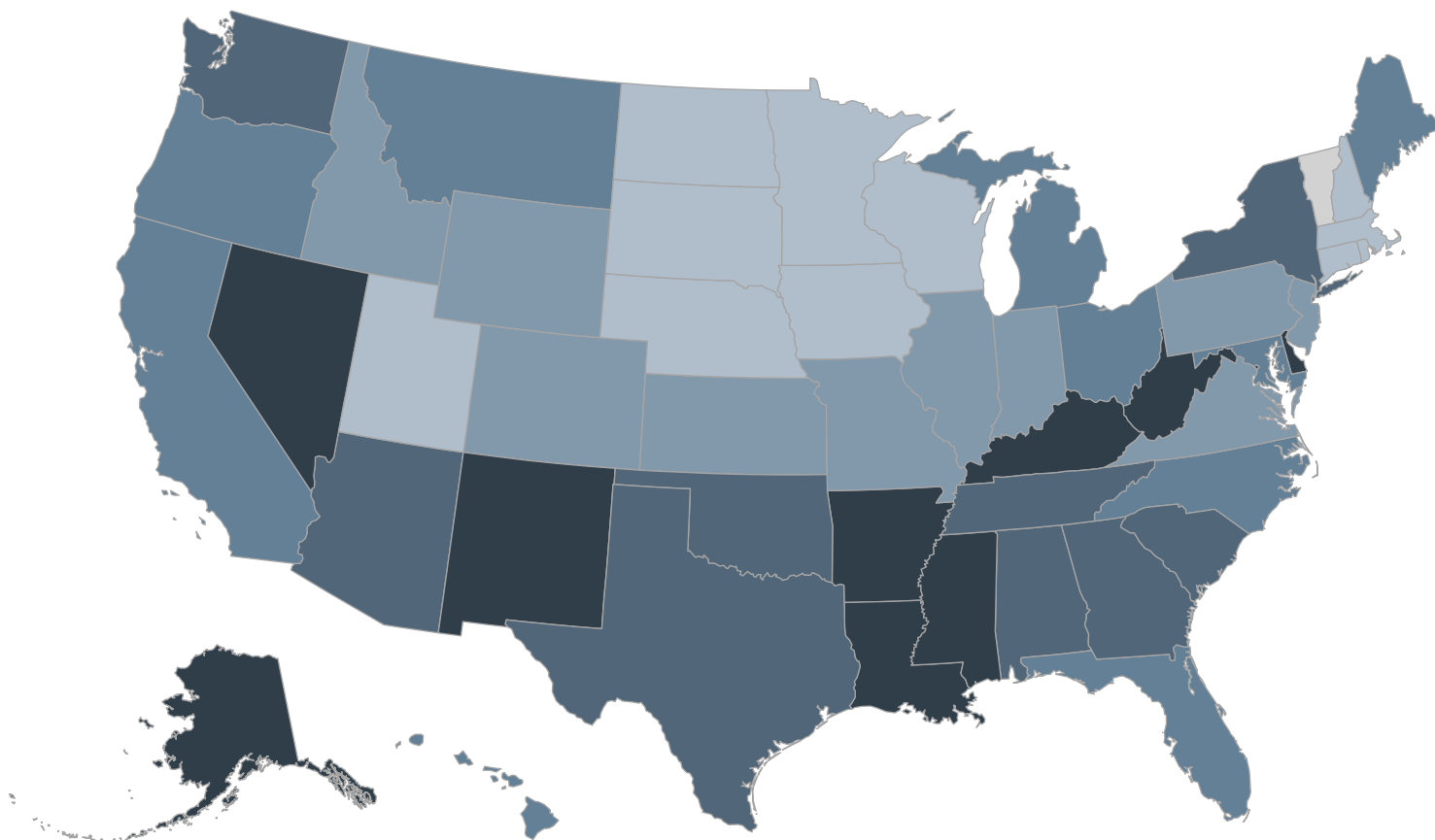


More than a Million Reasons for Hope

Youth Disconnection in America Today



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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.

MORE THAN A MILLION REASONS FOR HOPE

YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA TODAY



In 2016 the number of young people disconnected from both work and school declined for the sixth year in a row. The 2016 youth disconnection rate is 11.7 percent, an estimated 4.6 million youth. This represents a 20 percent decrease since 2010, when disconnection peaked in the aftermath of the Great Recession—about 1.2 million fewer young people.

Measure of America began calculating the youth disconnection rate and analyzing its causes and implications for human development in 2012. Disconnected youth, also known as opportunity youth, are teenagers and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor working. Disconnected young people are unmoored from the institutions that not only confer the credentials necessary to thrive as adults, but also give structure to their days and provide the opportunity to discover interests, form social networks, develop skills, and build confidence.

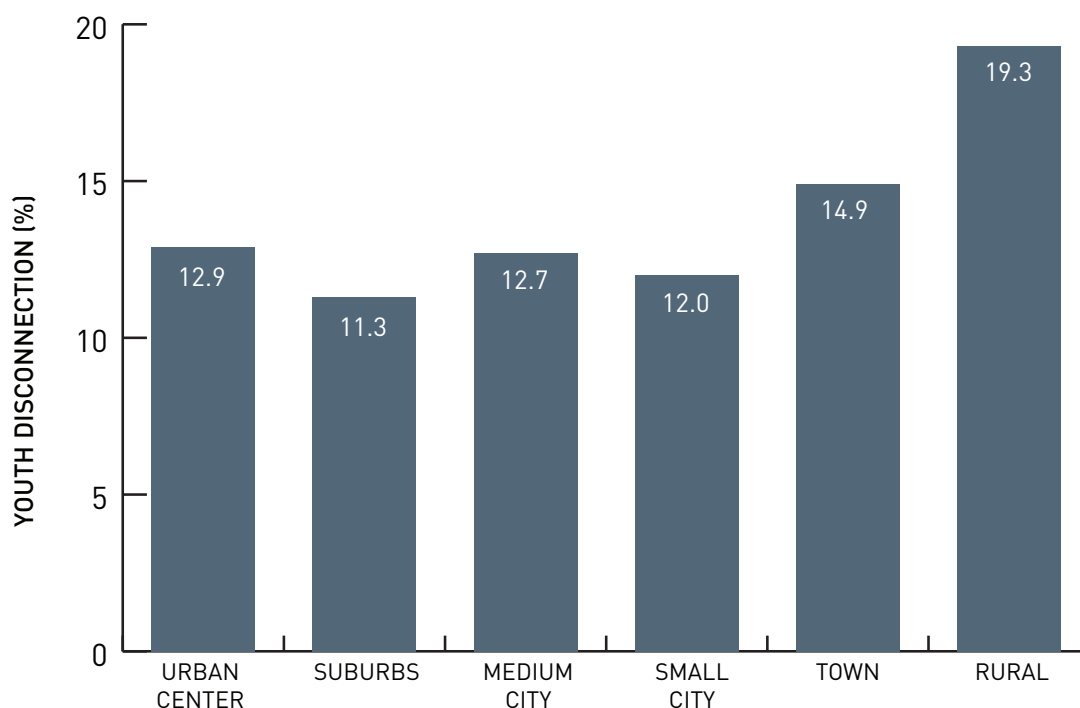
The sustained decline in the ranks of disconnected youth merits celebration. As the overall number of disconnected youth has shrunk, however, the gaps between different groups of young people persist. Young people—particularly young men—of color, youth living in poverty or with a disability, and young mothers are all far more likely to be disconnected than their peers. As the economy recovers and a portion of young people find their way back into the worlds of school and work, those left behind are the ones who face the greatest barriers to connection. Caregiving responsibilities, a criminal record, an absence of educational credentials, limited English proficiency, and undocumented status are all obstacles that can bar young people from the workforce and alienate them from the educational system even in the healthiest of economies.

More Than a Million Reasons for Hope analyzes youth disconnection in the United States by state, metro area, county, and community type, as well as by gender, race, and ethnicity. This report is the first in Measure of America's disconnected youth series to compare American and European metro areas and to examine disconnection by group characteristics such as poverty status, motherhood, marriage status, disability, English proficiency, citizenship, educational attainment, institutionalization, and household composition for different racial and ethnic groups.

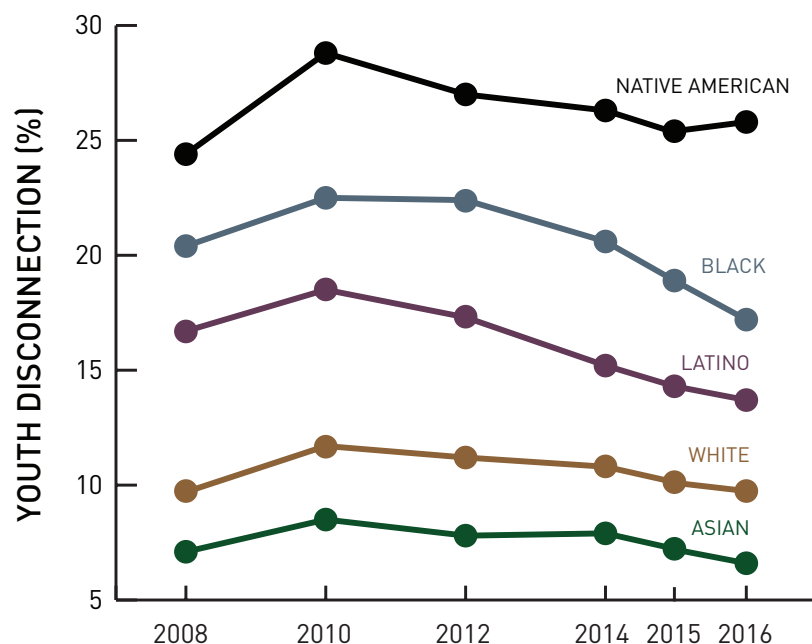
Key Findings:

- **OVERALL.** In 2016, **11.7 percent of young Americans were disconnected**, an improvement from the 2015 rate of 12.3 percent, and a 20 percent decrease from the 2010 peak rate of 14.7 percent. Yet 4.6 million young people remain out of work and out of school.
- **STATES AND REGIONS.** Youth disconnection ranges from 7 percent in North Dakota to 17.9 percent in Alaska. Young people in the Midwest are the least likely to be disconnected, with a rate of 10.2 percent, while young people in the South are the most likely, with a rate of 12.9 percent.

- **METRO AREAS.** Among the nearly one hundred most populous metro areas, disconnection rates range from 6.1 percent in the Des Moines metro area to 20.7 percent in greater Bakersfield, CA. Six European metro areas have rates lower than Des Moines, and Istanbul, the metro area with the highest rate of disconnection in Europe, has a rate just under that of Bakersfield, CA.
- **URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE.** Young people living in rural areas have the highest rate of disconnection, **19.3 percent**, followed by those living in towns (14.9 percent) and urban centers (12.9 percent). **Youth in the suburbs are the least likely to be disconnected, with a rate of 11.3 percent.** Disconnection rates in rural counties vary immensely, from essentially 0 percent to 76.6 percent.



- **RACE AND ETHNICITY.** There is a chasm of nearly 20 percentage points in disconnection rates separating racial and ethnic groups. Asian youth have the lowest rate of disconnection (6.6 percent), followed by white (9.2 percent), Latino (13.7 percent), black (17.2 percent), and lastly, Native American (25.8 percent) youth. Youth disconnection has decreased over time for all major racial and ethnic groups; however, the gap between the groups with the highest and lowest rates has not narrowed appreciably.
- **GENDER.** Overall, young women are less likely to be disconnected, with a rate of 11.2 percent compared to the male rate of 12.1 percent. However, the rate of female disconnection varies widely by race and ethnicity, from 6.6 percent among Asian young women and 9.4 percent among white women; to 14.2 and 14.8 percent among black and Latina women, respectively; and 23.4 percent among Native American women. **Disconnected young women face particularly high poverty rates and unique challenges like early marriage and motherhood that merit attention and resources.**
- **SUBGROUPS.** Racial and ethnic categories can mask diversity within groups. Among Asians, Vietnamese youth have the lowest rate of disconnection, 4.5 percent, and Hmong youth have the highest, 15.1 percent. Among



Latinos, rates range from 8.9 percent for South Americans to 14.9 percent for young people who trace their roots to the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

• LIVING ARRANGEMENTS.

Disconnected young people are about two-and-a-half times as likely to be living with family other than their parents, about twice as likely to be living with a roommate, and eight times as likely to be living alone. **Young people who do not have a stable living**

situation often lack the emotional and financial support of parents or other consistent, caring adults—an additional barrier in the transition to adulthood.

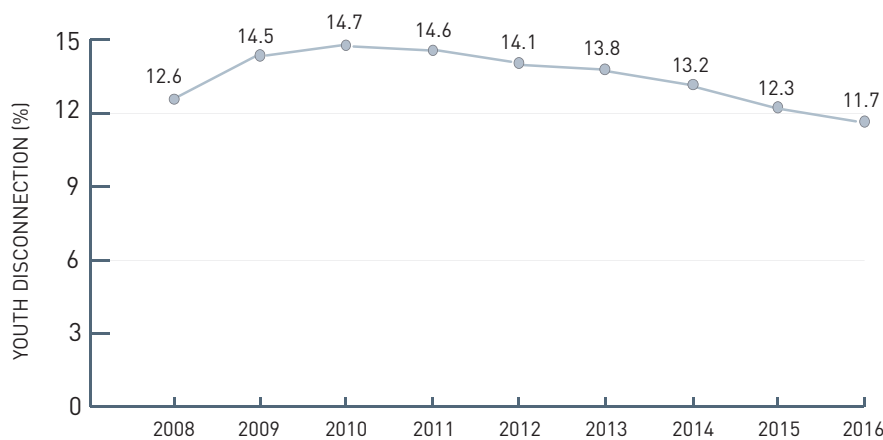
- **INSTITUTIONALIZATION.** An alarmingly high proportion of disconnected black boys and young men—nearly a fifth—is institutionalized, compared to just 0.3 percent of the overall population in that age group.
- **LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND CITIZENSHIP.** About 40 percent of disconnected Asian youth—and nearly half of disconnected Asian girls—are noncitizens. A third of disconnected Asian girls and about a fifth of disconnected Latinas are not English proficient.
- **IMPROVEMENTS AND SETBACKS.** Thirty-eight states experienced a significant improvement since 2010. Over the past year alone, twelve states saw a significant improvement, but Washington, DC, and Nebraska had setbacks.

The report concludes with examples of effective approaches to tackling youth disconnection that take into account the many converging challenges that at-risk youth face. Decreasing the overall number of disconnected youth is commendable, but it is not enough; closing the gaps between different groups of young people is crucial as well. Where, to whom, or into what circumstances a child is born should not limit his or her chances to have a healthy, productive transition into adulthood. The data available in this report and its companion interactive tool can help identify areas of need and at-risk groups. Doing so allows policymakers and service providers to target resources toward reconnecting those young people who have fallen through the cracks and guiding policies to prevent disconnection from happening in the first place.

INTRODUCTION

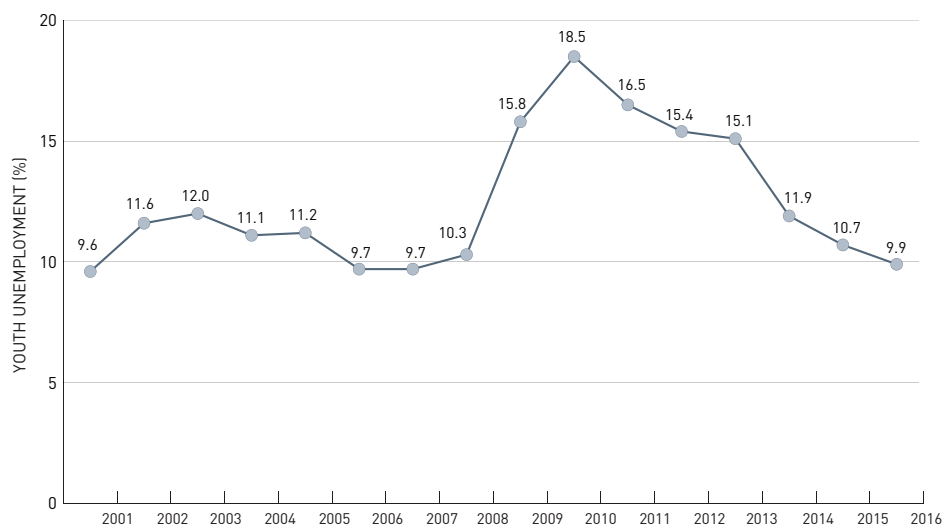
The continued economic recovery, the sharp drop in the youth unemployment rate, and the highest high school graduation rate on record have together improved the fortunes of America's young people. The US youth disconnection rate fell to 11.7 percent in 2016, down from 12.3 percent in 2015 and the sixth consecutive annual decline in as many years. In the aftermath of the Great Recession, which swelled the ranks of disconnected youth, one in every seven young people between the ages of 16 and 24 (14.7 percent) were neither working nor in school. Today, the rate is closer to one in nine. The 20 percent drop between 2010 and 2016—representing 1.2 million youth—is news worth celebrating.

FIGURE 1 Sixth Consecutive Annual Decline in the Youth Disconnection Rate



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2016.

FIGURE 2 Youth Unemployment Rate since 2001



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Economics Daily."

Note: April youth unemployment rate.

Percent vs. Percentage Point Change

You will see mention of both “percent change” and “percentage point change” in this report. What is the difference between these measures? “Percentage point change” refers to the absolute difference between two rates—the difference between 20 percent and 40 percent is 20 percentage points. “Percent change,” on the other hand, shows how big this difference is compared to the original rate. When a rate increases from 20 percent to 40 percent, that is a 100 percent increase—the rate has doubled.

The progress made thus far tells us a lot about the challenges that still lie ahead. A large group of young people saw their opportunities expand alongside the expanding economy; the youth unemployment rate was roughly half in 2016 what it was in 2010. But not all young people saw growth: 4.6 million young women and men remain disconnected from both school and the labor market, unmoored from routines of work and school that give shape, purpose, and direction to one’s days, and deprived of experiences that build knowledge, networks, skills, and confidence. Our tracking of the data since 2008 shows one constant: these disconnected teens and young adults are disproportionately people of color. Although the youth disconnection rate dropped for all racial and ethnic groups between 2010 and 2016, the distance between the groups with the highest and lowest disconnection rates, Native Americans and Asians, did not narrow appreciably. Disconnected youth are also disproportionately poor, and they are more likely to have significant barriers to employment—such as a disability, a criminal record, or a child—than the average person their age.

In other words, the challenges that youth who find themselves out of school and work face today, postrecovery, are unlikely to be addressed by an increase in the supply of jobs alone—though available jobs are clearly an important piece of the puzzle. Absent a catastrophic event, such as a large-scale economic shock like the Great Recession or a personal tragedy like the onset of severe mental illness, disconnection does not spontaneously occur. Disconnection is years in the making and the result not of one unlucky break but rather an accumulation of disadvantages, from family disruption and traumatic events to poor-quality schools and concentrated, multigenerational poverty. Thus, there’s no silver bullet, no magical summer job program or one-off mentoring arrangement that can make up for the cumulative losses and setbacks that most disconnected young people have experienced in their lives. Preventing disconnection and reengaging those whose ties to school have long since frayed requires proven, multipronged strategies, adequate resources, wraparound services, involving youth in planning programs that will serve them, and finally, patience, understanding, and a long-term commitment.

Why should we care about teens and young adults ages 16 to 24 who are not working or in school (see **BOX 1**)? Shouldn’t we focus our efforts on investments that are said to yield higher returns, like early childhood education for at-risk

The challenges that youth who find themselves out of school and work face today, postrecovery, are unlikely to be addressed by an increase in the supply of jobs alone.

preschoolers rather than on second-chance programs for struggling teens and young adults? First, the richest country in the world can do both; we can make high-return investments in young children and also do right by the many young people we as a society have allowed to fall through the cracks. Second, it's in everyone's interest to do so. Youth disconnection has serious consequences not just for affected young people but for their communities and for society as a whole: a labor force with too few skilled workers to fill even entry-level jobs, which require greater skill than entry-level jobs a generation ago, much less to compete in today's global economy; greater need for public assistance of all sorts; higher rates of crime and incarceration, which have high personal and societal costs; poor physical and mental health, costly in both human and financial terms; and a heightened risk of poor outcomes for the next generation.

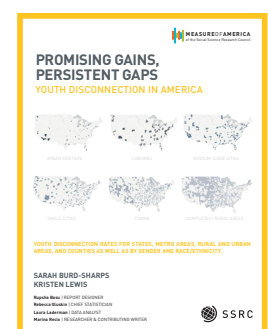
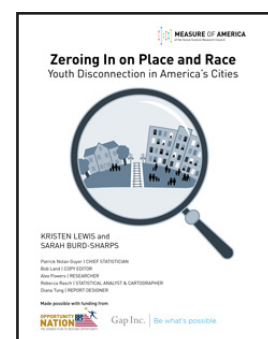
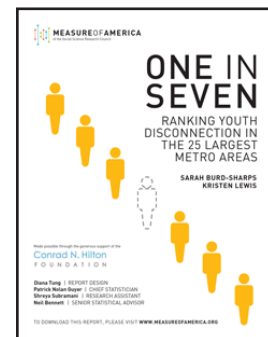
Emerging adulthood—that intense, exciting, and sometimes overwhelming period from our late teens to our early twenties when our adult selves start to take shape—is a pivotal time in life.

For connected young people, it is a time marked by positive firsts: the giddy thrill of hopping behind the wheel of the family car for that first solo spin, the pride of high school graduation, the sense of agency that comes with a first paycheck. Through coursework, clubs and sports, civic organizations, faith-based groups, music and art lessons, internships and training programs, and mentoring relationships with trusted adults outside the family circle like teachers and coaches, connected young people lay the groundwork for freely chosen, rewarding adulthoods. Through these experiences, they develop cognitive skills and gather academic credentials, learn to regulate their emotions and behave appropriately in different settings, develop soft skills like cooperation and habits like punctuality, build professional networks, and come to understand what pursuits they enjoy, excel at, and value. They learn about how the world works and what their role in it might be.

Disconnected young people are robbed of these critical and affirming experiences. Youth disconnection can be very painful; loneliness, disappointment, self-doubt, depression, anxiety about the future, isolation, and unhealthy behaviors are common among those who have left school or can't find a job. Spells of disconnection cast a long shadow into adulthood. The limited education, social exclusion, lack of work experience, and minimal professional networks that are part and parcel of disconnection have long-term consequences that snowball through the years, affecting a range of well-being outcomes, from earnings and self-sufficiency, to physical and mental health, to relationship quality and family formation.¹

MEASURE OF AMERICA'S YOUTH DISCONNECTION SERIES

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



BOX 1 Who Are Disconnected—or Opportunity—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.

Source: Measure of America.

Who Are Disconnected—or Opportunity—Youth?

Disconnected youth, also referred to as opportunity youth, are teens and young adults ages 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school (see BOX 1). This definition captures the categorical difference between disconnected and connected young people. But the two groups differ in many ways that go beyond their current employment and educational status.

Poverty. Disconnected young people are almost twice as likely to live in poverty and twice as likely to receive Medicaid, a means-tested health insurance program, as connected young people. Young people growing up in poverty face a range of challenges, such as residential segregation, poor-quality schools, inadequate transportation, worse health, greater exposure to neighborhood crime and violence, and more adverse childhood events; these challenges make it more difficult to thrive in school and create barriers to employment. As is discussed further below, for certain groups, such as disconnected young women who are black as well as disconnected young women who trace their heritage to the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, the poverty rate approaches 50 percent.

Caretaking. Disconnected young women are nearly four times as likely to have a child as connected young women. Disconnection may lower the barriers to early motherhood; in the absence of meaningful school and work opportunities, motherhood may be the most appealing and attainable route to adulthood. Once a young woman becomes a mother, reconnecting to school or joining the labor market becomes more difficult. Some young people who are neither working nor in school are caring not for their own children but for other relatives, such as siblings, parents, or grandparents. Unfortunately, we don't have the data required to estimate how many disconnected young people are engaged in these kinds of caretaking activities.

Disability. Disconnected young people are more than three times as likely to have a disability as connected young people. Despite laws requiring accommodations on the job and in schools, living with a disability is unfortunately still a barrier to employment and education, as evidenced by the higher unemployment and dropout rates. Inaccessible transportation systems, workplaces, and schools; prejudice and discrimination; and inflexible schedules add extra hurdles to employment and schooling for people with disabilities.

Educational background. Disconnected youth are nine times as likely to have left high school without a diploma as connected young people. Reconnecting these young people to school is challenging; the road to high school dropout is lined with many discouraging and disheartening experiences in the classroom, with peers, and with school administrators. Bringing young people back to a system that has failed them and in which they felt like failures is not easy. Opportunity youth over 18 are twice as likely as their connected counterparts to have graduated high school but have gone no further. Few opportunity youth have bachelor's degrees. Connected youth ages 21 to 24 are two-and-a-half times as likely to have earned bachelor's degrees.

Institutionalization. A vanishingly small percentage of connected youth live in institutional quarters, just 0.3 percent. The rate for disconnected youth is twenty-two times higher—and higher still for some groups, as discussed below. Institutionalization is a particularly grave problem for black young people. See the definition of institutional group quarters on the right.

Language proficiency and citizenship status. For Latinos and particularly Asian young people, lack of language proficiency and citizenship are serious barriers. Nearly 40 percent of Asian disconnected youth overall, and almost half (47.5 percent) of disconnected Asian girls and young women, are noncitizens. This is a marked contrast to 27.3 percent of connected Asian girls and young women in the same age range. Nearly three in ten disconnected Asian youth speak English “less than very well.” This is a higher percentage than that of disconnected Latinos (18.7 percent).

Marriage. Disconnected youth are much more likely than their connected peers to be married, and teenage girls are more likely to be married than teenage boys. Only 0.6 percent of connected girls ages 16 and 17 are married;

Institutional group quarters

non-household living arrangements that include such places as prisons, detention centers, jails, group homes, residential treatment centers, and psychiatric hospitals

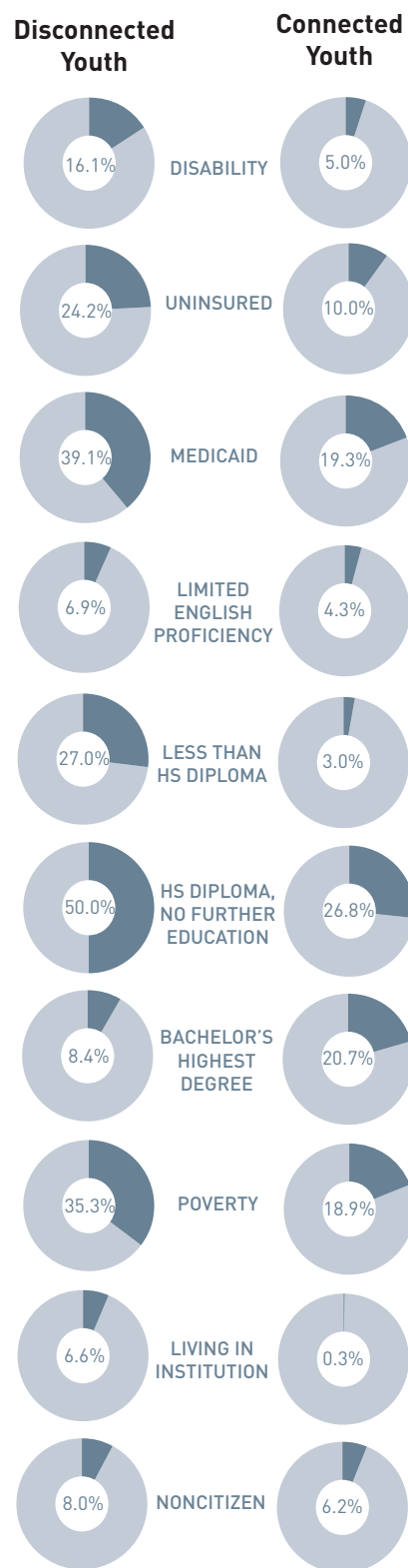
disconnected girls that age are six times as likely to be married, a surprising 4 percent of 16- and 17-year-old girls. Harms associated with this practice are discussed on page 22. Disconnected young women ages 18 to 24 are almost three times as likely to be married as their connected counterparts. Especially for young women at the older end of that age range, marriage may well be a choice that enhances their well-being.

Living with parents. Disconnected children ages 16 and 17 are 3.2 times as likely to be living without either of their parents as connected young people that age. Connected young people are one-and-a-half times as likely to be living with both their parents as disconnected young people. These statistics put the family situations of disconnected and connected youth in sharp contrast. A majority of connected young people (60 percent) live with two parents, benefitting from the emotional, social, and financial support of two adults, and only 8.3 percent live with neither parent. One in four disconnected young people, on the other hand, live apart from not just one but both parents; this reality indicates a profound family disruption at some earlier point.

TABLE 1 Contrasting Profiles: Disconnected vs. Connected Youth

	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)	CONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)
Mother (percent of women)	27.0	7.1
Married (all, ages 16–17)	2.8	0.6
Married (all, ages 18–24)	11.5	6.5
Married (girls, ages 16–17)	3.9	0.6
Married (young women, ages 18–24)	19.9	7.3
Youth not living with either parent (ages 16–17)	25.9	8.3
Youth living with both parents (ages 16–17)	40.5	60.4

FIGURE 3 Contrasting Profiles: Disconnected vs. Connected Youth



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2016.

The pages that follow explore youth disconnection in the United States by geography, with rates by region, state, major metro area, county, and type of community (ranging from urban center to rural area); by gender; and by race and ethnicity. We conclude with a call for greater use of data to identify areas of need, target and tailor programmatic interventions, design policy, set goals, and track change over time.

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 eight thousand 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.²

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.³

YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY GEOGRAPHY

Hometowns and neighborhoods shape the lives of their young residents—from the friends they make and adults they encounter to the schools they attend and the idioms they use—even to the music they listen to and the hobbies they enjoy. The place where a person grows up also determines to a large extent the range and quality of available educational and career opportunities—opportunities that can lay a path to a fulfilling, freely chosen adulthood, or, alternatively, constrain what someone can do and become.

In a diverse country that sprawls across an entire continent, the geography of disconnection is uneven, with peaks and valleys scattered across it. A close look at the data reveals patterns, however. State, metro area, regional, and county patterns help pinpoint areas of need and shed some light on the relationship between place and opportunity.



Youth Disconnection in US States

The rate of youth disconnection ranges from a low of 7 percent in North Dakota to a high two-and-a-half times that rate in Alaska (17.9 percent) (see **TABLE 2**). The high rate in Alaska is driven by an unusually large share of girls and young women, nearly 23 percent, who are neither in school nor working. This is the highest rate of disconnection for either boys or girls in any state, even though boys are generally more likely than girls to be disconnected.

TABLE 2 Youth Disconnection in US States

RANK	STATE	YOUTH DISCONNECTION		RANK	STATE	YOUTH DISCONNECTION	
		(%)	(#)			(%)	(#)
	United States	11.7	4,599,100				
1	North Dakota	7.0	7,100	26	Michigan	11.6	144,300
2	Iowa	7.4	29,700	27	North Carolina	11.6	144,100
3	Massachusetts	7.4	64,900	28	Montana	11.8	15,100
4	Rhode Island	7.5	10,600	29	Florida	11.8	266,700
5	Minnesota	7.5	47,500	30	Oregon	11.9	56,500
6	Connecticut	8.5	38,400	31	Maine	11.9	17,000
7	New Hampshire	8.5	13,600	32	New York	12.1	289,000
8	Wisconsin	9.1	65,000	33	Washington	12.3	103,100
9	Utah	9.2	40,700	34	Georgia	12.6	163,400
10	Nebraska	9.2	21,700	35	South Carolina	12.7	75,700
11	South Dakota	9.2	9,800	36	Tennessee	13.2	103,600
12	Virginia	9.8	101,600	37	Texas	13.4	478,700
13	Kansas	10.0	37,900	38	Arizona	13.7	117,000
14	New Jersey	10.1	103,500	39	Alabama	14.1	84,500
15	Missouri	10.1	75,300	40	Oklahoma	14.2	69,800
16	Wyoming	10.3	7,100	41	Nevada	14.3	47,700
17	Colorado	10.7	71,900	42	Kentucky	14.3	78,600
18	Indiana	10.7	90,800	43	Delaware	14.3	15,300
19	Illinois	10.8	167,000	44	Mississippi	14.5	56,700
20	Pennsylvania	10.8	161,900	45	District of Columbia	14.8	13,500
21	Idaho	11.0	22,600	46	Arkansas	15.0	55,500
22	Hawaii	11.1	17,600	47	New Mexico	16.4	42,800
23	Ohio	11.1	155,000	48	West Virginia	17.3	36,100
24	Maryland	11.1	76,900	49	Louisiana	17.5	99,700
25	California	11.5	560,400	50	Alaska	17.9	16,800

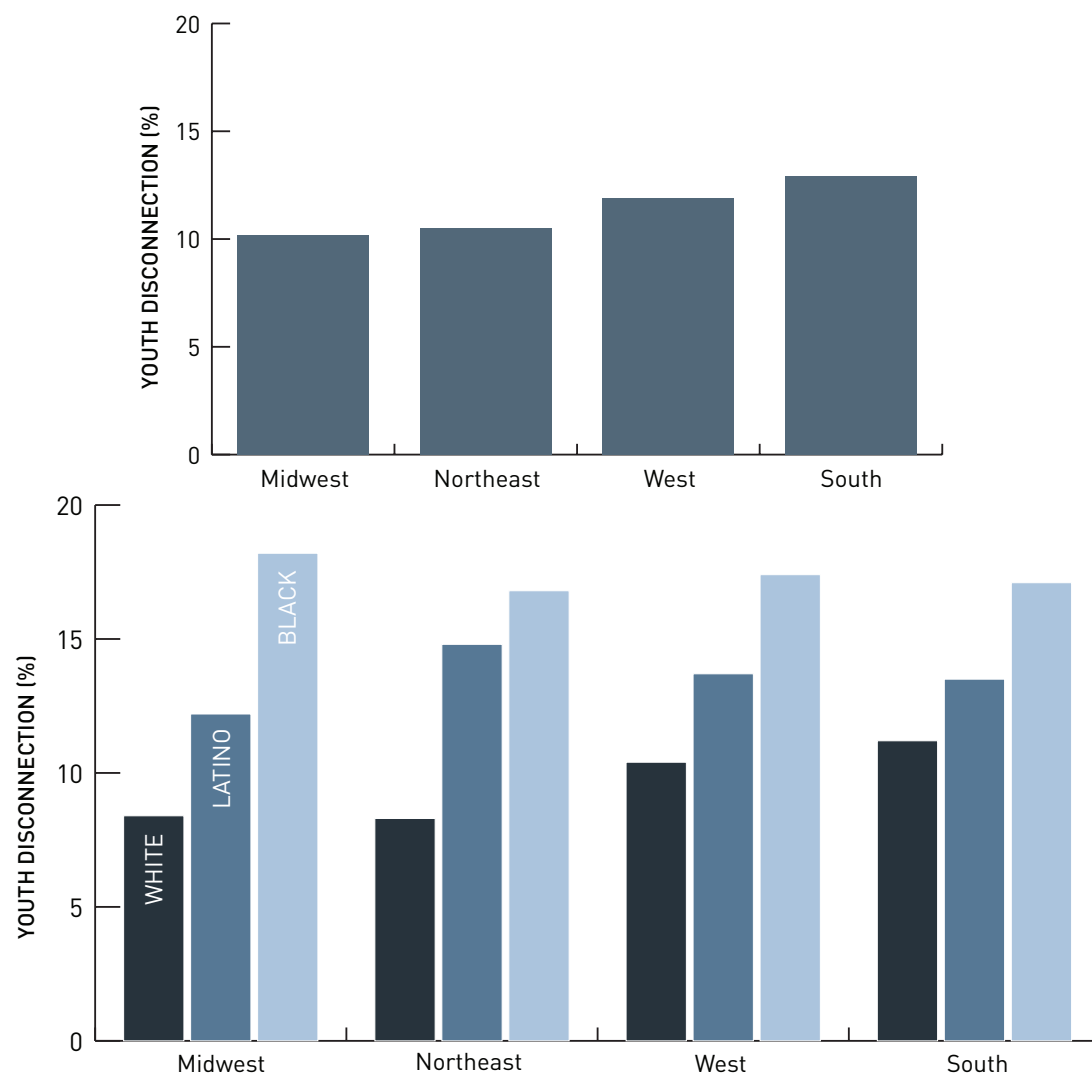
Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016.

Note: Vermont has been suppressed due to unreliable estimates. See Methodological Note for further details.

An exploration of disconnection by state within the four major US regions—Midwest, Northeast, South, and West—shows a clear regional pattern. The Midwest has the lowest rate of youth disconnection (10.2 percent), and the South has the highest rate (12.9 percent; see **FIGURE 4**). Of the ten states with the lowest rates of disconnection, half are in the Midwest, four are in the Northeast, and one (Utah) is in the West. None are located in the South. Of the ten states facing the greatest disconnection challenges, seven are in the South and three are in the West. None are in the Northeast or Midwest.

When adding the lens of race and ethnicity to this analysis, including the three major US racial and ethnic groups for which sufficient data are available, the Midwest region has the lowest rate of Latino disconnection (12.2 percent), but the highest rate of black disconnection (18.2 percent). The South has the highest rate for white youth (11.2 percent). White and black young people are faring best in the Northeast, with disconnection rates of 8.3 and 16.8 percent, respectively; Latinos, however, struggle most in this region, with a rate of 14.8 percent.

FIGURE 4 Youth Disconnection by Region



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016.

State Change since 2010

The national recovery from the Great Recession in terms of young people's work and school outcomes has been steady and fairly widespread, though it has not impacted every state to the same extent. No state has seen a statistically significant increase in youth disconnection rates since the Great Recession's peak effects on disconnection in 2010, and thirty-eight states have improved (see **FIGURE 5**). In the remaining eleven states and the District of Columbia, the rate has not changed significantly since the recession. They are North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico, Maine, Oklahoma, Delaware, West Virginia, Alaska, and Washington DC.

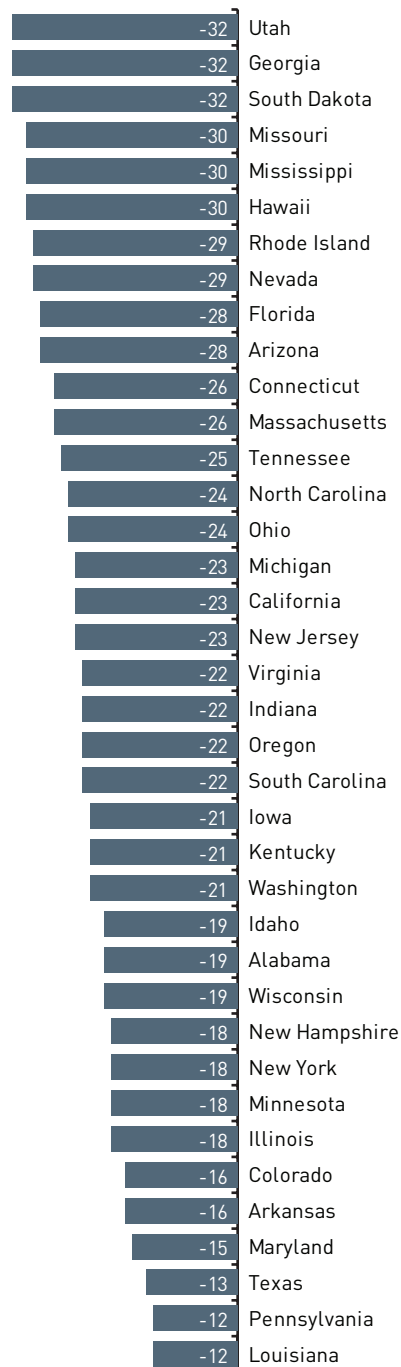
Focusing on more recent changes, since Measure of America's last report on youth disconnection, *Promising Gains, Persistent Gaps*, there have been some hopeful gains and a few setbacks. Twelve of the fifty states saw significant improvements in connection rates since 2015; they are scattered geographically and have varying current rates. In thirty-eight states, the difference between rates from 2015 and 2016 were not statistically significant. Finally, only Washington, DC, and Nebraska experienced significant reversals (see **BOX 3**).

BOX 3 Washington, DC: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back?

Since Measure of America's last report on disconnected youth, only in Washington, DC, and Nebraska did disconnection rates increase. Nebraska went from having the second-lowest disconnection rate in the country in 2015 to ranking tenth after a 26 percent increase in disconnection—from 7.3 percent to 9.2 percent. **Even more concerning is Washington, DC's 54 percent increase, from just 9.6 percent in 2015 to 14.8 percent in 2016.**

The setback in Washington, DC, is surprising, given the strides made in graduation rates; since 2011, graduation rates have risen steadily from 58.6 percent to 72.4 percent in the most recent school year.⁴ There is concern, however, that the improvements in graduation rates and test scores in DC may not be entirely a reflection of better outcomes; they may be partly due to teachers and administrators loosening standards. Prompted by allegations against one DC high school, an audit found that one-third of DC public school students in 2017 "graduated with the assistance of policy violations," and that most DC public schools exhibited a culture of improperly passing and graduating students in violation of school policies.⁵ The rising graduation rates don't necessarily translate into better

FIGURE 5 Youth Disconnection Rates Have Improved in Thirty-Eight States since 2010



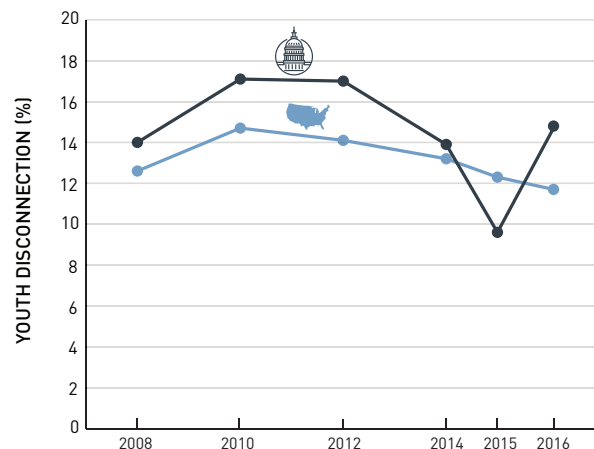
Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010 and 2016.
Note: States with statistically significant percent decreases.

BOX 3 Washington, DC: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back? (cont'd)

opportunities for students, many of whom graduate unprepared to succeed in college or the professional world. Despite recent gains, still less than a third of DC students meet math and reading standards for college readiness, as measured by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).⁶ The District of Columbia also ranks last after all fifty states in eighth-grade reading and math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).⁷

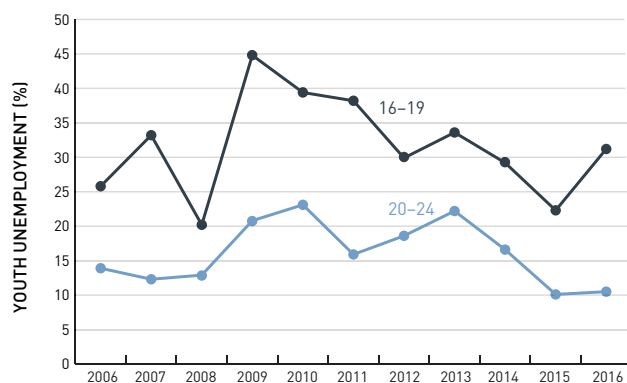
The spike in disconnection also reflects a recent uptick in youth unemployment. Since its peak during the Great Recession, unemployment among young people in DC has improved, but unsteadily. In 2016, unemployment among 16- to 19-year-olds increased from 22.1 percent to 31.2 percent.⁸ The child poverty rate has also hit a plateau of around 26 percent for the past three years, still higher than the pre-recession low of 22.7 percent.⁹ Disconnection is the result of systemic disadvantage in many aspects of a young person's life, and the setback in Washington, DC, is a reminder that the best intentions and sustained efforts of educators and leaders are sometimes not enough for a high-need student population that struggles with poverty and all its challenges outside the classroom.

FIGURE 6 While US Disconnection Rates Are Improving, DC Has Seen a Major Uptick



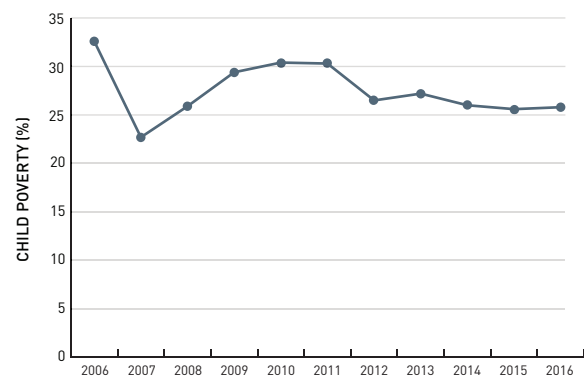
Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

FIGURE 7 Youth Unemployment Trends in Washington, DC, since 2006



Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey Table S2301, 1-year estimates.

FIGURE 8 Child Poverty Trends in Washington, DC, since 2006



Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey Table S1701, 1-year estimates.

Metro Area Youth Disconnection

A metropolitan area is a central city and its surrounding towns, suburbs, and exurbs; places within metro areas are bound together by strong economic, social, and environmental ties. Because labor markets and higher education and transportation systems are regional in nature, metro areas are a useful unit of analysis for understanding youth disconnection rates.

Youth disconnection rates in America's nearly one hundred most populous metro areas range from 6.1 percent in the Des Moines metro area to 20.7 percent—more than one in five youth—in greater Bakersfield in California's Central Valley north of Los Angeles. The fifteen metro areas with the highest rates of disconnection are all located in the South or West. The fifteen metro areas with the lowest rates of disconnection are more regionally diverse, with all four major US regions represented. The largest gap in disconnection between racial or ethnic groups is found in the San Diego metro area, where the white rate is 7.6 percent and black rate is 26.4 percent—an 18.8-percentage-point gap. San Diego has the second-highest rate of disconnection for black youth of any metro area.

Although the rate is high, the actual number of black young people in San Diego who are disconnected is relatively small, roughly 7,300 people. This is because black youth make up a relatively small share of all San Diego youth, just about 6 percent.

Youth
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Bakersfield
in California's
Central Valley
north of Los
Angeles.

TABLE 3 Youth Disconnection in America's Most Populous Metro Areas

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		
				MALE	FEMALE	BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
	United States	11.7	4,599,100	12.1	11.2	17.2	13.7	9.7
1	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1	5,500	—	—	—	—	—
2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	6.2	7,000	—	—	—	—	—
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	6.4	13,800	6.0	6.9	—	8.7	—
4	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	6.8	42,300	7.1	6.4	10.8	11.7	5.8
5	Provo-Orem, UT	7.2	8,700	9.2	—	—	—	6.8
6	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	7.9	32,900	7.9	7.9	—	—	6.6
7	Dayton, OH	7.9	7,900	—	8.9	—	—	4.9
8	Worcester, MA-CT	8.0	9,600	9.6	—	—	15.7	6.2
9	Akron, OH	8.1	7,600	—	—	—	—	—
10	Raleigh, NC	8.2	13,500	—	9.2	12.4	—	7.7
11	Syracuse, NY	8.2	7,900	8.9	—	—	—	6.2
12	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	8.3	17,300	8.2	8.3	—	15.8	6.3
13	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	8.3	9,900	6.4	—	—	—	8.2
14	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	8.5	39,200	8.6	8.4	11.5	11.9	7.2
15	Austin-Round Rock, TX	8.5	21,900	8.6	8.5	—	10.8	7.3
16	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	8.6	10,900	—	—	—	—	6.6
17	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	8.7	9,300	—	10.6	—	—	—
18	Rochester, NY	9.0	12,900	10.4	7.7	—	—	7.4
19	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	9.2	7,000	—	14.1	—	—	9.2
20	Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	9.3	12,600	9.9	8.6	19.2	—	6.0
21	St. Louis, MO-IL	9.3	31,300	10.4	8.1	10.8	—	8.0
22	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	9.4	40,800	8.3	10.6	26.4	10.0	7.6
23	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	9.4	14,700	9.6	9.1	—	18.7	7.1
24	Columbus, OH	9.4	21,700	8.9	9.8	15.0	—	7.9
25	Richmond, VA	9.5	13,900	10.3	8.6	11.8	—	7.4
26	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	9.5	39,500	8.9	10.2	—	9.4	9.7
27	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	9.5	9,200	—	—	—	—	—
28	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	9.6	23,400	8.8	10.5	13.2	—	7.3
29	Pittsburgh, PA	9.7	24,100	11.2	8.0	—	—	8.1
30	New Haven-Milford, CT	9.7	10,800	9.9	9.5	—	—	6.6
31	Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	9.8	11,500	10.3	9.3	—	—	9.8
32	Salt Lake City, UT	10.0	15,500	7.7	12.4	—	—	10.3
33	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	10.0	72,000	11.4	8.6	17.2	15.6	6.0
34	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	10.0	166,500	10.0	10.0	13.8	11.7	7.2
35	Urban Honolulu, HI	10.0	11,900	7.9	12.8	—	—	—
36	Greensboro-High Point, NC	10.1	9,800	13.0	—	—	—	11.1
37	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	10.2	18,800	11.6	8.9	20.4	—	6.1
38	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	10.3	29,400	11.0	9.4	12.6	—	9.0
39	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	10.3	72,700	10.6	10.0	16.2	11.6	7.2
40	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	10.3	6,800	—	—	—	—	11.0
41	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	10.4	6,000	—	—	—	—	—
42	Kansas City, MO-KS	10.6	26,900	12.6	8.4	—	15.4	8.8
43	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	10.6	12,100	11.1	10.0	—	—	8.0
44	Springfield, MA	10.6	8,300	13.3	—	—	20.4	—
45	Toledo, OH	10.6	9,200	9.0	12.3	—	—	10.3
46	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	10.9	31,300	10.5	11.3	—	18.1	9.4
47	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	11.0	78,800	11.8	10.2	13.7	10.8	9.0
48	Jacksonville, FL	11.0	18,000	11.1	10.8	17.0	—	8.1
49	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	11.0	34,700	10.1	11.9	—	15.0	7.9

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		
				MALE	FEMALE	BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
50	Wichita, KS	11.0	9,800	11.9	10.0	—	—	8.6
51	Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	11.0	25,300	11.9	10.1	19.9	—	8.0
52	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	11.1	71,400	12.4	9.8	15.4	10.5	8.6
53	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	11.1	127,500	12.0	10.3	20.6	11.7	7.3
54	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	11.4	6,400	—	—	—	—	7.1
55	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	11.4	7,300	—	—	—	—	—
56	Knoxville, TN	11.5	13,200	10.8	12.2	—	—	10.5
57	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	11.5	38,000	12.0	11.0	18.3	—	8.6
58	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	11.5	31,400	11.9	11.1	18.9	—	9.9
59	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	11.6	104,000	9.7	13.4	15.1	12.9	9.5
60	Cleveland-Elyria, OH	11.7	27,500	13.2	10.2	19.0	19.4	7.5
61	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	11.7	8,400	11.5	11.9	—	—	10.6
62	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	11.7	35,100	13.4	9.9	—	14.0	9.1
63	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	11.7	36,500	12.6	10.9	13.0	11.4	11.3
64	Colorado Springs, CO	11.8	11,400	9.3	14.8	—	—	11.6
65	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	11.8	27,600	12.8	10.9	13.4	—	12.1
66	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	11.8	274,900	12.7	10.9	16.8	14.9	8.9
67	Boise City, ID	11.9	10,000	13.7	—	—	—	—
68	Tulsa, OK	11.9	11,000	10.8	13.1	—	—	9.6
69	Winston-Salem, NC	11.9	9,000	11.9	11.9	—	—	10.1
70	Tucson, AZ	12.0	17,600	12.7	11.2	—	13.4	8.3
71	Columbia, SC	12.1	14,500	12.8	11.3	13.8	—	9.4
72	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	12.1	10,800	12.8	11.4	—	—	10.8
73	El Paso, TX	12.3	15,000	13.1	11.3	—	12.7	—
74	Oklahoma City, OK	12.3	23,000	14.7	9.9	—	—	8.8
75	Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	12.3	34,400	15.4	9.2	—	12.7	12.4
76	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	12.7	8,400	17.2	—	—	—	10.2
77	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	12.7	11,200	14.3	—	—	—	—
78	Albuquerque, NM	12.9	13,500	14.5	11.3	—	—	—
79	Chattanooga, TN-GA	13.0	9,300	10.4	15.8	—	—	11.4
80	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	13.2	63,200	13.3	13.1	19.5	12.8	10.7
81	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	13.4	18,800	13.9	12.8	27.7	—	10.5
82	Baton Rouge, LA	13.5	15,500	13.2	13.8	—	—	—
83	Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	13.6	9,600	14.5	12.6	—	—	11.8
84	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	13.6	75,200	12.8	14.5	18.1	16.2	11.0
85	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	13.7	9,500	17.6	—	—	—	13.0
86	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	13.7	113,400	12.3	15.2	16.5	14.5	12.2
87	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	13.9	10,700	16.0	11.6	14.2	—	14.0
88	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	13.9	33,900	15.3	12.4	23.9	13.0	12.6
89	New Orleans-Metairie, LA	14.1	19,000	17.4	10.8	19.7	—	9.8
90	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14.3	20,400	15.7	12.9	18.0	—	13.5
91	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	14.4	46,700	14.0	14.9	16.0	16.9	9.3
92	Stockton-Lodi, CA	14.7	13,800	15.4	13.9	—	15.6	—
93	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15.0	29,900	15.6	14.5	20.1	—	10.0
94	Fresno, CA	15.4	20,200	18.3	12.4	—	15.6	13.6
95	Jackson, MS	15.5	12,000	16.6	14.5	18.1	—	—
96	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	15.7	94,600	15.7	15.6	19.7	17.0	14.3
97	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	17.1	21,300	13.2	21.0	—	16.5	—
98	Bakersfield, CA	20.7	25,200	23.6	17.1	—	18.9	21.6

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016. Empty cells have been suppressed due to unreliable estimates.

BOX 4 How Do US Cities Stack Up?

How do US cities compare to those in Europe in terms of the opportunities available to teenagers and young adults? The European Union has tracked these data closely for many years in recognition of the tremendous cost of leaving large groups behind—costs to communities and to whole countries of the economic, social, and political alienation of young people. While they use the 15- to 24-year-old age range, their approach is methodologically similar enough to the disconnected youth calculations in this report to draw comparisons between the two.

Of the thirty-one most populous European metro areas, six have better rates of disconnection than Des Moines (6.1 percent), the top-performing US metro area (see **TABLE 4**). The Bakersfield metro area in California's Central Valley (20.7 percent), which occupies the bottom position of the US ranking, has a higher rate of disconnection than Istanbul (20.3 percent). As far as similarities between US and European metro areas, young people in San Diego and Berlin are disconnected at a rate of 9.4 percent, and Detroit and Athens both have disconnection rates of 13.2 percent.

TABLE 4 Youth Disconnection Rates: European Union and US Metro Areas in Comparison

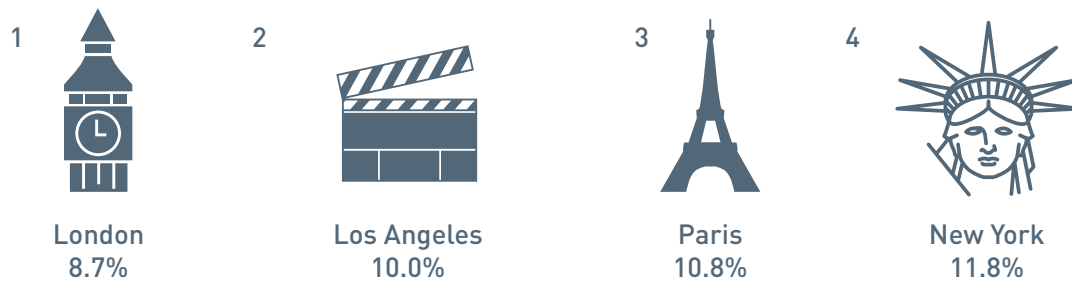
METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 15–24)	MOST SIMILAR AMERICAN METRO	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)
Prague, Czech Republic	2.0	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1
Oslo, Norway	3.5	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1
Amsterdam, Netherlands	3.9	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1
Munich, Germany	4.7	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1
Copenhagen, Denmark	5.0	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1
Stockholm, Sweden	5.7	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1
Zurich, Switzerland	6.2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	6.2
Budapest, Hungary	6.5	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	6.4
Bratislava, Slovakia	7.2	Provo-Orem, UT	7.2
Warsaw, Poland	7.3	Provo-Orem, UT	7.2
Ljubljana, Slovenia	7.3	Provo-Orem, UT	7.2
Helsinki, Finland	8.3	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA; Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	8.3
Lisbon, Portugal	8.7	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	8.7
Berlin, Germany	9.4	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA; Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT; Columbus, OH	9.4
Hamburg, Germany	9.4	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA; Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT; Columbus, OH	9.4
Sofia, Bulgaria	10.5	Kansas City, MO-KS; Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	10.6
London, UK	10.5	Kansas City, MO-KS; Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	10.6
Paris, France	11.1	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL; Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	11.1
Madrid, Spain	11.3	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	11.4
Manchester, UK	11.3	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	11.4
Glasgow, UK	11.4	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	11.4
Vienna, Austria	11.6	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	11.6
Cardiff, UK	11.6	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	11.6
Bucharest, Romania	11.7	Cleveland-Elyria, OH; Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL; Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL; Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	11.7
Dublin, Ireland	12.3	El Paso, TX; Oklahoma City, OK; Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	12.3
Athens, Greece	13.2	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	13.2
Barcelona, Spain	15.1	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15.0
Brussels, Belgium	15.2	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15.0
Zagreb, Croatia	16.5	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	17.1
Rome, Italy	19.0	Bakersfield, CA	20.7
Istanbul, Turkey	20.3	Bakersfield, CA	20.7

Source: Eurostat, 2016, and Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2016. Eurostat data use the 15–24 age range for youth disconnection.

BOX 4 How Do US Cities Stack Up? (cont'd.)

The two largest metro areas in the United States and the two largest in the European Union—those with over 10 million residents—fare similarly in terms of young people’s work and school outcomes. Young Londoners are the least likely to be disconnected, with a rate of 8.7 percent, and young New Yorkers are the most likely, with a rate three percentage points higher.

FIGURE 9 Comparing Disconnection Rates in the Two Most Populous US and European Metro Areas



Source: Eurostat, 2016, and Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2016. Eurostat data use the 15–24 age range for youth disconnection.

County Youth Disconnection

The over three thousand counties in the United States range enormously in size, from the 10 million residents of Los Angeles County to fewer than one hundred residents in Loving County, Texas, and Kalawao County, Hawaii. The occurrence of disconnection also varies widely. In a number of very small, predominantly rural counties, youth disconnection is relatively rare. On the other hand, in at least two counties—also small and rural—rates run over 70 percent. The lowest disconnection rate in a county with more than one thousand youths is 1.7 percent in Story, Iowa (population ninety thousand), and the highest rate in any US county with a youth population over one thousand is 67.1 percent of youth—or more than two in three—in rural Wheeler County, Georgia (population under eight thousand).

Grouping counties by state shows that even in relatively less-populous states with few counties (such as Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, and Rhode Island), the gap between counties in terms of disconnection rates is still considerable. In both Connecticut and Rhode Island, the rate of disconnection is quite low overall, but in some counties, it is on par with the US average. At the other end, Georgia is home to Stewart County, the county with the highest disconnection rate in the country, and to the widest gap between county-level rates, a stunning 71 percentage-point difference. It is worth keeping in mind, however, that Stewart County has fewer than one thousand residents. In very small populations, a small number of students leaving school early or struggling with employment can make the data look more extreme. Taking Stewart County out of the equation, however, still leaves very large disparities in youth outcomes in Georgia—61.7 percentage points, just above the range in Texas.

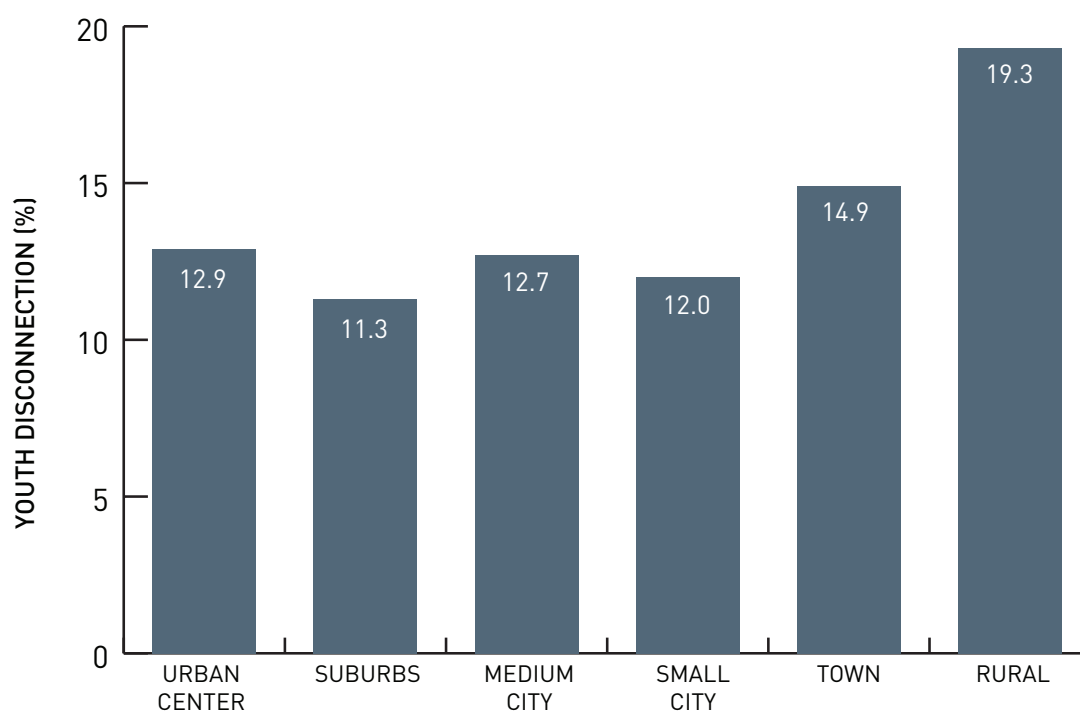
TABLE 5 States with Ten Highest and Ten Lowest Variations in County-Level Youth Disconnection

RANK	STATE	LOWEST COUNTY RATE	HIGHEST COUNTY RATE	RANGE
LOWEST VARIATION IN COUNTY-LEVEL DISCONNECTION RATES				
1	Delaware	12.7	15.9	3.2
2	Connecticut	5.5	11.4	5.9
3	Rhode Island	5.5	11.7	6.2
4	Wyoming	11.1	20.1	9.0
5	Hawaii	11.2	20.3	9.0
6	New Hampshire	5.2	15.4	10.2
7	Massachusetts	3.7	15.4	11.7
8	Maryland	7.2	20.2	13.0
9	Maine	7.7	21.0	13.4
10	New Jersey	6.4	21.2	14.9
HIGHEST VARIATION IN COUNTY-LEVEL DISCONNECTION RATES				
41	West Virginia	5.8	48.9	43.1
42	South Dakota	0.0	44.8	44.8
43	Virginia	2.9	50.0	47.2
44	Mississippi	9.9	58.1	48.2
45	Michigan	5.1	56.6	51.5
46	Arkansas	7.5	59.3	51.8
47	Florida	7.2	59.4	52.3
48	Texas	0.0	60.7	60.7
49	Pennsylvania	4.5	71.2	66.7
50	Georgia	5.4	76.6	71.2

One important factor in county-level disconnection analysis is the presence of detention and correctional facilities that house young people. Counties with these large institutions often have the highest rates of youth disconnection and the largest swings in population size. But because young people in these institutions usually came originally from other counties, and the paths leading there were shaped by the institutions and conditions they faced in their hometowns, these high rates are not necessarily indicative of disconnection problems where the institutions are located.

Many rural counties do not have populations sufficiently large to obtain reliable data about disconnected youth—who make up a small slice of an already small overall population. However, it is possible to calculate the disconnected youth rate for rural counties as a whole by pooling county-level data into groupings. All 3,141 US counties have been grouped into six categories using classifications developed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics. The classifications are urban centers, suburbs, medium-sized cities, small cities, towns, and rural areas. Using this methodology, the data show that rural areas have the highest rate of disconnection (19.3 percent), followed by towns (14.9 percent), and urban centers (12.9 percent) (see **FIGURE 10**).

FIGURE 10 Rural Areas and Towns Face the Greatest Disconnection Challenges



Source: Measure of America calculations using National Center for Health Statistics urban-rural classification scheme for counties, 2013, and the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2012–2016.

Looking into these rural-urban classifications further reveals that urban counties are relatively similar across the country in terms of disconnection rates, but there are large variations in rates among other types of counties—especially rural (see **TABLE 6**). Urban centers all have rates within a narrow range of 13 percentage points—from 7.0 percent in Suffolk County, Massachusetts (Boston is the county seat), to 20.4 percent in the Bronx in New York City. Considering only rural counties with more than one thousand youths, disconnection ranges from 6.1 percent in Addison County, Vermont, to 67.1 percent in Wheeler County, Georgia—a gap of 61.0 percentage points. Among suburban counties, disconnection rates range from 2.8 percent in Pierce County, Wisconsin, to 50 percent in Sussex County, Virginia; among counties in the medium city category, rates range from 3.7 percent in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, to 45.5 percent in Gilchrist County, Florida; among counties containing small cities, from 1.7 percent in Story County, Iowa, to 59.3 percent in Lincoln County, Arkansas; and among counties with over a thousand youths in the town category, from 3.0 percent in Whitman County, Washington, to 59.1 percent in Hancock County, Georgia.

TABLE 6 Youth Disconnection Rates Vary Least among Urban Centers

	LOWEST DISCONNECTION RATE	HIGHEST DISCONNECTION RATE	RANGE
URBAN CENTER	7.0	20.4	13.4
MEDIUM CITY	3.7	45.5	41.8
SUBURBS	2.8	50.0	47.2
SMALL CITY	1.7	59.3	57.6
TOWN	0.0	59.1	59.1
RURAL	0.0	76.6	76.6

Source: Measure of America calculations using National Center for Health Statistics urban-rural classification scheme for counties, 2013, and the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2012–2016.



The urban centers with the highest and lowest rates of disconnection are geographically scattered. Among the top and bottom rural counties, however, there is a regional trend: the top-ten rural counties are all in the Midwest and Northeast, while nine out of the ten rural counties with the highest rates of disconnection are located in the South. Of the 37 counties where disconnection rates reach over 40 percent, three-quarters (30 counties) are in the South, and about 60 percent (23 counties) are more specifically rural counties in the South, making **rural counties in the South by far the largest group among these high-disconnection counties**. The counties with the lowest rates of youth disconnection are much more diverse in region and classification.

TABLE 7 Top- and Bottom-Ten Counties in Youth Disconnection

URBAN CENTER: TOP- AND BOTTOM-TEN

RANK	STATE	COUNTY	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)
TOP 10			
1	Massachusetts	Suffolk County	7.0
2	North Carolina	Wake County	7.6
3	Minnesota	Hennepin County	7.7
4	Virginia	Arlington County	7.9
5	California	San Francisco County	8.0
6	California	Santa Clara County	8.5
7	Texas	Collin County	8.8
8	Pennsylvania	Allegheny County	8.8
9	Minnesota	Ramsey County	8.9
10	Texas	Travis County	8.9
BOTTOM 10			
58	California	Riverside County	16.0
59	Nevada	Clark County	16.0
60	New Jersey	Essex County	16.4
61	Missouri	St. Louis City	16.7
62	New York	Kings County	16.7
63	Tennessee	Shelby County	17.5
64	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia County	18.8
65	Maryland	Baltimore City	19.1
66	Michigan	Wayne County	19.4
67	New York	Bronx County	20.4

SUBURBS: TOP- AND BOTTOM-TEN

RANK	STATE	COUNTY	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)
TOP 10			
1	Wisconsin	Pierce County	2.8
2	Wisconsin	Ozaukee County	5.0
3	Minnesota	Carver County	5.2
4	Rhode Island	Washington County	5.5
5	Connecticut	Tolland County	5.5
6	Connecticut	Middlesex County	5.6
7	Minnesota	Wright County	5.8
8	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	5.9
9	Wisconsin	Waukesha County	6.0
10	Massachusetts	Norfolk County	6.1
BOTTOM 10			
296	Ohio	Perry County	24.8
297	Tennessee	Cannon County	25.5
298	Texas	Liberty County	25.5
299	Florida	Baker County	26.0
300	Texas	Caldwell County	26.2
301	South Carolina	Chester County	28.4
302	Georgia	Meriwether County	28.5
303	Georgia	Butts County	29.1
304	Georgia	Spalding County	31.2
305	Virginia	Sussex County	50.0

MEDIUM CITY: TOP- AND BOTTOM-TEN

RANK	STATE	COUNTY	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)
TOP 10			
1	Massachusetts	Hampshire County	3.7
2	Ohio	Wood County	3.9
3	Wisconsin	Dane County	4.5
4	North Carolina	Orange County	4.6
5	Ohio	Greene County	5.4
6	Michigan	Washtenaw County	5.7
7	Colorado	Boulder County	6.0
8	Michigan	Ingham County	6.2
9	New York	Albany County	6.2
10	Nebraska	Lancaster County	6.3
BOTTOM 10			
309	Washington	Pend Oreille County	27.8
310	Louisiana	East Feliciana Parish	28.2
311	Alabama	Lowndes County	28.4
312	North Carolina	Hoke County	29.3
313	Georgia	Burke County	29.8
314	Louisiana	Iberville Parish	31.6
315	Florida	Gadsden County	33.0
316	Tennessee	Morgan County	34.7
317	Mississippi	Yazoo County	35.0
318	Florida	Gilchrist County	45.5

SMALL CITY: TOP- AND BOTTOM-TEN

RANK	STATE	COUNTY	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)
TOP 10			
1	Iowa	Story County	1.7
2	Virginia	Montgomery County	2.9
3	Virginia	Harrisonburg City	3.3
4	New York	Tompkins County	3.6
5	Iowa	Johnson County	3.6
6	Kansas	Riley County	3.6
7	Texas	Brazos County	3.6
8	Missouri	Boone County	4.1
9	Oregon	Benton County	4.1
10	Minnesota	Blue Earth County	4.2
BOTTOM 10			
264	Florida	Sumter County	27.7
265	Florida	Gulf County	27.8
266	Georgia	Brantley County	29.1
267	North Carolina	Pamlico County	29.4
268	Missouri	DeKalb County	29.8
269	Alabama	Hale County	31.2
270	Georgia	McIntosh County	32.0
271	North Dakota	Sioux County	36.4*
272	Texas	Jones County	53.6
273	Arkansas	Lincoln County	59.3

TOWN: TOP- AND BOTTOM-TEN

RANK	STATE	COUNTY	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)
TOP 10			
1	Washington	Whitman County	3.0
2	Ohio	Athens County	3.9
3	Idaho	Madison County	3.9
4	Montana	Gallatin County	4.3
5	Wisconsin	Portage County	4.6
6	Minnesota	Rice County	4.9
7	Wisconsin	Dunn County	5.0
8	Nebraska	Buffalo County	5.0
9	Michigan	Isabella County	5.1
10	New Hampshire	Cheshire County	5.2
BOTTOM 10			
475	Arizona	Navajo County	33.6
476	Texas	Bee County	35.3
477	Florida	Columbia County	37.1
478	Oklahoma	Beckham County	37.2
479	Texas	Reeves County	37.9
480	Texas	Dawson County	39.3
481	Georgia	Ben Hill County	41.6
482	Texas	Willacy County	41.6
483	California	Lassen County	48.9
484	Georgia	Hancock County	59.1

RURAL: TOP- AND BOTTOM-TEN

RANK	STATE	COUNTY	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)
TOP 10			
1	South Dakota	Haakon County	2.5*
2	Vermont	Addison County	6.1
3	Wisconsin	Buffalo County	6.8
4	Minnesota	Yellow Medicine County	7.4
5	Ohio	Putnam County	7.9
6	Michigan	Emmet County	8.1
7	New York	Allegany County	8.7
8	Minnesota	Becker County	8.9
9	Minnesota	Itasca County	9.0
10	Maine	Aroostook County	9.4
BOTTOM 10			
517	Georgia	Telfair County	50.7
518	Texas	Madison County	51.4
519	Texas	Haskell County	52.0*
520	Michigan	Baraga County	56.6*
521	Mississippi	Tallahatchie County	58.1
522	Florida	Hamilton County	59.4
523	Texas	Childress County	60.7*
524	Georgia	Wheeler County	67.1
525	Pennsylvania	Forest County	71.2*
526	Georgia	Stewart County	76.6*

Source: Measure of America calculations using National Center for Health Statistics urban-rural classification scheme for counties, 2013, and US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2012–2016.

Note: Asterisk denotes counties with a youth population under one thousand residents.

This is important information for policies and interventions at all levels, from local town and county governments to state, regional, and national decisionmaking bodies. Understanding where youth are struggling the most is one factor. Now we'll turn to who they are.



YOUTH DISCONNECTION BY GENDER AND RACE AND ETHNICITY

Youth Disconnection by Gender

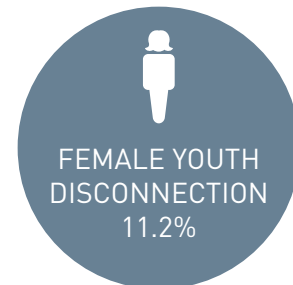
In the youth population as a whole, boys and young men are more likely than girls and young women to be disconnected—12.1 percent vs. 11.2 percent, respectively. Over the last decades, girls have stayed in school longer and performed better than boys academically, on average, and this new normal is reflected in youth disconnection trends. This pattern of lower female disconnection rates holds true for all racial and ethnic groups except for Latinos (see **FIGURE 11**).

Female youth disconnection gets less public attention than male youth disconnection. Organized efforts like My Brother's Keeper have highlighted the plight of disconnected boys and young men, especially the very high rates for black boys and young men. No commensurately high-profile national effort for young women exists. One possible reason for this lack of effort is that the societal consequences of female youth disconnection are perceived as less urgent than the consequences of male disconnection, particularly when it comes to crime and incarceration.

Another reason relates to social norms; some people may think that girls and young women are making a “natural” choice by deciding to have children and stay home with them, either as single mothers or as part of a married couple, albeit at an earlier age than their connected counterparts. Disconnected girls ages 16 and 17 are over six times more likely to be married than their connected counterparts, and disconnected young women ages 18 to 24 are three times more likely to be married. Furthermore, more than one in four (27 percent) disconnected young women ages 16 to 24 are mothers, nearly four times the rate among connected young women (7 percent).

These assumptions are problematic. First, taken as a whole, they deny the full personhood of girls and young women and their rights to agency, self-determination, and equality—in both the family and the labor market. Second, they ignore disconnected young women's uniquely disadvantaged position in society, which should on its own command greater attention: they are more likely to live in poverty than disconnected young men by almost ten percentage points, 39.9 percent vs. 30.8 percent. Third, what may seem like a choice to become a mother may be less an affirmative decision than the result of poor access to reproductive health care services, discriminatory gender norms, internalized gender stereotypes, exposure to trauma, and an absence of appealing options that would lead a young woman to delay having children.

Early marriage and motherhood have serious consequences for young mothers, their children, and society as a whole. Marrying at 16 or 17 should be called what it is—the harmful practice of child marriage. Early marriage exposes girls to an elevated risk of domestic violence as well as the dangers of early motherhood with the added risk of rapid subsequent births.¹⁰ Married or not, compared to mothers in their twenties, teen mothers are more likely to experience domestic violence, poor birth outcomes, and postpartum depression, and have higher rates of high school dropout, higher rates of poverty, lower levels



of educational attainment overall, and lower incomes. These risks transfer to the next generation.

Children born to teenage mothers perform less well in school, are less likely to complete high school, and are more likely to be incarcerated, become teen parents themselves, be unemployed, and have health problems than children born to older mothers.¹¹ Motherhood and/or marriage at the upper range of this age bracket, however, do not carry the same risks as at the lower end; such decisions made at age 23 or 24 have very different—and likely far more positive—human development implications than those made at age 16 or 17.

Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity

The good news is that the rate of youth disconnection has fallen for all of the major US racial and ethnic groups since the disconnection high point in 2010. The gap between black and Latino youth and the groups with the lowest rates, white and Asian young people, has narrowed (see **TABLE 8** and **FIGURE 12**). Unfortunately, the gap between the top- and bottom-performing racial and ethnic groups, Asians and Native Americans, has changed little. The burden of youth disconnection is still disproportionately shouldered by Native American, black, and, to a lesser extent, Latino young people.

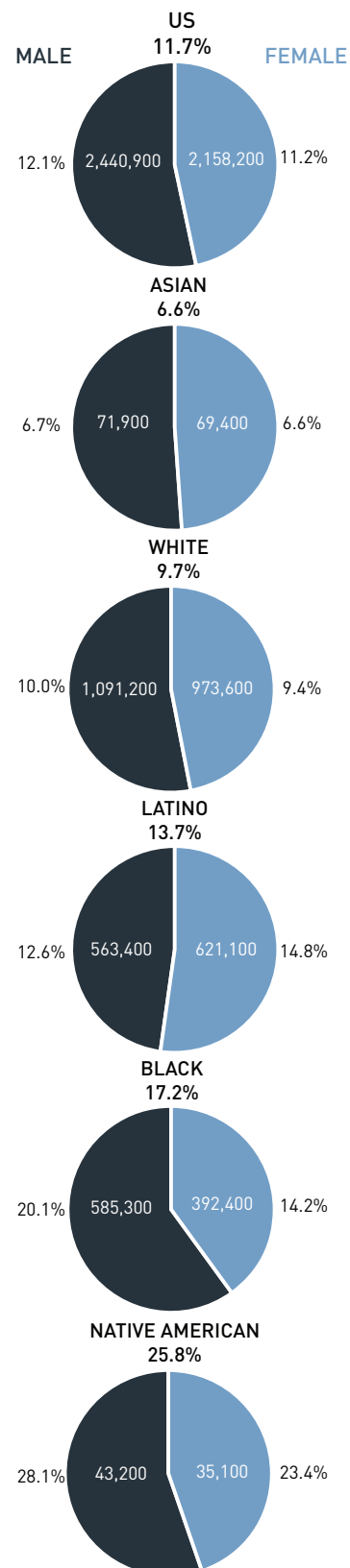
TABLE 8 Disconnection by Racial and Ethnic Group and Gender

CHANGE SINCE 2010	US	ASIAN	WHITE	LATINO	BLACK	NATIVE AMERICAN
%	20.7	21.8	17.1	26.1	23.4	10.6
↓						
#	1,209,700	21,500	558,900	297,200	320,300	13,700
MALE						
%	20.9	20.0	19.0	25.0	22.4	9.1
↓						
#	644,600	9,900	316,800	149,400	165,900	7,000
FEMALE						
%	20.4	23.5	14.8	27.3	25.4	12.3
↓						
#	565,100	11,600	242,100	147,800	154,400	6,700

Note: All values in the table are percent decreases or declines in the number of disconnected youth.

Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016.

FIGURE 11 Disconnection by Racial and Ethnic Group and Gender



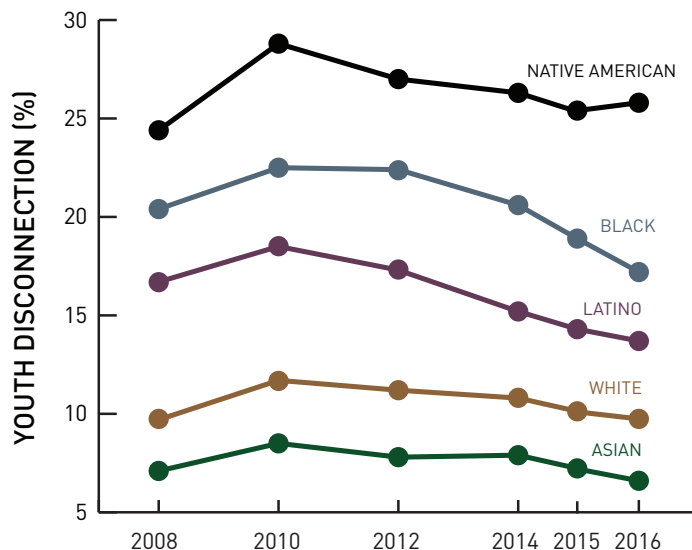
BOX 5 Too Young to Be on Their Own

Anyone who has raised children knows how much 16- and 17-year-olds still need their parents—for love, for the material basics, and for guidance and support in navigating the transition to adulthood. Far too many young teenagers lack this critical base, compounding the risks that disconnection on its own poses.

Overall, opportunity youth are about two-and-a-half times as likely to be living with other family and not their parents; they are about twice as likely to be living with a roommate; and they are eight times as likely to be living alone (though disconnected youth living alone only make up about 2 percent of disconnected youth overall). Youth who have experienced domestic violence or trauma, who have been in the foster care system, and/or who are LGBTQ are more likely to live apart from their parents than others.¹² Only 65 percent of black disconnected youth under 18 live with at least one parent, compared to 88 percent of black connected youth, 78 percent of white disconnected youth, and 94 percent of white connected youth. About equal percentages of black disconnected youth are living with other family members besides a parent or in institutionalized group quarters (such as correctional or detention facilities or residential health facilities)—12 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

The **Asian** youth disconnection rate is **6.6 percent**. The combination of the low rate and the comparatively small size of the Asian population means that the absolute number of disconnected youth who are Asian is 141,300 people nationally. Between 2010 and 2016, the rate for this group fell 21.8 percent. Asians are not a homogeneous group. Among the seven groups with populations sufficiently large to allow for calculations, the youth disconnection rate ranges from 4.5 percent for Vietnamese youth to 15.1 percent for Hmong young people. Girls and young women from these Asian subgroups have lower disconnection

FIGURE 12 Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity



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

ASIAN
6.6%
141,300

WHITE
9.7%
2,064,800

US TOTAL
11.7%
4,599,100

LATINO
13.7%
1,184,500

BLACK
17.2%
977,700

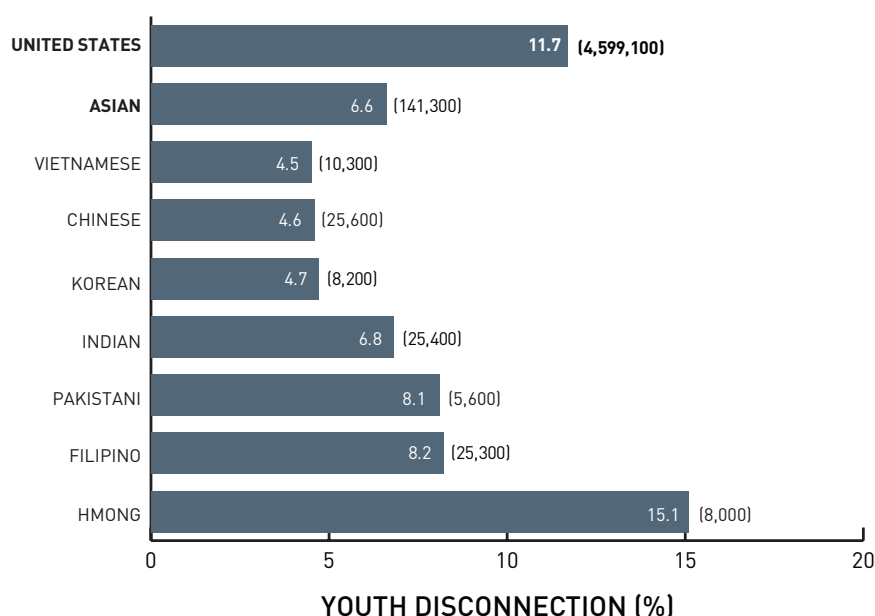
NATIVE AMERICAN
25.8%
78,300

rates than their male counterparts, with the exception of Indian young people; among Indians, the male rate is 5.0 percent and the female rate is 9.1 percent, 80 percent higher.

Somewhat surprisingly, Asian disconnected youth ages 21 to 24 are more likely to have a bachelor's degree than youth of any other racial group, whether disconnected or not. About 40 percent of disconnected Asian young women ages 21 to 24 have at least a bachelor's degree—the highest rate of any gender/race combination by far. For some Asian subgroups, the share of bachelor's degree holders is even higher—62 percent of disconnected Indian women have a bachelor's degree, as do 53 percent of disconnected Chinese women. For comparison, the share of disconnected youth ages 21 to 24 with bachelor's degrees overall is just 8.4 percent.

What keeps these comparatively well-educated young people out of the job market? Citizenship and language proficiency are serious barriers. As mentioned above, nearly 40 percent of Asian disconnected youth overall, and 47.5 percent of disconnected Asian girls and young women, are noncitizens. Nearly three in ten disconnected Asian youth speak English “less than very well.” This is a higher percentage than that of disconnected Latinos (18.7 percent). Asian girls and young women are more likely to speak English less than very well than their male counterparts—33.2 percent vs. 24.4 percent, respectively. Disconnected

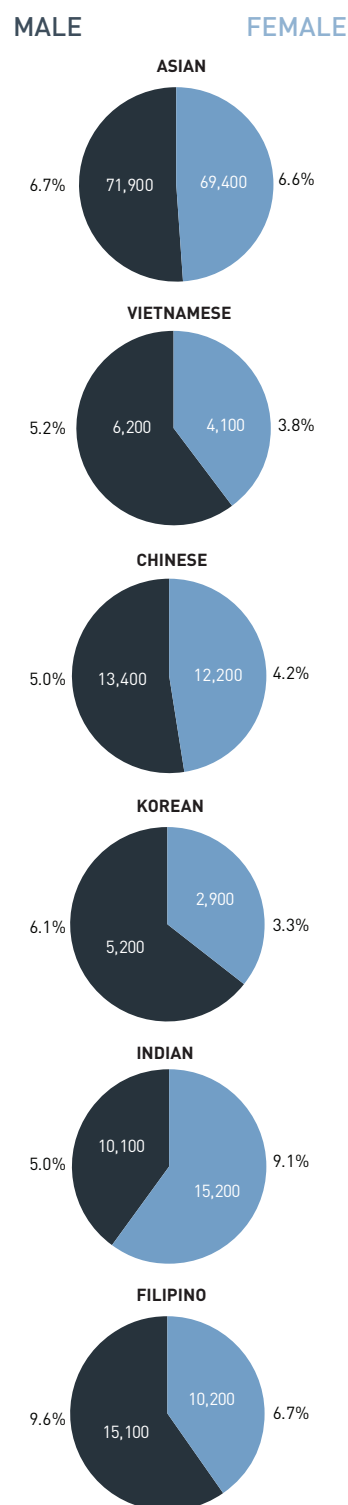
FIGURE 13 Disconnection among the Most Populous Asian Subgroups



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016.

Note: Hmong and Pakistani disconnection cannot be calculated by gender due to unreliable estimates. Total subgroup counts may not equal male plus female counts due to rounding.

FIGURE 14 Disconnection among Asian Subgroups by Gender



Asian girls and young women are the most likely to be married and the least likely to be mothers among connected and disconnected youth of any racial or ethnic group.

In 2016 the rate of disconnection for **white** youth was **9.7 percent**. Although they have the second-lowest rate, white youth make up the largest share of the US youth population and therefore the largest group of disconnected youth, about 2,064,800 people. Young men have a slightly higher rate of youth disconnection, at 10.0 percent, than do young women, at 9.4 percent. The white rate fell 17.1 percent between 2010 and 2016.

Over a fifth (21.8 percent) of disconnected white boys are disabled, the highest rate of any group. Among disconnected girls, white girls have the highest rate as well. This does not mean that white youth are more likely to be disabled than other groups. In fact, among youth ages 16 to 24, black young people are more likely to be disabled than white young people, 7.3 percent compared to 6.6 percent, respectively. In addition, research suggests that minority children are under-identified as disabled.¹³ But because the disconnection rate for non-disabled black youth (15.8 percent) is so much higher than the rate for non-disabled white youth (8.4 percent), the overall share of black disconnected youth living with disabilities is smaller than the overall share of white disconnected youth living with disabilities.

The **Latino** rate of disconnection is **13.7 percent**. Some 1,184,500 Latino young people ages 16 to 24 are disconnected. Overall, the Latino rate fell 26.1 percent since 2010, the sharpest drop among all the racial and ethnic groups. Young Latino men are less likely to be disconnected than their female counterparts, 12.6 percent vs. 14.8 percent, respectively. The gap between women and men has narrowed since 2008, however; at that time, the female rate was 6.6 percentage points higher than the male rate.

As with Asians, there are subgroup differences among Latinos. Latinos who trace their heritage to the Spanish-speaking Caribbean have the highest Latino youth disconnection rate, 14.9 percent. The rate is 13.8 for Mexican Americans and 13.7 for Central Americans. South American residents have the lowest Latino youth disconnection rate, 8.9 percent. Among Central Americans, the female youth disconnection rate is nearly double the male rate, 18.1 percent vs. 9.8 percent, respectively (see **FIGURE 16**).

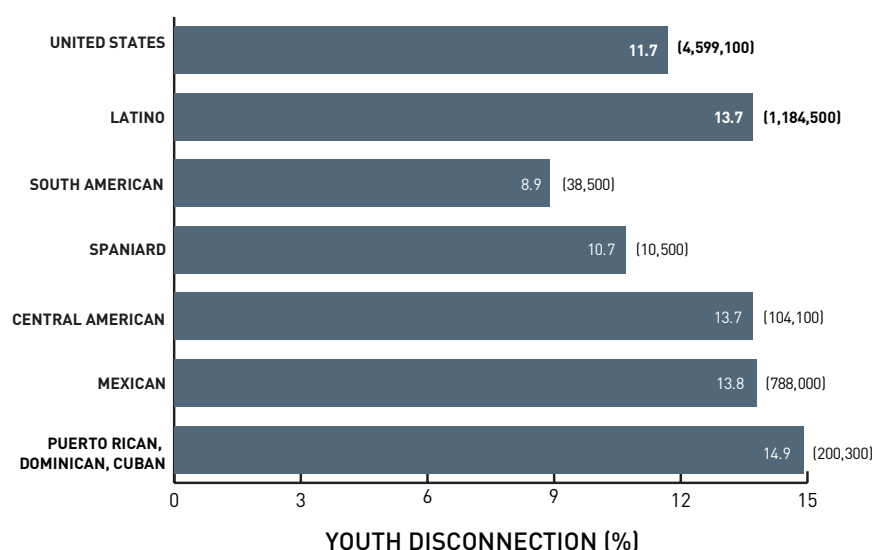
As is true for Asians, among Latino disconnected youth, young women are less likely to be fluent English-speakers than their male counterparts (22 percent of Latinas vs. 15 percent of Latino males speak English less than very well). Among certain subgroups this difference is particularly pronounced. Slightly over half of Central

Among youth
ages 16–24,
black young
people are
more likely to
be disabled
than white
young people,
7.3 percent
compared to
6.6 percent,
respectively.

American disconnected young women speak English less than very well, compared to 35 percent of their male counterparts, a gap of 16.6 percentage points. For Mexican young people, the gap is only 5.3 percentage points. Interestingly, the gap is reversed for connected Central Americans: 32 percent of men and 18 percent of women speak English less than very well. Another way to look at the numbers is to say that just 11 percent of Central American men with low English proficiency are disconnected, compared to 38 percent of Central American women with low English proficiency. For young Central American men, English is not a very large factor in determining disconnection, but for women it is; there is just a 3-percentage-point gap in the difference in English proficiency between connected and disconnected men, but a 33-percentage-point gap between connected and disconnected women.

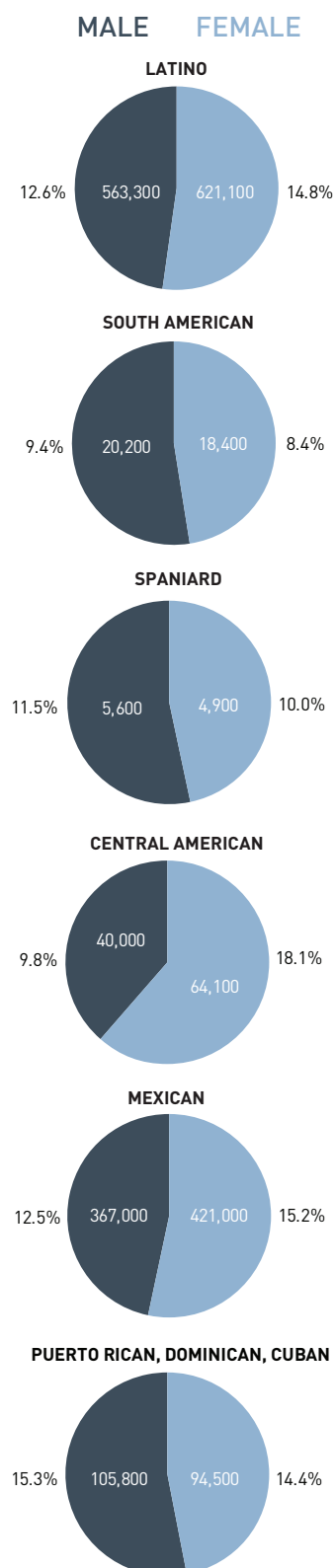
Nearly one-third (31.2 percent) of disconnected Latinas are mothers. When connected, Latinas are less likely to be mothers than black and Native American girls, but once disconnected, they are by far the most likely. Staying connected to school appears to be a disproportionate challenge for Latino youth. A third of disconnected Latino males dropped out of high school—the highest rate of any group. Among disconnected girls, Latinas are the most likely to have dropped out of high school (29 percent), followed by Native American girls and young women (28.5 percent).

FIGURE 15 Disconnection among the Most Populous Latino Subgroups



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016.

FIGURE 16 Disconnection among Latino Subgroups by Gender



Black youth experience the second-highest rates of youth disconnection, **17.2 percent**. About 977,700 black young people are neither working nor in school. Male and female youth are separated by nearly 6 percentage points; the male rate is 20.1 percent, and the female rate is 14.2 percent. The rate fell by 23.4 percent between 2010 and 2016, the second-largest decline. Some 320,300 fewer black young people are disconnected today than in 2010. Disconnected black girls and young women are the most likely to live in poverty (47.8 percent) of any race/gender group. Disconnected black young people are the least likely to live with their parents—36 percent of black disconnected youth ages 16 and 17 don't live with parents.

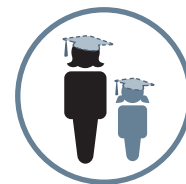
Incarceration has a disproportionate impact on black communities and families, including out-of-school-and-work young people. Among disconnected black young people, 12 percent live in institutionalized group quarters, compared to 4.5 percent of disconnected white young people. This rate is higher among men—nearly a fifth of disconnected black boys and young men are institutionalized. High rates of incarceration have a huge impact on the living situations of disconnected black youth; 36 percent of disconnected black youth ages 16 and 17 of any gender and 44 percent of men in this group are not living with a parent. Of these youth who are living apart from their parents, one-third are incarcerated; for men that ratio is nearly half. Black disconnected youth under 18 are also more likely than average to be living with family members other than their parents. While not the only cause, the incarceration of parents is one reason why youth may be living with other family members.

The **Native American** youth disconnection rate is the highest of racial and ethnic groups at **25.8 percent**, more than one in every four young people. Because the Native American population is the smallest of the five major American racial and ethnic groups, the number of disconnected young people is comparatively low, 78,300 people. Native American young men have a somewhat higher rate than Native American young women, 28.1 percent vs. 23.4 percent. The decline in the youth disconnection rate between 2010 and 2016 among Native American young people, 10.6 percent, is about half the drop seen in the country as a whole. That Native American youth have the highest rate of disconnection and the lowest reduction since 2010 paints a disconcerting picture about the well-being and access to opportunity of Native young people.

Poverty is a key driver. Over 44 percent of Native Americans live in poverty, higher than the other major racial and ethnic groups. Native American youth disconnection is also having a major impact on the Native community as a whole. Fifteen percent of Native American youth are involved in gang activity, compared to 8 percent of Latino youth and

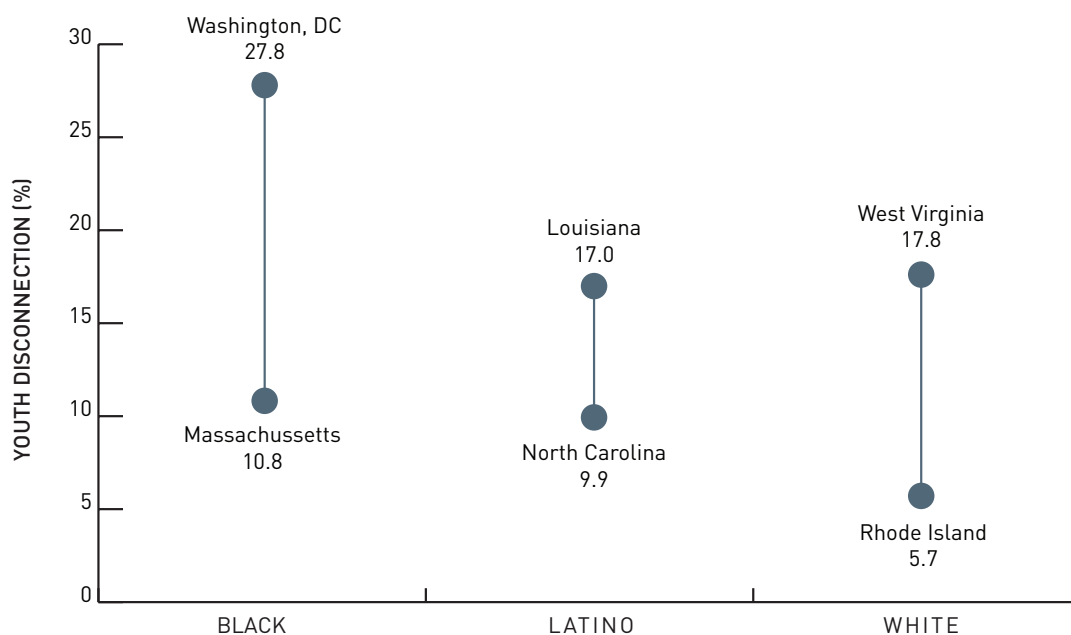
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6 percent of black youth.¹⁴ Most concerning, the suicide rate for 15-to-24-year-old Native American youth is 3.5 times the national average, and it is estimated that there are thirteen nonfatal attempts for every fatal event. And compared to all other racial groups in America, the suicide rate for young Native American women is eleven times greater (for males it is four times greater).¹⁵ Native youth need much greater assistance in managing a healthy, safe transition to adulthood; though dedicated organizations are making great strides, too few programs reach these vulnerable young people.



BOX 6 Geographic and Racial Disconnection

The racial breakdown of disconnection varies geographically. The rates of disconnection for black, Latino, and white young people range across the states quite dramatically. Latino and white young people have the highest rates of disconnection in Louisiana (17 percent) and West Virginia (17.8 percent), respectively, states with the second- and third-highest rates overall. For black young people, the highest rate—nearly 28 percent—is found in Washington, DC, where there has been a significant increase in disconnection over the past year. The states where young people are faring best are Massachusetts for black youth (10.8 percent), Rhode Island for white youth (5.7 percent), and North Carolina for Latino youth (9.9 percent). Massachusetts and Rhode Island occupy third and fourth place in the state rankings, but North Carolina is in the middle of the pack, ranking twenty-eighth, with an overall disconnection rate of 11.6 percent. Interestingly, Latinos in North Carolina are faring better than their black and white peers. North Carolina saw almost a five-point decrease in the rate of Latino disconnected youth, and also is one of the only states where Latino youth have a lower disconnection rate than their white peers (the others are Arkansas, Nevada, New Mexico, and Tennessee).



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016.

Conclusion

The national youth disconnection rate has fallen for six years in a row, from 14.7 percent to 11.7 percent, thanks to steadily improving high school graduation rates and the dramatic drop in youth unemployment that accompanied the economic recovery. Yet 4.6 million teens and young adults are still neither working nor in school. These young people face structural and individual barriers that stand in the way of their transition to independent, thriving adulthoods, not only harming them but also keeping the country from fielding its best team in a globally competitive economy. They need our support—for their sake and ours.

Previous Measure of America research has shown that youth disconnection does not occur spontaneously. Its roots are planted years earlier, most often in communities that are themselves disconnected from the mainstream. Underfunded schools have left too many opportunity youth unprepared for the requirements of today's job market and without the adult guidance and support they need to succeed. Public transportation that skirts around rather than serves low-income communities makes it logistically and financially hard to reach educational, training, and employment opportunities. Residential segregation by race and ethnicity as well as by education and income—the legacy of discriminatory laws and policies¹⁶—means that too many young people are growing up in neighborhoods weighed down by concentrated, multigenerational poverty, where adults also struggle with connection to work and school, where exposure to violence limits human flourishing, and where youth disconnection is so entrenched as to be normative.¹⁷ And the disproportionate institutionalization of youth of color continues apace at a time when overall incarceration is declining, creating yet another set of barriers for black and Latino young people.¹⁸

The good news is that increasingly effective networks of groups and individuals are addressing these root causes. Three strategies stand out.

First, these networks are working together across previously fractured systems—schools, the private sector, the criminal justice system, philanthropy, workforce development, and others—to attack the unequal conditions of daily life that persist in high-disconnection communities. Two inspiring examples of this new way of working are the San Diego Workforce Partnership's development of a collective vision and broad-based commitment to a concrete goal to reduce disconnection (see **BOX 7**) and work in Phoenix, Arizona, where partners have built a comprehensive, cross-sectoral coalition called Opportunities for Youth to turn around their 2012 bottom-place metro area youth disconnection ranking.¹⁹

The disproportionate institutionalization of youth of color continues apace at a time when overall incarceration is declining, creating yet another set of barriers for black and Latino young people.

Second, networks are including the views and voices of youth themselves. A recent workshop and related activities spearheaded by nonprofit LeadersUp in Chicago, in collaboration with Measure of America, yielded important lessons on how to reach the hardest to reconnect. The participation of opportunity youth in workshop design and discussions alongside employers brought to the fore often-overlooked issues. A central theme that emerged was the need to develop trust and transparency between opportunity youth and employers as a way to overcome the biases that erect formidable barriers to connection.²⁰

Finally, they are using data to set goals and work together to achieve them. A tremendous engine for private-sector growth today is the use and linking of different datasets. The same is beginning to happen for youth systems. Data is being combined across agencies and organizations and used to identify disconnection warning signs; design programs; cost alternative interventions; make the case to funders, policymakers, and the public; and track outcomes over time. Recent examples of data-driven approaches include the following:

- **Project U-Turn** is a Philadelphia-wide campaign to focus public attention and policymaking on the dropout crisis in the city. A major prong of its strategy is to collect and disseminate data on Philadelphia's most vulnerable students and use the data to unify partners and create shared accountability. From a 52 percent graduation rate starting point in the 2005–2006 school year, the rate is up to 67 percent, and the network is working hard across every sector to maintain this positive momentum.²¹
- The **100,000 Opportunities Initiative**, a coalition of public, private, and philanthropic partners led by Starbucks, has sponsored seven hiring fairs in cities across the country, each chosen because of the severity of their disconnection challenge as well as the promise of opportunities for employment, internships, and apprenticeships.
- **Jobs for the Future**, in its work across the country, aims to transform education and workforce systems to ensure access to economic advancement for all. The organization's approach includes working with federal and state governments, business, philanthropy, and community partners to create innovative and scalable solutions that help young people to change their lives. In its work with disconnected youth, JFF aims to increase postsecondary enrollment, employment, and reengagement. JFF uses data like that from Measure of America to inform program design and help communities gauge progress toward desired outcomes for young people.

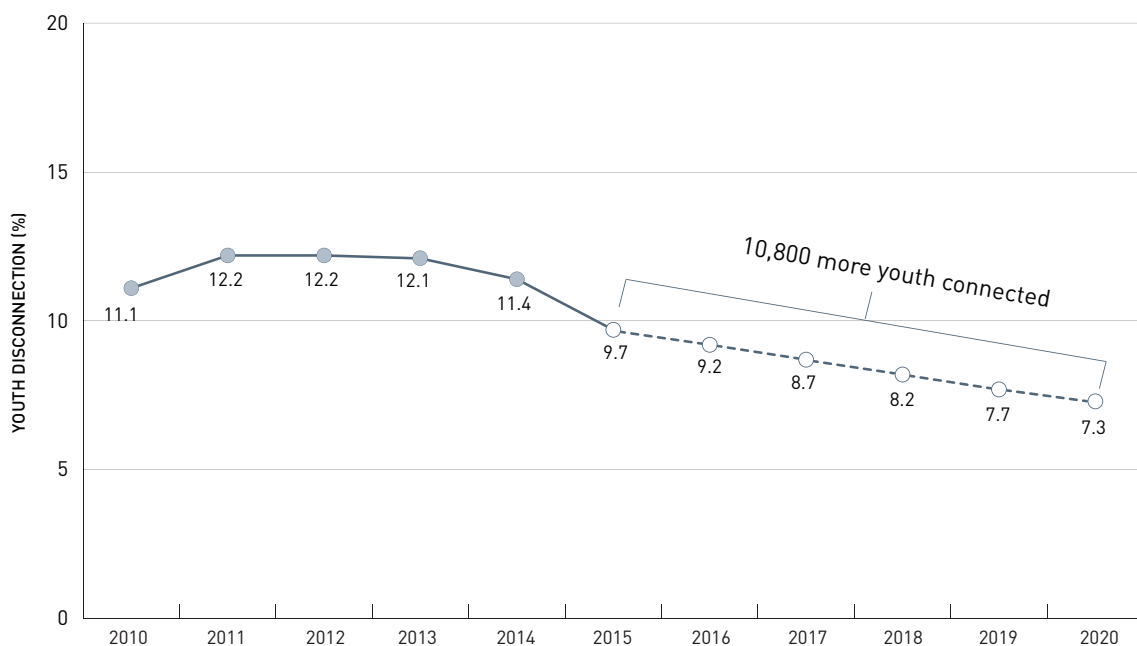
A tremendous engine for private-sector growth today is the use and linking of different datasets. The same is beginning to happen for youth systems.

BOX 7 Halving the Gap in San Diego

In 2017 the San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP), the local workforce development board, in collaboration with many of the county's stakeholders (e.g., opportunity youth, parents, employers, workforce professionals, service providers, educators, funders, businesses, research partners, community members, and elected leaders), developed an action plan to "cut the rate and halve the gap of youth disconnection" in San Diego County. They were determined to do better by the county's young people through mobilizing institutions and individuals central to their success and developing a collective vision.

In San Diego County, the youth disconnection rate varies widely by place as well as by racial and ethnic group. In order to pinpoint the gaps in systems supporting youth and to determine what data could inform a way forward for the approximately 43,000 opportunity youth in the county, SDWP connected with Measure of America to work on setting measureable targets. The following two goals were set and widely agreed upon. Goal 1 was to cut the youth disconnection rate of the county as a whole to 7.3 percent by 2020 from a starting point of 9.7 percent. Goal 2 was that, by 2020, no neighborhood rate should be more than 4.4 percent above the countywide disconnection rate. Achieving this goal would halve the gap between the area with the highest rate of youth disconnection today (18.6 percent) and the county average; it will encourage a host of actors to focus efforts and resources on underserved communities, a great example of putting numbers into action.

SDWP and its stakeholders are committed to reconvening annually to measure progress, and Measure of America continues to work with them to provide tailored research and data to support local planning. To learn more about SDWP's action plan for opportunity youth, visit www.opportunitysd.org.



Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, prepared for the San Diego Workforce Partnership's "Flip the Script" report.

- In 2012 the **Opportunity Youth Network** took leadership on a goal to reconnect 1 million opportunity youth in five years—a goal that has largely been reached. A more recent focus of the group’s work has been calculating the return on investment, congressional district by district, of reconnecting opportunity youth and bringing this information to members of Congress to present a concrete figure for each district on the benefit of appropriations.²²
- In 2017 the **San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP)** was extremely dismayed by the latest data on youth disconnection—43,000 disconnected young people—and determined to “flip the script” from disconnection to opportunity for these youth. The partnership mobilized a powerful multisectoral coalition and worked with Measure of America to come up with an ambitious but realistic goal: to cut by 2020 the overall disconnection rate and halve the gap between the area of San Diego County with the highest rate of disconnection (18.6 percent) and the county average (9.7 percent). This April SDWP will track progress one year in (see **BOX 7**).²³



Measure of America is committed to continuing to provide data and analysis on youth disconnection as we have done since releasing our first report on the topic, *One in Seven*, in 2012. Up-to-date calculations by race and ethnicity, by gender, and by state, county, and metro area are vital to understanding who is disconnected and why, to targeting programs, to developing policy, and to tracking change over time to see which efforts actually work.

We end with two pleas. First, we implore organizations to use data to establish a baseline and to set realistic, time-bound goals. Doing so is critical to the success of collective, cross-sectoral efforts; a shared understanding of where you are starting and where you want to end up brings together, motivates, and focuses collective efforts. Without a data roadmap, knowing if you have reached your destination—or have just been spinning your wheels—is impossible. Second, we urge organizations of all sorts that are implementing programs with opportunity youth to set up data collection systems that make rigorous program evaluation possible. Engaging young people in a program that doesn’t actually change outcomes—no matter how good it sounds or well-intentioned it may be—wastes time and money: time that young people whose narrow windows of opportunity are shutting can ill afford to waste, and money that could be otherwise directed to effective programs. Opportunity youth have ended up disconnected in large part because they have been so poorly served by society’s institutions. We owe it to them not to disappoint them further by programs that don’t work.

We implore
organizations
to use data
to establish
a baseline
and to set
realistic,
time-bound
goals.

Methodological Note

Who Are Considered “Disconnected Youth”?

Youth disconnection rates in this report are calculated by Measure of America using employment and enrollment data from the 2016 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 official 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

Disconnected youth rates and numbers in *More Than a Million Reasons for Hope* at the national, state, and metro area levels use 2016 data. Time series data are one-year estimates from the relevant year. County data are from 2012–2016.

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 metro 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 FactFinder provides a list of Metro Statistical Areas (MSAs) by population size. The top one hundred MSAs include Madison, Wisconsin, and Durham–Chapel Hill, North Carolina. But because the standard errors of the youth disconnection estimates for these two metro areas were too large to provide reliable estimates, these two 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 built up by Measure of America from the Census Bureau's Public Use Microdata Areas (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*, *Zeroing In on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*, and *Halve the Gap by 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*. They are comparable to last year's report, *Promising Gains, Persistent Gap: Youth Disconnection in America*.

European Union Geographies

The countries of the European Union have been tracking youth disconnection rates for decades and refers to this group as NEETs (neither in employment nor in education or training). The age range for NEETs differs; the European Union examines ages 15–24 whereas in the United States, the standard is ages 16–24. NEET data for European Union comparisons are obtained from [EuroStat 2016](#).

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 (Los Angeles County) to under one hundred residents (Loving County, Texas, and Kalawao County in Hawaii). Because many counties are relatively small, disconnected youth rates for each county in this report are calculated using five-year estimates using data from 2012–2016. Counties with disconnected youth populations considered statistically unreliable have been removed from the analysis.

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 countries)	Counties within metro areas with populations between 250,000 and 999,999
SMALL CITIES (small metro)	Counties within metro areas with populations between 50,000 and 249,999
TOWNS (micropolitan)	Counties containing cities with populations between 10,000 and 49,999
COMPLETELY RURAL AREAS (non-core)	Counties with no cities larger than 10,000

The Urban and Rural Divide

There are multiple definitions of urban and rural areas used by different federal agencies in the United States. For the purposes of this report, Measure of America has opted to use the taxonomy developed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Their 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.

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.

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 2016 one-year ACS. The most populous Asian subgroups also include Japanese Americans and Cambodians, 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.

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](#).

Unreliable — Estimates with a coefficient of variance of greater than 0.2 are considered unreliable and are omitted from the report.

Endnotes

- ¹ Scarpetta et al., “Rising Youth Unemployment during the Crisis.”
- ² Palmer, Greytak, and Kosciw, “Educational Exclusion: Drop Out, Push Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline among LGBTQ Youth.”
- ³ James et al., “The Report of the 2015 US Transgender Survey.”
- ⁴ Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.
- ⁵ Alvarez & Marsal, “Final Report, District of Columbia Public Schools Audit and Investigation, 2018.”
- ⁶ Office of the State Superintendent of Education, “2017 DC PARCC Results.”
- ⁷ National Assessment of Educational Progress, “The Nation’s Report Card 2015, State Comparisons.”
- ⁸ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year Estimates, Table S2301.
- ⁹ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year Estimates, Table S1701.
- ¹⁰ Seiler, “Is Teen Marriage a Solution?”
- ¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Reproductive Health: Teen Pregnancy—About Teen Pregnancy.”
- ¹² Youth.gov, “Youth Topics.”
- ¹³ Morgan et al., “Replicated Evidence of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Disability Identification in U.S. Schools.”
- ¹⁴ Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute, “Native American Youth 101.”
- ¹⁵ Hummingbird, “The Public Health Crisis of Native American Youth Suicide.”
- ¹⁶ See Richard Rothstein’s *The Color of Law* for a comprehensive discussion of the history of segregation in the United States.
- ¹⁷ Lewis and Burd-Sharps, *Halve the Gap by 2030*.
- ¹⁸ The Sentencing Project, “Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration.”
- ¹⁹ The Aspen Institute, 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, and Measure of America’s *One in Seven*.
- ²⁰ See Measure of America and LeadersUp, “Career 360”.
- ²¹ Project U-Turn, Information Page.
- ²² Opportunity Youth Network, “ROI for Reconnecting Opportunity Youth in Each Congressional District.”
- ²³ San Diego Workforce Partnership, “Flip the Script—Join the Conversation: #53kreasons.”

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Indicator Tables: Youth Disconnection by State since 2008

RANK	STATE	TREND SINCE 2008 (%)	YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATE (%)				2016	
			2008	2010	2012	2014	(%)	(#)
	United States		12.6	14.7	14.1	13.2	11.7	4,599,100
1	North Dakota		6.5	7.3	8.2	9.2	7.0	7,100
2	Iowa		7.4	9.4	8.9	9.3	7.4	29,700
3	Massachusetts		9.1	9.9	9.3	8.4	7.4	64,900
4	Rhode Island		10.1	10.6	10.8	11.9	7.5	10,600
5	Minnesota		8.4	9.2	9.0	8.3	7.5	47,500
6	Connecticut		8.7	11.5	11.0	10.2	8.5	38,400
7	New Hampshire		8.7	10.5	10.7	8.6	8.5	13,600
8	Wisconsin		8.8	11.2	10.4	10.5	9.1	65,000
9	Utah		9.1	13.5	11.6	12.2	9.2	40,700
10	Nebraska		6.2	10.0	7.9	9.0	9.2	21,700
11	South Dakota		8.6	13.5	9.0	10.6	9.2	9,800
12	Virginia		10.4	12.6	11.9	10.7	9.8	101,600
13	Kansas		8.2	9.8	10.4	12.2	10.0	37,900
14	New Jersey		10.7	13.0	12.5	11.4	10.1	103,500
15	Missouri		12.0	14.5	12.6	11.9	10.1	75,300
16	Wyoming		13.7	12.9	10.4	9.1	10.3	7,100
17	Colorado		10.4	12.8	11.8	11.4	10.7	71,900
18	Indiana		12.7	13.8	13.4	12.7	10.7	90,800
19	Illinois		11.5	13.1	13.1	12.5	10.8	167,000
20	Pennsylvania		10.3	12.2	13.0	12.3	10.8	161,900
21	Idaho		12.6	13.6	13.1	14.0	11.0	22,600
22	Hawaii		13.0	15.7	14.1	14.0	11.1	17,600
23	Ohio		12.2	14.6	13.6	12.4	11.1	155,000
24	Maryland		11.8	13.0	12.9	12.9	11.1	76,900
25	California		13.0	14.9	14.7	13.5	11.5	560,400
26	Vermont		9.3	9.2	9.8	9.1	—	—
27	Michigan		12.5	15.2	14.2	13.4	11.6	144,300
28	North Carolina		13.1	15.4	15.3	13.4	11.6	144,100
29	Montana		13.7	13.8	14.8	12.5	11.8	15,100
30	Florida		14.7	16.5	15.8	14.1	11.8	266,700
31	Oregon		13.9	15.2	14.9	12.8	11.9	56,500
32	Maine		13.9	11.8	11.9	10.3	11.9	17,000
33	New York		11.9	14.8	13.6	13.3	12.1	289,000
34	Washington		11.5	15.4	14.2	13.1	12.3	103,100
35	Georgia		16.4	18.4	17.8	15.6	12.6	163,400
36	South Carolina		14.8	16.2	17.0	14.6	12.7	75,700
37	Tennessee		14.4	17.6	16.1	16.1	13.2	103,600
38	Texas		14.3	15.5	14.8	14.2	13.4	478,700
39	Arizona		16.1	19.0	17.0	15.2	13.7	117,000
40	Alabama		15.3	17.3	16.2	17.1	14.1	84,500
41	Oklahoma		12.6	13.8	15.3	15.4	14.2	69,800
42	Nevada		15.9	20.0	17.0	14.5	14.3	47,700
43	Kentucky		16.8	18.1	17.1	15.5	14.3	78,600
44	Delaware		10.4	14.0	12.6	11.5	14.3	15,300
45	Mississippi		15.3	20.7	19.4	17.6	14.5	56,700
46	District of Columbia		14.0	17.1	17.0	13.9	14.8	13,500
47	Arkansas		16.9	17.8	18.9	14.9	15.0	55,500
48	New Mexico		15.3	17.5	18.9	15.0	16.4	42,800
49	West Virginia		15.7	18.8	13.7	15.8	17.3	36,100
50	Louisiana		16.3	19.7	17.4	17.1	17.5	99,700
51	Alaska		14.1	15.4	16.9	17.2	17.9	16,800

Youth Disconnection by Metro Area

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		
				MALE	FEMALE	BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
	United States	11.7	4,599,100	12.1	11.2	17.2	13.7	9.7
1	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	6.1	5,500	—	—	—	—	—
2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	6.2	7,000	—	—	—	—	—
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	6.4	13,800	6.0	6.9	—	8.7	—
4	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	6.8	42,300	7.1	6.4	10.8	11.7	5.8
5	Provo-Orem, UT	7.2	8,700	9.2	—	—	—	6.8
6	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	7.9	32,900	7.9	7.9	—	—	6.6
7	Dayton, OH	7.9	7,900	—	8.9	—	—	4.9
8	Worcester, MA-CT	8.0	9,600	9.6	—	—	15.7	6.2
9	Akron, OH	8.1	7,600	—	—	—	—	—
10	Raleigh, NC	8.2	13,500	—	9.2	12.4	—	7.7
11	Syracuse, NY	8.2	7,900	8.9	—	—	—	6.2
12	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	8.3	17,300	8.2	8.3	—	15.8	6.3
13	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	8.3	9,900	6.4	—	—	—	8.2
14	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	8.5	39,200	8.6	8.4	11.5	11.9	7.2
15	Austin-Round Rock, TX	8.5	21,900	8.6	8.5	—	10.8	7.3
16	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	8.6	10,900	—	—	—	—	6.6
17	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	8.7	9,300	—	10.6	—	—	—
18	Rochester, NY	9.0	12,900	10.4	7.7	—	—	7.4
19	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	9.2	7,000	—	14.1	—	—	9.2
20	Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	9.3	12,600	9.9	8.6	19.2	—	6.0
21	St. Louis, MO-IL	9.3	31,300	10.4	8.1	10.8	—	8.0
22	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	9.4	40,800	8.3	10.6	26.4	10.0	7.6
23	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	9.4	14,700	9.6	9.1	—	18.7	7.1
24	Columbus, OH	9.4	21,700	8.9	9.8	15.0	—	7.9
25	Richmond, VA	9.5	13,900	10.3	8.6	11.8	—	7.4
26	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	9.5	39,500	8.9	10.2	—	9.4	9.7
27	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	9.5	9,200	—	—	—	—	—
28	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	9.6	23,400	8.8	10.5	13.2	—	7.3
29	Pittsburgh, PA	9.7	24,100	11.2	8.0	—	—	8.1
30	New Haven-Milford, CT	9.7	10,800	9.9	9.5	—	—	6.6
31	Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	9.8	11,500	10.3	9.3	—	—	9.8
32	Salt Lake City, UT	10.0	15,500	7.7	12.4	—	—	10.3
33	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	10.0	72,000	11.4	8.6	17.2	15.6	6.0
34	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	10.0	166,500	10.0	10.0	13.8	11.7	7.2
35	Urban Honolulu, HI	10.0	11,900	7.9	12.8	—	—	—
36	Greensboro-High Point, NC	10.1	9,800	13.0	—	—	—	11.1
37	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	10.2	18,800	11.6	8.9	20.4	—	6.1
38	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	10.3	29,400	11.0	9.4	12.6	—	9.0
39	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	10.3	72,700	10.6	10.0	16.2	11.6	7.2
40	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	10.3	6,800	—	—	—	—	11.0
41	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	10.4	6,000	—	—	—	—	—
42	Kansas City, MO-KS	10.6	26,900	12.6	8.4	—	15.4	8.8
43	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	10.6	12,100	11.1	10.0	—	—	8.0
44	Springfield, MA	10.6	8,300	13.3	—	—	20.4	—
45	Toledo, OH	10.6	9,200	9.0	12.3	—	—	10.3
46	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	10.9	31,300	10.5	11.3	—	18.1	9.4
47	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	11.0	78,800	11.8	10.2	13.7	10.8	9.0
48	Jacksonville, FL	11.0	18,000	11.1	10.8	17.0	—	8.1
49	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	11.0	34,700	10.1	11.9	—	15.0	7.9

Note: Blank cells indicate that the estimate is unreliable.

Youth Disconnection by Metro Area (continued)

RANK	METRO AREA	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (# ages 16–24)	DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		DISCONNECTED YOUTH (% ages 16–24)		
				MALE	FEMALE	BLACKS	LATINOS	WHITES
50	Wichita, KS	11.0	9,800	11.9	10.0	—	—	8.6
51	Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	11.0	25,300	11.9	10.1	19.9	—	8.0
52	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	11.1	71,400	12.4	9.8	15.4	10.5	8.6
53	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	11.1	127,500	12.0	10.3	20.6	11.7	7.3
54	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	11.4	6,400	—	—	—	—	7.1
55	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	11.4	7,300	—	—	—	—	—
56	Knoxville, TN	11.5	13,200	10.8	12.2	—	—	10.5
57	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	11.5	38,000	12.0	11.0	18.3	—	8.6
58	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	11.5	31,400	11.9	11.1	18.9	—	9.9
59	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	11.6	104,000	9.7	13.4	15.1	12.9	9.5
60	Cleveland-Elyria, OH	11.7	27,500	13.2	10.2	19.0	19.4	7.5
61	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	11.7	8,400	11.5	11.9	—	—	10.6
62	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	11.7	35,100	13.4	9.9	—	14.0	9.1
63	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	11.7	36,500	12.6	10.9	13.0	11.4	11.3
64	Colorado Springs, CO	11.8	11,400	9.3	14.8	—	—	11.6
65	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	11.8	27,600	12.8	10.9	13.4	—	12.1
66	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	11.8	274,900	12.7	10.9	16.8	14.9	8.9
67	Boise City, ID	11.9	10,000	13.7	—	—	—	—
68	Tulsa, OK	11.9	11,000	10.8	13.1	—	—	9.6
69	Winston-Salem, NC	11.9	9,000	11.9	11.9	—	—	10.1
70	Tucson, AZ	12.0	17,600	12.7	11.2	—	13.4	8.3
71	Columbia, SC	12.1	14,500	12.8	11.3	13.8	—	9.4
72	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	12.1	10,800	12.8	11.4	—	—	10.8
73	El Paso, TX	12.3	15,000	13.1	11.3	—	12.7	—
74	Oklahoma City, OK	12.3	23,000	14.7	9.9	—	—	8.8
75	Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	12.3	34,400	15.4	9.2	—	12.7	12.4
76	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	12.7	8,400	17.2	—	—	—	10.2
77	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	12.7	11,200	14.3	—	—	—	—
78	Albuquerque, NM	12.9	13,500	14.5	11.3	—	—	—
79	Chattanooga, TN-GA	13.0	9,300	10.4	15.8	—	—	11.4
80	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	13.2	63,200	13.3	13.1	19.5	12.8	10.7
81	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	13.4	18,800	13.9	12.8	27.7	—	10.5
82	Baton Rouge, LA	13.5	15,500	13.2	13.8	—	—	—
83	Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	13.6	9,600	14.5	12.6	—	—	11.8
84	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	13.6	75,200	12.8	14.5	18.1	16.2	11.0
85	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	13.7	9,500	17.6	—	—	—	13.0
86	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	13.7	113,400	12.3	15.2	16.5	14.5	12.2
87	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	13.9	10,700	16.0	11.6	14.2	—	14.0
88	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	13.9	33,900	15.3	12.4	23.9	13.0	12.6
89	New Orleans-Metairie, LA	14.1	19,000	17.4	10.8	19.7	—	9.8
90	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14.3	20,400	15.7	12.9	18.0	—	13.5
91	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	14.4	46,700	14.0	14.9	16.0	16.9	9.3
92	Stockton-Lodi, CA	14.7	13,800	15.4	13.9	—	15.6	—
93	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15.0	29,900	15.6	14.5	20.1	—	10.0
94	Fresno, CA	15.4	20,200	18.3	12.4	—	15.6	13.6
95	Jackson, MS	15.5	12,000	16.6	14.5	18.1	—	—
96	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	15.7	94,600	15.7	15.6	19.7	17.0	14.3
97	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	17.1	21,300	13.2	21.0	—	16.5	—
98	Bakersfield, CA	20.7	25,200	23.6	17.1	—	18.9	21.6

Note: Blanks indicate that the estimate is unreliable.

Youth Disconnection by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

MAJOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS	DISCONNECTED YOUTH RATE [% ages 16–24]				2016		CHANGE IN RATE 2010–2016 [%]
	2008	2010	2012	2014	(%)	(#)	
United States	12.6	14.7	14.1	13.2	11.7	4,599,100	–20.7
Male	12.3	15.2	14.5	13.3	12.1	2,440,900	–21.0
Female	12.9	14.1	13.7	13.0	11.2	2,158,200	–20.4
ASIAN	7.1	8.5	7.8	7.9	6.6	141,300	–21.8
Asian Male	6.3	8.3	7.4	7.2	6.7	71,900	–20.1
Asian Female	7.9	8.6	8.1	8.6	6.6	69,400	–23.5
WHITE	9.7	11.7	11.2	10.8	9.7	2,064,800	–17.1
White Male	9.5	12.3	11.5	10.8	10.0	1,091,200	–19.0
White Female	10.0	11.1	10.8	10.7	9.4	973,600	–14.8
LATINO	16.7	18.5	17.3	15.2	13.7	1,184,500	–26.1
Latino Male	13.6	16.8	16.0	14.0	12.6	563,300	–25.0
Latino Female	20.2	20.3	18.8	16.5	14.8	621,100	–27.3
BLACK	20.4	22.5	22.4	20.6	17.2	977,700	–23.4
Black Male	23.7	26.0	25.6	23.5	20.1	585,300	–22.4
Black Female	17.0	19.0	19.3	17.6	14.2	392,400	–25.4
NATIVE AMERICAN	24.4	28.8	27.0	26.3	25.8	78,300	–10.6
Native American Male	25.0	30.9	28.0	26.9	28.1	43,200	–9.1
Native American Female	23.9	26.7	25.9	25.6	23.4	35,200	–12.3

ASIAN SUBGROUPS	2016		LATINO SUBGROUPS	2016	
	(%)	(#)		(%)	(#)
United States	11.7	4,599,100			
Male	12.1	2,440,900	LATINO	13.7	1,184,500
Female	11.2	2,158,200	Latino Male	12.6	563,300
ASIAN	6.6	141,300	Latino Female	14.8	621,100
Asian Male	6.7	71,900	SOUTH AMERICAN	8.9	38,500
Asian Female	6.6	69,400	South American Male	9.4	20,200
VIETNAMESE	4.5	10,300	South American Female	8.4	18,400
Vietnamese Male	5.2	6,200	SPANIARD	10.7	10,500
Vietnamese Female	3.8	4,100	Spaniard Male	11.5	5,600
CHINESE	4.6	25,400	Spaniard Female	10.0	4,900
Chinese Male	5.0	13,400	OTHER LATINO	13.5	43,000
Chinese Female	4.2	12,200	Other Latino Male	15.2	24,800
KOREAN	4.7	8,200	Other Latino Female	11.8	18,200
Korean Male	6.1	5,200	CENTRAL AMERICAN	13.7	104,100
Korean Female	3.3	2,900	Central American Male	9.8	40,000
TWO OR MORE	5.6	3,200	Central American Female	18.1	64,100
Two or More Male	—	—	MEXICAN	13.8	788,000
Two or More Female	—	—	Mexican Male	12.5	367,000
INDIAN	6.8	25,400	Mexican Female	15.2	421,000
Indian Male	5.0	10,100	PUERTO RICAN, DOMINICAN, CUBAN	14.9	200,300
Indian Female	9.1	15,200	PR, DR, Cuban Female	15.3	105,800
PAKISTANI	8.1	5,600	PR, DR, Cuban Female	14.4	94,500
Pakistani Male	—	—			
Pakistani Female	—	—			
FILIPINO	8.2	25,300			
Filipino Male	9.6	15,100			
Filipino Female	6.7	10,200			
HMONG	15.1	8,000			
Hmong Male	—	—			
Hmong Female	—	—			

Note: Blank cells indicate that the estimate is unreliable.