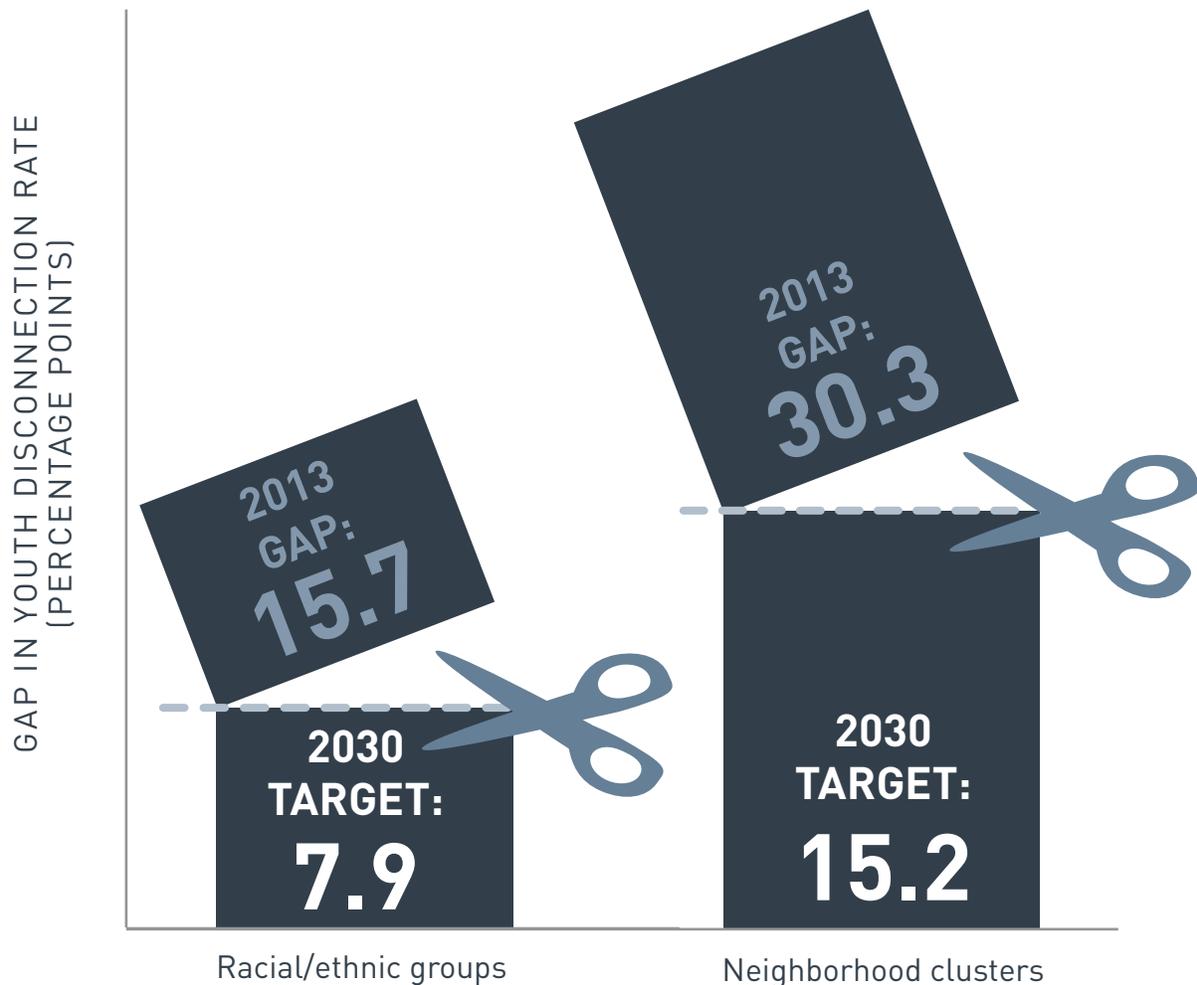


HALVE THE GAP BY 2030

YOUTH DISCONNECTION
IN AMERICA'S CITIES

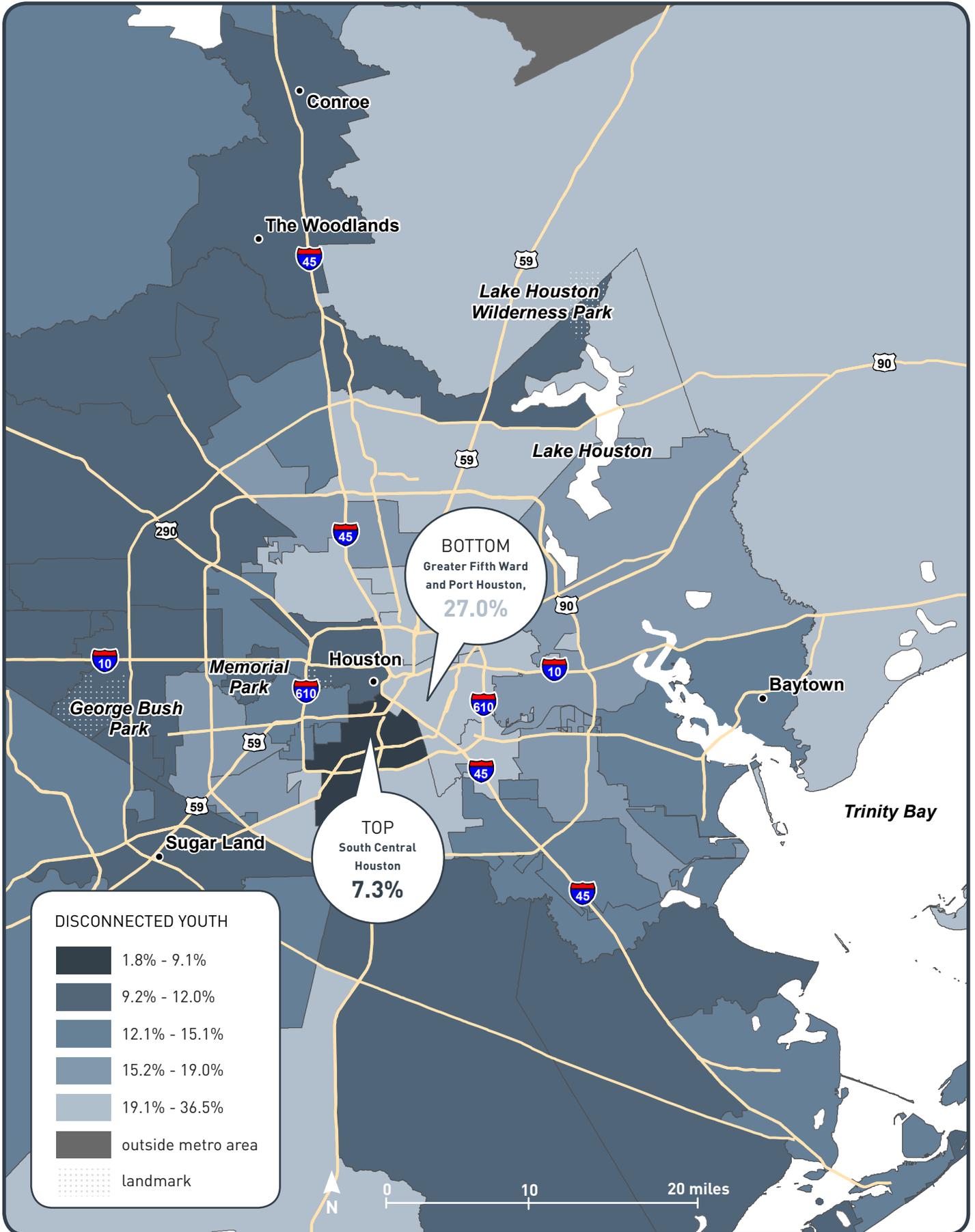
HOUSTON METRO AREA CLOSE-UP

KRISTEN LEWIS and SARAH BURD-SHARPS



Patrick Nolan Guyer | CHIEF STATISTICIAN & CARTOGRAPHER
Diana Tung | REPORT DESIGN

TO DOWNLOAD THIS REPORT, PLEASE VISIT
WWW.MEASUREOFAMERICA.ORG/HALVE-THE-GAP-2030



About the Houston Metro Area Close-Up

This document is an excerpt from *Halve the Gap by 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*. It portrays in detail the landscape of youth disconnection in the Houston Metro Area, with a map of the metro area; identification of the neighborhood highs and lows; youth disconnection rates by race, ethnicity, and gender; and key well-being indicators to provide context.

Who Are Disconnected Youth: Definition and Data Sources

Disconnected youth are people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor working.

Young people in this age range who are working or in school part-time or who are in the military are not considered disconnected. Youth disconnection rates in this report are calculated by Measure of America using employment and enrollment data from the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) of the US Census Bureau. For further details, see the Note on Methods and Definitions.

Several official data sources exist that can be used for calculating youth disconnection. As a result, researchers working with different data sets, or different definitions of what constitutes disconnection, arrive at different numbers for this indicator. Measure of America uses the ACS for four reasons: (1) it is reliable and updated annually; (2) it allows for calculations by state and metro area as well as by the more granular census-defined neighborhood clusters within metro areas; (3) it includes young people who are in group quarters, such as juvenile or adult correctional facilities, supervised medical facilities, and college dorms; and (4) it counts students on summer break as being enrolled in school.



Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council, provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in the United States and to stimulate fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: **health**, **education**, and **living standards**. 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 to developing the capabilities required for a full and flourishing 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 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.

KEY WELL-BEING INDICATORS

HD Index: 5.02 out of 10

HD Index ranking: 21st out of 24

Total population: 6,051,850

Adult unemployment rate: 7.0%

Adults with at least bachelor's degree: 28.9%

Poverty rate: 17.4%

Youth unemployment rate (ages 16–24): 18.1%

School enrollment rate (ages 16–24): 60.5%

Sources: *Measure of America 2013-2014* and U.S. Census Bureau, 2011.

Of the three major metro areas in Texas that rank among the twenty-five largest in the nation, the **Houston metro area** has the lowest rate of youth disconnection. Dallas and San Antonio rank sixteenth and seventeenth, respectively. Composed of nine Texas counties—Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Brazoria, Galveston, Liberty, Waller, Chambers, and Austin—the Houston metro area has a disconnection rate of 14.1 percent, translating to a troubling 110,000 teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 lacking the key anchors provided by a job or school enrollment. This rate places the Space City between Chicago and St. Louis in terms of youth disconnection.

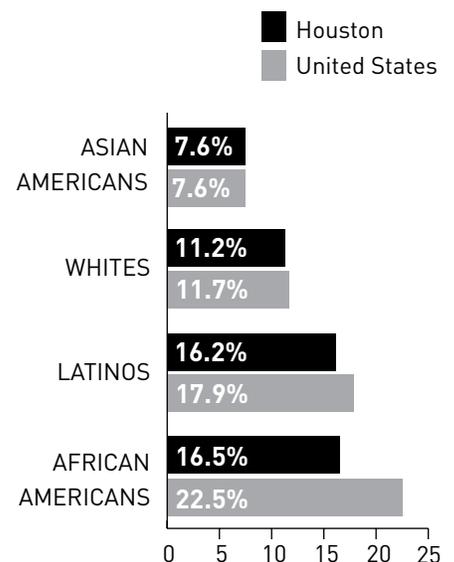
Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity

All major racial and ethnic groups in Houston—African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and whites—have youth disconnection rates that are better than or equal to the national average for those groups. This difference is most marked for African Americans; their youth disconnection rate of 16.5 percent is 6 percentage points less than the US average for African Americans (22.5 percent) and the second-best among US big cities, behind only Boston.

Youth Disconnection by Gender

As in Dallas–Ft. Worth, Houston runs counter to the national trend in terms of the gender difference in youth disconnection. Young women in Houston are significantly less likely to be enrolled in school or employed than their male counterparts. This difference derives both from a female youth disconnection rate that is greater than the national average, and

How Do Racial and Ethnic Groups Compare to Each Other and to Their National Counterparts?



a male youth disconnection rate that is among the lowest in the country. Just 12.5 percent of Houston’s young men are disconnected, far less than the national rate for young men of 15.1 percent, whereas 15.8 percent of Houston’s young women are disconnected, compared to 14.1 percent nationally. In real numbers, there are 8,000 more young women not in work and not in school in Houston than there are young men in this situation.

Just over six percent of teenage girls ages 16 to 19 have children of their own, the second highest teen motherhood rate among the largest US metro areas (San Antonio’s rate is the highest, 6.3 percent). The association between teen motherhood and disconnection is strong—disconnected young women are three times as likely to be mothers as connected young women. Some teens and young women leave school or work because they have a child, but others have a child because the other appealing choices and opportunities open to them are few to none.

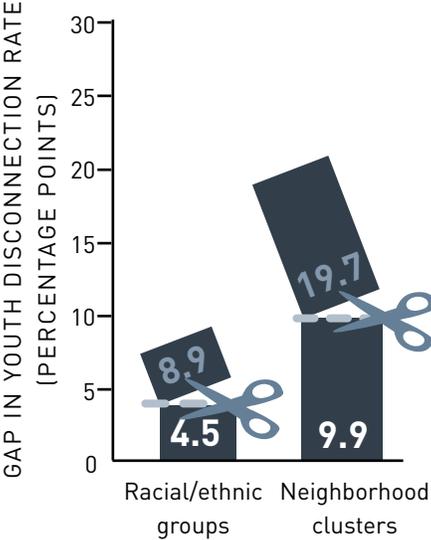
Youth Disconnection by Neighborhood

Houston is one of the most racially diverse metro areas in the country. Just under 40 percent of the city’s population is white, and the other three major racial and ethnic groups make up a greater proportion of Houston’s populaton than they do nationally. Latino Houstonians make up nearly 36 percent of the city’s population, more than double the proportion nationwide.

The Houston metro area is made up of thirty-five neighborhood clusters. Youth disconnection rates range from 27.0 percent in the Greater Fifth Ward and Port Houston neighborhood to 7.3 percent in the South Central Houston neighborhood. This variation of 19.7 percentage points between the neighborhood clusters with the highest and lowest rates of youth disconnection places Houston towards the middle of the twenty-five largest metro areas in terms of this range.

Regarding the racial and ethnic populations within these distinct neighborhood clusters, correlations between the youth disconnection rate and the various racial populations within each district of the city are relatively insignificant. Unlike many of the other largest metro areas across the country, neighborhoods at both ends of the spectrum in terms of youth disconnection have signficiant populations of African Americans, Latinos, and whites, indicating that Houston is less racially segregated than other big US cities. One exception to this is that the neighborhood cluster with the highest rate of youth disconnection in Houston is also home to the highest proportion of Latino residents.

Halve the Gap in Houston



Most Connected Neighborhood Clusters

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE OF YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)
South Central Houston, TX	7.3
Jersey Village and Northwest Harris County, TX	9.2
Galveston, TX	9.7

Least Connected Neighborhood Clusters

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE OF YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)
Humble, Harris County, TX	22.0
Spring, Harris County, TX	22.7
Greater Fifth Ward and Port Houston, TX	27.0