

IDEA 67 The disconnection of urban youth: Indianapolis as among the worst for youth engagement

In 2012, Measure of America published, “One in Seven: Ranking Youth Disconnection in the 25 Largest Metro Areas” (http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/MOA-One_in_Seven09-14.pdf)

Writer Richard Florida in his essay, “The Tragic Geography of Disconnected Youth” (<http://www.citylab.com/work/2012/09/metros-most-disconnected-young-people/3269/>) unpacks the report. Nationally, over 5.8 million young people (almost 15%) are disconnected--a figure that grew by 800,000 as a result of the 2008 economic crisis.

Globally, the U.S. has higher rates of youth disconnection than many advanced nations. For example:

- England 13.4%
- Austria 11.4 %
- Canada 10.5 %
- Germany 9.5 %
- Norway 9.2 %
- Finland 8.6 %
- Switzerland 6.8 %
- Denmark 5.7 %
- Netherlands 4.1 %

Youth disconnection varies substantially by race. More than 1 in 5 (22.5 %) young African American are disconnected, 18.5 % of Latinos, 11.7 % of whites, and just 8 % of Asian-Americans.

This brief ranks the country’s 25 largest metropolitan areas as well as the nation’s largest racial and ethnic groups in terms of youth disconnection. Key findings include the following:

- Big gaps separate major metro areas; in bottom-ranked Phoenix, 19 % of young people are disconnected from the worlds of work and school, whereas in Boston, which tops the chart, only about 9 % are.
- African American young people have the highest rate of youth disconnection, 22.5 % nationally. In Pittsburgh, Seattle, Detroit, and Phoenix, more than one in four African American young people are disconnected.
- Young men are slightly more likely to be disconnected than young women, a reversal of the situation found in decades past. The situation varies by race and ethnicity, however. The gender gap is largest among African Americans; nationally, 26 % of African American male youth are disconnected, compared to 19 % of their female counterparts.
- Youth disconnection mirrors adult disconnection: household poverty rates and the employment and educational status of adults in a community are strongly associated with youth disconnection.
- Where a young person lives is highly predictive of his or her likelihood of disconnection. The findings break down youth disconnection by neighborhoods within cities. The disparities between wealthy and poor communities are striking. For example, in New York, disconnection rates range from 3.7 % in parts of Long Island to 35.6 % in parts of the South Bronx.
- The report concludes with a set of recommendations for preventing youth disconnection, including moving beyond the “college-for-all” mantra to provide meaningful support and guidance both to young people aiming for a four-year bachelor’s degree and to those whose interests and career aspirations would be better served by relevant, high-quality career and technical education certificates and associate’s degrees.

Indianapolis/Marion County

In “Zeroing in on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America’s Cities,” interested Marion County citizens can see how the Indianapolis metro area is ranked compared to other areas:

<http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MOA-Zeroing-In-Final.pdf>

The 98 ranked US metro areas

1st Omaha–Council Bluffs, NE/IA 7.7%

98th Memphis, TN/MS/AR 21.6%

- Disconnected Youth (% ages 16–24) 13.8%
- Disconnected Youth (# ages 16–24) 5,527,000
- Disconnected Youth (% ages 16–24)
 - Blacks 21.6%
 - Latinos 16.3%
 - Whites 11.3%

Indianapolis, Carmel, & Anderson

<http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MOA-YouthDisconnectionTables.pdf>

Rank: **78th worst out of 98 major cities** p. 29-30

78 Indianapolis–Carmel–Anderson, IN

- Disconnected Youth (% ages 16–24) 15.8%
- Disconnected Youth (# ages 16–24) 35,539
- Disconnected Youth (% ages 16–24)
 - Blacks 22.3 %
 - Latinos Not reported
 - Whites 14.0%

Indiana Congressional District 7

Disconnected Youth (% ages 16–24) 19.7%

Rank: **401 worst out of 436** p. 28