



HALVE THE GAP BY 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities

Note on Methods and Definitions

Introduction

HALVE THE GAP BY 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities ranks the country's twenty-five most populous metropolitan areas—and racial and ethnic groups within those areas—based on the percentage of young people ages 16–24 who are not working and not in school. This note describes the methods and definitions used to calculate youth disconnection rates in major metropolitan areas as well as other indicators presented in the report.

Methods

Unless otherwise noted, all estimates presented in the report are from Measure of America's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). Estimates of youth disconnection and other indicators for the nation and for major metro areas were calculated using data from the 2011 ACS. Demographic data for metro areas are from the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (July 1st, 2011 population estimates) and from the 2011 ACS. Estimates of youth disconnection and other indicators for neighborhood clusters (Public Use Microdata Areas) within metro areas were calculated using ACS microdata spanning 2007 to 2011.

To calculate the percentage of disconnected youth, the total number of disconnected young people and the total number of young people overall are calculated for the nation as a whole and for each metro area from the ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. Disconnected youth are defined as all young people ages 16 through 24 (inclusive) who are not in school and are not in work. 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 in work means that a young person is either unemployed or not in the labor force at the time of responding to the survey. Disconnected youth are young people who are simultaneously not in school and not in work. 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.

After determining the number of disconnected youth and the total youth population, the disconnected youth rate is obtained by dividing the number of disconnected youth by the total youth population and multiplying the quotient by 100 to obtain the rate.

Comparability

Due to recent changes in the definitions of the metro areas used in this report, findings from this report for specific metro areas are not directly comparable to findings from [ONE IN SEVEN: Ranking Youth Disconnection in the 25 Largest Metro Areas](#). Please see the definition of “Metro Area” below for more information. Data used in this report come from the ACS, an annual survey conducted by the US 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.

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 individuals’ ability to work or to perform basic required tasks without assistance. Individuals who report having such a condition on the ACS are counted as having a disability. Those who do not are counted as not having a disability.

Disconnected Youth – The Disconnected Youth Rate is the percentage of young people ages 16 through 24 who are simultaneously not in school and are not working. Young people who are unemployed or not in the labor force that are also not enrolled in school are considered disconnected. Young people who are working or attending any kind of school, regardless of full- or part-time status, are considered connected, as are young people serving in the armed forces. Please see BOX 1 Who Are “Disconnected Youth”? on page 7 of the report for more information.

Employment-to-Population Ratio – The Employment-to-Population Ratio is the ratio of the total number of people employed to the total population. When this indicator is shown as a percentage of youth ages 16 through 24 who are not in school, both the total employed and the total population are restricted to only those youth who are not enrolled in school.

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 both types of group quarters.

Metro Area – Metro areas used in this report are formally known as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), geographic areas defined by the White House Office of Management and Budget 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. MSA definitions were last updated in February 2013. Under the new definitions, the Sacramento–Arden–Arcade–Roseville, CA MSA is no longer one of the 25 largest metro areas in the nation and the Charlotte–Concord–Gastonia, NC–SC MSA is now within the top twenty-five. The ACS Public Use Microdata Sample does not permit researchers to identify MSAs in the data. For the purposes of this report, we have approximated MSAs by grouping together all Public Use Microdata Areas (Please see “Public Use Microdata Areas” below) that are all or

partially within each MSA. These approximated MSAs are generally somewhat larger and more populous than the areas within their formal boundaries.

MSA names used in this report have been shortened from their official versions for simplicity to refer only to the principal city or cities of the metro area. The following table shows the shortened name for each metro area used in the text alongside the official name of each MSA featured in this report:

Metro Area	Metropolitan Statistical Area – Full Name
Atlanta	Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Roswell, GA
Baltimore	Baltimore–Columbia–Towson, MD
Boston	Boston–Cambridge–Newton, MA–NH
Charlotte	Charlotte–Concord–Gastonia, NC–SC
Chicago	Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL–IN–WI
Dallas–Ft. Worth	Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX
Denver	Denver–Aurora–Lakewood, CO
Detroit	Detroit–Warren–Dearborn, MI
Houston	Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land, TX
Los Angeles	Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA
Miami	Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL
Minneapolis–St. Paul	Minneapolis–St. Paul–Bloomington, MN–WI
New York	New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY–NJ–PA
Philadelphia	Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington, PA–NJ–DE–MD
Phoenix	Phoenix–Mesa–Scottsdale, AZ
Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA
Portland	Portland–Vancouver–Hillsboro, OR–WA
Riverside–San Bernardino	Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario, CA
St. Louis	St. Louis, MO–IL
San Antonio	San Antonio–New Braunfels, TX
San Diego	San Diego–Carlsbad, CA
San Francisco	San Francisco–Oakland–Hayward, CA
Seattle	Seattle–Tacoma–Bellevue, WA
Tampa–St. Petersburg	Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater, FL
Washington, DC	Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC–VA–MD–WV

Neighborhood Clusters – Please see “Public Use Microdata Areas” below.

Public Use Microdata Areas – “Neighborhood clusters” in this report refer to Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) that are all or partially inside the boundaries of the twenty-five most populous metro areas in the nation. PUMAs are sub-state geographic units designated by the US Census Bureau. PUMAs have populations of at least 100,000 and generally less than 200,000. A challenge of working with data for PUMAs is that the boundaries of these areas do not always follow neighborhood boundaries that are

recognizable to local residents. However, the advantage of using these units for exploring variations within metro areas is that all PUMAs are roughly equal in population size and timely and reliable estimates for a variety of indicators are available for PUMAs from the ACS.

Race and Ethnic Groups – Racial and ethnic groups in this report are based on definitions established by the White House Office of Management and Budget and used by the Census Bureau and other government entities. Since 1997 the OMB has recognized five racial groups and two ethnic categories. The racial groups include Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, and whites. 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. Measure of America recognizes that Native Americans and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders constitute two of the five racial groups recognized by the OMB. However, due to the very small population sizes of these groups in most metropolitan areas, reliable estimates of youth disconnection for these groups cannot be presented in this report.

Teen Motherhood Rate – The teen motherhood rate is the percentage of young women ages 16 through 19 who have one or more children of their own. These could be biological, adopted, or step children. Young women who live in any kind of group quarters (see above) are not included in the Teen Motherhood Rate as information on motherhood is only available from the ACS for women living in households.

Unemployment Rate – The Unemployment Rate is the total number of people who do not have jobs but who have actively looked for work within the preceding four weeks and are available to work as a percentage of the total number of people in the labor force. Unemployment rates for different age groups presented in this report count members of military as both employed and as part of the labor force. Adult unemployment refers to unemployment among adults ages 25 and over.

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