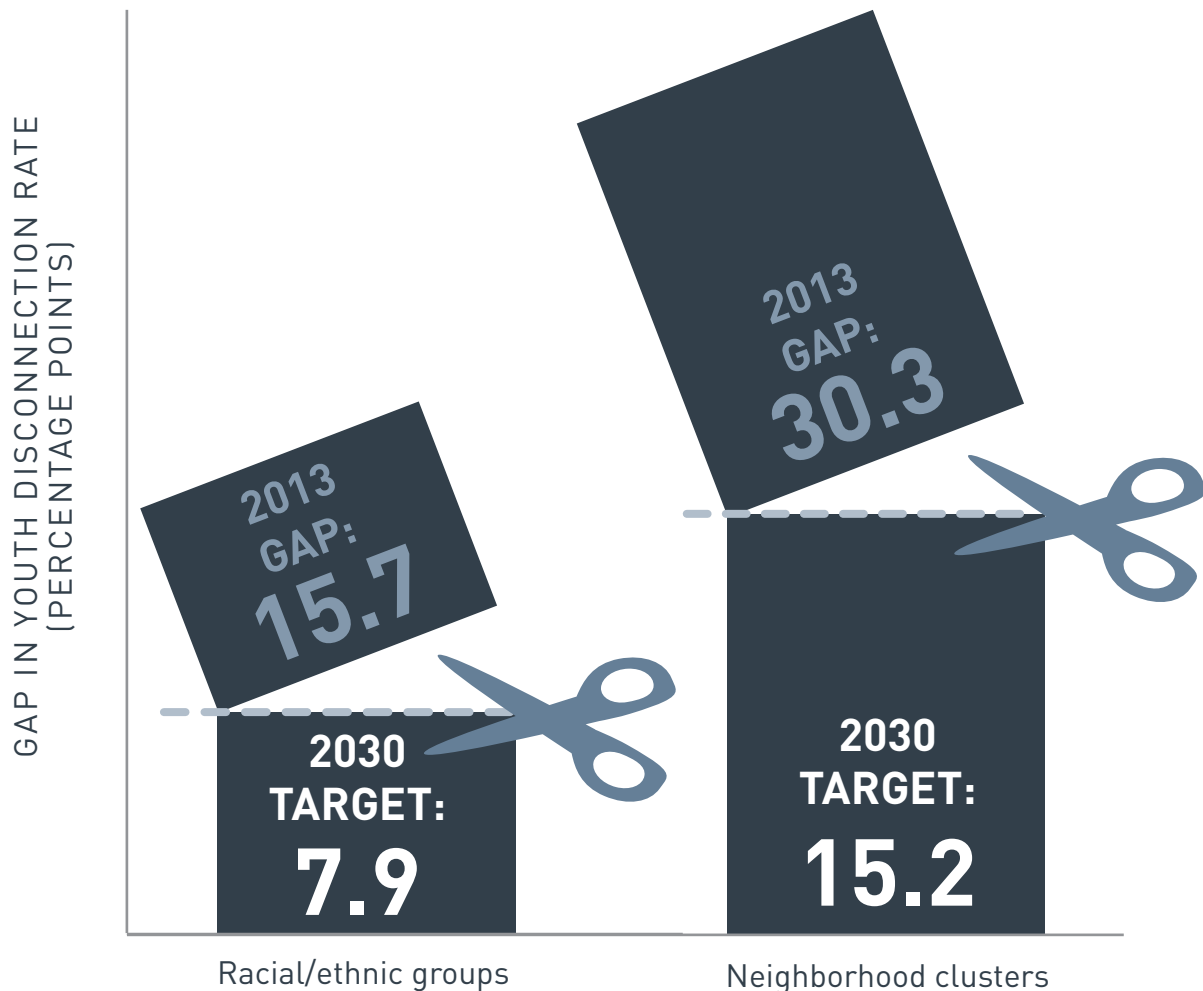# HALVE THE GAP BY 2030

YOUTH DISCONNECTION IN AMERICA'S CITIES
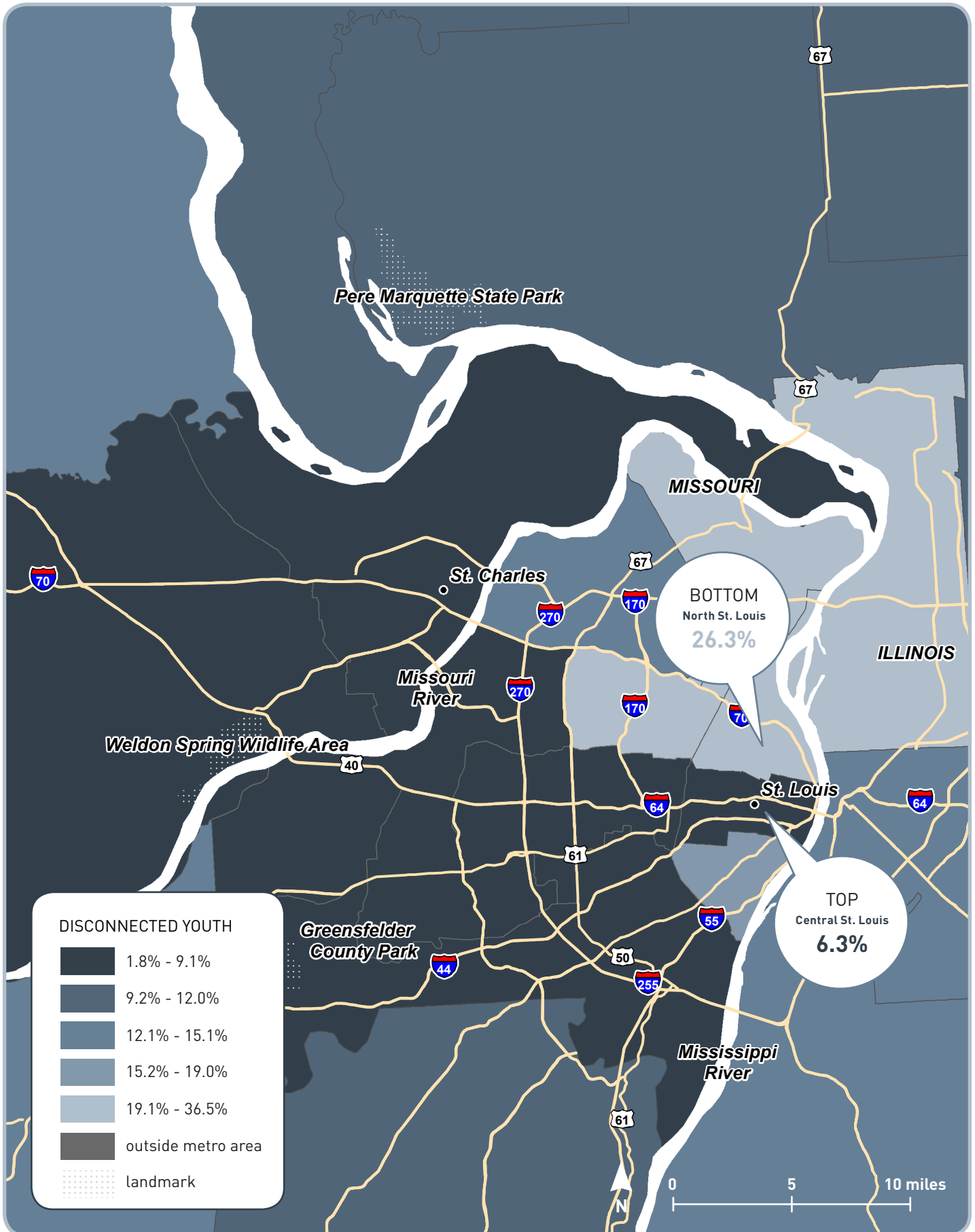
ST. LOUIS METRO AREA CLOSE-UP

KRISTEN LEWIS and SARAH BURD-SHARPS

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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DISCONNECTED YOUTH

- 1.8% - 9.1%
- 9.2% - 12.0%
- 12.1% - 15.1%
- 15.2% - 19.0%
- 19.1% - 36.5%
- outside metro area
- landmark

Pere Marquette State Park

MISSOURI

ILLINOIS

St. Charles

BOTTOM
North St. Louis
26.3%

Missouri River

Weldon Spring Wildlife Area

St. Louis

TOP
Central St. Louis
6.3%

Greensfelder County Park

Mississippi River

0   5   10 miles

N

About the St. Louis Metro Area Close-Up

This document is an excerpt from *Halve the Gap by 2030: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*. It portrays in detail the landscape of youth disconnection in the St. Louis Metro Area, with a map of the metro area; identification of the neighborhood highs and lows; youth disconnection rates by race, ethnicity, and gender; and key well-being indicators to provide context.

Who Are Disconnected Youth: Definition and Data Sources

Disconnected youth are people 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 disconnection rates in this report are calculated by Measure of America using employment and enrollment data from the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) of the US Census Bureau. For further details, see the Note on Methods and Definitions.

Several official data sources exist that can be used for calculating youth disconnection. As a result, researchers working with different data sets, or different definitions of what constitutes disconnection, arrive at different numbers for this indicator. Measure of America uses the 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 the 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.

MEASUREOF**AMERICA**

Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council, provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in the United States and to stimulate fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: **health**, **education**, and **living standards**. 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 to developing the capabilities required for a full and flourishing 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 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.

The **St. Louis metro area** is made up of seven counties in Missouri and eight counties in neighboring Illinois that have strong social and economic ties to the cities of St. Louis and St. Charles. The youth disconnection rate in the St. Louis metro area is 14.2 percent, slightly below the national average of 14.6 percent. Roughly 49,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 years are neither working nor in school.
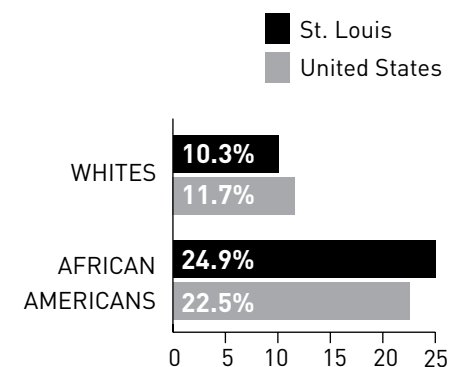
Youth Disconnection by Race and Ethnicity

White youth have a rate of disconnection slightly lower than the national rate for whites, while African Americans have a rate of disconnection slightly higher than the national rate for African Americans. St. Louis is roughly three-quarters white and one-fifth African American; Asian Americans and Latinos each make up less than 3 percent of the St. Louis population, meaning that there are too few young people from these two groups for a reliable calculation of their youth disconnection rates.

Youth Disconnection by Gender

Young women in St. Louis are less likely than young men to be disconnected by a considerable and significant margin—4.7 percentage points. While the metro area ranks seventeenth in terms male disconnection, teenage girls and young women in St. Louis fare much better; the city is the sixth-best in terms of female disconnection.

How Do Racial and Ethnic Groups Compare to Each Other and to Their National Counterparts?

■ St. Louis
■ United States

WHITES
10.3%
11.7%

AFRICAN AMERICANS
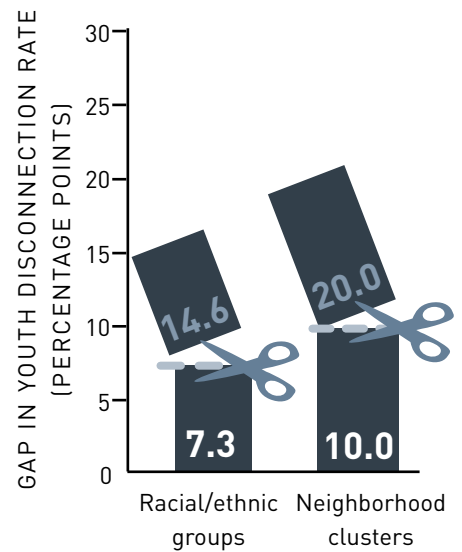24.9%
22.5%

0 5 10 15 20 25

Youth Disconnection by Neighborhood

St. Louis is made up of twenty-one neighborhood clusters, and the range of outcomes for youth education and employment among them is startling. In St. Louis City North, 26.3 percent of young people, or more than one of every four, are not working or in school. In contrast, in St. Louis City Central, just next door, only 6.3 percent of youth are disconnected.

St. Louis City North is 94 percent African American. It also faces extraordinary challenges in terms of key social and economic indicators. Nearly half of the children in the neighborhood live in poverty, and one in four adults did not complete a high school diploma. The unemployment rate for adults 16 years and older is 24 percent, as compared to the average of 8.1 percent in the broader metro area.

St. Louis is one of the ten most segregated cities in the U.S. in terms of black-white residential segregation, one of a handful of Rustbelt metro areas where segregation has been stubbornly persistent for several decades. Nationally, communities of color tend to be disproportionately poor, and the confluence of segregation by race and segregation by income is associated with high rates of youth disconnection. Schools in segregated neighborhoods tend to have fewer resources and thus worse educational outcomes, ranging from higher dropout rates to a lower quality education. Segregation by race and income also typically translates to fewer transportation options and employment opportunities. And people living in low-income neighborhoods of color tend to have social networks limited to others who share their financial circumstances, thus limiting vital connections so helpful for job-seekers.

Halve the Gap in St. Louis

GAP IN YOUTH DISCONNECTION RATE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)

Racial/ethnic groups: 14.6 / 7.3
Neighborhood clusters: 20.0 / 10.0

Most Connected Neighborhood Clusters

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE OF YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)
St. Louis City Central, MO	6.3
St. Charles County West, MO	6.6
West Central St. Louis County, MO	7.2

Least Connected Neighborhood Clusters

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE OF YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)
Inner Ring North, St. Louis County, MO	21.0
St. Louis County Northeast, MO	24.1
St. Louis City North, MO	26.3