MEASUREOFAMERICA
of the Social Science Research Council

A DECADE UNDONE

2021 UPDATE

Kristen Lewis

THE MEASURE OF AMERICA
YOUTH DISCONNECTION SERIES

SSRC

Acknowledgements

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MEASURE OF AMERICA

Measure of America is a project of the **Social Science Research Council**, a century-old independent nonprofit that mobilizes knowledge for the public good. Measure of America creates easy-to-use and methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in America. Through reports, interactive websites and apps, and custom-built dashboards, Measure of America works with partners to breathe life into numbers, using data to identify areas of 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. Measure of America cares about youth disconnection because it hampers human development, closing off some of life's most rewarding and joyful paths and leading to a future of limited horizons and unrealized potential.

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DESIGN

This document's design was adapted from that of our 2020 report, which was designed by our longtime collaborator, Humantific.

HUMANTIFIC is an internationally recognized SenseMaking for ChangeMaking firm located in New York and Madrid. Humantific has pioneered the integration of visual sensemaking into multi-disciplinary innovation. We help multi-disciplinary teams and organizations innovate and build inclusive innovation cultures. Our focus is operationalizing cross-disciplinary innovation, making it understandable, teachable and real. Our hybrid approach integrates the best of human-centered design, strategic problem solving, and information visualization.

A DECADE UNDONE: 2021 UPDATE

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WHO ARE AMERICA'S DISCONNECTED YOUNG PEOPLE?

38,583,300

UNITED STATES YOUTH POPULATION

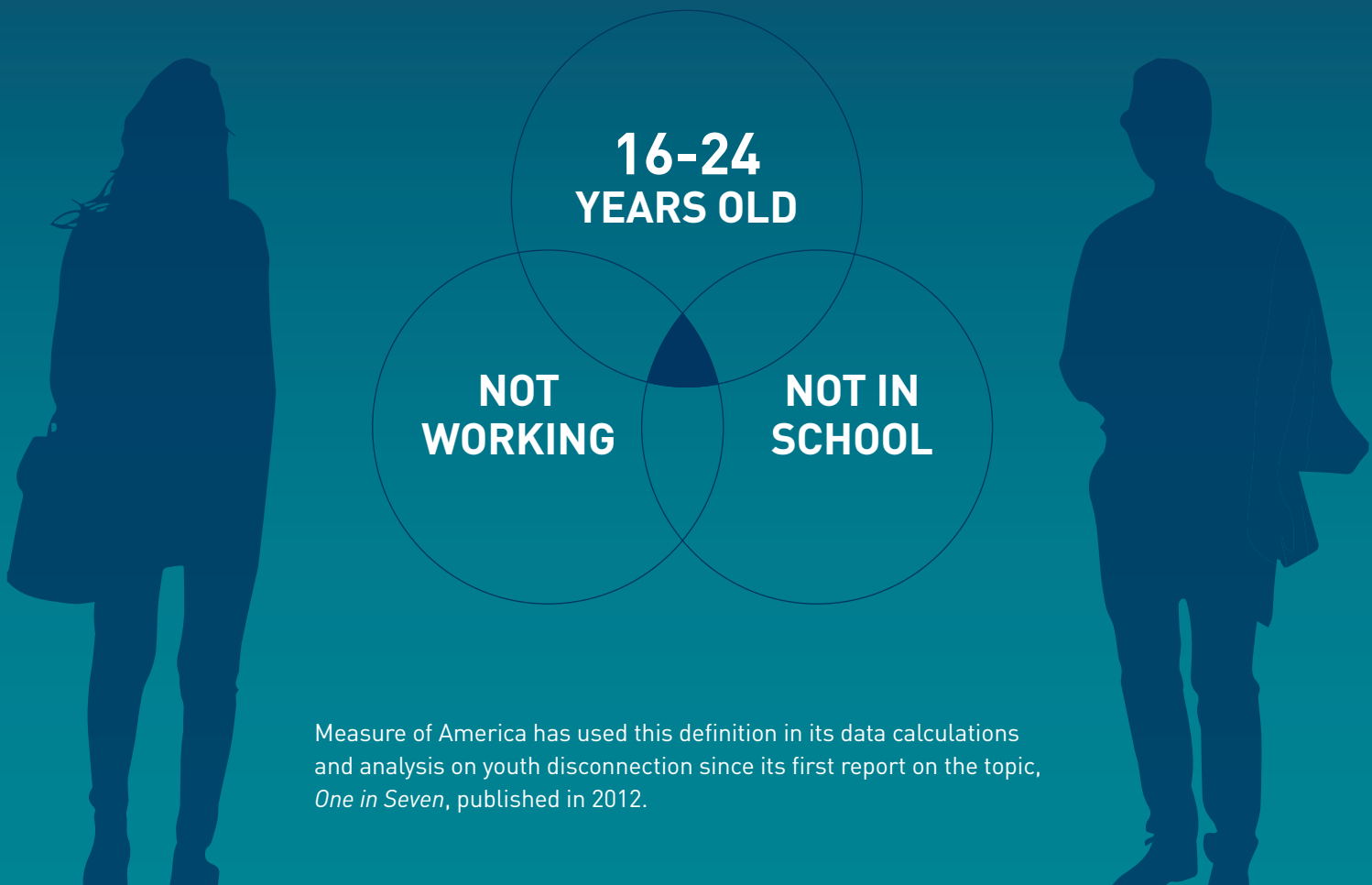
(Teens & Young Adults 16-24 Yeas Old)

10.7%

OF YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES ARE DISCONNECTED

(4,114,500 PEOPLE)

Measure of America defines disconnected youth as teens and young adults ages 16 to 24 who are neither in school nor working.



Measure of America has used this definition in its data calculations and analysis on youth disconnection since its first report on the topic, *One in Seven*, published in 2012.

WHO ARE AMERICA'S DISCONNECTED YOUNG PEOPLE?

	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)	CONNECTED YOUTH (%)
LIVING IN POVERTY	30.9	16.5
LIVING WITH A DISABILITY	17.4	5.4
LIVING IN AN INSTITUTION	5.9	0.3
DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL	23.8	2.9
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA/ NO FURTHER EDUCATION	52.3	23.3
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	5.2	9.1
WOMEN WITH CHILDREN	24.0	5.7
MARRIED	11.1	6.5
NONCITIZEN	7.3	5.6
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	6.9	4.0
UNINSURED	25.4	11.0
RECEIVES MEDICAID	37.4	18.8

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

INTRODUCTION

Disconnected youth are young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school and not working.

This report provides US youth disconnection rates for 2019—a year that now seems a lifetime ago, before Covid-19 profoundly and irreperably altered the landscape of the country and the world. We realize that what readers of the Measure of America youth disconnection series want to know right now is what happened to young people in 2020. We do, too. Unfortunately, the data we need to reliably calculate youth disconnection rates for 2020 will not be available from the Census Bureau until late 2021 or early 2022, at which time we will work as quickly as possible to calculate and release the new rates.[1]

We estimate, based on currently available youth unemployment data from the Bureau for Labor Statistics,[2] enrollment and employment data from the Census Current Population Survey,[3] and school closure information,[4] that in May 2020 as many as nine million young people were out of school and out of work, more than twice as many as in 2019. Given the decline in youth unemployment in the second half of 2020, we anticipate that the number for 2020 as a whole will be closer to six million—not as high as the early pandemic spike but still considerably higher than in the years after the Great Recession;[5] in 2010, 5.8 million youth were disconnected.

The 2019 numbers in this report nonetheless matter for a few reasons. First, they show a steady, decade-long drop in the youth disconnection rate, with nearly 1.7 million fewer young people in 2019 than in 2010 experiencing the painful and durable effects of being unmoored from school and work. This heartening development is worth celebrating: adults who did not experience disconnection during their teens and early twenties are more likely to own a home, report better health, and earn $31,000 more each year than those who did.[6] Second, they show that, despite welcome aggregate progress, gaps between racial and ethnic groups remained chasms. While Latino young people made comparatively quick progress over the decade, narrowing the gap with white youth considerably, Native American and Black young people continued to experience disconnection at much higher rates than white and Asian youth.

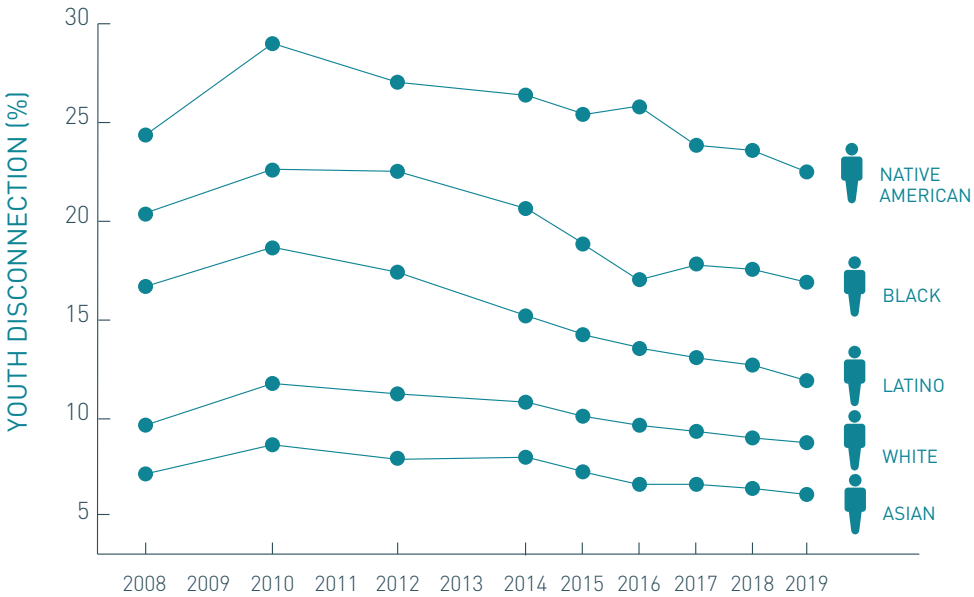
And third, as the federal government continues to work out the details of the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, the 2019 youth disconnection rates provide invaluable information about where to target aid. The 2019 rates create a vulnerability map, showing which neighborhoods were already struggling, pre-pandemic, to support meaningful, rewarding transitions to flourishing adulthoods for their young people. We know that this challenge became immeasurably more difficult in 2020 as high-disconnection communities, disproportionately home to low-income people of color, bore the heaviest burdens of exposure, illness, and death; despair and grief; job loss and food insecurity; and the widespread collapse of the childcare and educational systems.

As we argued in our last report, *A Decade Undone: Youth Disconnection in the Age of Coronavirus*, written at the height of the pandemic, communities located in rural and urban opportunity deserts—where, pre-Covid, one in four and one in five young people, respectively, were out of school and work—must be prioritized in the distribution of recovery aid.[7] Pre-pandemic, rural opportunity deserts were home to some 230,500 out-of-school, out-of-work young people, urban opportunity deserts to 650,400. Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 pandemic caused these numbers to increase.

Youth Disconnection from 2010 to 2019

In addition, in the conclusion to this report, we identify thirty counties where the combination of already-high youth disconnection rates (24 percent and up) and lengthy stretches of virtual-learning education during the 2020–2021 academic year has created an educational emergency. At least one in four young people in these hot spots was already disconnected in 2019, and many more were at risk of dropping out of high school, faced serious challenges in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education, or were only tenuously attached to the labor market. The pandemic pushed many of this latter group into disconnection. Students across the educational spectrum wrestled with aspects of distance learning, but young people who struggled academically pre-pandemic, especially those who relied on school to provide special education and behavioral services, faced the highest hurdles when schools shifted to a remote format. In these counties with high rates of disconnection and school closures, already- and newly-disconnected youth urgently need assistance to close preexisting educational gaps,

FIGURE 1 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2008-2019



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

regain the ground they lost in 2020, reconnect to the education system, and receive the help they need to gain a foothold in the labor market.

These counties, along with communities in urban and rural opportunity deserts, should be at the front of the line for the $211 billion earmarked for education and childcare. They should also be prioritized for benefits to individual opportunity youth, such as economic impact payments, child tax credits, rental assistance, and unemployment benefits, and to hard-hit communities in the form of support to local and tribal governments, broadband access, transportation, and health care.[8]

Log onto **www.measureofamerica.org/DYinteractive** for interactive data.

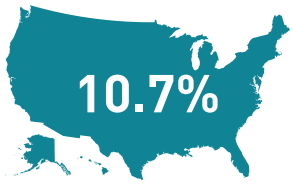
BOX 2 What Is the Source of the Data and Who Is Included?

Measure of America'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.

	AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS) DEFINITION
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'	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.

YOUTH DISCONNECTION **NATIONALLY**

The 2019 youth disconnection rate is 10.7 percent, or one in nine young people, down from 11.2 percent in 2018. This was the ninth consecutive year of decline in the share of young people neither working nor in school in the United States. Between 2010 and 2019, the youth disconnection rate fell 27 percent, driven largely by the sharp, recovery-fueled drop in youth unemployment—from over 18 percent in 2010, when the country was still reeling from the effects of the Great Recession, to 8 percent in 2019.[9] On the eve of the Covid-19 pandemic, the youth disconnection rate was lower than it had been in over a decade.



2019 YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATE

Characteristics of Disconnected Youth

Connected and disconnected young people differ in many ways that go beyond their current employment and educational status.

Poverty

Overall, 16.5 percent of connected youth and 30.9 percent of disconnected youth are poor. More than four in ten Black and Native American disconnected young women live in poverty (42.7 percent and 41.6 percent, respectively). They are nearly twice as likely to experience poverty as their connected counterparts.

2010: 1 in 7

2019: 1 in 9

Disability

Disconnected youth are more than three times as likely to have one or more disabilities as connected youth—17.4 percent as compared to 5.4 percent.

1/3

Almost one-third of disconnected young people live in a **poor household**.

Motherhood and marriage

Overall, disconnected young women are more than four times as likely to be mothers as connected young women. Disconnected Native American and Latino young women have the highest motherhood rates (25.6 percent and 27.7 percent, respectively). Overall, disconnected girls and young women are 2.5 times as likely to be married as their connected counterparts. Latina disconnected young women are three times as likely, Asian disconnected young women are nearly six times as likely, and Indian disconnected young women are more than seven times as likely to be married as their connected counterparts.

They are **nearly twice as likely** to live in poverty as connected young people.

Living Arrangements

Compared to connected youth, disconnected youth ages 16 and 17 are more than twice as likely to be living apart from both parents, 21.7 percent versus 8.3 percent. Over 90 percent of connected teens in this age group live with either both parents (six in ten) or one parent (three in ten). Living apart from one's parents at this age may indicate traumatic childhood experiences, and lacking parental guidance in the transition to adulthood poses significant challenges.

Institutionalization

Disconnected youth are more than twenty times as likely to be living in institutionalized group quarters (such as correctional facilities or residential health facilities) as their connected peers, 5.9 percent compared to just 0.3 percent. About one in six disconnected Black boys and young men are living in institutionalized group quarters of some kind, attesting to continued racial disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Limited Education

Disconnected youth are eight times as likely to have dropped out of high school as connected youth; about one in four disconnected young people left high school without a diploma. Disconnected youth are twice as likely to have completed high school but not moved on to any further education: 52.3 percent of disconnected youth have a high school diploma and no further education, compared to 23.3 percent of connected youth. Among young adults ages 21 to 24, disconnected young adults are less than half as likely to have completed a bachelor's degree as connected young adults.

Health Insurance

Disconnected youth are more than twice as likely to be uninsured as connected youth, 25.4 percent and 11.0 percent, respectively.

Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity

This is the ninth report in Measure of America's youth disconnection series, which has charted the steady decline in the rate of youth disconnection since 2010. Though the youth disconnection rate has fallen sharply, from 14.7 percent to 10.7 percent, huge gaps persist between young people from different racial and ethnic groups, different regions of the country, and different types of communities (see **SIDEBAR**).

Most race/gender groups saw a decrease in disconnection rates from 2018 to 2019. The largest decrease was for Native American girls and young women, from 24.8 percent to 20.8 percent. After Native American young women, Black young women had the second-largest decrease, from 14.8 percent to 13.7 percent. The relatively large drops for both of these groups are heartening as both had experienced an increasing disconnection rate from 2016 to 2018.

Girls and young women are less likely to be disconnected than boys and young men, 10.3 percent versus 11.0 percent. But the gender gap varies by race and ethnicity. Latina young women have slightly higher disconnection rates than their male counterparts, whereas for Black and white youth, young men do. Black young people have the largest gender gap in the youth disconnection rate of any racial or ethnic group—13.7 percent for Black girls and young women, compared to 19.5 percent for their male counterparts.

Native American Youth

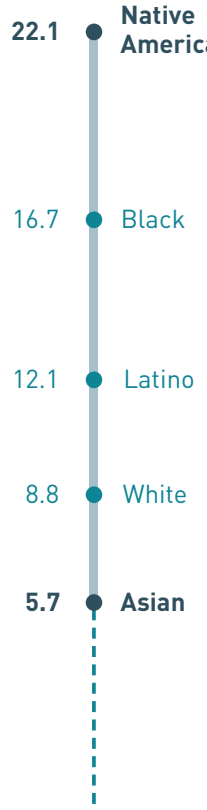
Native American teens and young adults have a disconnection rate of 22.1 percent, the highest of the United States' five major racial and ethnic groups. Because the Native American population is the smallest of the five groups, the number of Native American disconnected youth is likewise the smallest, approximately 64,600 young people. Native American teen boys and young men have the highest disconnection rate of any race/gender combination, 23.3 percent. Native American girls and young women have a disconnection rate of 20.8 percent.

Black Youth

Black teens and young adults have the second-highest disconnection rate, 16.7 percent, or 894,500 young people. As mentioned above, Black boys and young men are much more likely than their female counterparts to be disconnected, 19.5 percent compared to 13.7 percent, the largest gender gap of any racial or ethnic group.

22.1%
of Native American youth are disconnected, the highest rate of any US racial and ethnic group.

YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

Latino Youth

The Latino youth disconnection rate stands at 12.1 percent, or 1,081,500 young people. Latina girls and young women are slightly more likely than their male counterparts to be disconnected, 12.8 percent compared to 11.5 percent. We were able to calculate disconnection rates for several Latino subgroups: Mexican; Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban; Central American; and South American young people (see **SIDEBAR**). Rates ranged from 7.6 percent for South American young women to 16.8 percent for Central American young women. Mexican young people saw a significant decline in their disconnection rate from 2018 to 2019, from 12.9 to 12.1 percent. The disconnection rate of Central American boys and young men decreased substantially, from 11.8 percent to 9.9 percent, while the disconnection rate of South American boys and young men increased from 7.5 percent to 9.5 percent.

White Youth

The disconnection rate for white teens and young adults is 8.8 percent, the second-lowest rate. White teens and young adults make up the largest absolute number of disconnected youth, 1,787,200 people (even though whites have a lower-than-average rate, they make up the largest share—45.2 percent—of people in the 16-to-24 age range). White boys and young men are more likely than their female counterparts to be disconnected, 9.0 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively.

Asian Youth

Asian teens and young adults have the lowest disconnection rate, 5.7 percent, or 124,300 young people. Asian boys and young men have the lowest disconnection rate of any race/gender combination, 5.6 percent, a decrease from the previous year's rate of 6.4 percent. While data were insufficient to allow us to calculate disconnection rates for all Asian subgroups, we were able to calculate rates for Chinese, Indian, Filipino, and Vietnamese young women and men, and for Korean young people (data were insufficient to allow for gender disaggregation for this last group). The rates ranged from a low of 3.1 percent for Chinese girls and young women to a high of 6.8 percent for Indian girls and young women (see **SIDEBAR**).

YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY LATINO SUBGROUP

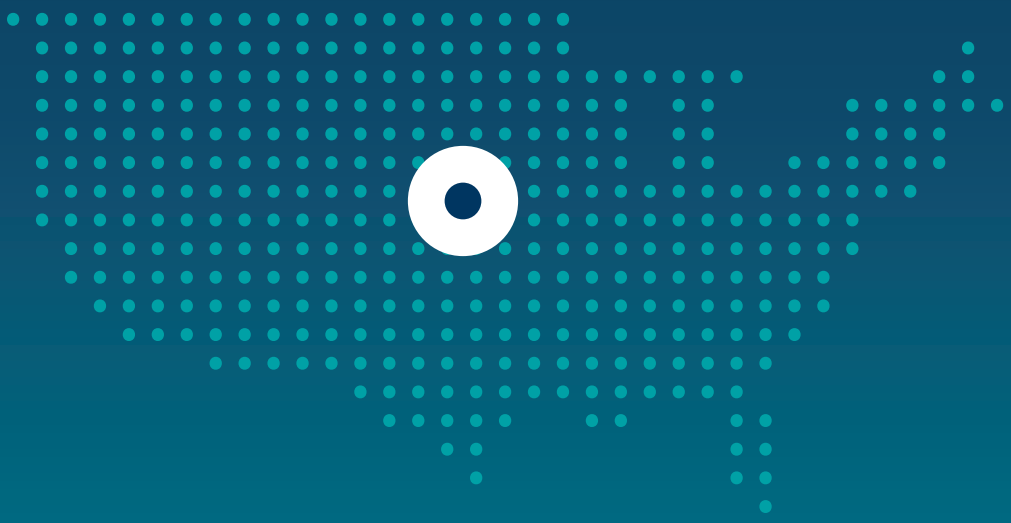
LATINO SUBGROUP	%	#
SOUTH AMERICAN	**8.6**	**38,900**
Men	9.5	22,000
Women	7.6	16,900
MEXICAN	**12.1**	**705,200**
Men	11.2	334,900
Women	13.1	370,300
PR, DR, CUBAN	**12.9**	**172,800**
Men	13.9	96,000
Women	11.9	76,800
CENTRAL AMERICAN	**13.2**	**108,000**
Men	9.9	42,800
Women	16.8	65,200

YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY ASIAN SUBGROUP

ASIAN SUBGROUP	%	#
CHINESE	**3.4**	**18,800**
Men	3.7	9,800
Women	3.1	9,000
KOREAN	**4.6**	**7,100**
PAKISTANI	**5.1**	**3,600**
INDIAN	**5.6**	**21,200**
Men	4.4	8,600
Women	6.8	12,600
VIETNAMESE	**6.0**	**14,300**
Men	6.7	8,300
Women	5.3	6,000
FILIPINO	**6.2**	**19,000**
Men	6.2	10,100
Women	6.3	8,900

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

YOUTH DISCONNECTION **BY PLACE**



PUBLIC USE MICRODATA AREAS
REGIONS
STATES
METRO AREAS
COUNTIES
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Public Use Microdata Areas

The Census Bureau defines the boundaries of public use microdata areas (PUMAs). They nest within states, are comprised of census tracts and counties, are almost always geographically contiguous, contain at least 100,000 people, and together cover the entirety of the United States. In urban areas, a county will be comprised of many PUMAs; Los Angeles County, for example, contains sixty-nine PUMAs. In rural areas, PUMAs are generally comprised of several contiguous counties.

There are several advantages to using PUMAs as a unit of analysis: they have roughly similar population sizes, allowing for apples-to-apples comparisons between them; the Census Bureau releases a great deal of statistical information by PUMA, making the geography useful to researchers; PUMAs allow for more granular analysis of urban areas, as the Los Angeles County example exemplifies; and PUMAs include every place in the US, combining counties with small populations to create a solid blanket of statistically reliable estimates from coast to coast. The disadvantages are that PUMA boundaries do not necessarily neatly align with more commonplace and well-known boundaries like city limits, and the Census Bureau's naming conventions can make for long, clunky, and sometimes confusing PUMA designations.

The ten best-performing PUMAs can all be found in affluent sections of large cities or in well-to-do suburbs of major metro areas, and all have youth disconnection rates below 3 percent. Many are home to large universities and as a result have unusually high proportions of connected young people.

The ten PUMAs facing the greatest challenges have youth disconnection rates that range from 28.9 percent to 35.0 percent. Two types of communities are found in this group: some, like parts of Washington, DC, Houston, or Chicago, are low-income, majority-minority neighborhoods in large metro areas; others, like Northeast Louisiana, Navajo & Apache Counties in Arizona, and the

TABLE 3 TOP-AND BOTTOM-SCORING PUMAS

RANK	Public Use Microdata Area	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection (%)
TOP 10			
1:	Boston—Allston, Brighton & Fenway; Massachusetts	700	1.5
2:	Boulder County (Central)—Boulder; Colorado	600	1.7
3:	Austin (Central); Texas	700	1.9
4:	Columbus (Central); Ohio	800	2.0
5:	Middlesex County (East)—Cambridge; Massachusetts	500	2.0
6:	Milwaukee County (Northeast); Wisconsin	500	2.2
7:	Washtenaw County (East Central)—Ann Arbor Area; Michigan	900	2.3
8:	Story & Boone Counties—Ames City; Iowa	800	2.4
9:	Chicago (North)—Lake View & Lincoln Park; Illinois	600	2.5
10:	Centre County; Pennsylvania	1,000	2.5
BOTTOM 10			
2342:	District of Columbia (East); District of Columbia	5,800	28.9
2343:	Columbia, Levy, Bradford, Gilchrist, Dixie & Union Counties; Florida	5,800	28.9
2344:	Northwest New Mexico—Navajo Nation; New Mexico	4,800	29.2
2345:	Houston (East Central)—East of I-45 & Inside Loop I-610; Texas	4,400	29.3
2346:	Logan, Mingo, Wyoming & McDowell Counties; West Virginia	2,800	29.4
2347:	Deep East Texas COG (East); Texas	3,900	29.6
2348:	Chicago (West)—North & South Lawndale, Humboldt Park, East & West Garfield Park; Illinois	8,900	30.8
2349:	Navajo & Apache Counties; Arizona	6,800	31.3
2350:	Pinal County (Central)--Florence, Eloy (Northeast) & Coolidge; Arizona	4,200	33.6
2351:	North Delta Regional Planning & Development District 2—Northeast Louisiana; Louisiana	5,900	35.0

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015–2019.

Navajo Nation in Northwest New Mexico, are isolated rural areas characterized by long-term, deep poverty. The country's extensive incarceration system is hauntingly visible on this list, which features both places where prisoners disproportionately come from (such as struggling neighborhoods in Chicago) and places where they are disproportionately incarcerated. For example, in Arizona's Central Pinal County, home to several correctional facilities, 26 percent of all youth and 67 percent of disconnected youth are behind bars.

WWW

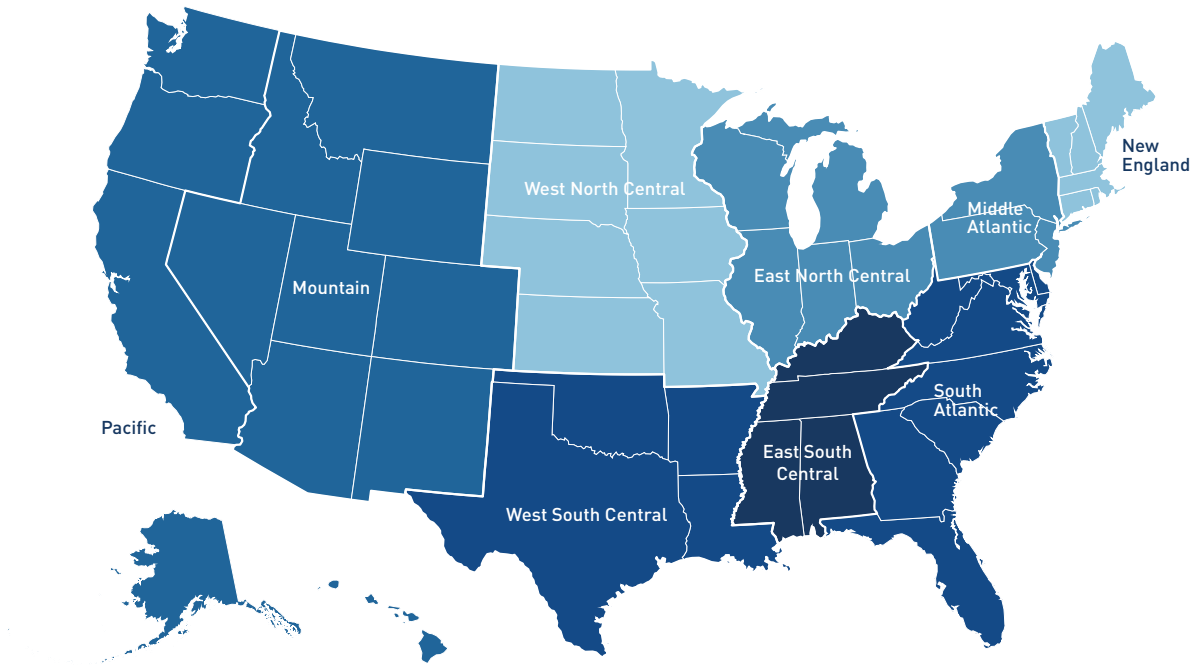
Log onto
www.measureofamerica.org/DYinteractive
to find the data for your PUMA.

Regions, States, Metro Areas, Counties, and Congressional Districts

REGIONS

The East South Central region, which includes Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee, has the highest disconnection rate of any region in the United States (12.9 percent). New England has the lowest youth disconnection rate of all US regions, 7.7 percent.

FIGURE 4 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY REGION



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

FIGURE 4 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY REGION, CONTINUED

REGION	OVERALL (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	White (%)	Latino (%)	Black (%)
United States	**10.7**	**11.0**	**10.3**	**8.8**	**12.1**	**16.7**
New England	**7.7**	9.1	6.3	6.6	12.5	9.4
West North Central	**9.0**	9.2	8.8	7.7	9.0	16.6
East North Central	**9.9**	10.4	9.3	8.1	9.8	20.1
Middle Atlantic	**10.1**	11.1	9.1	7.8	14.0	17.0
Pacific	**10.4**	10.8	10.0	9.6	11.3	17.5
Mountain	**10.9**	10.5	11.2	8.1	13.6	16.5
South Atlantic	**11.2**	11.7	10.6	9.4	10.9	15.8
West South Central	**12.3**	12.0	12.7	10.4	13.6	15.5
East South Central	**12.9**	13.0	12.8	11.4	12.3	17.3

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

We calculated regional disconnection rates for the three largest racial and ethnic groups: Black, Latino, and white young people. For Black young people, the East North Central region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin) has the highest rate, 20.1 percent. New England has the lowest disconnection rate for Black young people, 9.4 percent.

For Latino young people, the highest rate is found in the Middle Atlantic region (14.0 percent). The lowest rate is the West North Central region (9.0 percent).

For white young people, the East South Central region has the highest disconnection rate (11.4 percent) and New England boasts the lowest rate (6.6 percent).

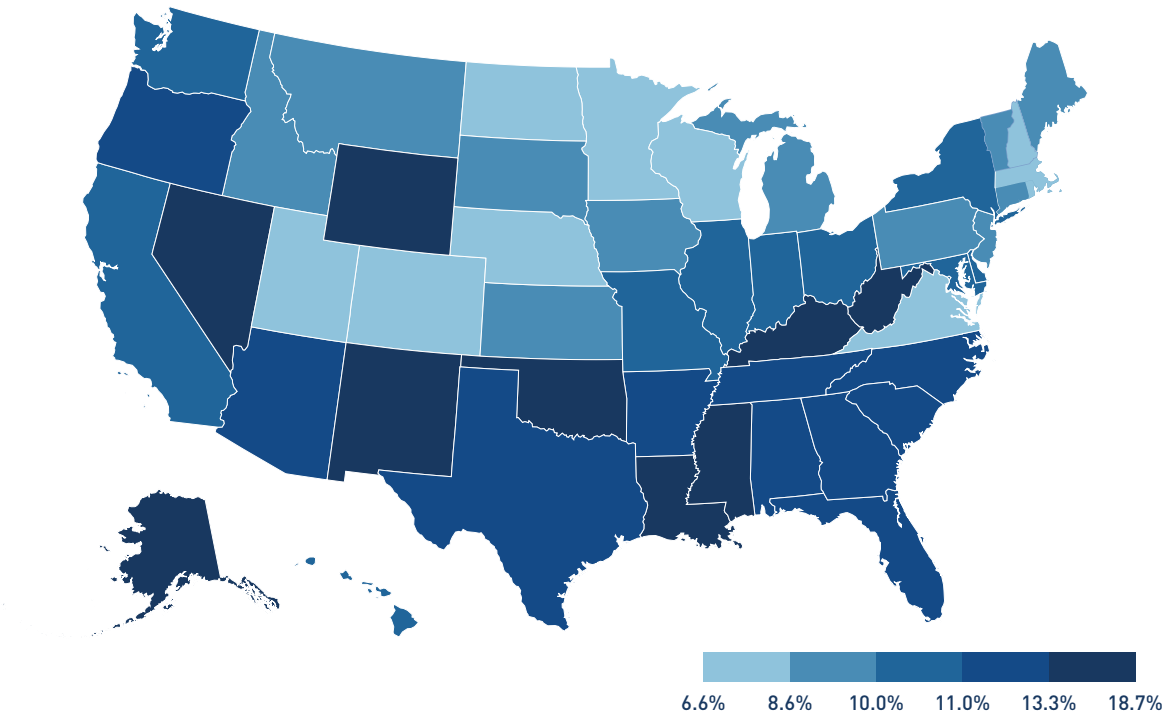
STATES

North Dakota has the lowest rate of youth disconnection (6.6 percent), followed by Massachusetts (6.7 percent) and Minnesota (6.9 percent). Alaska has the highest rate (18.7 percent), followed by the District of Columbia (15.6 percent) and Mississippi (15.0 percent). The disconnection rate for girls and young women in Alaska is even higher, 21.7 percent.

The highest disconnection rates for young men are in the District of Columbia (18.5 percent), Alaska (16.4 percent), and Mississippi (16.1 percent), and the lowest rates are in Minnesota (7.1 percent), Utah (7.3 percent), and Nebraska (7.4 percent).

Young women are most likely to be disconnected in Alaska (21.7 percent), Wyoming (14.6 percent), and Louisiana (13.3 percent) and least likely to be disconnected in Massachusetts (5.3 percent), New Hampshire (6.3 percent), and Minnesota (6.6 percent). The lowest rate of disconnection of any gender/state combination is for young women living in Massachusetts.

FIGURE 5 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY STATE



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

TABLE 6 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY STATE

Rank	State	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity (%)				
				Men	Women	Black	Latino	White
1	North Dakota	6.6	**6,500**					
2	Massachusetts	6.7	**57,200**	8.0	5.3		12.5	5.4
3	Minnesota	6.9	**43,300**	7.1	6.6			5.6
4	New Hampshire	7.5	**11,800**	8.7	6.3			7.0
5	Nebraska	7.7	**18,400**	7.5	8.0			5.7
6	Rhode Island	8.0	**10,800**	11.4				4.6
7	Virginia	8.1	**80,900**	8.5	7.6	10.7	8.3	7.2
8	Colorado	8.3	**55,400**	7.7	8.8		12.2	6.3
9	Utah	8.3	**38,100**	7.3	9.3		12.2	7.4
10	Wisconsin	8.5	**58,600**	9.7	7.3	22.9	12.2	6.5
11	Vermont	8.6	**7,000**					
12	Idaho	8.6	**18,200**	8.8	8.5			7.6
13	Maine	9.1	**39,700**	9.9	8.2	12.3	12.2	7.6
14	Connecticut	9.1	**12,500**	10.5	7.6			9.3
15	Pennsylvania	9.5	**136,500**	10.3	8.7	17.4	13.2	7.9
16	South Dakota	9.6	**10,000**	12.1	7.0			5.7
17	Kansas	9.6	**36,100**	8.9	10.4	17.5	11.0	8.6
18	Iowa	9.6	**38,000**	10.5	8.7			9.0
19	Michigan	9.8	**117,700**	10.1	9.5	20.0	9.1	7.7
20	Montana	9.8	**12,700**	9.3	10.3			8.8
21	New Jersey	9.9	**96,900**	11.0	8.7	18.7	13.0	7.1
22	Washington	10.0	**83,000**	9.8	10.1		11.3	9.7
23	Ohio	10.0	**135,800**	9.9	10.1	18.0	8.8	8.6
24	Illinois	10.0	**148,600**	10.8	9.3	21.3	9.8	7.6
25	Hawaii	10.2	**15,200**	9.2	11.5			

TABLE 6 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY STATE, CONTINUED

Rank	State	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity (%)				
				Men	Women	Black	Latino	White
26	California	10.3	**480,900**	10.8	9.7	18.4	11.2	8.9
27	Maryland	10.4	**69,800**	10.5	10.2	15.2	11.5	7.6
28	Delaware	10.5	**11,200**	11.1	9.9	14.2		9.3
29	New York	10.6	**235,900**	11.8	9.4	16.1	14.7	7.9
30	Indiana	10.7	**90,200**	11.9	9.4	20.2	9.7	9.9
31	Missouri	10.9	**77,700**	11.3	10.5	18.6		9.8
32	North Carolina	11.0	**141,000**	10.7	11.4	15.6	12.5	8.8
33	Florida	11.1	**248,300**	12.3	9.8	15.4	10.9	9.7
34	Oregon	11.5	**52,900**	12.5	10.4		12.6	12.0
35	Tennessee	11.7	**92,600**	10.9	12.5	17.5	12.1	10.2
36	Texas	11.9	**433,000**	11.3	12.5	14.9	13.8	8.8
37	Arizona	12.4	**108,300**	12.1	12.6	12.8	14.0	9.1
38	Alabama	12.7	**73,400**	12.2	13.3	14.8		11.7
39	Georgia	12.8	**166,900**	13.1	12.4	16.7	11.3	10.5
40	Arkansas	12.8	**46,900**	13.2	12.4	15.2		13.4
41	South Carolina	12.9	**76,600**	13.3	12.4	19.1		10.0
42	Oklahoma	13.3	**64,900**	14.0	12.5	23.9	12.5	12.1
43	Kentucky	13.4	**71,500**	14.8	11.9	13.2	12.6	13.2
43	Wyoming	13.6	**9,600**		14.6			10.1
45	New Mexico	14.1	**35,500**	14.1	14.0		14.1	9.7
46	Louisiana	14.2	**77,000**	14.2	14.3	15.6	17.1	13.3
47	Nevada	14.5	**47,400**	14.9	14.0	28.1	14.6	11.7
48	West Virginia	14.7	**28,500**	15.4	14.0			15.3
49	Mississippi	15.0	**57,400**	16.1	13.8	21.1		10.1
50	District of Columbia	15.6	**12,900**	18.5	13.2	30.5		
51	Alaska	18.7	**15,400**	16.4	21.7			14.5

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

In terms of change over time, Idaho achieved the largest drop in youth disconnection, from 13.1 percent in 2018 to 8.6 percent in 2019, a decrease of 34 percent. The District of Columbia experienced the largest increase in the share of disconnected young people, from 10.7 percent in 2018 to 15.6 percent in 2019, an increase of 46 percent. DC also has the highest rate of male youth disconnection, 18.5 percent, and the highest rate of Black youth disconnection, 30.5 percent. It may be more difficult for Black young adults to find work, given the growing Black unemployment rate in DC.[10] In addition, in recent years, the high school graduation rates for students of color in DC have been dropping.[11]

METRO AREAS

A metropolitan area is a central city and its surrounding towns, suburbs, and exurbs. Communities within metro areas are bound together by strong economic, social, and environmental ties, even when they cross state lines. Metro areas are a key unit of analysis for understanding youth disconnection rates, as they frame labor markets and higher education systems, which can be more aligned with metro areas rather than state or county lines.

Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH (6.0 percent) boasts the lowest youth disconnection rate of any metro area in the country, followed by San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA (6.4 percent), and San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA (6.6 percent). The highest youth disconnection rate can be found in Augusta–Richmond County, GA-SC (17.9 percent), followed by McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX (17.1 percent); Memphis, TN-MS-AR (16.6 percent); and the Bakersfield, CA, metro area (16.5 percent).

TABLE 7 YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA'S MOST POPULOUS METRO AREAS

Rank	Metro Area	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity (%)				
				Men	Women	Black	Latino	White
1	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	6.0	**36,200**	7.0	4.9		10.9	5.2
2	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	6.4	**30,100**	6.8	5.9	14.1	6.4	5.0
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	6.6	**13,500**	5.6	7.7		9.6	
4	Provo-Orem, UT	6.9	**8,900**		9.4			6.7
5	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	7.3	**30,900**	7.6	6.9			5.3
6	Pittsburgh, PA	7.5	**17,900**	8.7	6.3			6.2
7	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	7.6	**31,300**	8.3	6.7		7.8	8.5
8	Toledo, OH	7.8	**6,500**		9.7			
9	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	7.8	**8,900**					
10	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	7.9	**9,000**		8.8			6.8
11	Worcester, MA-CT	7.9	**9,300**	9.9				7.2
12	Syracuse, NY	8.0	**7,500**	11.3				7.8
13	Columbus, OH	8.0	**18,700**	7.6	8.5			7.8
14	Rochester, NY	8.0	**10,400**	9.2	6.8			5.6
15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	8.1	**32,900**	8.5	7.6			8.1
16	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	8.1	**16,300**	10.9	5.2			5.6
17	Akron, OH	8.2	**7,700**					
18	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	8.2	**12,600**	8.2	8.3		13.9	6.6
19	Greensboro-High Point, NC	8.2	**8,200**	9.9	6.6			6.8
20	Milwaukee-Wakesha-West Allis, WI	8.3	**14,600**					
21	Buffalo-Cheektowga-Niagra Falls, NY	8.3	**10,400**	8.2	8.4			5.8
22	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	8.3	**6,400**					7.8
23	Harrisburg-Carisle, PA	8.5	**5,600**					
24	Raleigh, NC	8.5	**14,800**	8.6	8.4	16.2		4.8
25	Colorado Springs, CO	8.5	**8,400**	6.5	11.1			7.3

TABLE 7 YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA'S MOST POPULOUS METRO AREAS, CONTINUED

Rank	Metro Area	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity (%)				
				Men	Women	Black	Latino	White
26	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	8.7	**60,000**	9.4	7.9	17.7	8.0	5.6
27	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton	8.7	**8,800**	10.4				
28	Austin-Round Rock, TX	8.7	**24,200**	7.9	9.6		11.8	6.6
29	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	8.8	**19,800**	9.7	7.6	9.8		7.4
30	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	8.8	**26,600**	8.4	9.1	11.5	9.5	7.3
31	Oxnard–Thousand Oaks–Ventura, CA	8.8	**8,600**	10.5	7.1		12.2	
32	Dayton-Kettering, OH	8.8	**8,500**		13.3			6.7
33	Salt Lake City, UT	8.8	**14,100**	8.4	9.2			7.5
34	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	8.9	**60,300**	8.2	9.5	16.3	8.1	5.4
35	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	8.9	**10,000**	10.9				6.5
36	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	9.2	**6,000**					
37	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	9.2	**141,700**	9.7	8.6	16.3	10.3	7.2
38	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	9.2	**29,700**	8.9	9.5		13.2	6.9
39	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	9.3	**8,400**	11.5				8.6
40	New Haven, Milford, CT	9.3	**9,900**	10.2				
41	Richmond, VA	9.5	**13,800**	10.1	8.8			6.8
42	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	9.6	**23,700**	9.1	10.2	10.9		9.3
43	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	9.6	**26,200**	11.2	7.9	24.0		7.7
44	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	9.9	**93,900**	8.6	11.1	12.7	11.4	7.8
45	Knoxville, TN	9.9	**11,700**	9.2	10.7			8.6
46	Cleveland-Elyria, OH	10.0	**22,200**	10.5	9.4	18.8		6.7
47	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	10.0	**109,200**	10.9	9.1	20.3	9.8	7.0
48	Tulsa, OK	10.2	**9,700**	9.3	11.2			9.1
49	Urban Honolulu, HI	10.3	**11,200**		11.6			
50	Columbia, SC	10.4	**11,900**	10.7	10.0			8.1

TABLE 7 YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA'S MOST POPULOUS METRO AREAS, CONTINUED

Rank	Metro Area	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity (%)				
				Men	Women	Black	Latino	White
51	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	10.4	**29,200**	11.1	9.8		12.9	10.9
52	Kansas City, MO-KS	10.7	**27,600**	9.8	11.5	19.1	15.9	8.1
53	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	10.7	**9,200**					11.2
54	St. Louis, MO-IL	10.8	**34,500**	12.2	9.4	17.9		9.5
55	Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	10.8	**25,700**	13.7	7.9			9.3
56	Springfield, MA	11.0	**8,100**		10.3		21.5	5.9
57	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	11.0	**228,800**	12.1	9.7	17.4	14.7	7.3
58	Sacramento--Roseville--Arden-Arcade, CA	11.0	**30,800**	14.6	7.2		7.9	10.6
59	Charolotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	11.0	**33,300**	11.1	10.9	13.5	13.4	8.8
60	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	11.0	**50,600**	10.7	11.4	20.0		7.4
61	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	11.1	**7,500**					
62	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	11.2	**70,100**	11.8	10.5	14.3	10.8	9.7
63	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	11.3	**36,500**	12.2	10.3	16.4		8.7
64	Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	11.5	**14,200**	12.0	10.9			10.2
65	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	11.6	**83,300**	11.2	11.9	15.2	10.7	9.2
66	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	11.6	**67,500**	11.2	11.9		13.8	9.0
67	Albequerque, NM	11.6	**11,600**					
68	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	11.7	**9,900**	14.4				9.0
69	Chattanooga, TN-GA	11.8	**8,400**	10.0	13.6			11.4
70	Tucson, AZ	11.8	**16,800**	12.0	11.6		12.8	9.3
71	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	11.8	**16,600**	14.4	9.1			10.7
72	Baton Rouge, LA	11.8	**13,300**	13.8				
73	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	11.9	**37,200**	13.5	10.2	18.3	11.3	10.7
74	Wichita, KS	12.0	**10,000**	13.0				12.8
75	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	12.0	**39,400**	11.1	13.0		13.0	8.3

TABLE 7 YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA'S MOST POPULOUS METRO AREAS, CONTINUED

Rank	Metro Area	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Youth Disconnection by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity (%)				
				Men	Women	Black	Latino	White
76	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	12.5	**105,000**	11.7	13.3	14.6	15.2	7.7
77	Stockton-Lodi, CA	12.6	**11,900**	12.0	13.3		15.2	
78	Jacksonville, FL	12.8	**20,600**	14.6	10.8	20.0		10.6
79	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	13.1	**10,600**	15.2	10.9			13.2
80	Oklahoma City, OK	13.2	**24,900**	14.7	11.6			11.0
81	Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	13.3	**9,400**	10.7	16.0			13.0
82	Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario, CA	13.4	**79,000**	12.9	13.9	27.3	12.2	13.5
83	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	13.6	**18,700**	14.7	12.4	15.8		11.6
84	El Paso, TX	13.8	**16,500**	13.1	14.6		15.2	
85	Winston-Salem, NC	13.9	**10,300**		15.8			
86	Jackson, MS	14.5	**11,700**		11.2	18.7		
87	New Orlean-Metaire, LA	14.5	**19,000**	16.2	12.7	13.7		15.5
88	Fresno, CA	14.6	**18,200**	15.9	13.2		14.7	
89	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	14.6	**13,200**	14.0				13.6
90	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	15.9	**38,100**	15.8	16.0	27.7	15.6	13.2
91	Bakersfield, CA	16.5	**18,500**	17.7	15.0		15.0	16.2
92	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	16.6	**31,400**	15.0	18.4	23.7		8.9
93	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	17.1	**22,000**	16.6	17.6		16.9	
94	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	17.9	**14,300**	19.1	16.5			15.9

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

COUNTIES

Counties are defined by the Census Bureau as the primary legal divisions of most states. Most counties are functioning governmental units in themselves, meaning that county stakeholders have key decision-making power on policies related to youth disconnection.

TABLE 8 TOP- AND BOTTOM-SCORING COUNTIES

10 Lowest-Disconnection Counties

County	State	County Type	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)
Harrisonburg City	Virginia	Small City	2.2	400
Tompkins County	New York	Small City	2.7	800
Whitman County	Washington	Town	2.8	500
Chittenden County	Vermont	Small City	3.0	900
Mongomery County	Virginia	Small City	3.1	900
Hampshire County	Massachusetts	Medium City	3.2	1,300
Centre County	Pennsylvania	Small City	3.2	1,400
Wood County	Ohio	Medium City	3.4	900
Monroe County	Indiana	Small City	3.5	1,400
Johnson County	Iowa	Small City	3.5	1,200

10 Highest-Disconnection Counties

County	State	County Type	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)
Telfair County	Georgia	Rural	47.7	700
Tyler County	Texas	Rural	49.6	1,400
Custer County	Idaho	Rural	50.0	200
Lassen County	California	Town	54.2	2,200
Lincoln County	Arkansas	Small City	55.1	700
Forest County	Pennsylvania	Rural	60.9	500
Childress County	Texas	Rural	62.3	600
Hancock County	Georgia	Town	71.3	600
Stewart County	Georgia	Rural	76.1	600
East Carroll Parish	Louisiana	Rural	81.0	800

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015-2019.

Counties can range from rural areas or townships to large cities and urban centers. Rural counties have by far the highest rate of youth disconnection, 17.3 percent. They also, however, have the lowest total population and total youth population, meaning that the number of disconnected youth in rural counties (341,800) is the lowest by head count of all county types. Towns, the least-dense type of county following rural counties, have the second-highest disconnection rate (13.3 percent). Suburban counties have the lowest youth disconnection rate, 9.9 percent.

Rural counties have by far the highest rate of youth disconnection, 17.3 percent.

County youth disconnection rates have the greatest range of any unit of geography. Virginia's Harrisonburg City, a small city, has the lowest rate of youth disconnection in the country (2.2 percent), while Louisiana's East Carroll Parish has the highest (81.0 percent), a 78.8-percentage-point difference. The counties with the second- and third-highest youth disconnection rates are both found in Georgia: Stewart County and Hancock County (76.1 percent and 71.3 percent, respectively).

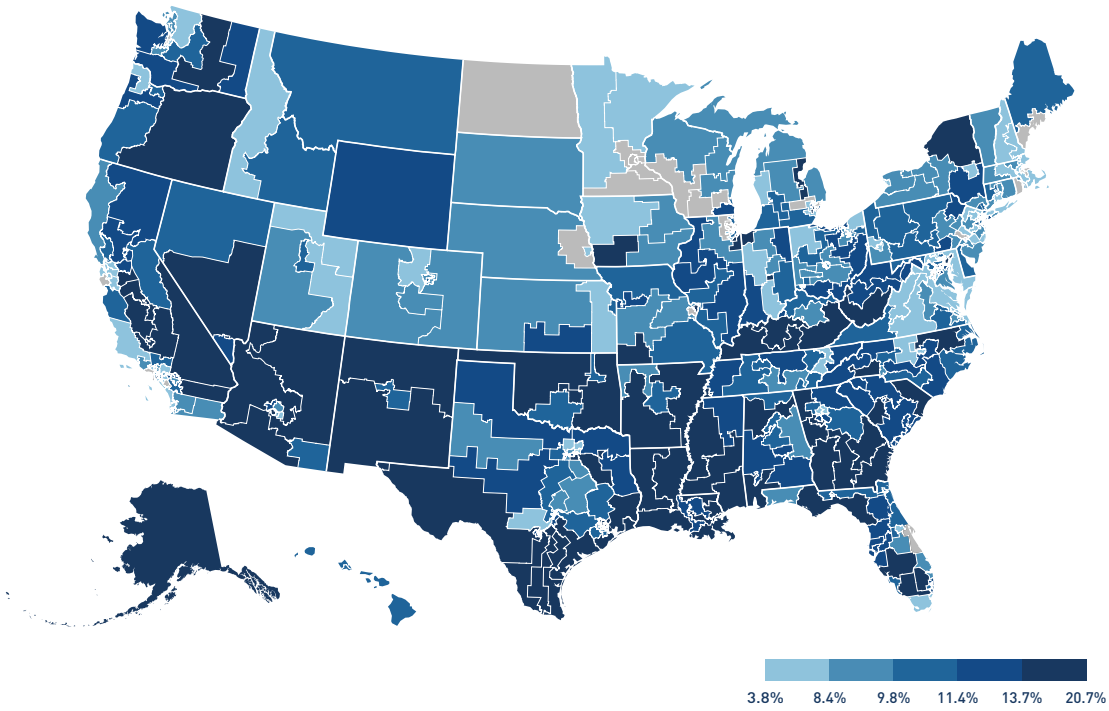
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

As is the case with the other geographies examined in this section, the youth disconnection rate varies widely by congressional district. Colorado's 2nd congressional district, which includes suburbs north and west of Denver, has the lowest youth disconnection rate (3.8 percent). Nevada District 1, which includes most of Las Vegas, is home to the highest youth disconnection rate, 20.7 percent.

The male youth disconnection rate is highest in Georgia's 2nd congressional district (24.6 percent) and lowest in Utah's 3rd congressional district (5.6 percent) in the southern and eastern part of the state. The female disconnection rate is highest in Michigan's 13th congressional district (23.2 percent), which includes portions of Detroit and its suburbs. The lowest rate for girls and young women is in New York's 24th congressional district (6.3 percent), which includes Cayuga, Onondaga, and Wayne Counties; Syracuse is its largest city.

Nevada District 1 has the highest youth disconnection rate, 20.7 percent.

FIGURE 9 YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019.

CONCLUSION

Disconnected young people hail disproportionately from low-income communities of color—communities that are nearly always most harmed by and slowest to recover from disasters of all sorts. The Covid-19 pandemic is no different. These communities and the young people who live in them must move to the front of the line when it comes to distribution of aid from the American Rescue Plan. This moment represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest appropriately ambitious sums in people and places that need the most but almost always get the least.

In **communities located in rural and urban opportunity deserts**, high-quality educational and employment opportunities are scarce, residential segregation is stark, and twenty-first-century infrastructure like public transportation, broadband, and childcare are inadequate. Pre-pandemic, these areas were home to some of the most acute challenges facing disadvantaged young people and the highest rates of disconnection for youth of every racial and ethnic group. **Building an infrastructure of opportunity in these places is among the best possible investments of American Rescue Plan dollars.** They include urban areas like Lancaster in northern Los Angeles County (where the disconnection rate is 20.1 percent), the Lawndale, Humboldt Park, and Garfield Park area in Chicago (31.8 percent), and the Hunts Point, Longwood, and Melrose sections of the Bronx (29.0 percent); and rural areas like the Lakota Region (27.4 percent); Northeast Louisiana (36.1 percent); and Southwest Alabama (28.9 percent). All opportunity desert communities can be found here on Measure of America's interactive map.

Another priority for the American Recue Plan is **counties where disconnection rates topped 24 percent in 2019 and where at least half of the K–12 student population was not engaged in in-person learning during most of the 2020–2021 school year (September 2020 to April 2021).**[12] Evidence from California—the state with some of the lowest rates of in-person instruction during the pandemic—shows that districts with larger shares of low-income students were three times as likely to remain in distance-learning even as schools began to open.[13] Though some students, such as those experiencing social anxiety or those who had faced discrimination or bullying at school, welcomed certain aspects of distance learning, research shows that virtual instruction has had many harmful effects on young people, making clear the need to swiftly and substantially invest in targeted learning recovery and reengagement efforts.[14] This is particularly urgent for the post-pandemic priority counties listed in **TABLE 10**, where high disconnection rates and longer durations of learning remotely combined to create areas of profound educational need. During the early and most-acute stages of the pandemic, reasonable people could disagree about how to most appropriately address the educational, developmental, and mental health needs of young people while also protecting public health. Now what's needed is clear: young people in high-disconnection neighborhoods who have been cut off from in-person learning for the better part of a year need all the help we can offer to catch up and move forward.

TABLE 10 POST-PANDEMIC PRIORITY COUNTIES

County	State	Youth Disconnection (%)	Youth Disconnection (#)	Student Enrollment	Virtual (%)	County Type
Lake	Tennessee	42.4	400	800	80.0	Rural
Morgan	Kentucky	37.7	500	2,000	62.9	Rural
Hardeman	Tennessee	36.4	1,100	3,500	80.0	Rural
Apache	Arizona	33.2	3,100	13,600	51.4	Rural
McKinley	New Mexico	32.7	3,100	15,700	60.0	Town
Sunflower	Mississippi	32.6	1,100	3,600	68.6	Town
Magoffin	Kentucky	32.2	400	2,100	62.9	Rural
Luna	New Mexico	32.1	900	5,400	94.0	Town
Breathitt	Kentucky	31.6	500	2,200	62.9	Rural
Greensville	Virginia	30.6	300	2,200	90.1	Rural
Adams	Mississippi	30.6	1,000	3,200	68.6	Town
Humphreys	Mississippi	30.6	300	1,600	68.6	Rural
Del Norte	California	30.1	800	4,300	76.6	Town
Navajo	Arizona	29.9	3,700	21,800	51.4	Town
Trinity	California	29.7	300	1,500	79.3	Rural
Yazoo	Mississippi	28.7	900	3,900	68.6	Medium City
Brunswick	Virginia	28.5	500	1,600	90.1	Rural
Floyd	Kentucky	28.0	1,100	5,800	62.9	Rural
Adams	Washington	28.0	800	5,200	50.3	Town
Jefferson	Washington	26.6	500	2,700	83.3	Rural
McNairy	Tennessee	26.5	700	4,200	80.0	Rural
Sussex	Virginia	25.9	400	1,100	90.1	Suburb
Granville	North Carolina	25.6	1,700	9,000	84.4	Town
Morgan	Missouri	25.6	500	2,100	50.1	Rural
Cibola	New Mexico	25.5	800	4,400	76.6	Town
Lawrence	Kentucky	25.4	400	2,500	62.9	Rural
Lauderdale	Tennessee	25.2	800	4,000	80.0	Rural
Washington	Mississippi	25.0	1,400	7,900	68.6	Town
Pend Oreille	Washington	24.4	300	1,700	69.8	Medium City
Holmes	Mississippi	24.2	700	3,100	68.6	Rural

Source: Source: Youth Disconnection: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015–2019. Virtual Schooling: Burbio School Opening Tracker, 2020–2021. See methodology note for more on the selection of these counties.

REFERENCES

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Who Is Considered a "Disconnected Youth"?

Youth disconnection rates in this report are calculated by Measure of America using employment and enrollment data from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) of the US Census Bureau. Disconnected youth, also referred to as opportunity youth, are teenagers and young adults 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 who are actively looking for work are considered disconnected.

Several data sources exist that can be used for calculating youth disconnection. As a result, researchers working with different datasets, or using different definitions of what constitutes disconnection, can arrive at different numbers for this indicator. A good summary of these various definitions can be found on a Huffington Post blog piece from September 2016 here.

Measure of America uses the Census Bureau's 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 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.

Methods

In this report, the youth disconnection rates and numbers at the national, state, congressional district, and metro area levels use 2019 data. Estimates at the county and public use microdata area (PUMA) level use 2015–2019 (five-year) data. Time series data are one-year estimates from the relevant year.

The ACS is an annual survey conducted by the Census Bureau that samples a subset of the overall population. As with any data drawn from surveys, there is some degree of sampling and nonsampling error inherent in the data. Thus, comparisons between similar values on any indicator should be made with caution since these differences may not be statistically significant.

In order to arrive at the percentage of disconnected youth, the total number of disconnected young people and the total number of young people overall are calculated for each geographic area from the ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. Not in school means that a young person has not attended any educational institution and has also not been home schooled at any time in the three months prior to the survey date. Not working means that a young person is either unemployed or not in the labor force at the time they responded to the survey. Disconnected youth are young people who are simultaneously not in school and not working. This population cannot be estimated by simply adding the number of young people not enrolled in school to the number of young people not working because many students in this age range do not work and many young workers are not in school.

Calculating Metro Area Youth Disconnection and Identifying the Largest Metro Areas

The US Census Bureau provides a list of metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) by population size. The top one hundred MSAs include Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Michigan; Madison, Wisconsin; Durham-Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Boise City, Idaho; Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, Florida; and North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, Florida. But because the standard error of the youth disconnection estimate for these metro areas were too large to provide a reliable estimate, these MSAs are not included in this report.

The employment and enrollment data needed to calculate youth disconnection for metro areas are not available directly by metro area from the ACS. Metro areas were custom built up by Measure of America from the PUMAs that make up metro areas. In cases where a PUMA falls partially within two or more metro areas, it is included in the metro area where it has the largest population. If the PUMA falls partly in and partly outside a metro area, it is included in the metro area.

Due to changes in the definitions of metro areas by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), findings from this report for specific metro areas are not directly comparable to findings from Measure of America's first three reports on youth disconnection: *One in Seven: Ranking Youth Disconnection in the 25 Largest Metro Areas*, *Halve the Gap by 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*, and *Zeroing In on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*. They are comparable to the previous three reports: *Promising Gains, Persistent Gaps: Youth Disconnection in America*, *More Than a Million Reasons for Hope: Youth Disconnection in America Today*, and *Making the Connection: Transportation and Youth Disconnection*.

Counties

US county and county equivalent (as defined by the federal government) estimates are custom tabulations provided by special arrangement with the US Census Bureau. Counties range in size from over 10 million to under one hundred residents. Because many counties are relatively small, disconnected youth rates for each county in this report are calculated using five-year estimates from 2015–2019. Counties with disconnected youth populations considered statistically unreliable have been removed from the analysis.

Urban-Rural Classification of Counties

There are multiple definitions of urban and rural areas used by different federal agencies in the United States. In this report, the youth disconnection estimates for each of the six urban-rural categories use the taxonomy developed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Its schema places each of the 3,154 counties in the United States into one of six categories: large central metro, large fringe metro, medium metro, small metro, micropolitan, and non-core. Further details on this classification are here. For ease of communication, these six categories have been renamed to commonly used terms: urban centers, suburbs, medium-sized cities, small cities, towns, and completely rural areas. The table above contains the definitions used by NCHS in classifying counties.

Based on the most recent NCHS county categorizations (2013), each county was assigned to a category in the above schema. Then, using county-level estimates prepared for MOA by the Census Bureau, we calculated an aggregate disconnected youth rate for each of the six county classifications by dividing the total number of disconnected youth in a given county classification by the total number of people ages 16–24 in a given county classification.

Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs)

This report includes youth disconnection estimates for each public use microdata area in the country. PUMAs are the smallest geographic unit of the Public Use Microdata Sample. They are defined by the US Census Bureau, are built out of census tracts and counties, and have populations of at least 100,000 people. Due to this population threshold, urban areas may contain multiple PUMAs within a county whereas in rural areas a PUMA may cover multiple counties. There are 2,351 PUMAs within the 50 US states.

Post-Pandemic Priority Counties

To calculate the percentage of virtual schooling during the September 2020 through April 2021 school year we purchased data from Burbio.com. Burbio compiled data across the U.S. counties to calculate the number of weeks the school district was virtual only. We then applied that number to the total number of weeks calculated to estimate the percent of the school year that the district was virtual and not in-person across all grades.

TYPE OF COUNTY	DEFINITION
URBAN CENTERS (Large Central metro)	Counties within metro areas with populations **1,000,000 or more**
SUBURBS (Large fringe metro)	Counties within metro areas with populations **1,000,000 or more that are not urban centers**
MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES (Medium metro)	Counties within metro areas with populations **between 250,000 and 999,999**
SMALL CITIES (Small metro)	Counties containing cities with populations **between 50,000 and 249,999**
TOWNS (Micropolitan)	Counties within metro areas with populations **between 10,000 and 49,999**
COMPLETELY RURAL AREAS (Non-core)	Counties **with no cities larger than 10,000**

DEFINITIONS

Disability – Disability status in this report refers to any enduring emotional, physical, or mental condition that makes everyday activities like walking, dressing, or remembering things difficult and restricts an individual's ability to work or to perform basic required tasks without assistance. This is self-reported; individuals who report having such a condition in the ACS are counted as having a disability. Those who do not are counted as not having a disability.

Group Quarters – The US Census Bureau refers to people who live in any kind of non-household living arrangement as living in "group quarters". These can be institutional group quarters such as correctional or supervised medical facilities or non-institutional group quarters such as college or university dormitories, military bases, or group homes. One of the primary advantages of using the ACS as the data source for this research is that the survey includes young people living in group quarters.

Metro Area – Metro areas used in this report are formally known as metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), geographic areas defined by the OMB and used by the US Census Bureau and other government entities. MSAs constitute counties grouped around an urban center and include outlying suburban and exurban counties from which a substantial percentage of the population commutes to the urban center for work.

PUMA – Public use microdata areas, or PUMAs, are the smallest geographic unit of the Public Use Microdata Sample. They are defined by the US Census Bureau, are built out of census tracts and counties, and have populations of at least 100,000 people.

Regions – In the discussion of regional differences in disconnected youth rates, we use the four regions of the United States (Midwest, Northeast, South, and West) as defined by the US Census Bureau.

Racial and Ethnic Groups – Racial and ethnic groups in this report are based on definitions established by the OMB and used by the Census Bureau and other government entities. Since 1997, this office has recognized five racial groups and two ethnic categories. The racial groups include Asian, black, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and white. The ethnic categories are Latino and not Latino. People of Latino ethnicity may be of any race. In this report, members of each of these racial groups include only non-Latino members of these groups. All references to Asians, blacks, Native Americans, and whites include only those who are non-Latino. Throughout the report, the Asian racial group combines the OMB categories of both Asian and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Due to the very small population sizes of some of the racial and ethnic groups in some states and metropolitan areas, we cannot always present reliable estimates of youth disconnection for these groups. These are denoted in the report's tables.

In recognition of the fact that these racial groups are not monolithic, this report includes youth disconnection rates for seven of the largest Asian subgroups and the five largest Latino/a subgroups in the United States. The selection of these groups is based on national population estimates from the 2018 one-year ACS. The most populous Asian subgroups also include Japanese and Pakistani residents, but because the standard errors of the youth disconnection estimates for these groups were too large to provide reliable estimates, they are not included in this report.

Unreliable – With one exception, estimates with a coefficient of variance of greater than 0.2 are considered unreliable and are omitted from the report. Estimates at the PUMA-level with a coefficient of variance of greater than 0.3 are considered unreliable so that more geographies could be examined.

ENDNOTES

1 Measure of America'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.

2 Bureau of Labor Statistics, Youth Unemployment Series, May 2020.

3 US Census Bureau, "The Current Population Survey and Household Pulse Survey."

4 A special purchase of data from Burbio.com's K-12 School Opening Tracker.

5 The estimate for the total number of disconnected youth in May 2020 is based on several data sources. First, we reviewed a national estimate from the Census Household Pulse Survey which reported rates of unemployment and school enrollment, we factored in youth unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and finally we surveyed the percentage of schools across the country switching to remote-only schooling and estimated that this will have roughly double the impact on school enrollment compared to the Great Recession.

6 Lewis and Gluskin, *Two Futures*.

7 Lewis, *A Decade Undone*.

8 National Association of Counties, "American Rescue Plan Act Funding Breakdown."

9 Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, "Youth Unemployment Rate for the United States."

10 Lang, "The District's Economy Is Booming, but Many Black Washingtonians Have Been Left Out, Study Finds."

11 Abamu, "D.C. Reports a Drop in Graduation Rates, with Students of Color Most Affected."

12 To calculate rates of virtual versus in-person and hybrid instruction, we relied on a special purchase of data from the Burbio School Opening Tracker.

13 Wills and Fensterwald, "Over Half of California Public School Students Remain in Distance Learning."

14 Dorn et al., "COVID-19 and Learning Loss—Disparities Grow and Students Need Help."

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of the Social Science Research Council