



NEWS RELEASE

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Zeroing In on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities Reveals 1 in 7 Young Adults Neither Working nor in School, Costing Taxpayers at least \$26.8 Billion in 2013

Disconnection rates for blacks, Native Americans and Latinos much higher than rates for Asian Americans or whites; residential segregation by race disproportionately harms blacks

NEW YORK — [Measure of America](#) today released [Zeroing In on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities](#), revealing 1 in 7 young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 nationwide are neither working nor in school. The disconnected youth population has fallen since the Great Recession to 5,527,000, roughly 280,000 fewer than the last decade's peak in 2010 but still larger than the populations of thirty U.S. states. Youth disconnection rates range from under 8 percent in the Omaha, Nebraska, and Bridgeport, Connecticut, metro areas to over 20 percent in greater Lakeland Florida; Bakersfield, California; and Memphis, Tennessee.

Zeroing In on Place and Race ranks youth disconnection in 98 of the country's 100 most populous metro areas, including calculations for the major racial and ethnic groups at the national and metro levels. The report shows that residential segregation by race disproportionately harms black teenagers and young adults while advantaging white youth. In highly segregated metro areas, black youth tend to have higher-than-average rates of disconnection, whereas white youth tend to have lower-than-average rates of disconnection.

At the national level, youth disconnection rates for blacks (21.6 percent), Native Americans (27.8 percent), and Latinos (16.3 percent) are much higher than rates for Asian Americans (7.9 percent) or whites (11.3 percent). Even more concerning: in nine metro areas, at least one in four black youth are disconnected. In ten metro areas, at least one in five Latino youth are disconnected.

"Disconnected youth are cut off from the people, institutions, and experiences that would help them develop the skills, credentials, and sense of purpose required to live rewarding lives as adults," said Kristen Lewis, co-director, Measure of America. "They're not a monolithic group, and understanding the differences among them is critical for crafting effective solutions. The costs of the status quo are extremely high for individuals and for society."

According to Measure of America's analysis of a small subset of direct costs, youth disconnection cost taxpayers at least \$26.8 billion in 2013 alone.

“Disconnected young people tend to come from historically disadvantaged neighborhoods and segregated communities, meaning disconnection is not a spontaneously occurring phenomenon; it is an outcome years in the making,” added co-director Sarah Burd-Sharps. “We hope that *Zeroing In on Place and Race* will make previously invisible groups visible and help those working to reconnect young people and prevent future disconnection succeed in their efforts to provide all young people a meaningful shot at their own American Dreams.”

Although national patterns are generally mirrored in metro areas, important variations exist. For instance, a city can simultaneously be among the best for one racial or ethnic group and among the worst for another. The greater Boston metro area, which has a low overall disconnection rate (8.2 percent), is relatively good for white (6.8 percent) and black youth (9.8 percent), but not for Latinos (17.3 percent). In the Chicago metro area, both whites and Latinos are doing better than they are in the country as a whole (7.5 and 13.9 percent, respectively), but blacks are doing much worse (24.5 percent).

The report concludes with recommendations for cost-effective investments in preventing youth disconnection, including helping at-risk parents ensure their children are prepared to enter school; universal pre-K; high-quality K-12; and developing more diverse pathways to meaningful careers through measures like apprenticeship and mentoring programs that provide support, instruction, and real world job experience.

Zeroing In on Place and Race was made possible through the support of [Opportunity Nation](#) and [Gap Inc.](#)

“Ensuring the next generation has access to meaningful pathways to education and careers regardless of zip code, race, or gender must be our top priority,” says Russell Krumnow, managing director, Opportunity Nation. “To solve the youth unemployment crisis, we need to understand what youth disconnection looks like in our communities; *Zeroing In on Place and Race* provides the important data we need to spur our country to action.”

About Measure of America

An initiative of the **Social Science Research Council**, [Measure of America](#) provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulating fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards.

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