of students who were not transgender reported that they might drop out. Over half of the students unsure about graduating cited a hostile or unsupportive school environment as their primary reason for considering dropping out.<sup>6</sup>

Such issues can follow gender nonconforming young people into the labor market. According to the 2015 US Transgender Survey, transgender adults of any age have a 15 percent unemployment rate—three times the national average. Thirty percent of all respondents who held a job in that year reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing other mistreatment due to their gender identity.<sup>7</sup>

### BOX 3 From Data to Action in Phoenix, Arizona

Five years ago, Measure of America's *One in Seven* report ranked the Phoenix metropolitan area as the worst of the twenty-five largest metropolitan areas in the US in terms of youth disconnection, with a rate of nearly one in five. The sharp contrast between the city's wealthy Scottsdale and Paradise Valley suburbs, where the rate was as low as one in seventeen young people, and South Phoenix's staggering one-in-three youth disconnection rate made for an even bleaker picture.

A front-page story in the *Arizona Republic*, which covered the report's findings and told the story of one local youth's struggles to stay in school and find work, focused Maricopa County's attention on a population that had been mostly invisible to that point. The collective surprise and concern of people in the Phoenix metro area has been channeled into concrete action on multiple fronts. The Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA) jumpstarted the efforts with a series of summits to raise awareness and strategize. This was the first of a series of coordinated responses that brought together county and city officials, community leaders, the nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors, and residents to address youth disconnection.

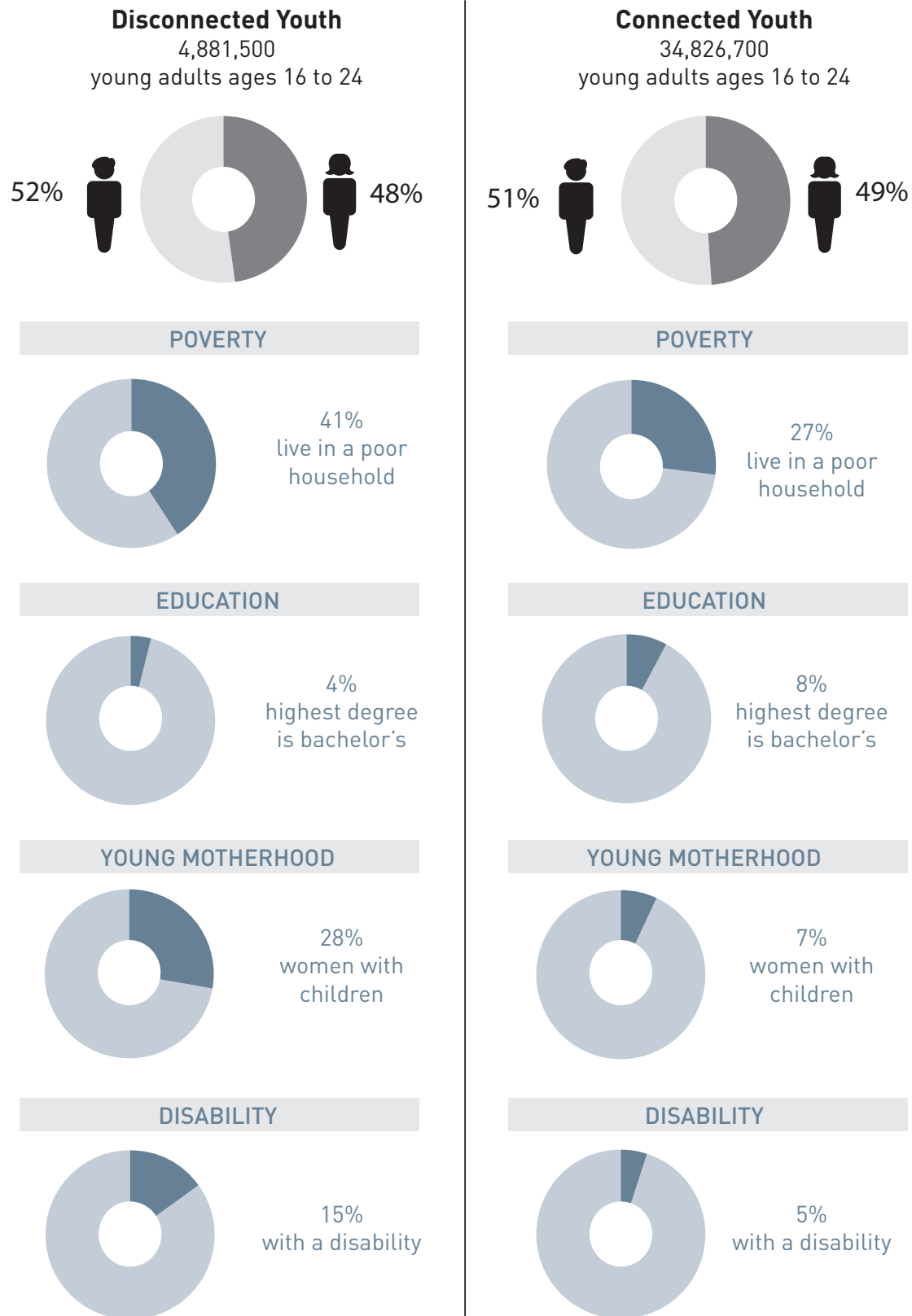
Among the notable efforts, the Phoenix Public Library launched two initiatives focusing on high school completion: ReEngage Phoenix, a help center, and Career Online High School, an online alternative to earn a high school diploma. Maricopa County obtained a \$1.5 million grant from the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to prevent youth who are or have been incarcerated from becoming disconnected or returning to prison. The private sector also joined the efforts. Starbucks selected Phoenix to participate in its 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, in which the private sector coalition led by Starbucks creates job and training opportunities for disconnected youth in several cities. Similarly, the Phoenix R.I.S.E. Program, a public-private partnership, has organized and funded paid summer internships.

Three years later, Maricopa County's focus on youth disconnection has resulted in new funding, new strategies, new alliances with the business community, and tangible progress. The assessment of the impact of these initiatives is ongoing, but the data suggest a positive trend; disconnection has dropped from 18.8 percent (an estimated **99,800** youth) in 2010 to 13.2 percent (**73,700** youth) in 2015. This 30 percent decrease is an achievement to celebrate.

## Youth Disconnection in the Country as a Whole

A popular misconception of the typical disconnected young person gained currency during the Great Recession. Countless magazine and newspaper articles told stories of middle class, college-educated young people unable to find work and living glumly among elementary school karate trophies and Green Day posters in their childhood bedrooms.<sup>8</sup> But as real and painful as those particular twenty-somethings' experiences were, college-educated young people were a tiny slice of the disconnected youth population even at the recession's height. Disconnected young people are disproportionately poor, living with disabilities, and parenting children, and only 4 percent of them have college degrees (see FIGURE 2).

**FIGURE 2 Who Are America's Disconnected Youth?**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.

## Spotlight on Rural Youth

The months since the 2016 presidential election have seen the issues facing rural America come to the fore, and a sense that too little attention has been paid to its particular challenges has taken hold. Research and advocacy around youth disconnection has indeed long had a largely urban focus. One reason for this relates to cost and logistics: providing services to small, geographically dispersed populations is administratively difficult and associated with comparatively high per-person costs. A second stems from larger national conversations about the problems facing low-income urban neighborhoods: youth disconnection has been viewed as of a piece with other “inner city” challenges like crime and high school dropout. In the popular imagination, those sorts of problems are less common outside urban centers, though the opioid crisis has certainly engendered greater awareness of the social problems bedeviling rural America. The final reason is a technical one: rural populations are typically too small to allow for reliable calculations of the youth disconnection rate (see BOX 4).

To bypass the limitations imposed by the small population size of individual rural counties, we pooled five years’ worth of data for US counties from the American Community Survey 2010–2014. We then divided counties into six groups defined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics—urban centers, suburbs, medium-sized cities, small cities, towns, and rural areas (see FIGURE 3 for details). While we still cannot provide estimates for individual rural counties, we can provide an estimate for sparsely populated rural counties in general.


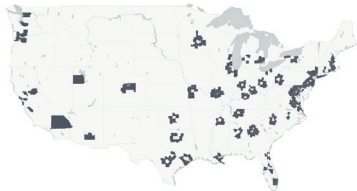
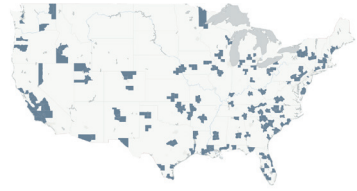
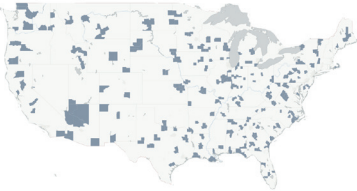
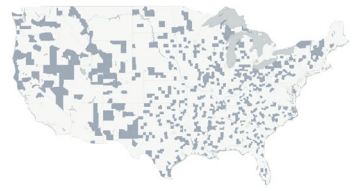
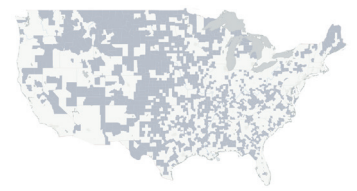
### BOX 4 How Small Is Too Small?

Readers sometimes ask why Measure of America research presents youth disconnection rates for some places and population groups but not for others. These rates, like all data drawn from the US Census Bureau’s annual American Community Survey, are estimates calculated on the basis of a representative sample of the population. **For these calculations to be accurate, enough people to reliably represent the full population must complete the survey.** By definition, a rural area is one without many people in it; thus estimates for rural geographies like counties are often unreliable.

Here is a hypothetical example of how this works. Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 make up roughly 12 percent of the total US population. If we were to apply this national average to a rural county with just 2,000 inhabitants, only about 240 people would fall into that age bracket. And the share of those young people who were disconnected would make up an even smaller slice of the already small population pie; if the youth disconnection rate were 15 percent, the disconnected youth population would be just thirty-six people. This number is very small, much too small for a survey estimate to be statistically reliable. This is the situation for many sparsely populated rural areas.

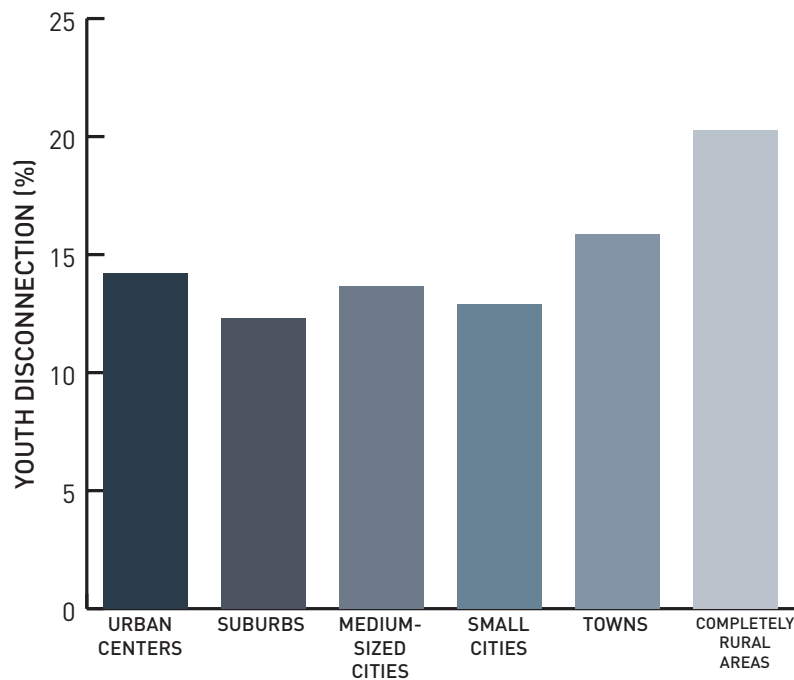
The large populations in major metropolitan areas, on the other hand, make studying youth disconnection in them feasible. In the Chicago metro area, there are nearly 150,000 disconnected young people; in Atlanta, about 111,000; in Houston, about 115,000. These large numbers allow for the calculation of rates not just for whole metro areas, but often also for racial and ethnic groups as well as neighborhoods within them. Such deep data explorations in urban areas have yielded important observations and expanded our understanding of the youth disconnection phenomenon, but it’s possible that not all of these insights are applicable to young people living in rural areas.

**FIGURE 3 Urban, Suburban, and Rural Youth Disconnection**

TYPE OF COUNTY		AVERAGE YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATE	EXAMPLES OF THIS TYPE
<b>URBAN CENTERS</b> Counties within metro areas with populations 1,000,000 or more <b>30.5%</b> OF US POPULATION		<b>14.2%</b>	Cook County, IL [Chicago]; Orleans Parish, LA [New Orleans]; Allegheny County, PA [Pittsburgh]; Multnomah County, OR [Portland]
<b>SUBURBS</b> Counties within metro areas with populations 1,000,000 or more that are not urban centers <b>24.7%</b> OF US POPULATION		<b>12.3%</b>	Nassau County, NY [Long Island]; Cobb County, GA [Atlanta suburbs]; Prince William County, VA [Washington, DC suburbs]
<b>MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES</b> Counties within metro areas with populations between 250,000 and 999,999 <b>20.9%</b> OF US POPULATION		<b>13.7%</b>	Ventura County, CA; Lubbock County, TX; Durham County, NC; Pima County, AZ
<b>SMALL CITIES</b> Counties within metro areas with populations between 50,000 and 249,999 <b>9.2%</b> OF US POPULATION		<b>12.9%</b>	Laramie County, WY; Berkshire County, MA; Santa Fe County, NM; Jackson County, MI
<b>TOWNS</b> Counties containing cities with populations between 10,000 and 49,999 <b>8.7%</b> OF US POPULATION		<b>15.9%</b>	Columbia County, NY; Marquette County, MI; Muskogee County, OK; Clatsop County, OR
<b>COMPLETELY RURAL AREAS</b> Counties with no cities larger than 10,000 <b>6.1%</b> OF US POPULATION		<b>20.3%</b>	Lyman County, SD; Mingo County, WV; Carter County, KY; Caledonia County, VT

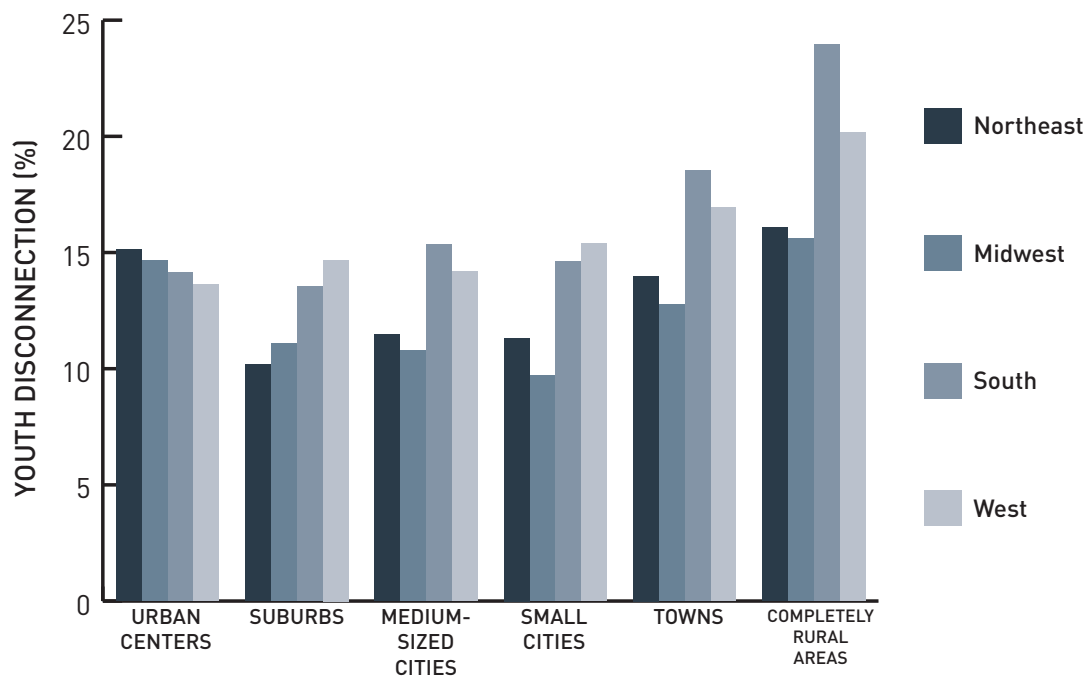
Source: Measure of America calculations using National Center for Health Statistics urban-rural classification scheme for counties, 2013 and the American Community Survey, 2010–2014.

**FIGURE 4 Rural Areas and Towns Face the Greatest Disconnection Challenges**



Source: Measure of America calculations using data from US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010–2014 and NCHS county classifications.

**FIGURE 5 Rural Areas Have the Greatest Regional Variation in Youth Disconnection**



Source: Measure of America calculations using data from US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010–2014 and NCHS county classifications and US Census Bureau regions.

Using this method of combining like counties, we found that **rural counties as a whole are faring considerably worse than more populous counties in terms of youth disconnection.** In completely rural counties, the average youth disconnection rate is 20.3 percent, much higher than the rate for counties in urban centers (14.2 percent) or for suburban counties (12.3 percent) (see FIGURE 4).<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly, region also plays a role in rural youth disconnection; while urban centers have similar rates of youth disconnection in the four main regions of the United States, ranging from 13.7 percent in the West to 15.1 in the Northeast, there is significant variation in how completely rural counties are faring across regions. The rates of youth disconnection in completely rural counties range from 15.6 percent in the Midwest to 24.0 percent in the South (see FIGURE 5). In other words, region matters more for rural areas than for urban centers.

The urban-rural gap in youth disconnection rates is not surprising considering that several factors associated with youth disconnection are more pronounced in rural counties. One is child poverty; the rate of children under 18 living in a poor household is 21 percent in metropolitan counties (all groups except towns and completely rural areas) and 25 percent in nonmetropolitan counties. Adult educational attainment is another and follows the opposite trend; the share of adults with at least a bachelor's degree is 32 percent in metropolitan counties but just 18 percent in the towns and rural areas that make up nonmetropolitan counties.<sup>10</sup>

Though metropolitan areas taken as a whole are doing better than rural areas, they are far from homogenous, and the differences between urban centers and suburbs demonstrate this variation. And even within urban centers, access to opportunity and resources tends to be concentrated in wealthy neighborhoods. Previous MOA research has shown that the largest gaps that exist in the disconnected youth rate between different population groups are between predominantly low-income black and Latino central cities and nearby largely white suburbs. For instance, in greater Chicago, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, the disconnection rate for young people living in a few predominately black neighborhoods was ten times higher than the rate for youth living in a few nearly all-white neighborhoods.<sup>11</sup> (This issue is explored in greater depth on page 31.) Further analysis is needed to determine the degree of variation in youth disconnection rates within rural counties.

The share of adults with at least a bachelor's degree is 32 percent in metropolitan counties but just 18 percent in nonmetropolitan counties.

## Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity

One aim of this research is to provide solid data on geographic areas and demographic groups facing the greatest hurdles with a view to helping focus youth disconnection programs and policies on those who need them most. The astonishing variation in youth disconnection rates by race and ethnicity, ranging from nearly one in fourteen Asian American youth to more than one in four Native American young people, gives support to the idea that different population groups face distinct challenges that require tailored responses. One size doesn't fit all.

- The **Asian American** youth disconnection rate is **7.2 percent**, the lowest rate among the five major racial and ethnic groups in the United States. This rate translates to **154,200** young people. Asian Americans are a diverse group, however; see BOX 5 for a further breakdown of Asian subgroups.
- The **white** youth disconnection rate is **10.1 percent**. Whites make up the largest share of the US population and also the largest share of the 4.9 million disconnected youth: **2,176,400** young people.
- **Latinos** fall in the middle of the group, with a rate of **14.3 percent**, or **1,228,200** young people.
- Nearly one in five **black** youth experience disconnection, **18.9 percent**. This rate translates to **1,084,500** black young people who are neither in school nor working.
- **Native American** teens and young adults have the highest rate of disconnection, **25.4 percent**, more than one in four. Because the Native American population is the smallest of the five major American racial and ethnic groups, the actual number of disconnected youth is likewise the smallest, around **74,800** young people.



ASIAN  
7.2%



WHITE  
10.1%



US TOTAL  
12.3%



LATINO  
14.3%



BLACK  
18.9%



NATIVE  
AMERICAN  
25.4%



### BOX 5 Youth Disconnection and Asian Subgroups

The category “Asian” is tremendously diverse. It includes, for example, third- and fourth-generation Americans who trace their origins to East Asia; people who arrived from Southeast Asia as refugees in the years following the Vietnam War; recent arrivals from countries as different as India and the Philippines; and the American-born children and grandchildren of all these groups.

As discussed above, Asian Americans have the lowest overall rate of youth disconnection, 7.2 percent. **But data that address Asians as one monolithic group miss important variation.** Of the nine most populous Asian subgroups in the country, Hmong (a Lao ethnic group) and Pakistani youth experience disconnection at considerably higher rates than the Asian average (13.8 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively), and Chinese, Korean, and Japanese youth have rates far lower than the Asian average (4.7 percent for Chinese youth and 5.7 percent for both Korean and Japanese youth).

**Despite the variation, however, it is noteworthy that only one Asian subgroup, Hmong, has a rate of youth disconnection that surpasses the US average; though Asian subgroups vary, most are doing very well on this indicator.**

GROUP	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (#)
ALL YOUTH	12.3	4,881,500
ASIANS	7.2	154,200
Chinese	4.7	25,400
Japanese	5.7	3,500
Korean	5.7	11,000
Vietnamese	6.0	13,900
Two or More	6.9	4,000
Filipino	7.3	22,900
Indian	8.8	31,300
Pakistani	9.4	6,300
Hmong	13.8	7,700

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.

Note: Total Asian American count is larger than the sum of the nine most populous subgroups. Additional subgroups cannot be included due to small sample size. The Japanese rate is slightly better than the Korean rate but they appear equal due to rounding.

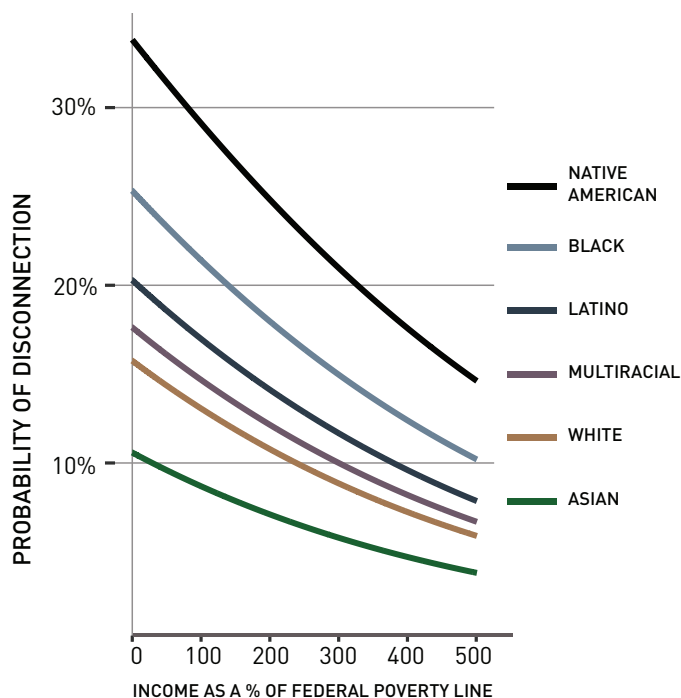
## Youth Disconnection and Poverty

For young people of all races, the probability of disconnection falls as household incomes rise. White youth in affluent households are less likely to be disconnected than white youth in poor households, and the same is true for the other racial and ethnic groups. Clearly poverty is associated with higher rates of youth disconnection, affluence with lower rates. As FIGURE 6 shows, however, blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans are more likely to be disconnected than whites and Asians given the same income level.

**Native American youth living in households with incomes at five times the poverty line face roughly the same probability of disconnection as white youth living in households with incomes well below the poverty line and Asian Americans living in households with little-to-no income. Black youth living in households with incomes four times the poverty line are as likely to be disconnected as white youth living in households at the poverty line.** While income is an important determinant of the likelihood of youth disconnection, race and ethnicity determine where groups start in comparison with one another. For further details on the logistic regression, see the [Methodological Note](#).



**FIGURE 6 Probability of Disconnection by Income Level**

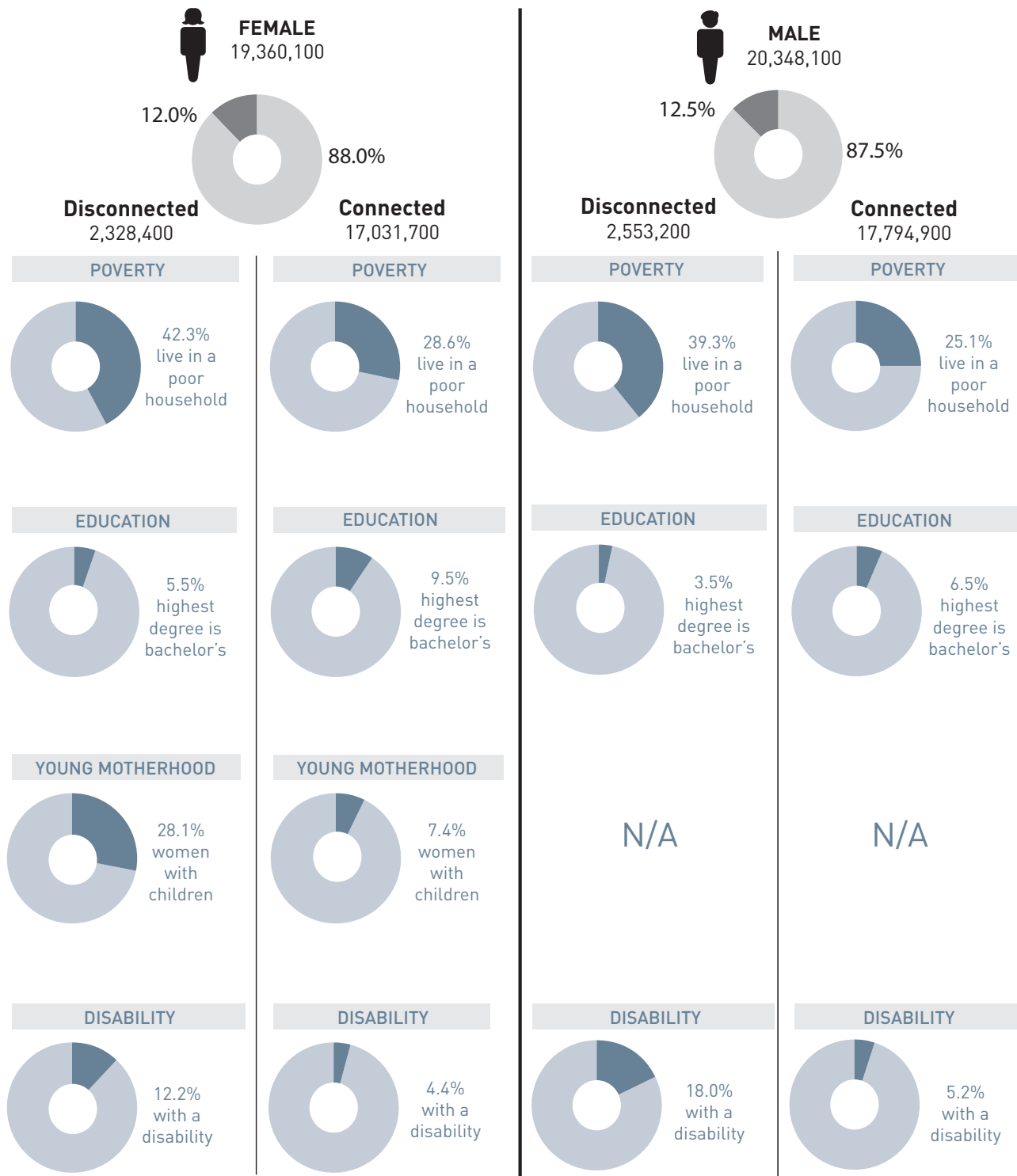


## Youth Disconnection by Gender

Nationally, girls and young women are slightly less likely to be disconnected than boys, **12.0 percent** vs. **12.5 percent**, a small but statistically significant difference (see FIGURE 7). Although their rates are similar, they differ in important ways and face specific challenges.

- Among both connected and disconnected young people, young women are slightly more likely than young men both to live in poverty and to have completed a bachelor's degree.
- Disconnected young men are 50 percent more likely to be living with a disability than disconnected young women, 18.0 percent vs. 12.2 percent. That almost one in five disconnected boys and young men are living with a disability is a finding with important programmatic implications.
- Due to the way the data are collected, Measure of America cannot calculate how many disconnected young men are parents, but the data do show that disconnected young women are nearly four times as likely as connected young women to be mothers. This finding is particularly consequential for programming: training and other interventions targeted at disconnected young women will miss a lot of them if they fail to make accommodations for the small children under their care.

**FIGURE 7 Important Characteristics of Connected and Disconnected Young Women and Men**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.

# Youth Disconnection by Gender and Race and Ethnicity

My Brother's Keeper, the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, and initiatives supported by foundations and community-based organizations large and small across the country have in recent years focused attention on the needs of boys and men of color. This focus is welcome; young men of color, especially young black men, disproportionately face harsh discipline in schools and aggressive policing in their communities; have comparatively poor educational outcomes; face job discrimination and high rates of unemployment; and suffer America's highest homicide rates. They also have disproportionately high rates of youth disconnection.

What about girls and young women of color? Though their situation is not as dire as that of their brothers in some important respects, such as homicide and incarceration, black, Latina, and Native American young women also face outsized challenges, among them poverty, discrimination, sexual violence, and early parenthood. These and other factors contribute to high youth disconnection rates for certain groups of young women.

**Latinas** are the only major group more likely than their brothers to be disconnected (**15.6 percent** vs. **13.1 percent**), and **black young women** are much less likely than their male counterparts to be disconnected (15.7 percent vs. 21.9 percent). Among **whites, Asian Americans, and Native Americans**, the male and female disconnection rates are the same or quite similar (see FIGURE 8).

## What are some of the different challenges that young women and men from the groups with the highest disconnection rates face?

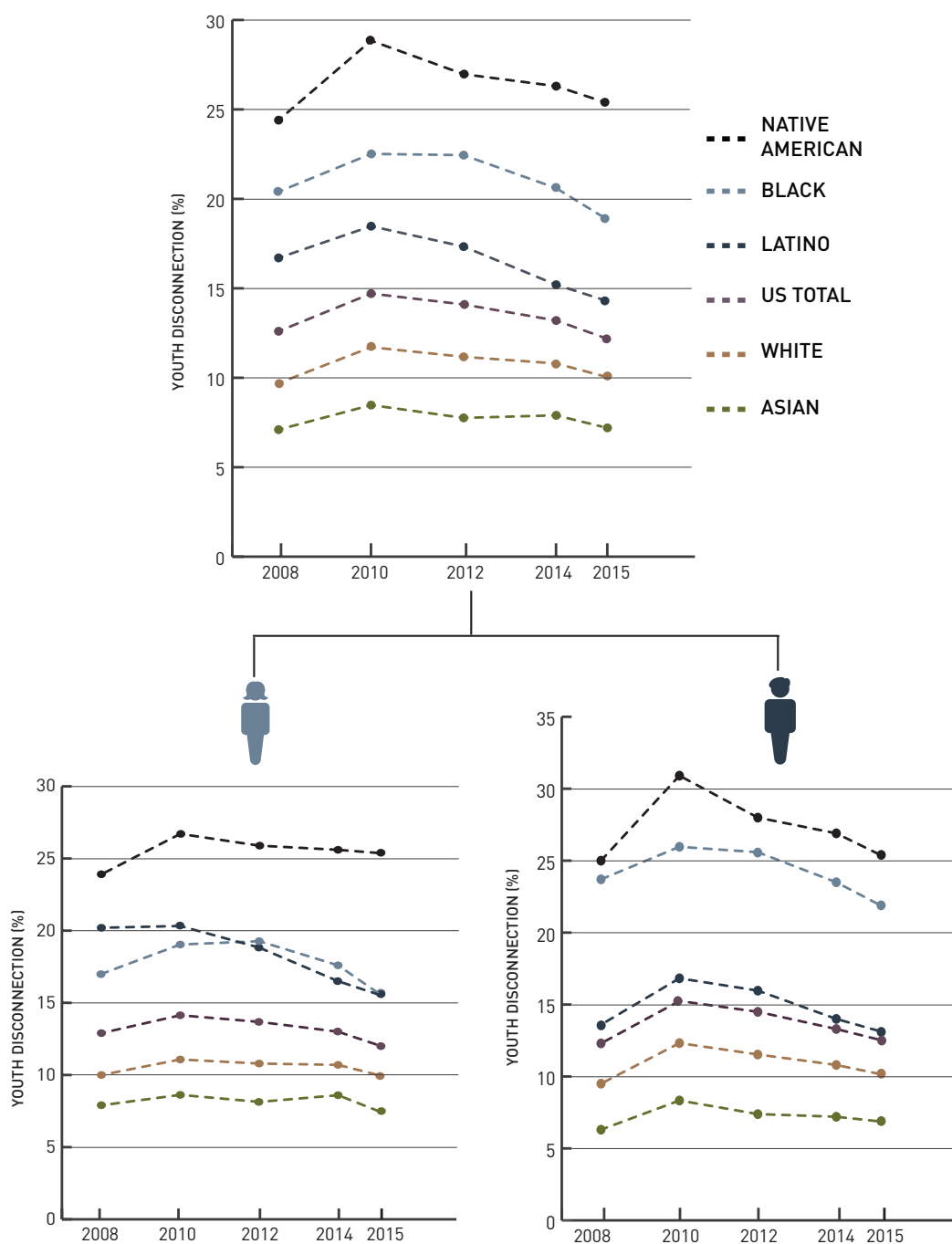
Our findings suggest that two particular challenges for disconnected Latinas are young motherhood and high school completion. Latinas have a youth disconnection rate of 15.6 percent. Roughly one in three disconnected Latinas are young mothers, the highest rate among the five largest racial and ethnic groups. Early motherhood presents myriad obvious challenges in both the short and the long term for young women looking to finish their education and/or join the workforce.<sup>12</sup> Disconnected Latinas have the fourth highest dropout rate (30.7 percent); only Native American males and females and Latino young men have higher rates of high school dropout. The good news is that Latina girls and young women experienced the greatest drop in the youth disconnection rate of all gender/race and ethnicity combinations since 2010, an impressive 23 percent.

Roughly one in three disconnected Latinas are young mothers, outpacing their peers of all other races and ethnicities.

The relationship between motherhood and disconnection is a complicated one. While the reasons motherhood might cause disconnection are readily apparent, the causality can also run the other way; young women who are weakly attached to school and lack decent job options may see little reason to postpone motherhood, which may offer both emotional rewards and adult status.



**FIGURE 8 Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity and Gender, 2008–2015**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.

Disconnected **black girls and young women**, with a youth disconnection rate of 15.7 percent, have the highest rate of poverty of any racial/ethnic and gender combination (51.4 percent), slightly surpassing that of black boys. While people of color disproportionately experience poverty, black disconnected women are the only group more likely to be in poverty than not. Poverty among black women (and men) is compounded by discrimination; according to a 2004 study published in the *American Economic Review*, job applicants with “black sounding” names were far less likely to get a call back from a potential employer than those with commonly “white sounding” names.<sup>13</sup> Black girls are far more likely than their female peers of other races to be suspended and/or expelled.<sup>14</sup> Young black women who are disconnected have a high rate of motherhood, 28.3 percent.<sup>15</sup> The youth disconnection rate for black girls and young women fell 17.7 percent between 2010 and 2015.

**Native American young women** have the highest disconnection rate (25.4 percent). Disconnected Native American women have the second-highest rate of young motherhood (29.2 percent) and the second-highest high school dropout rate (33.6 percent). Nearly half live in poverty, 47.1 percent. Native American women have the highest rate of juvenile detention among young women—167 per 100,000—and are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than women of other races—nearly 27 percent report being raped and 49 percent report experiencing other sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>16 17</sup> Experiencing sexual violence can have long-term effects, including diminished academic performance and less high school completion, as well as continuing emotional distress and problems with work or school, among other consequences.<sup>18 19 20</sup> It is very concerning that this group experienced the smallest drop in the youth disconnection rate of any gender/race and ethnicity combination between 2010 and 2015, just 4.8 percent.

The foremost challenge for disconnected **Latino men**, with a youth disconnection rate of 13.1 percent, is educational attainment. This group also has a very low rate of high school completion, with 33.6 percent dropping out of high school, the third-highest rate after Native American men and women. The disconnection rate for Latino boys and young men dropped sharply between 2010 and 2015, 22.4 percent; only Latina girls and young women made faster progress.

Native American women have the highest rate of juvenile detention among young women—167 per 100,000—and are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than women of other races.

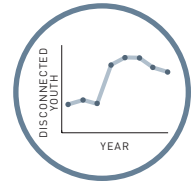
Young **black men**, with a disconnection rate of 21.9 percent, face a wide array of challenges that contribute to their high rate of disconnection. Nearly half (49.7 percent) of young black males out of school and out of work live in poverty—the second-highest rate after their sisters. Like black girls, black boys are disproportionately disciplined in school; black males receive the lion’s share (28.7 percent) of repeated suspensions and a disproportionate share of expulsions.<sup>21</sup> Black males make up 41 percent of the male juvenile detention population, with nearly 10 percentage points separating them from the next group, white males.<sup>22</sup> Only 1.4 percent of disconnected black men have completed a bachelor’s degree, the lowest rate of any group, and nearly 16 percent are disabled, the highest rate after white males and females. The youth disconnection rate for black boys and young men fell less between 2010 and 2015 than it did for male youth of other racial and ethnic groups.

**Native American young men**, with a disconnection rate of 25.4 percent, suffer the highest youth disconnection rate of any group along with their sisters, nearly one in four. Disconnected Native American men encounter both educational and economic challenges; nearly two in five drop out of high school, the highest rate of any group. The poverty rate for this group of young people, 46.8 percent, is extremely high. The alarming rate of suicide among Native American young men, four times the rate of the total population aged 16–24 at fifty suicides per one hundred thousand, reflects a host of unmet socioeconomic and healthcare needs.<sup>23</sup> The drop in their disconnection rate between 2010 and 2015, 17.7 percent, is the same as for all male youth.

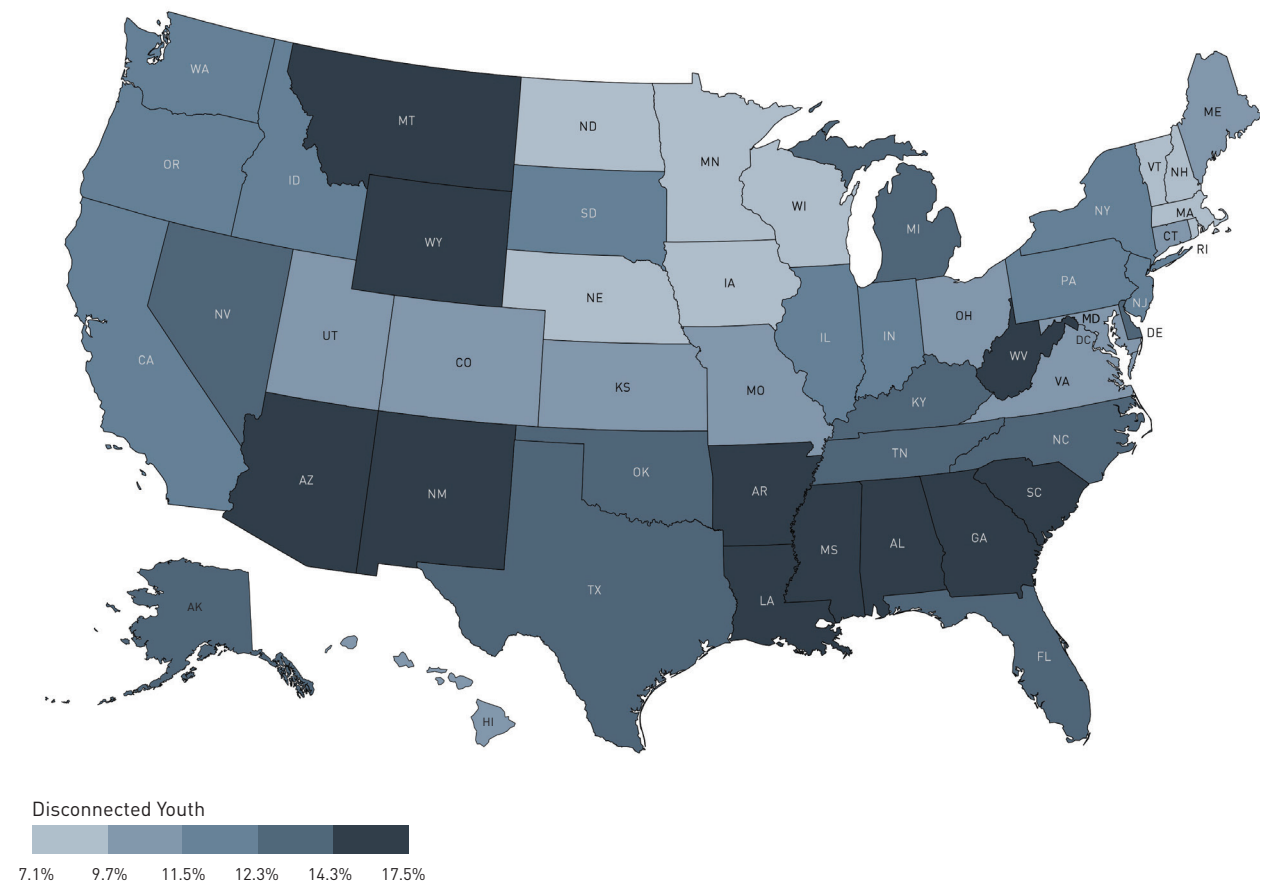
Black males make up 41 percent of the US male juvenile detention population. Nearly 10 percentage points separate the black rate from that of the next highest group, white males.

# Youth Disconnection by State

US states are far from homogenous when it comes to well-being metrics, including youth disconnection. Young people are disconnected at rates that range from under 8 percent in some states (New Hampshire, Nebraska, North Dakota, Vermont, Minnesota, and Iowa) to over twice that in others, with New Mexico, West Virginia, and Mississippi facing the greatest challenges.



MAP 1 Youth Disconnection by State



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.



## State Change Since 2010

Youth disconnection in the United States reached its highest rate since the start of the new millennium in 2010, reflecting the lingering effects of the Great Recession, which ended in June 2009. Since that high-water mark, youth disconnection has decreased every year, from 14.7 in 2010 to 12.3 in 2015. Given this positive trend, it is not surprising that thirty-five of the fifty states (plus Washington, DC) had a statistically significant drop in the youth disconnection rate over this five-year period.

- Seventeen states had reductions in the disconnection rate of at least **20 percent** since 2010.
- Fifteen states experienced no statistically significant change in youth disconnection in the five-year period, and **no state had a statistically significant increase**.
- Washington, DC made the greatest progress since 2010, with a **43.9 percent** reduction in the rate of youth disconnection.
- **New Hampshire** had the second-largest drop from the 2010 high-water mark, nearly **32 percent**, and now has the lowest rate of any state.
- The **top five** most-improved states since 2010, Washington, DC (which is included in the state rankings), New Hampshire, Hawaii, Nevada, and Tennessee, are **regionally diverse**, representing the Northeast, South, and West.

Some states have not just recovered but are faring better than before the recession. In ten states, the rate of youth disconnection is lower than it was in 2008, before the worst of the effects of the recession had registered: Arizona, California, Florida, Kentucky, Maine, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington, DC.

		DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% AGES 16-24)
RANK	STATE	
LOWEST DISCONNECTION RATES		
1	New Hampshire	7.2%
2	Nebraska	7.3%
3	North Dakota	7.4%
HIGHEST DISCONNECTION RATES		
49	Mississippi	16.7%
50	West Virginia	17.0%
51	New Mexico	17.4%

		YOUTH DISCONNECTION DECLINE SINCE 2010
RANK	STATE	
STATES WITH GREATEST IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 2010		
1	Washington, DC	-43.9%
2	New Hampshire	-31.6%
3	Hawaii	-31.3%
4	Nevada	-30.3%
5	Tennessee	-30.0%

**TABLE 2 Youth Disconnection by State**

RANK	STATE	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-24)	CHANGE FROM 2010-2015 (%)
	United States	12.3	4,881,500	-16.4
1	New Hampshire	7.2	11,800	-31.6
2	Nebraska	7.3	17,800	-27.4
3	North Dakota	7.4	8,200	0.8*
4	Vermont	7.4	6,200	-19.6*
5	Minnesota	7.5	48,700	-19.1
6	Iowa	7.8	30,900	-17.2
7	Massachusetts	8.2	71,600	-17.5
8	Wisconsin	8.8	62,100	-21.1
9	Rhode Island	9.2	12,800	-12.9*
10	Washington, DC	9.6	8,800	-43.9
11	Maine	9.8	14,200	17.7*
12	Connecticut	9.9	44,900	-13.4
13	Colorado	10.0	65,300	-22.0
14	Kansas	10.0	37,500	1.8*
15	Utah	10.1	44,400	-25.6
16	Virginia	10.2	105,200	-19.0
17	Hawaii	10.8	18,100	-31.3
18	Missouri	11.3	86,100	-22.3
19	Ohio	11.4	159,600	-22.2
20	Maryland	11.4	81,300	-12.5
21	Idaho	11.5	24,000	-15.1
22	Oregon	11.7	54,600	-23.0
23	New York	11.8	285,500	-20.4
24	Pennsylvania	11.9	181,200	-2.6*
25	South Dakota	12.0	12,700	10.8*
26	New Jersey	12.1	123,300	-7.1
27	Illinois	12.1	190,900	-7.6
28	Indiana	12.1	103,400	-12.3
29	Washington	12.2	102,800	-21.2
30	California	12.2	609,000	-17.9
31	Tennessee	12.3	99,400	-30.0
32	Delaware	12.6	14,000	-10.1*
33	Florida	12.9	291,200	-21.5
34	Michigan	13.0	162,000	-14.6
35	North Carolina	13.1	162,500	-15.1
36	Oklahoma	13.3	65,900	3.7*
37	Texas	13.7	488,900	-11.3
38	Alaska	13.8	14,300	10.2*
39	Nevada	13.9	45,200	-30.3
40	Kentucky	13.9	75,600	-22.8
41	Montana	14.3	17,700	3.3*
42	Wyoming	14.3	10,200	11.0*
43	South Carolina	14.6	89,600	-9.8
44	Arizona	14.6	125,500	-22.8
45	Alabama	15.2	90,900	-12.4
46	Georgia	15.5	203,200	-16.2
47	Arkansas	16.1	58,500	9.3*
48	Louisiana	16.6	96,800	-15.7
49	Mississippi	16.7	66,000	-19.5
50	West Virginia	17.0	35,100	-9.9*
51	New Mexico	17.4	45,900	0.5*

Note: Asterisks indicate change is not statistically significant.

# Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity in the Fifty States

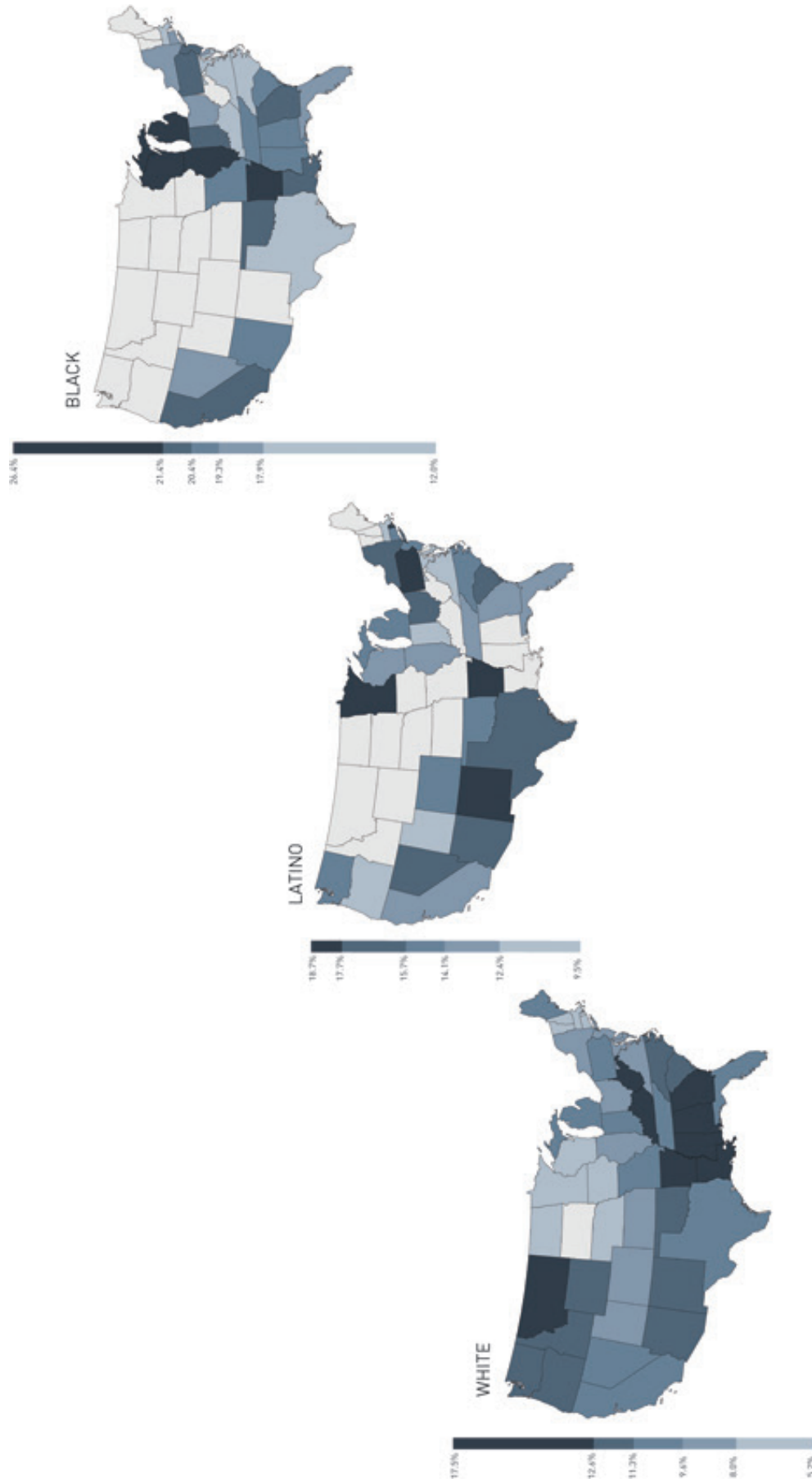
Looking beyond statewide averages, we see that racial and ethnic disparities play out differently by location. **Racial disparity in youth disconnection rates is the norm across all fifty states, but there is great diversity in this disparity.** Yet one thing is consistent: in no state do black youth fare better in terms of youth disconnection rates than white youth. The black-white disparity is so stark that the highest rate of white state-level youth disconnection—**17.0 percent** in West Virginia—is still lower than the national average rate for blacks, **18.9 percent**. And the lowest rate of black youth disconnection—**12.1** in Massachusetts—is still higher than the national average rate for whites, **10.1 percent**. In other words, even in the state where white youth are faring worst, they are still doing better than blacks on average; and even in the state where blacks are faring best, they are still not doing as well as whites on average. Some of the reasons why this is so, particularly residential segregation by race and ethnicity as well as by income, are discussed on page 31.

In addition, **low state rates of youth disconnection sometimes hide stark disparities within states.** For example:

- In **Minnesota**, where 7.5 percent of youth are disconnected, the Latino rate, 18.7 percent, is more than double the statewide rate and the highest Latino rate in any state. At the same time, the rate for whites, 5.3 percent, is the lowest white rate in any state.
- **Kentucky's** statewide disconnection rate is 13.9 percent, higher than the national rate, yet the black youth disconnection rate is the third best among blacks at 14.4 percent and well below the US black rate of 18.9 percent.
- In **Wisconsin**, the 8.8 percent rate of disconnection is better than the national average, yet the disconnection rate for blacks, 26.4 percent—the highest of any state for the group—is over four times the white rate.
- In **Michigan, Illinois, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania**, the black disconnection rate is roughly double the statewide rate.
- In **Rhode Island**, a state with a low overall youth disconnection rate, 9.2 percent, the Latino rate, 18.5 percent, is nearly triple the white rate, 6.7 percent.

The black-white disparity is so stark that the worst rate of white state-level youth disconnection is still lower than the national average rate for blacks.

MAP 2 White Youth Fare Better in Terms of Youth Disconnection Rates Than Black and Latino Youth



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.  
 Note: The grey color in certain states indicates that the data have been suppressed due to unreliable estimates.

# Youth Disconnection by Place and Race: Ranking America's Metro Areas

In the country's ninety-eight most populous metro areas, youth disconnection ranges from **6.5 percent** in greater **Albany, New York** to **21.0 percent** in the **Augusta metro area, which straddles Georgia and South Carolina**.<sup>24</sup> The high and low on the metro area youth disconnection scale reflect the regional distribution of youth disconnection; the lowest rates are in metro areas in the North, the highest in the South.

This section presents youth disconnection rates for **ninety-eight of America's one hundred most populous metro areas**, home to two in every three Americans. The country's other metropolitan areas have populations that are too small to allow for statistically reliable calculations of the youth disconnection rate. It also presents youth disconnection rates for black, Latino, and white young people within these cities when the data allow for such calculations. Unfortunately, data availability for Asian Americans and Native Americans is too limited for reliable metro-level estimates.

A metropolitan area is defined as a central city and the towns, suburbs, and exurbs that surround it; strong economic, social, and environmental ties bind metro areas together. Metro areas are particularly meaningful units of analysis for assessing youth disconnection because of the regional nature of higher education and labor markets as well as transportation systems. Metro-area boundaries are defined by the White House Office of Management and Budget. They often cross state lines; the Chicago metro area, for example, is a contiguous area made up of parts of Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. See [Methodological Note](#) for further details.

Those living in metro areas typically enjoy higher levels of well-being, meaning they tend to be better educated, healthier, and wealthier than residents of non-metro areas. Many metro areas are, however, extremely unequal and characterized by residential segregation by race and income; different communities may share a city but live for all intents and purposes in different worlds. The country's largest metros, in particular, are studies in sharp contrasts, with wealth, resources, and opportunities concentrated in privileged, primarily white pockets.

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH [% AGES 16-24]
LOWEST DISCONNECTION RATES		
1	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	6.5
2	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	6.8
3	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	7.1
HIGHEST DISCONNECTION RATES		
96	Bakersfield, CA	18.7
97	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	19.7
98	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	21.0

The disconnection rates for young people of different racial and ethnic groups in different cities create three distinct and often quite different metro area rankings.

- **Black** disconnection rates range from 10.8 percent in the Boston metro area to a stunning 30.3 percent in greater Rochester, New York, the highest rate for any racial group within a metro area (see BOX 6). Forty-one metro areas have sufficiently large black populations to allow for a reliable calculation of the youth disconnection rates.
- **Latino** disconnection rates range from 9.3 percent in the Austin, Texas metro area to 23.3 percent in greater Lakeland, Florida. Thirty-eight cities have sufficiently large Latino populations for reliable calculations.
- **White** rates range from 4.8 percent in greater Hartford, Connecticut to 21.0 percent in the Augusta metro area, which includes parts of Georgia and South Carolina. White rates can be calculated for eighty-three metro areas.

As TABLE 3 shows, some metro areas that appear to be doing reasonably well in terms of their overall rate nonetheless experience striking disparities among groups. The San Francisco metro area, for instance, stands out in this regard. Although the rate for the city as a whole is 9.2 percent, below the national average, the black rate (21.8) is more than double the Latino rate (9.6) and more than triple the white rate (6.9). Some cities have greater equality among groups because all groups are doing better than average (like Boston), whereas others are more equal because all groups are struggling (like Bakersfield). And in still others, a city that is good for one group is among the worst for another; for instance, both the Chicago and the Philadelphia metro areas have white rates below the national average but black rates well above the national average. The Detroit metro area has a white disconnection rate on par with the national average for whites but the second-highest black rate.

Although the youth disconnection rate for San Francisco as a whole is 9.2 percent, below the national average, the black rate (21.8) is more than double the Latino rate (9.6) and more than triple the white rate (6.9).

**TABLE 3 Youth Disconnection by Metro Area**

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)		
				BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
	United States	12.3	4,881,500	18.9	14.3	10.1
1	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	6.5	7,400			
2	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	6.8	8,600			6.0
3	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	7.1	8,400			6.9
4	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	7.3	45,200	10.8	9.6	6.5
5	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	7.9	34,000			5.8
6	Austin-Round Rock, TX	8.0	20,600		9.3	6.7
7	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	8.5	8,400			
8	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	8.7	7,200			
9	Salt Lake City, UT	8.8	13,800			8.0
10	Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	9.2	12,800			7.0
11	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	9.2	44,100	21.8	9.6	6.9
12	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	9.3	22,000	17.4		7.3
13	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	9.3	14,700		15.9	4.8
14	Columbus, OH	9.3	21,700	14.6		8.1
15	Akron, OH	9.3	8,600			8.9
16	Worcester, MA-CT	9.3	11,200			7.8
17	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	9.5	20,100		12.5	9.0
18	Raleigh, NC	9.6	14,900			
19	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	9.7	19,900		18.0	7.7
20	Syracuse, NY	9.7	9,400			8.0
21	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	9.7	43,200		11.3	8.6
22	Pittsburgh, PA	10.1	26,000			8.7
23	Oklahoma City, OK	10.2	18,400			8.8
24	Kansas City, MO-KS	10.2	26,400	18.6		7.8
25	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	10.2	11,500			7.9
26	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	10.3	70,800	14.6	11.9	7.3
27	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	10.3	32,300		14.6	7.7
28	Colorado Springs, CO	10.3	9,900			8.8
29	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	10.3	25,800	12.8		9.2
30	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	10.5	7,300			9.1
31	Dayton, OH	10.6	10,500			8.5
32	Springfield, MA	10.6	8,500			
33	Richmond, VA	10.7	16,400	13.5		6.6
34	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	10.8	20,100	25.4	20.1	
35	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	10.9	15,200			11.0
36	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	10.9	44,600		15.7	10.2
37	Provo-Orem, UT	10.9	12,700			9.7
38	Boise City, ID	11.0	9,300			12.2
39	New Haven-Milford, CT	11.0	12,400			5.7
40	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	11.0	11,900		12.7	
41	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	11.1	8,300			10.3
42	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	11.1	188,300	21.2	12.0	8.4
43	Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	11.1	25,400	20.0		8.1
44	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	11.2	31,700		13.1	11.6
45	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	11.3	38,600	20.5		7.0
46	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	11.3	10,000	18.3		
47	Urban Honolulu, HI	11.4	14,300			6.8
48	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	11.4	6,600			12.3
49	Toledo, OH	11.4	10,000			7.9
50	St. Louis, MO-IL	11.5	39,900	19.4		8.5

Note: Blanks indicate that estimate is unreliable.

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-21)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)		
				BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
51	Rochester, NY	11.6	16,900	30.3		7.9
52	Baton Rouge, LA	11.7	14,200	18.3		7.6
53	Jacksonville, FL	11.8	19,100	12.9		11.7
54	Winston-Salem, NC	11.9	8,900			12.4
55	Columbia, SC	11.9	14,500	15.7		9.1
56	Wichita, KS	12.1	9,960			11.5
57	Knoxville, TN	12.1	14,600			11.9
58	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	12.1	140,600	22.9	12.2	8.2
59	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	12.2	287,100	18.2	15.6	8.7
60	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	12.2	36,300	17.4	14.1	8.8
	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	12.2	7,900			13.7
62	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	12.2	79,000	17.0	11.9	8.8
63	Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	12.3	34,700	21.4	11.7	11.1
64	Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	12.3	15,000			11.2
65	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	12.4	33,400	23.8		9.7
66	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	12.4	109,900	15.2	14.6	10.4
67	Cleveland-Elyria, OH	12.4	28,900	20.4		8.9
68	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	12.7	7,500			11.5
69	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	12.9	93,300	22.2	18.0	8.5
70	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	12.9	40,600	21.8	12.1	11.1
71	Tulsa, OK	13.1	13,100		19.6	11.3
72	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	13.2	73,700	21.0	15.4	10.6
73	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	13.4	43,500		15.6	11.2
74	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	13.6	8,800			14.1
75	Greensboro-High Point, NC	13.6	13,200	17.1		12.4
76	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	13.6	97,800	17.8	13.1	10.9
77	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	13.7	114,500	15.3	15.8	10.8
78	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	14.1	9,000			
79	El Paso, TX	14.4	17,300		13.6	
80	Jackson, MS	14.4	11,000	16.2		
81	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14.6	20,700	17.6		12.6
82	Tucson, AZ	14.6	21,300		16.0	12.6
83	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	14.7	41,800	17.4	17.3	13.3
84	Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	14.9	10,500			13.9
85	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	15.0	71,800	25.6		10.5
86	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	15.1	9,100			11.7
87	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	15.1	36,000	18.7	18.2	11.5
88	Stockton-Lodi, CA	15.3	14,600		18.1	
89	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	15.5	13,300			12.6
90	New Orleans-Metairie, LA	15.7	21,800	18.4		15.1
91	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15.7	32,100	19.9		9.4
92	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	16.1	99,700	21.1	16.5	14.8
93	Albuquerque, NM	16.1	17,300		17.7	
94	Fresno, CA	16.1	21,800		17.7	14.4
95	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	18.4	13,500		23.3	
96	Bakersfield, CA	18.7	22,900		17.9	16.5
97	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	19.7	24,500		20.0	
98	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	21.0	17,300	24.3		21.0

Note: Blanks indicate that estimate is unreliable.



## BOX 6 Highs and Lows: Black Youth Disconnection in Boston and Rochester

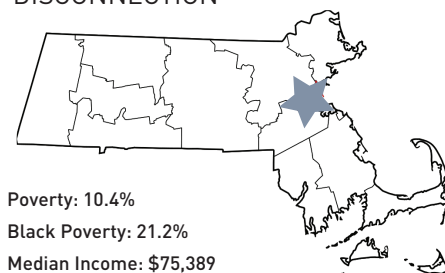
Nationwide, nearly one in five black youth are disconnected, and in most metro areas, the black youth disconnection rate is higher than either the white or Latino rate. **Nonetheless, the wide range of disconnection rates in metro areas for black youth—from 10.8 in Boston to 30.3 in Rochester, NY—shows that while race matters, place does, too.**

Once home to leading technology manufacturing companies—including Kodak, Bausch & Lomb, and Xerox—**Rochester**, NY has become a Rust Belt “shrinking city.” The poverty rate for blacks is more than double the Rochester average at 35.8 percent.<sup>25</sup> The median income for black households, \$27,000, is almost \$8,000 below that of blacks nationally and roughly half that of all Rochester households.<sup>26</sup> Public education has not succeeded as an equalizer; the black graduation rate in the Rochester City School District is 47 percent, compared to the black statewide rate of 65 percent and the overall rate of 78 percent.<sup>27</sup> The district has the largest number of schools labeled as “persistently struggling” in the state.<sup>28</sup> Black students pass the eighth grade NYS English exam at a rate of 13 percent, compared to 47 percent of their white peers and 28 percent of black students in the state as a whole.<sup>29</sup> Fortunately, youth disconnection in Rochester is gaining more attention. Adding to existing nonprofit initiatives like Teen Empowerment and the Center for Youth’s Teen Court, the New York State Department of Education recently awarded the Rochester School District a \$150,000 grant to improve outcomes for disconnected youth.

In contrast, **Boston** is an economic powerhouse with plenty of higher education and career opportunities. Public school students perform on par with those in other large cities in reading and outperform them in math, and the graduation rate has risen steadily over the past decade.<sup>30</sup> Though racial disparities continue to exist in education, the on-time graduation rate of black students rose from 56 percent in 2006 to 70 percent in 2015—just one point shy of the Boston-wide average.<sup>31</sup> With a 21.2 percent poverty rate and a \$44,000 median household income, black Bostonians are faring better than blacks nationally but not as well as the average Bostonian.<sup>32</sup> In 2013, the Boston Opportunity Agenda, a public-private partnership, created a collaborative of eighty partners to tackle youth disconnection. The Boston Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) has organized several initiatives, including a one-stop resource center and a collective data-sharing system. Quality public education, economic opportunities, and support for disconnected youth have no doubt contributed to the comparatively low disconnection rate for black youth.

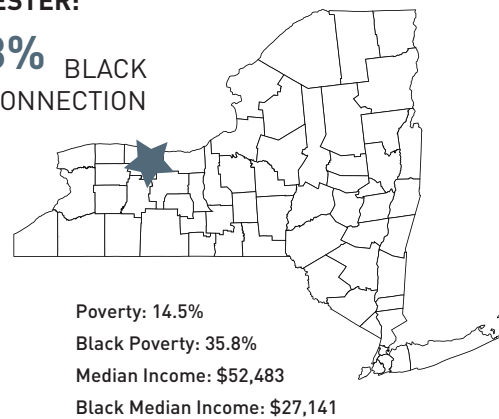
### BOSTON:

**10.8%** BLACK  
DISCONNECTION



### ROCHESTER:

**30.3%** BLACK  
DISCONNECTION



Note: The citations for data used in this graphic are in endnotes 33 and 34.

There are also interesting variations among the largest metro areas in terms of differences between young women and men. Nationally, women and men have similar rates, and there is considerable overlap in the cities with the highest rates. However, the metro areas where women have the lowest rates—greater Boston, Worcester, and Hartford—are a completely different set than the cities where men have the lowest rates—greater Honolulu, Albany, and Provo. Also worth noting is that in some cities, the gender gap within racial and ethnic groups is particularly large (see BOX 7).

**FIGURE 9 Best and Worst (of 98 Metro Areas) by Gender**



#### HIGHEST MALE DISCONNECTION RATES

Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	22.4%
McAllen-Edinburgh-Mission, TX	19.6%
Stockton-Lodi, CA	18.5%



#### HIGHEST FEMALE DISCONNECTION RATES

McAllen-Edinburgh-Mission, TX	19.8%
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	19.5%
Bakersfield, CA	19.2%



#### LOWEST MALE DISCONNECTION RATES

Provo-Orem, UT	8.1%
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	8.0%
Urban Honolulu, HI	7.5%



#### LOWEST FEMALE DISCONNECTION RATES

Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	6.7%
Worcester, MA-CT	6.6%
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	6.2%

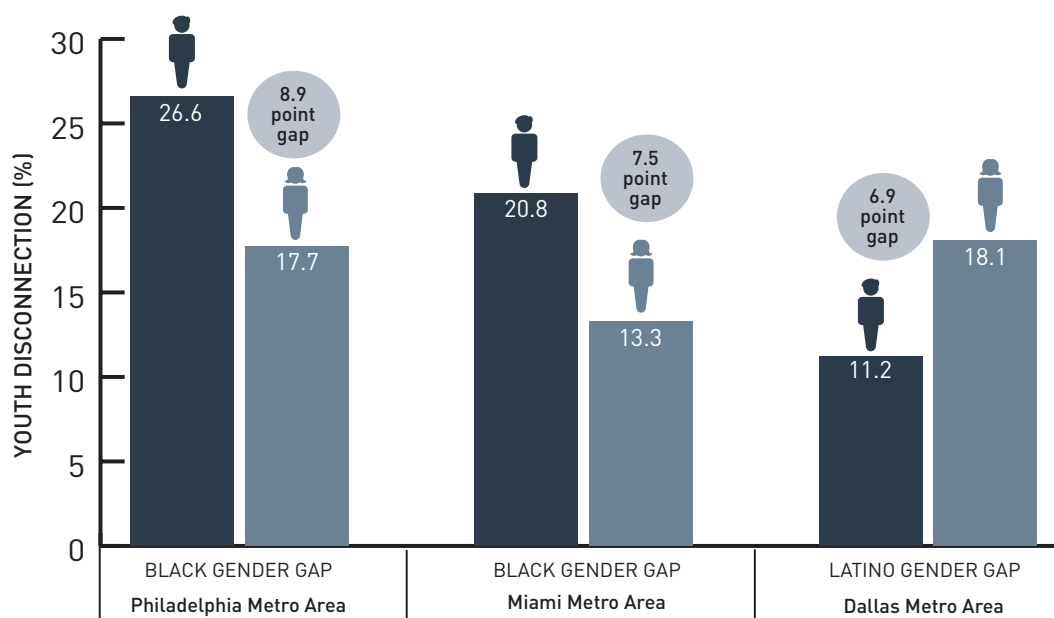
Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.

### BOX 7 Cities Where Female and Male Prospects Diverge

In the ten largest metro areas, home to a quarter of America's disconnected youth, the interaction of race, place, and gender produce a wide range of outcomes. Among the ten most populous cities, white young women in the Boston metro area have the lowest rate of youth disconnection, 5.8 percent. Black young men in greater Philadelphia, which includes Camden and Wilmington, have the highest rate, 26.6 percent.

**While some challenges, like poverty, are widely shared by disconnected youth, some are gender-, race-, and place-specific.** What may push or pull a young Latina away from the worlds of school and work in Dallas may not be the same reason her male counterparts are disconnected in the same neighborhood—let alone the reason a black young man finds himself in the same situation 1,300 miles away in New York.

The most pronounced gender gaps between male and female youth are among blacks and Latinos. In greater Philadelphia, the black gender gap is **8.9** percentage points, the widest gender gap among the ten most populous US metro areas. The second-largest gender gap, also between black young men and women, is **7.5** points in Miami. The third-widest gap is found among young Latino men and women in the Dallas area, where the female rate is **6.9** percentage points higher than the male rate.



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015.

Both black and Latino communities have disconnection gender gaps, but they are skewed generally toward young women among Latinos and toward young men among blacks. Latina young women are more disconnected than their brothers in all nine cities for which estimates are reliable.<sup>35</sup> The disconnection gender gap is most pronounced in black communities. Black young men fare worse than their female counterparts by at least 1.8 percentage points in every single one of the nine largest metro areas and by over 4 percentage points in all but three. Nationally, the Latino female-male gap is **2.6** percentage points, while the black male-female gap is much wider at **6.3** percentage points.

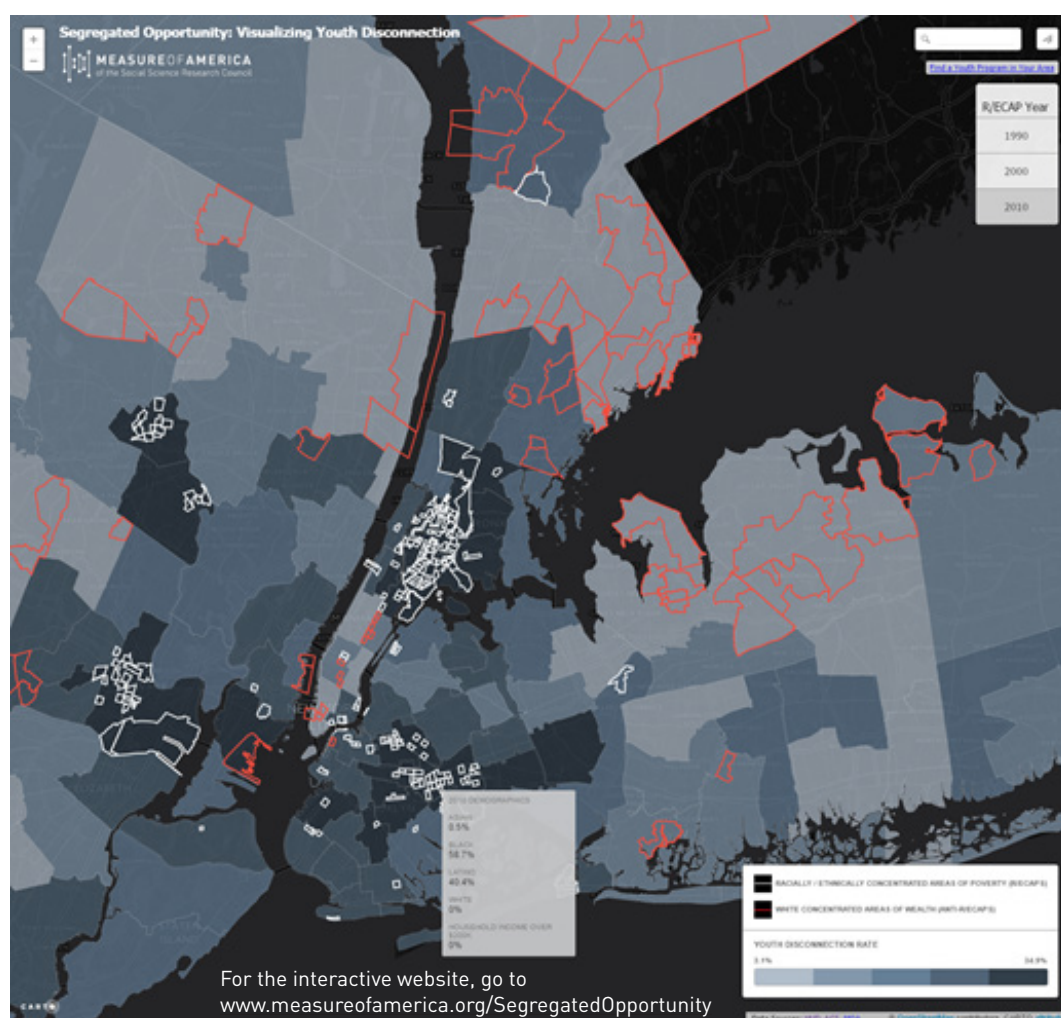
**Previous MOA research on youth disconnection in metro areas has found the following issues to be strongly associated with youth disconnection by place.**

- **High rates of disconnection a decade ago.** Prior MOA research found that rates of youth disconnection by neighborhood in 2000 were highly predictive of rates of youth disconnection by neighborhood in 2011, even controlling for population growth and demographic change.<sup>36</sup> The persistence of youth disconnection suggests that, in the absence of effective programs and policies, youth disconnection has become the norm in far too many areas.
- **High rates of poverty.** Disconnected young people disproportionately live in low-income neighborhoods, which tend to be poorly served by key public services like transportation and schools and are often far from jobs. In high-poverty neighborhoods, those with a poverty rate above 21 percent, one in five young people are disconnected; in low-poverty neighborhoods, those with a poverty rate below 6 percent, only about one in fourteen are.<sup>37</sup>
- **High rates of “adult disconnection.”** Parents who themselves did not complete high school or struggle to find steady work are less able to help their children navigate the educational system and gain a foothold in the labor market than college educated parents with robust employment histories and strong professional networks. Neighborhoods with high rates of adult unemployment and low rates of educational attainment tend to have higher youth disconnection rates than places where the opposite is true.
- **A high degree of racial segregation.** In past research, we found that the more segregated blacks and whites were from one another in a metro area, the higher the disconnection rate for blacks and the lower the disconnection rate for whites.<sup>39</sup>

MOA found this last finding disturbing and worthy of greater inquiry. As part of a White House–led data accessibility project, MOA and other nonprofits and businesses gained access to data from various US departments and agencies. MOA looked at youth disconnection in geographies that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development designated as “Racially/Ethnicity Concentrated Areas of Poverty” (R/ECAPs). R/ECAPs are defined as census tracts in which whites make up less than 50 percent of the population and the poverty rate either is over 40 percent or more than three times the greater metropolitan area poverty rate. In FIGURE 10, the shapes outlined in white are R/ECAPs. The youth disconnection rate is shown in blue, with darker areas corresponding to higher rates of disconnection. It is clear that in the New York metropolitan area, the youth disconnection rate in nearly all highly segregated areas with high poverty rates (R/ECAPs) is very high.

In order to investigate the opposite side of this dichotomy, Measure of America created a new geographic descriptor: White Concentrated Areas of Wealth, or Anti-R/ECAPs. These areas, outlined in red on the map, have a non-Hispanic white population of at least 50 percent, and at least 40 percent of households have a median income over \$200,000. In the New York metro area, these wealthy, white areas tend to have low rates of youth disconnection. While some Anti-R/ECAPS are located in areas with higher disconnection rates, it is not possible to know if the rates are high within the wealthy, white tract, or only in neighboring less white or less wealthy tracts. Regardless, this map paints a fairly clear picture: segregated low-income, minority neighborhoods tend to have high rates of disconnection, while segregated high-income, white neighborhoods tend to have low rates.

**FIGURE 10 Residential Segregation by Race and Income Interacts with Youth Disconnection in the NYC metro area**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2006-2010 and US Department of Housing and Urban Development R/ECAPs.


## Conclusion

Thanks to a recovering economy, climbing high school graduation rates, and the efforts of individuals, organizations, and businesses across the country, more young people are finding solid footholds in the worlds of school and work. The 900,000-person drop in the national youth disconnection count since 2011 is heartening news for America's young people and for the country as a whole.

As disconnection rates fall, those still struggling to navigate the transition to a rewarding, independent adulthood are disproportionately black, Latino, and Native American young people, low-income youth, youth with disabilities, and young mothers. In addition, young people living in rural areas face particularly high barriers to accessing educational and employment opportunities. The road ahead will require attention to the specific challenges of each of these high-risk groups as well as a focus on building education and workforce systems that expand opportunities for everyone and counter discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Until recently, rigorous evaluations of prevention and reconnection programs were few and far between, making it difficult to know exactly which approaches were most effective. This situation has started to change, however, making it possible to point to a set of emerging good practices.

**Successful reconnection programs address a wide variety of challenges and needs.** Too many young people face not one but many obstacles to educational or employment opportunities. Lack of the basic literacy or numeracy skills required for entry-level jobs, unsafe or insecure housing, unreliable transportation, the high cost of childcare, physical and mental health conditions, the legacy of traumatic events, and involvement with the criminal justice system are some of the roadblocks that can frustrate a young person's best intentions and efforts. Counseling, career mentoring, remedial learning, and help with problem-solving both during and after the life of reconnection programs are essential for successful reengagement and lasting connections.

 **SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** Boston's nonprofit Jewish Vocational Service provides training and job placement in the health care field complemented by a high level of support both during and after training in a broad range of areas, including child care, transportation assistance, English as a second language, basic skills, and tax preparation aid.<sup>40</sup> Their program targets all disadvantaged populations, with particularly impressive results serving young adults. Upon evaluation, 18- to 24-year-olds in the program earned almost 50 percent more than a young adult control group after two years.<sup>41</sup>

**Short-term workforce and school reengagement programs seldom bring long-term benefits.** Summer employment and other sorts of short-term job placements can be an important first step for at-risk youth, giving them the chance to gain self-confidence, learn the norms of the workplace, and build an employment track record. But evaluations of short-term programs suggest that the positive effects associated with such programs frequently fade within a year or two. Youth struggling with connection require encouragement and attention beyond a one-off match with an employer; they need longer-term relationships with caring adults.



**SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** National Guard ChalleNGe, a national program founded in the 1990s, targets 16- to 18-year-old at-risk youth who have dropped out of high school. Following an intensive five-month residential program of skills training, career exploration, and classroom learning, the youth are assigned a trained mentor for at least a year after they leave the program to help them solve problems. An evaluation found that ChalleNGe participants were more likely to obtain a high school diploma or GED and college credits and earned 20 percent more than a control group.<sup>42</sup>



**SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** The federal Opening Doors for Youth Act of 2016, to be introduced to Congress in March 2017, has built-in funding for regular evaluations of grantee programs after five years, well after the initial investment is spent.<sup>43</sup> If this bill becomes law, the use of federal funds for youth disconnection will be tracked against measurable, long-term results.

**Paid work creates a virtuous circle.** A common reason teens and young adults leave school is the need to contribute to their family income. Whenever possible, programs should offer jobs with wages rather than unpaid internships or token living allowances or stipends. Paying wages addresses sometimes acute financial need. It also helps youth build bona fide employment records, allows them to participate in formal performance appraisals that can provide useful feedback, and gives them the sense of agency, autonomy, and pride that often accompanies a first paycheck.


#### BOX 8 Apprenticeships

In many European countries, apprenticeships are a commonplace, respected route to well-paying careers in high-demand fields. Between 50 percent and 70 percent of young people in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria opt for apprenticeships.<sup>44</sup> In the United States, only 1.5 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds apprentice.<sup>45</sup> But this situation is changing. The number of apprentices in official federal Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs has increased from 374,000 to 505,000 since 2013.<sup>46</sup>

US apprenticeships generally involve on-the-job training combined with classroom instruction under the supervision of a skilled professional and culminate in a certification or academic credit. Apprenticeship opportunities are available in traditional trades, such as manufacturing and construction, as well as in high-growth fields, such as information technology and digital media. Community colleges and employers are joining forces to offer hybrid apprenticeship-degree programs as well.

**Presenting a traditional four-year college degree as the brass ring all high school graduates should reach for, and anything else as second best, is counterproductive. It offers nothing to young adults who are not interested in a bachelor's degree, but who nonetheless need post-high school training of some kind in order to embark on careers that offer economic security.** For these young people, apprenticeships can be an excellent option. And they can be especially well-suited for youth at risk for disconnection, who benefit from the structured system, job-relevant classroom instruction, engaged adult mentors, and paid, hands-on learning that apprenticeships offer. Apprenticeships are also cost-effective. Because employers generally shoulder much of the cost, apprenticeships are an incredible bargain for taxpayers. Over their careers, apprentices go on to earn an estimated \$240,000 more than similar non-apprentice workers, and the social benefits of the federal RA program exceed the costs by nearly \$50,000 per participant.<sup>47</sup>

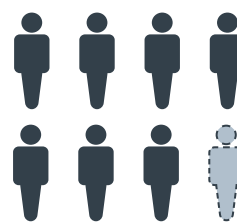


 **SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** Year Up, a nonprofit training and internship placement program serving sixteen US cities, provides six months of paid training for employment in high-demand industries, such as information technology and investment, followed by a six-month paid internship—supported by Year Up and the corporate employer. The Year Up approach sets young people on a track toward a career with potential for advancement.<sup>48</sup> An evaluation of their Boston, Providence, and New York programs found that Year Up participants were more likely to be working full time and earned wages 30 percent higher than the control group, and these earnings gains continued three years after the program ended.<sup>49 50</sup> Close links with Year Up’s corporate partners is a critical ingredient to their success.

**Young people need preparation for a career, not just a (low-wage, low-skill) job.** In order to set at-risk youth on a trajectory for success, workforce programs should help them build not just very basic skills (such as preparing a resume, interviewing for a job, and managing their time), but also the higher-order, sought-after skills necessary for a secure career in today’s economy. Such skills include mid-level technical skills related to specific fields, such as health care, skilled construction, information technology, and maintenance and repair, but could also include more broadly applicable skills like foreign languages, management training, entrepreneurship, and others.<sup>51</sup>

 **SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** A study addressing youth unemployment in Europe found that prioritizing innovation and skills higher up the value chain in both education and employment policy is extremely important for boosting youth employment. Doing so also contributes to the creation of a nimble workforce with the abilities and mindset for today’s rapidly changing labor market.<sup>52</sup>

**Restorative discipline, rather than punitive school suspensions and expulsions, reduces dropout and disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline.** Educators and policymakers increasingly recognize the disproportionate impact of school suspensions and expulsions on young people of color and youth with disabilities. In the past decade, the movement for an alternative to punitive discipline, restorative justice, has been gaining steam in school districts across the nation. Restorative justice focuses on helping students understand the impact of their actions on others and often includes some form of peer adjudication to resolve




### YOUTH DISCONNECTION BEST PRACTICES


- Successful reconnection programs address a wide variety of challenges and needs.
- Short-term workforce and school reengagement programs seldom bring long-term benefits.
- Paid work creates a virtuous circle.
- Young people need preparation for a career, not just a (low-wage, low-skill) job.
- Restorative discipline, rather than punitive school suspensions and expulsions, reduces dropout and disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Rural youth face an added dilemma: opportunity is often far from home.



conflicts. Since 2011, the Civil Rights Project at UCLA has been tracking the racial gap in disciplinary practices as well as restorative justice programs designed to address those gaps. They have documented efforts that range from changes to school codes of conduct in California, regulations to eliminate racial disparities in discipline in Maryland, mandatory interventions in school districts with high suspension rates in Massachusetts, and limits on suspensions in Chicago and Los Angeles, to name just a few.<sup>53</sup>

 **SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** In one South Side Chicago public school, Christian Fenger Academy High School, a federal grant following the tragic gang-related murder of a student enabled a tremendous turnaround built in part on a series of restorative justice programs led by the school's principal. Over the four years of the grant, on-time graduation rose from 47 percent to 73 percent, reaching a high of 82 percent the following year.<sup>54</sup> Following the end of the grant in 2013, the school has been struggling to maintain these efforts.<sup>55</sup>

**Rural youth face an added dilemma: opportunity is often far from home.** Many young people who grow up in rural areas leave after high school, drawn by the opportunities metro areas afford. For those who stay, disconnection is a serious challenge. Efforts to help them should respond to local labor market demands as well as build transferable skills. The recent shift away from the “college for all” mantra is lessening the misguided sense that anything but a four-year college degree is somehow a second-best option. But the alternative must be high-quality vocational and technical education that is relevant to local employment needs and equips rural youth for economic security in the new economy.

 **SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** YouthBuild USA, a nonprofit active in forty-six states, is funded primarily by the US Department of Labor. About 20 percent of YouthBuild programs are in rural areas. Working with local partners in high-poverty communities, the organization offers classroom learning toward a high school or equivalency diploma alongside hands-on construction training. Students build or renovate housing for the homeless as well as for low-income families in a program that culminates in youth shadowing experienced workers. Both urban and rural youth in YouthBuild programs struggle with high unemployment, serious educational shortfalls, and poverty. For rural youth, limited access to broadband technology and public transportation exacerbate these challenges. A 2015 study found that three in four YouthBuild graduates had gone on to postsecondary education, job training, or a paid job at the time of the survey, which was conducted several years following graduation.<sup>56</sup>

The responsibility to fix this problem does not fall on young people and the social service delivery organizations that serve them alone. The demand side—employers and the private sector—is an equally important part of the equation.

The programs and policies to reconnect youth to opportunities described above are an essential part of the solution. But the responsibility to fix this problem does not fall on young people and the social service delivery organizations that serve them alone. The demand side—employers and the private sector—is an equally important part of the equation.

Over the past few years, the business community has stepped up its contributions by initiating internships, training programs, job fairs, and partnerships to address disconnected young people’s systemic barriers to connection. These employer-led efforts offer a win-win opportunity for young people and for businesses. Young people gain the skills, habits, income, and self-confidence they need to move toward self-sufficiency. Employers build a pipeline of talent and benefit from particularly loyal workers; for example, Gap Inc. reports that they hire three in four young people who take part in their This Way Ahead job training program aimed at low income youth and that such workers are more engaged and have twice the retention rate of similar young people who did not participate in the program.<sup>57</sup>



**SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:** The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative was launched in 2015 by Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz. Forty-five leading companies now take part in this national effort to hire and advance disconnected youth. The coalition works to galvanize local business communities to employ best practices in attracting and retaining this overlooked pool of entry-level talent. They have already met and surpassed their initial goal of hiring one hundred thousand youth in three years, and the coalition continues to grow.<sup>58</sup>

These bright spots point to a way forward. At least three conditions at the national level are necessary to knit these efforts and others like them together such that they become greater than the sum of their parts: a more systematic approach to the school-to-work transition; an end to discrimination; and realistic, widely shared goals for reducing youth disconnection.

#### **A more systematic approach to preventing and addressing disconnection.**

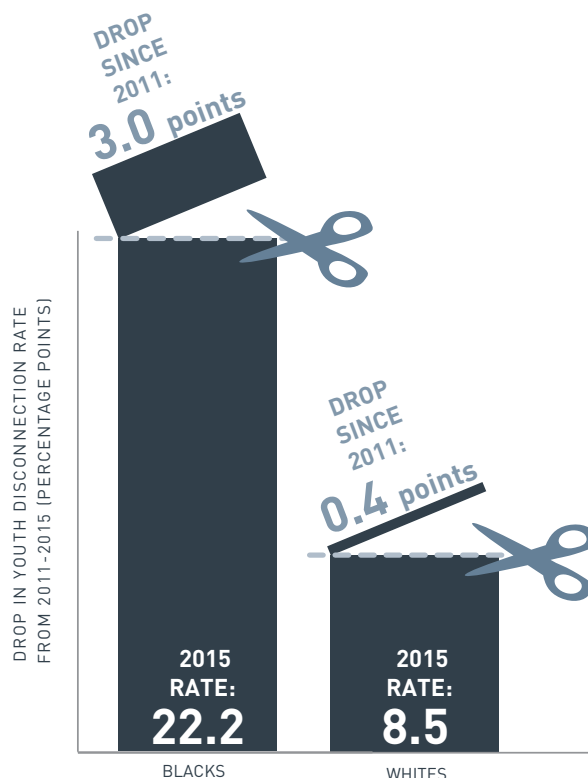
One of the lessons from the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, and the Nordic countries, where youth disconnection rates range from 4.6 percent to 7.5 percent, is that **youth-friendly economies offer multiple established pathways for young people to transition from school to work.**<sup>59</sup> Such countries have workforce-development systems that provide numerous opportunities for apprenticeships, worker training, and other structured programs that help young people build their careers (see BOX 8). Such opportunities are available not only in traditional manufacturing and other blue collar occupations, but also in high-tech manufacturing, renewable energy, finance, tourism, and many other mid-skill sectors.<sup>60</sup>

**An end to discrimination.** Discrimination fuels and exacerbates disconnection. While de jure employment discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, or physical or mental disability is illegal, de facto discrimination in the job market persists. A recent Pew Research Center survey on views of race in the United States found that 21 percent of blacks said they have been treated unfairly by an employer in the past year in hiring, pay, or promotion because of their race or ethnicity, as compared to only 4 percent of whites, a four-fold difference.<sup>61</sup> And the study discussed on page 17 above, in which job applicants with names people associated with blacks were far less likely to be considered than those with “white sounding” names,<sup>62</sup> backs up this finding. Addressing the many types of discrimination that keep far too many Americans from living freely chosen, rewarding lives has long been and will likely continue to be a central task for all who care about not just youth disconnection but also justice and freedom more broadly.

**Concrete local and national goals.** In a 2013 report, *Halve the Gap by 2030*, Measure of America proposed setting specific, time-bound, ambitious-yet-achievable city- and state-wide goals for reducing youth disconnection as a way to galvanize collective action and track progress. The report argued that everyone who worked with disconnected young people—educational institutions, social service delivery organizations, the justice system, the private sector, and others—should come together to decide jointly what success would look like. Measure of America further recommended that success be defined not by inputs like dollars spent or youth trained, but rather by the results of those efforts as reflected in changes in the youth disconnection rate.

*Halve the Gap* suggested that one way to set goals at a local level was to aim to cut in half the gaps between racial and ethnic groups within metro areas by 2030. MOA gave greater Philadelphia as an example. In 2011, the black youth disconnection rate was about 25.2 percent, and the white rate was 8.9 percent—a gap of 16.3 percentage points. Thus, a goal for Philadelphia could be to cut that gap to 8.2 points. How is the city tracking against that target? In 2015, the black rate was 22.2 percent, the white rate, 8.5 percent; both rates fell between 2011 and 2015, and the gap between the two groups narrowed to 13.7 points—progress! Philadelphia is on track to halve the racial gap by 2030.

**THE BLACK-WHITE GAP IN PHILADELPHIA**



Those working at the city, state, and even national level also benefit from setting absolute targets—decreasing the overall rate from 18 percent to 12 percent in five years, for instance, or reconnecting one hundred thousand young people by 2020. When setting targets, it is important to keep in mind what evidence tells us is possible. Goals that are not even remotely achievable are not motivating; in fact, they can be counterproductive. No metro area or state in the United States has a youth disconnection rate below 6 percent, and none of the five major racial and ethnic groups has a rate below 7 percent. Even in the countries with the lowest national youth disconnection rates in the world, roughly 5 percent of young people are disconnected. Thus, while for Minnesota (with a disconnection rate of 7.5 percent), Iowa (7.8 percent), or Wisconsin (8.8 percent), aiming to nab the crown from top-ranking New Hampshire (7.2 percent) in the next two or three years would be a realistic and motivating goal, for states like New Mexico or Georgia, with rates more than double New Hampshire's, it would not be. For them, a realistic goal might be a 25 percent decline over five years. **Nationwide, the period from 2010 to 2015 saw a drop of 16 percent, over nine hundred thousand people;** it is unlikely that the rate of change seen over five years could be achieved or exceeded in, for instance, just one year, even with Herculean efforts.

All Americans have a role to play in addressing youth disconnection, whether as teachers, employers, parents, mentors, or policymakers. Using programmatic approaches that have been shown to work is key. The private sector should more widely embrace “double-bottom line” approaches proven to be good for young people and good for business. And at the national level, creating robust, accessible pathways for at-risk young people to transition from school to work, combatting discrimination, and setting concrete goals that are ambitious but achievable are critical.

Most of all, at-risk youth need the kind of support from communities and institutions that other young people take for granted: safe places to live and food on the table; caring adults to help them navigate the often-bewildering transition from child to adult; opportunities to try new things, to fail, and to try again; and experiences that build self-knowledge, agency, and confidence as well as hard and soft skills. They need encouragement, trust, kindness, and love—not harsh discipline and not zero-tolerance. They need society to give them what it gives more fortunate young people, not just “a” chance, but many chances.

Disconnected  
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# Endnotes

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- <sup>2</sup> Committee on Education & The Workforce Democrats, “The Opening Doors for Youth Act of 2016,” House of Representatives, September 22, 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> Jennifer L. DePaoli, Robert Balfanz, and John Bridgeland, “Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates,” Civic Enterprises and the Everyone Graduates Center, 2016.
- <sup>4</sup> Stefano Scarpetta, Anne Sonnet and Thomas Manfredi, “Rising Youth Unemployment during the Crisis: How to Prevent Negative Long-Term Consequences on a Generation?” OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, 2010.
- <sup>5</sup> Tangible direct costs to taxpayers that resulted from disconnected youth were calculated using data from the 2013 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample based on use of four types of assistance/ costs: \$11,192 million (incarceration); \$12,366 million (Medicaid); \$741 million (public assistance payments); and \$2,490 million in Supplemental Security Income payments. For full methodological details and data sources for per-person costs, see [www.measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2015/methodology](http://www.measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2015/methodology).
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- <sup>24</sup> Both Madison, Wisconsin, and Durham, North Carolina, fit within the top one hundred most populous US metro areas, but due to Census data limitations for those two metro areas, reliable youth disconnection estimates cannot be calculated.
- <sup>25</sup> US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2011–2015 Five-Year Estimates, Table B17001.
- <sup>26</sup> US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2011–2015 Five-Year Estimates, Table B19013.
- <sup>27</sup> NYSED, “Comparing Graduation Rate Data–4 Year Outcome as of June,” New York State Education Department Data.

- <sup>28</sup> NYSED, "Priority School Status for 2016–2017," New York State Education Department School and District Accountability Designation Reports, December 29, 2016.
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- <sup>30</sup> National Assessment of Educational Progress, "2015 Mathematics & Reading Assessments," The Nation's Report Card, 2015.
- <sup>31</sup> Boston Public Schools, "4-Year Graduation Rate By Cohort Group," Office of Data and Accountability, Boston Public Schools, October 1, 2015.
- <sup>32</sup> US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2011–2015, B17001, B19013.
- <sup>33</sup> US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2011–2015 Five-Year Estimates, Table S1701.
- <sup>34</sup> US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2011–2015 Five-Year Estimates, Table B19013B.
- <sup>35</sup> The estimate for Latina women (as well as black men and women) in Boston is unreliable—this is the only city where Latina women appear to be faring worse than Latino men.
- <sup>36</sup> This finding was presented in Measure of America's 2013 report, *Halve the Gap by 2030*. Census Bureau-designated geographic areas called Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) were used to analyze variation by neighborhood. PUMAs each contain at least one hundred thousand people, and most have fewer than two hundred thousand. Analyzing the roughly two thousand PUMAs in the United States, we found that neighborhood-level youth disconnection in 2000 explains about 74 percent of the variation in disconnection in those same neighborhoods at the end of the decade (2011). This relationship holds true even when controlling for population growth and demographic change.
- <sup>37</sup> Poverty thresholds were set for this exercise at one standard deviation above and below the mean for all neighborhoods. Low-poverty neighborhoods were those with a poverty rate below 5.5 percent. High-poverty neighborhoods had a poverty rate above 21.4 percent. See Burd-Sharps and Lewis, *One in Seven*, page 20, for further details.
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## Acknowledgments

This report benefited from the excellent research and data analysis contributions of Chigozie Akah, Dhruv Gandhi, Andy Garon, Matt Herman, and Alexander Powers. Sincere thanks to our long-term design partner, Humantific, who created the core design elements and overall visual language used in Measure of America publications.

Special thanks to our Social Science Research Council colleagues Dewey Blanton, Kim Habib, and Zach Zinn for their communications, design, and website expertise, to Clare McGranahan for careful editing, and to Ira Katznelson and Mary McDonnell for their hearty support of Measure of America.

Finally, we are so grateful for our talented communications and partnerships team of John Keaten and Megan MacInnes at Group Gordon and Vikki Lassiter at Measure of America.



## Indicator Tables: Youth Disconnection by State

RANK	STATE	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-24)	CHANGE FROM 2010-2015 (%)
	United States	12.3	4,881,500	-16.4
1	New Hampshire	7.2	11,800	-31.6
2	Nebraska	7.3	17,800	-27.4
3	North Dakota	7.4	8,200	0.8*
4	Vermont	7.4	6,200	-19.6*
5	Minnesota	7.5	48,700	-19.1
6	Iowa	7.8	30,900	-17.2
7	Massachusetts	8.2	71,600	-17.5
8	Wisconsin	8.8	62,100	-21.1
9	Rhode Island	9.2	12,800	-12.9*
10	Washington, DC	9.6	8,800	-43.9
11	Maine	9.8	14,200	17.7*
12	Connecticut	9.9	44,900	-13.4
13	Colorado	10.0	65,300	-22.0
14	Kansas	10.0	37,500	1.8*
15	Utah	10.1	44,400	-25.6
16	Virginia	10.2	105,200	-19.0
17	Hawaii	10.8	18,100	-31.3
18	Missouri	11.3	86,100	-22.3
19	Ohio	11.4	159,600	-22.2
20	Maryland	11.4	81,300	-12.5
21	Idaho	11.5	24,000	-15.1
22	Oregon	11.7	54,600	-23.0
23	New York	11.8	285,500	-20.4
24	Pennsylvania	11.9	181,200	-2.6*
25	South Dakota	12.0	12,700	10.8*
26	New Jersey	12.1	123,300	-7.1
27	Illinois	12.1	190,900	-7.6
28	Indiana	12.1	103,400	-12.3
29	Washington	12.2	102,800	-21.2
30	California	12.2	609,000	-17.9
31	Tennessee	12.3	99,400	-30.0
32	Delaware	12.6	14,000	-10.1*
33	Florida	12.9	291,200	-21.5
34	Michigan	13.0	162,000	-14.6
35	North Carolina	13.1	162,500	-15.1
36	Oklahoma	13.3	65,900	3.7*
37	Texas	13.7	488,900	-11.3
38	Alaska	13.8	14,300	10.2*
39	Nevada	13.9	45,200	-30.3
40	Kentucky	13.9	75,600	-22.8
41	Montana	14.3	17,700	3.3*
42	Wyoming	14.3	10,200	11.0*
43	South Carolina	14.6	89,600	-9.8
44	Arizona	14.6	125,500	-22.8
45	Alabama	15.2	90,900	-12.4
46	Georgia	15.5	203,200	-16.2
47	Arkansas	16.1	58,500	9.3*
48	Louisiana	16.6	96,800	-15.7
49	Mississippi	16.7	66,000	-19.5
50	West Virginia	17.0	35,100	-9.9*
51	New Mexico	17.4	45,900	0.5*

Note: Asterisks indicate change is not statistically significant.

## Youth Disconnection by State and State by Race/Ethnicity

RANK	STATE	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)		
				BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
	United States	12.3	4,881,500	18.9	14.3	10.1
1	New Hampshire	7.2	11,800			6.7
2	Nebraska	7.3	17,800			5.9
3	North Dakota	7.4	8,200			6.2
4	Vermont	7.4	6,200			7.4
5	Minnesota	7.5	48,700		18.7	5.3
6	Iowa	7.8	30,900			6.7
7	Massachusetts	8.2	71,600	12.1	12.1	7.0
8	Wisconsin	8.8	62,100	26.4	12.9	6.4
9	Rhode Island	9.2	12,800		18.5	6.7
10	Washington, DC	9.6	8,800	16.9		
11	Maine	9.8	14,100			9.8
12	Connecticut	9.9	44,900	19.3	14.7	6.3
13	Colorado	10.0	65,300		14.7	8.0
14	Kansas	10.0	37,500			9.0
15	Utah	10.1	44,400		9.6	9.3
16	Virginia	10.2	105,200	14.2	11.7	8.8
17	Hawaii	10.8	18,100			
18	Missouri	11.3	86,100	19.9		9.7
19	Ohio	11.4	159,600	19.3	16.4	9.5
20	Maryland	11.4	81,300	16.4	11.9	8.2
21	Idaho	11.5	24,000			12.1
22	Oregon	11.7	54,600		12.2	11.8
23	New York	11.8	285,500	18.0	15.8	9.1
24	Pennsylvania	11.9	181,200	20.4	18.2	9.9
25	South Dakota	12.0	12,700			
26	New Jersey	12.1	103,400	21.0	15.2	8.5
27	Illinois	12.1	123,300	23.4	12.5	8.9
28	Indiana	12.1	190,900	20.8	12.2	11.2
29	California	12.2	609,000		15.1	11.4
30	Washington	12.2	102,800	20.4	13.2	10.9
31	Tennessee	12.3	99,400	19.4	13.1	10.5
32	Delaware	12.6	14,000	19.1		9.5
33	Florida	12.9	291,200	18.0	12.5	11.2
34	Michigan	13.0	162,000	25.1	14.2	9.9
35	North Carolina	13.1	162,500	16.9	14.8	11.3
36	Oklahoma	13.3	65,900	20.8	14.5	11.5
37	Texas	13.7	488,900	15.4	16.0	11.2
38	Alaska	13.8	14,300			
39	Nevada	13.9	45,200	18.3	16.7	11.2
40	Kentucky	13.9	75,600	14.4		14.0
41	Montana	14.3	17,700			12.9
42	Wyoming	14.3	10,200			11.7
43	South Carolina	14.6	89,600	19.5	16.9	12.1
44	Arizona	14.6	125,500	19.5	16.3	11.5
45	Alabama	15.2	90,900	19.9		13.3
46	Georgia	15.5	203,200	20.9	12.8	12.7
47	Arkansas	16.1	58,500	21.5	18.7	14.4
48	Louisiana	16.6	96,800	20.9		14.1
49	Mississippi	16.7	66,000	20.3		12.9
50	West Virginia	17.0	35,100			17.5
51	New Mexico	17.4	46,000		17.7	11.8

Note: Blanks indicate that the estimate is unreliable.

## Youth Disconnection by State Since 2008

RANK	STATE	CHANGE SINCE 2010 (%)	YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATE (%)				2015	
			2008	2010	2012	2014	(%)	(#)
	United States		12.6	14.7	14.1	13.2	<b>12.3</b>	4,881,500
1	Washington, DC	-43.9	14.0	17.1	17.0	13.9	<b>9.6</b>	8,800
2	New Hampshire	-31.6	8.7	10.5	10.7	8.6	<b>7.2</b>	11,800
3	Hawaii	-31.3	13.0	15.7	14.1	14.0	<b>10.8</b>	18,100
4	Nevada	-30.3	15.9	20.0	17.0	14.5	<b>13.9</b>	45,200
5	Tennessee	-30.0	14.4	17.6	16.1	16.1	<b>12.3</b>	99,400
6	Nebraska	-27.4	6.2	10.0	7.9	9.0	<b>7.3</b>	17,800
7	Utah	-25.6	9.1	13.5	11.6	12.2	<b>10.1</b>	44,400
8	Oregon	-23.0	13.9	15.2	14.9	12.8	<b>11.7</b>	54,600
9	Arizona	-22.8	16.1	19.0	17.0	15.2	<b>14.6</b>	125,500
10	Kentucky	-22.8	16.8	18.1	17.1	15.5	<b>13.9</b>	75,600
11	Missouri	-22.3	12.0	14.5	12.6	11.9	<b>11.3</b>	86,100
12	Ohio	-22.2	12.2	14.6	13.6	12.4	<b>11.4</b>	159,600
13	Colorado	-22.0	10.4	12.8	11.8	11.4	<b>10.0</b>	65,300
14	Florida	-21.5	14.7	16.5	15.8	14.1	<b>12.9</b>	291,200
15	Washington	-21.2	11.5	15.4	14.2	13.1	<b>12.2</b>	102,800
16	Wisconsin	-21.1	8.8	11.2	10.4	10.5	<b>8.8</b>	62,100
17	New York	-20.4	11.9	14.8	13.6	13.3	<b>11.8</b>	285,500
18	Vermont	-19.6*	9.3	9.2	9.8	9.1	<b>7.4</b>	6,200
19	Mississippi	-19.5	15.3	20.7	19.4	17.6	<b>16.7</b>	66,000
20	Minnesota	-19.1	8.4	9.2	9.0	8.3	<b>7.5</b>	48,700
21	Virginia	-19.0	10.4	12.6	11.9	10.7	<b>10.2</b>	105,200
22	California	-17.9	13.0	14.9	14.7	13.5	<b>12.2</b>	609,000
23	Maine	-17.7*	13.9	11.8	11.9	10.3	<b>9.8</b>	14,200
24	Massachusetts	-17.5	9.1	9.9	9.3	8.4	<b>8.2</b>	71,600
25	Iowa	-17.2	7.4	9.4	8.9	9.3	<b>7.8</b>	30,900
26	Georgia	-16.2	16.4	18.4	17.8	15.6	<b>15.5</b>	203,200
27	Louisiana	-15.7	16.3	19.7	17.4	17.1	<b>16.6</b>	96,800
28	Idaho	-15.1	12.6	13.6	13.1	14.0	<b>11.5</b>	24,000
29	North Carolina	-15.1	13.1	15.4	15.3	13.4	<b>13.1</b>	162,500
30	Michigan	-14.6	12.5	15.2	14.2	13.4	<b>13.0</b>	162,000
31	Connecticut	-13.4	8.7	11.5	11.0	10.2	<b>9.9</b>	44,900
32	Rhode Island	-12.9*	10.1	10.6	10.8	11.9	<b>9.2</b>	12,800
33	Maryland	-12.5	11.8	13.0	12.9	12.9	<b>11.4</b>	81,300
34	Alabama	-12.4	15.3	17.3	16.2	17.1	<b>15.2</b>	90,900
35	Indiana	-12.3	12.7	13.8	13.4	12.7	<b>12.1</b>	103,400
36	Texas	-11.3	14.3	15.5	14.8	14.2	<b>13.7</b>	488,900
37	South Dakota	-10.8*	8.6	13.5	9.0	10.6	<b>12.0</b>	12,700
38	Alaska	-10.2*	14.1	15.4	16.9	17.2	<b>13.8</b>	14,300
39	Delaware	-10.1*	10.4	14.0	12.6	11.5	<b>12.6</b>	14,000
40	West Virginia	-9.9*	15.7	18.8	13.7	15.8	<b>17.0</b>	35,100
41	South Carolina	-9.8	14.8	16.2	17.0	14.6	<b>14.6</b>	89,600
42	Arkansas	-9.3*	16.9	17.8	18.9	14.9	<b>16.1</b>	58,500
43	Illinois	-7.6	11.5	13.1	13.1	12.5	<b>12.1</b>	190,900
44	New Jersey	-7.1	10.7	13.0	12.5	11.4	<b>12.1</b>	123,300
45	Oklahoma	-3.7*	12.6	13.8	15.3	15.4	<b>13.3</b>	65,900
46	Pennsylvania	-2.6*	10.3	12.2	13.0	12.3	<b>11.9</b>	181,200
47	New Mexico	-0.5*	15.3	17.5	18.9	15.0	<b>17.4</b>	45,900
48	North Dakota	0.8*	6.5	7.3	8.2	9.2	<b>7.4</b>	8,200
49	Kansas	1.8*	8.2	9.8	10.4	12.2	<b>10.0</b>	37,500
50	Montana	3.3*	13.7	13.8	14.8	12.5	<b>14.3</b>	17,700
51	Wyoming	11.0*	13.7	12.9	10.4	9.1	<b>14.3</b>	10,200

Note: Asterisks indicate change is not statistically significant.

## Youth Disconnection by Metro Area

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)		
				BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
	United States	12.3	4,881,500	18.9	14.3	10.1
1	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	6.5	7,400			
2	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	6.8	8,600			6.0
3	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	7.1	8,400			6.9
4	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	7.3	45,200	10.8	9.6	6.5
5	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	7.9	34,000			5.8
6	Austin-Round Rock, TX	8.0	20,600		9.3	6.7
7	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	8.5	8,400			
8	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	8.7	7,200			
9	Salt Lake City, UT	8.8	13,800			8.0
10	Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	9.2	12,800			7.0
11	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	9.2	44,100	21.8	9.6	6.9
12	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	9.3	22,000	17.4		7.3
13	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	9.3	14,700		15.9	4.8
14	Columbus, OH	9.3	21,700	14.6		8.1
15	Akron, OH	9.3	8,600			8.9
16	Worcester, MA-CT	9.3	11,200			7.8
17	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	9.5	20,100		12.5	9.0
18	Raleigh, NC	9.6	14,900			
19	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	9.7	19,900		18.0	7.7
20	Syracuse, NY	9.7	9,400			8.0
21	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	9.7	43,200		11.3	8.6
22	Pittsburgh, PA	10.1	26,000			8.7
23	Oklahoma City, OK	10.2	18,400			8.8
24	Kansas City, MO-KS	10.2	26,400	18.6		7.8
25	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	10.2	11,500			7.9
26	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	10.3	70,800	14.6	11.9	7.3
27	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	10.3	32,300		14.6	7.7
28	Colorado Springs, CO	10.3	9,900			8.8
29	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	10.3	25,800	12.8		9.2
30	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	10.5	7,300			9.1
31	Dayton, OH	10.6	10,500			8.5
32	Springfield, MA	10.6	8,500			
33	Richmond, VA	10.7	16,400	13.5		6.6
34	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	10.8	20,100	25.4	20.1	
35	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	10.9	15,200			11.0
36	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	10.9	44,600		15.7	10.2
37	Provo-Orem, UT	10.9	12,700			9.7
38	Boise City, ID	11.0	9,300			12.2
39	New Haven-Milford, CT	11.0	12,400			5.7
40	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	11.0	11,900		12.7	
41	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	11.1	8,300			10.3
42	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	11.1	188,300	21.2	12.0	8.4
43	Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	11.1	25,400	20.0		8.1
44	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	11.2	31,700		13.1	11.6
45	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	11.3	38,600	20.5		7.0
46	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	11.3	10,000	18.3		
47	Urban Honolulu, HI	11.4	14,300			6.8
48	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	11.4	6,600			12.3
49	Toledo, OH	11.4	10,000			7.9
50	St. Louis, MO-IL	11.5	39,900	19.4		8.5

Note: Blanks indicate that the estimate is unreliable.

## Youth Disconnection by Metro Area (continued)

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16-21)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16-24)		
				BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
51	Rochester, NY	11.6	16,900	30.3		7.9
52	Baton Rouge, LA	11.7	14,200	18.3		7.6
53	Jacksonville, FL	11.8	19,100	12.9		11.7
54	Winston-Salem, NC	11.9	8,900			12.4
55	Columbia, SC	11.9	14,500	15.7		9.1
56	Wichita, KS	12.1	9,960			11.5
57	Knoxville, TN	12.1	14,600			11.9
58	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	12.1	140,600	22.9	12.2	8.2
59	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	12.2	287,100	18.2	15.6	8.7
60	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	12.2	36,300	17.4	14.1	8.8
	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	12.2	7,900			13.7
62	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	12.2	79,000	17.0	11.9	8.8
63	Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	12.3	34,700	21.4	11.7	11.1
64	Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	12.3	15,000			11.2
65	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	12.4	33,400	23.8		9.7
66	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	12.4	109,900	15.2	14.6	10.4
67	Cleveland-Elyria, OH	12.4	28,900	20.4		8.9
68	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	12.7	7,500			11.5
69	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	12.9	93,300	22.2	18.0	8.5
70	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	12.9	40,600	21.8	12.1	11.1
71	Tulsa, OK	13.1	13,100		19.6	11.3
72	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	13.2	73,700	21.0	15.4	10.6
73	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	13.4	43,500		15.6	11.2
74	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	13.6	8,800			14.1
75	Greensboro-High Point, NC	13.6	13,200	17.1		12.4
76	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	13.6	97,800	17.8	13.1	10.9
77	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	13.7	114,500	15.3	15.8	10.8
78	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	14.1	9,000			
79	El Paso, TX	14.4	17,300		13.6	
80	Jackson, MS	14.4	11,000	16.2		
81	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14.6	20,700	17.6		12.6
82	Tucson, AZ	14.6	21,300		16.0	12.6
83	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	14.7	41,800	17.4	17.3	13.3
84	Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	14.9	10,500			13.9
85	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	15.0	71,800	25.6		10.5
86	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	15.1	9,100			11.7
87	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	15.1	36,000	18.7	18.2	11.5
88	Stockton-Lodi, CA	15.3	14,600		18.1	
89	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	15.5	13,300			12.6
90	New Orleans-Metairie, LA	15.7	21,800	18.4		15.1
91	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15.7	32,100	19.9		9.4
92	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	16.1	99,700	21.1	16.5	14.8
93	Albuquerque, NM	16.1	17,300		17.7	
94	Fresno, CA	16.1	21,800		17.7	14.4
95	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	18.4	13,500		23.3	
96	Bakersfield, CA	18.7	22,900		17.9	16.5
97	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	19.7	24,500		20.0	
98	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	21.0	17,300	24.3		21.0

Note: Blanks indicate that the estimate is unreliable.

## Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity and Gender

MAJOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS	DISCONNECTED YOUTH RATE (% ages 16-24)				2015		CHANGE IN RATE 2010-2015 (%)
	2008	2010	2012	2014	(%)	(#)	
<b>United States</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>4,881,500</b>	<b>-16.4</b>
Male	12.3	15.2	14.5	13.3	12.5	2,553,200	-17.7
Female	12.9	14.1	13.7	13.0	12.0	2,328,400	-14.9
<b>ASIAN</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>154,200</b>	<b>-14.9</b>
Asian Male	6.3	8.3	7.4	7.2	6.9	74,500	-17.4
Asian Female	7.9	8.6	8.1	8.6	7.5	79,700	-12.6
<b>WHITE</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>2,176,400</b>	<b>-13.9</b>
White Male	9.5	12.3	11.5	10.8	10.2	1,133,900	-16.9
White Female	10.0	11.1	10.8	10.7	9.9	1,042,500	-10.4
<b>LATINO</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>1,228,200</b>	<b>-22.6</b>
Latino Male	13.6	16.8	16.0	14.0	13.1	578,900	-22.4
Latino Female	20.2	20.3	18.8	16.5	15.6	649,300	-23.0
<b>BLACK</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>1,084,500</b>	<b>-16.3</b>
Black Male	23.7	26.0	25.6	23.5	21.9	639,700	-15.5
Black Female	17.0	19.0	19.3	17.6	15.7	444,800	-17.7
<b>NATIVE AMERICAN</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>74,800</b>	<b>-11.8</b>
Native American Male	25.0	30.9	28.0	26.9	25.4	38,800	-17.7
Native American Female	23.9	26.7	25.9	25.6	25.4	36,000	-4.8*

Note: Asterisks indicate change is not statistically significant.

ASIAN SUBGROUPS	2015		ASIAN SUBGROUPS	2015	
	(%)	(#)		(%)	(#)
<b>United States</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>4,881,500</b>			
Male	12.5	2,553,200	<b>TWO OR MORE</b>	6.9	4,000
Female	12.0	2,328,400	Two or More Male		
<b>ASIAN</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>154,200</b>	Two or More Female		
Asian Male	6.9	74,500	<b>FILIPINO</b>	7.3	22,900
Asian Female	7.5	79,700	Filipino Male	8.5	13,400
<b>CHINESE</b>	4.7	25,400	Filipino Female	6.2	9,500
Chinese Male	4.7	12,600	<b>INDIAN</b>	8.8	31,300
Chinese Female	4.6	12,800	Indian Male	6.7	12,900
<b>JAPANESE</b>	5.7	3,500	Indian Female	11.2	18,400
Japanese Male			<b>PAKISTANI</b>	9.4	6,300
Japanese Female			Pakistani Male		
<b>KOREAN</b>	5.7	11,000	Pakistani Female		
Korean Male	6.3	6,200	<b>HMONG</b>	13.8	7,700
Korean Female			Hmong Male		
<b>VIETNAMESE</b>	6.0	13,900	Hmong Female		
Vietnamese Male	7.2	8,300			
Vietnamese Female	4.9	5,700			

Note: Blanks indicate that the estimate is unreliable.