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***A Portrait of Newark Reveals 18.4 Percent of Young People Aged 16 to 24 are Not in School and Not Working***

*Measure of America's latest report identifies a path forward for Newark's community members and includes resources for the City's most vulnerable – its 7,500 disconnected youth*

**Newark, NJ – April 24, 2024** – Newark Opportunity Youth Network, in partnership with Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council, today released *A Portrait of Newark*. The report is an extensive study of the well-being of the Newark community across race, ward, and gender and shines a light on Newark's young people aged 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school. The report findings are based on the American Human Development Index (HDI), derived from the United Nations Human Development Index, and measures three fundamental capabilities: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The report offers detailed analysis and data from across the five wards of Newark, serving as a resource to help community members, local and state governments, and advocates identify areas of opportunity for support and growth across the City of Newark.

Newark has incredible resources in the form of strong community ties and neighborhood identities, deeply rooted ethnic enclaves, and thriving community organizations. The city also has tremendous financial resources including a vast transportation infrastructure and a host of resource-rich educational, arts-related, and private-sector anchor institutions. Despite the flourishing local community, the people who live in Newark don't often benefit from the economic bounty the city attracts and creates.

A recent Measure of America [study](#) focused on the tri-state area revealed that Newark had the lowest level of well-being among the 170 neighborhood-and-town clusters that together make up the New York Metropolitan area. The HDI score for Newark is 4.10 out of 10, lower than that of Essex County (5.67) and New Jersey as a whole (6.35).

“Earlier this year, Governor Murphy signed the Youth Disconnection Prevention Bill into law which was a significant milestone for young people in New Jersey,” said Robert Clark, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Newark Opportunity Youth Network. “Despite the recent progress, the numbers in *A Portrait of Newark* speak volumes for the state of disconnected youth in Newark signaling that there is more work to be done. It is my hope that the report findings will motivate other cities across New Jersey to understand their own numbers and, in turn, inspire a statewide movement dedicated to creating a better foundation for all young people.”

“Our research aims to shine a light on the opportunity gaps that individuals across the City of Newark are facing,” said Kristen Lewis, Director of Measure of America. “Newark has experienced a series of shocks including racial tensions, police violence, and decades of disinvestment. Today, city residents continue to face residential segregation by race and ethnicity, income, and occupation. Policymakers and legislators should use *A Portrait of Newark*’s findings to support community members, particularly those groups – like disconnected youth – who are most vulnerable.”

**Key findings in *A Portrait of Newark* include:**

- **Overall well-being:** Black residents have the lowest HDI score (3.59) of the major racial and ethnic groups, and Asians have the highest (6.90), followed by whites (5.70), and Latinos (4.19). In terms of distribution by tract, Tract 16 in the West Ward has the lowest HDI score (1.42) compared to Tract 73 in the East Ward which is the highest-scoring census tract (5.56). In the North Ward, no tract scores below 3.36. Both the South and West Wards have tracts that score below 2.00, evidence of well-being challenges.
- **Health:** Life expectancy at birth in Newark (77.0 years) is 1.6 years shorter than life expectancy in Essex County and 2.6 years shorter than life expectancy in New Jersey as a whole. Newark women outlive their male counterparts by 7.4 years, on average—larger than the gender gap at the national level, about six years. Black residents of Newark have a life expectancy of 71.9 years, about five years less than the Newark average and nearly eight years less than the state average. The life expectancy for Black women is 75.9 years and for Black men, a shockingly low 67.4 years.
- **Education:** The share of Newark adults ages 25 and older who lack a high school diploma (22.1 percent) is more than double the state rate (9.4 percent). State residents are two and one-half times as likely to hold a four-year bachelor’s degree as Newark residents and three times as likely to hold a graduate degree. Newark’s Latino residents have the lowest overall levels of educational attainment with more than one in three adults ages 25 and older lacking a high school diploma. Latina women are more likely to have a bachelor’s degree than Latino men (12.7 percent versus 9.3 percent) – yet they earn significantly less.
- **Earnings:** Roughly one in four Newark residents live in poverty, more than double the national rate. The typical Newark resident earns \$33,300 per year, \$10,400 less than the Essex County median of \$43,700 and \$18,200 less than the New Jersey median of \$51,500. Among gender and racial and ethnic groups, Latina women earn the least (\$23,100), less than half of what the top-earning group, white men, earn (\$50,600). The median household income for a Newark commuter is more than \$91,000, nearly three times higher than the median household income of a Newark resident. Essex County is home to the largest Black-white and Latino-white gaps in median household income among the state’s 21 counties.

- **Opportunity youth:** The Newark rate of disconnection among teens and young adults (18.4 percent) is 7.5 percentage points higher than the national rate (10.9 percent) and 9.0 points higher than the rate in New Jersey as a whole (9.4 percent). Black youth make up 43.2 percent of the total youth population in Newark and 54.9 percent of the opportunity youth population. Boys and young men are more likely to be disconnected than girls and young women (18.8 percent versus 16.3 percent). Newark’s girls and young women have an unusually high disconnection rate.
- **Incarceration:** Approximately 900 young men ages 16-24 are institutionalized within Newark city limits; 100 of these young men are enrolled in some form of prison education.

In each ward across Newark are neighborhoods that score 3.5 or less out of the ten-point American Human Development Index. Despite the staggering data, *A Portrait of Newark*, in partnership with local community members and advocates, identifies areas where investment in people is an urgent priority. These priority areas include childcare, transportation, and broadband. The report serves as a guide for Newark’s community members, advocacy leaders, and policymakers and underscores the collective need for action.

“Instead of being discouraged by the information in the *Portrait of Newark* report, I feel even more inspired to continue to do advocacy work for positive change in my city,” said Kevin Able, a student at [LEAD Charter School](#) in Newark. “I know there are many other young people who feel the same way and would love the opportunity to ensure everyone in Newark has the resources they need to thrive. My hope is that young people are invited to sit, and actively participate, at all tables where discussions about improving the lives of residents are taking place.”

*A Portrait of Newark* is based on 2018–2022 data, the latest available from the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau. The full report is available [here](#). It was released at a launch event hosted by the Newark Opportunity Youth Network at which young leaders had the opportunity to share their stories, respond to the data from the report in real time, and express their vision for a brighter future for the City of Newark.

### **About Newark Opportunity Youth Network**

Newark Opportunity Youth Network (NOYN) is New Jersey’s leading advocate of opportunity youth with a body of replicable initiatives that are designed to address youth disconnection. These initiatives, organized around four key elements of Education, Workforce Development, Policy Advocacy, and Systems Building, work in tandem to accomplish NOYN’s mission to re-engage opportunity youth while drastically changing systems that inhibit their success.

### **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.