HALVE THE GAP BY 2030
YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA'S CITIES

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GAP IN YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATE
(PERCENTAGE POINTS)

2013 GAP: 15.7

2013 GAP: 30.3

2030 TARGET: 7.9

2030 TARGET: 15.2

Racial/ethnic groups

Neighborhood clusters
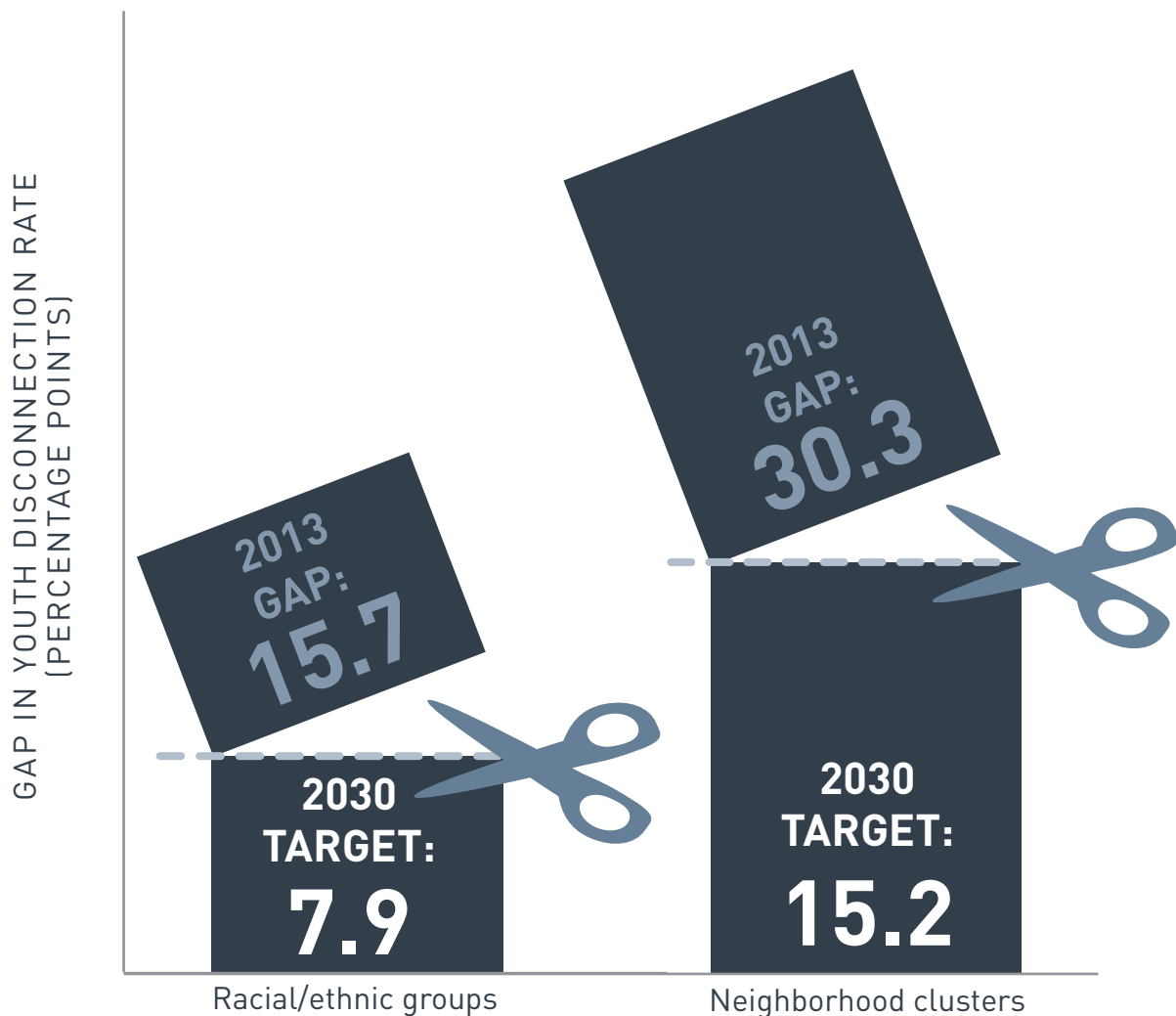
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Halve the Gap by 2030: Overview

Once again, an autumnal snap is in the air, and the back-to-school season has come and gone. High school and college students have now settled into new routines, and recent grads have moved on to assume new roles. **But more than one in every seven young people in America have been left behind.** An astounding 5.8 million teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 are neither working nor in school. As their peers lay the foundation for a productive and meaningful adulthood, these disconnected youth find themselves adrift, unmoored from the structures that confer knowledge, skills, identity, and purpose. This disengagement is costly not only to individuals but to their communities and the country as a whole.

Just over a year ago, Measure of America published its initial research on the epidemic of youth disconnection, called *One in Seven: Ranking Youth Disconnection in the 25 Largest Metro Areas*. This report updates last year's findings with the latest numbers and, to better map the landscape of youth disconnection, also presents the data disaggregated by neighborhood cluster for each of the twenty-five most populous US metro areas. Key findings include the following:

- **Boston** (9.2 percent), **Minneapolis** (9.5 percent), and **Washington, DC** (11.3 percent), have the lowest rates of youth disconnection among the twenty-five most populous metro areas.

- **Charlotte** (17.3 percent), **Detroit** (17.4 percent), and **Riverside–San Bernardino** (18.8 percent) are home to the greatest share of disconnected young people.

- The greatest disparities are found not between but within our nation's big cities. In **Chicago**, **New York**, and **Detroit**, gaps of approximately 30 percentage points separate the most- and least-connected neighborhood clusters.

- A chasm likewise separates different racial and ethnic groups. For example, in **Pittsburgh** and **St. Louis**, one in every four African American young people is disconnected, compared to one in every ten white youth. Nationwide, African Americans are roughly three times as likely as Asian Americans and twice as likely as whites to be disconnected in their teens and early twenties.

The report identifies six factors associated with youth disconnection: high rates of disconnection a decade ago, low human development levels, high poverty, high adult unemployment, low adult educational attainment, and a high degree of residential segregation by race and ethnicity.

In addition to painting a picture of youth disconnection in America today, in this report we imagine, in very specific terms, a different, better tomorrow. We lay out an ambitious but attainable goal: **to cut the gaps between the most- and least-connected neighborhoods and between racial groups in half by 2030.** Our research has convinced us that, through the collective efforts of educational institutions, social service delivery organizations, the justice system, the private and nonprofit sectors, and others, this objective is within reach. By coalescing around a shared goal, we can galvanize greater attention to the problem, mobilize more resources and collaborative efforts to address it, and put in place a system of accountability for tracking our progress annually.

What would it mean in practice to **halve the gap**? Here's an example. In Philadelphia, the African American youth disconnection rate is 25.2 percent, and the white rate is 8.9 percent, a gap of 16.3 percentage points; halving the racial gap would mean that no more than 8.15 percentage points would separate blacks and whites by 2030. In terms of Philly neighborhoods, the highest youth disconnection rate is 30 percent, the lowest, 3.2 percent, a gap of 26.8 percentage points; halving the neighborhood gap would mean no more than 13.4 percentage points would separate any two neighborhoods by 2030. Of course, the gap could also close if today's highly connected groups did worse, but implicit in the goal is that no neighborhood or racial group moves backward. The target gaps for many cities are still sizable—and in an ideal world such gaps would not exist at all—but given how vast the current differences are, a halve-the-gap reduction represents a realistic goal around which stakeholders can rally to achieve **real results.**

We firmly believe that setting measureable, time-bound targets for reducing youth disconnection is key to moving the needle on this critical issue. Knowing where you want to go is fundamental to getting there.

Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity

RANK	METRO AREA	ALL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN AMERICAN	LATINO	WHITE
			DISCONNECTED YOUTH (%)			
	United States	14.6	22.5	7.6	17.9	11.7
1	Boston	9.2	14.2	...	18.6	7.2
2	Minneapolis	9.5	20.2	...	...	7.2
3	Washington	11.3	19.6	...	11.2	7.4
4	San Diego	12.2	19.0	...	16.1	8.2
5	San Francisco	12.3	19.4	8.5	14.3	11.0
6	Pittsburgh	12.6	24.8	...	...	10.3
7	Denver	13.0	...	...	18.2	10.0
8	Seattle	13.2	21.2	9.3	18.3	12.1
9	Chicago	14.1	24.9	...	15.6	9.2
10	Houston	14.1	16.5	7.6	16.2	11.2
11	St. Louis	14.2	24.9	...	...	10.3
12	Philadelphia	14.3	25.2	...	24.0	8.9
13	Baltimore	14.3	22.4	...	...	10.7
14	New York	14.5	23.3	6.5	18.5	9.8
15	Los Angeles	14.6	22.5	7.8	17.2	10.5
16	Dallas–Fort Worth	14.9	19.3	...	17.6	12.4
17	San Antonio	15.6	...	...	17.2	12.0
18	Tampa–St. Peterburg	15.8	22.3	...	18.6	13.2
19	Miami	16.0	21.0	...	16.6	10.8
20	Atlanta	16.8	21.1	...	16.5	14.1
21	Portland	17.0	...	...	20.2	16.0
22	Phoenix	17.2	22.5	...	22.3	12.2
23	Charlotte	17.3	21.4	...	...	16.7
24	Detroit	17.4	26.9	...	19.5	12.8
25	Riverside–San Bernardino	18.8	24.5	...	19.4	17.5

Note: ... Data unavailable because there are too few 16– to 24–year-olds to allow for reliable calculations. Source: Measure of America analysis of US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011 PUMS Microdata File.