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Measure of America Releases *Halve the Gap by 2030: Youth Disconnection in American Cities*

Second Annual Study Shows 5.8 Million Young People are Unemployed and Not in School; Disconnection Disparities Between Neighborhoods and Racial/Ethnic Groups Greatest in Most Racially Segregated Cities

NEW YORK — [Measure of America](#) today released [Halve the Gap by 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities](#), a new report that ranks the 25 most populous U.S. metro areas by the share of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school. The report sets an ambitious, but attainable, goal to cut in half the gaps between racial groups and between the most- and least-connected neighborhoods by 2030.

According to the study, 5.8 million, or one in seven, young people are disconnected—a number little changed since last year when Measure of America published its initial research on the epidemic of youth disconnection. *Halve the Gap* updates last year's findings with the latest numbers by metro area, race and ethnicity, and gender, and better maps the landscape of youth disconnection by neighborhood, exposing extreme gaps within cities and between groups.

"Today, 5.8 million young people are adrift at America's margins, a situation that is costly both financially and socially," said Sarah Burd-Sharps, co-director of Measure of America. "These are critical years in which young people should be developing the skills and confidence to prepare them for a productive and meaningful adulthood. The lack of attachment to these anchor institutions leaves lasting scars that impact future earnings, financial independence, and physical and mental health."

The average disconnected youth costs \$37,450 a year in government services. Last year, disconnected youth cost over \$930 billion in government assistance and uncollected taxes.

"When we look at the neighborhood data over ten years, it is clear that youth disconnection is an issue that is bigger than any one child; the conditions in struggling neighborhoods, such as poverty and educational inequality, are the driving forces behind this persistent problem," said Kristen Lewis, co-director of Measure of America. "To really move the needle on youth disconnection, key actors who work with youth need to align their resources behind measurable, time-bound targets. To halve the gap is an achievable and worthy goal we can all get behind."

The report provides a set of concrete recommendations to cut the youth disconnection rate in half by 2030 through the implementation of a mix of critical programs, including job training, youth engagement programs, and education initiatives.

Among the key findings from *Halve the Gap*:

- More than one in every seven young people in America—5.8 million teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24—is unemployed and not enrolled in school.
- The lowest rates of youth disconnection among the 25 most populated cities are found in Boston (9.2 percent), Minneapolis (9.5 percent), and Washington, DC (11.3 percent).
- The highest rates of youth disconnection among the 25 most populated cities are found in San Bernardino (18.8 percent), Detroit (17.4 percent), and Charlotte (17.3 percent).
- The greatest differences in youth disconnection rates are found *within* cities as opposed to *between* cities. In Chicago, New York, and Detroit, gaps of approximately 30 percentage points separate neighborhoods within the same city.
- Major differences in youth disconnection rates also exist based on race and ethnicity. In Pittsburgh and St. Louis, one in every four African American youths is disconnected, compared to one in every ten white youths. Nationwide, African Americans are about three times as likely as Asian Americans and twice as likely as whites to be disconnected in their teens and early twenties.

About Measure of America and the American Human Development Index

An initiative of the **Social Science Research Council**, [Measure of America](#) provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulating fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards.

About the Authors

Sarah Burd-Sharps and Kristen Lewis are co-directors of Measure of America and authors of the Measure of America series of national and state reports. Previously, Sarah worked with the United Nations for more than two decades, most recently as Deputy Director of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Prior to this, she worked in China and in a number of African countries on gender issues and economic empowerment. Sarah holds an M.I.A. from Columbia University. Kristen also comes from an international development policy background, having worked primarily in the areas of gender equality, governance, environment, and water and sanitation. Kristen is co-author, under the leadership of Jeffrey Sachs' Millennium Project, of the 2005 book, *Health, Dignity and Development: What Will It Take?* She worked at the United Nations for some ten years and has served as a consultant for many international development organizations. Kristen also holds an M.I.A. from Columbia University.

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