

# Disconnected Young Adults: Increasing Engagement and Opportunity



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*Even in a strong job market with low overall unemployment, a substantial number of youth are disconnected from work and schooling. Being disconnected during early ages (between sixteen and twenty-four) can have negative impacts on future labor-market success and other outcomes. This article presents data and summarizes the literature on the causes and consequences of youth disconnection. It discusses evidenced-based policies and programs that show promise for engaging or reengaging young people and meeting the needs of particular groups of disconnected youth, including effective education and training programs (both in secondary and postsecondary contexts), targeted reforms to community college systems, strategies for addressing barriers to work and school including provision of comprehensive services, and demand-oriented solutions that improve job opportunities for youth.*

**Keywords:** youth, disconnected, employment, unemployment, education, training

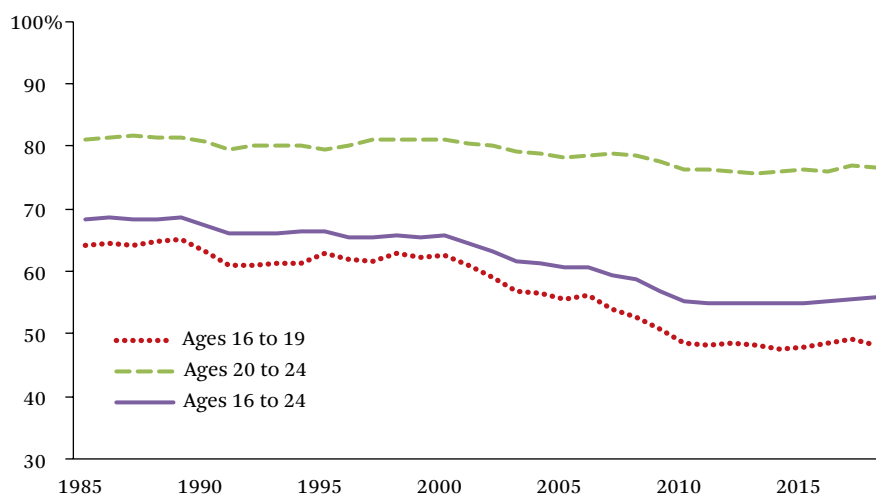
Over the past several decades, the United States has seen declines in employment among young adults in their late teens and early twenties. These trends have led to widespread concerns about the consequences for young people, especially those who are also not enrolled in school. Early adult years are critical for building human capital through work and schooling, and are the stage of life during which young people start to make career decisions and build

connections that can be pivotal for future labor-market success. Early work experience not only provides income for young people and their families in the immediate term, but also can provide foundational skills and experience for later employment and careers. The possible consequences for those not working or in school in these early years include being less prepared for work, facing unstable employment, and following a trajectory of lower-wage

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**Figure 1.** Labor-Force Participation of Youth, by Age

Source: Authors' compilation based on Current Population Survey data (BLS 2018).

employment. Disconnection from work and school correlates with other issues such as increased criminal activity, increased drug use, and lower levels of educational attainment overall. For young people who are parents themselves, the effects of not working can be particularly serious, increasing the likelihood that their children will grow up in poverty.

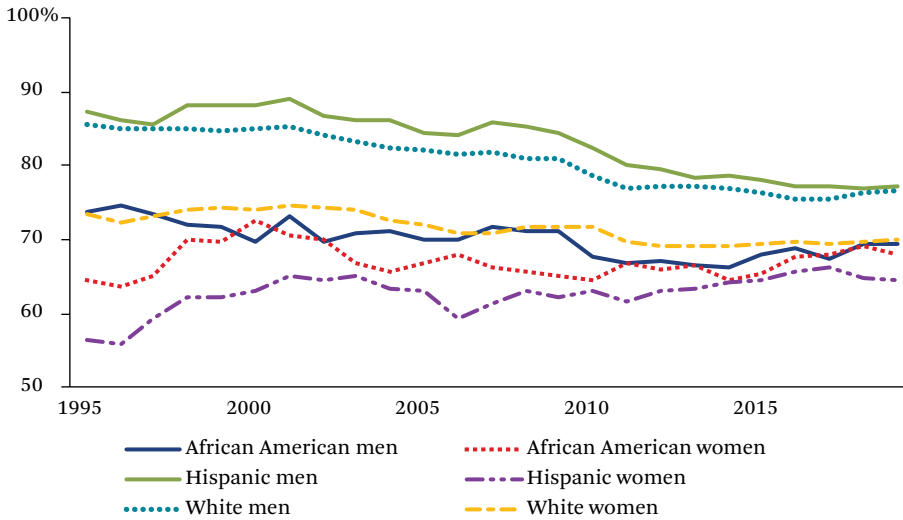
Research suggests that a large part of the decline in youth employment stems from increasing numbers of young adults attending school, both secondary and postsecondary. However, despite this trend, a significant group of young people are disconnected, that is, neither in the labor force nor in education or training. This article summarizes trends in youth employment, focusing on youth who are disconnected from both work and school during these formative years. It synthesizes the literature on the causes for and consequences of youth being disconnected and discusses evidenced-based policies and programs that show promise for engaging or reengaging young people to improve their labor-market opportunities now and in the future. We argue that tackling the issue of youth disconnection requires going beyond efforts to improve overall economic conditions; it is essential to develop and implement programs targeted to meet the specific needs of this population, as

well as system reforms and policy changes that address the variety of causes of youth disconnection.

### EMPLOYMENT AND DISCONNECTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Labor-force participation (LFP) of young people ages sixteen to twenty-four has been declining since the 1980s, though it has been fairly flat since 2010 (figure 1). Youth employment fell during the recession that began in 2007 and has been recovering since 2010, but remains below pre-recession levels. The decline in youth LFP is largest among those ages sixteen to nineteen. As many youth in this younger age group live with parents and attend secondary school, it is not surprising that LFP levels for this younger group are lower than for youth ages twenty to twenty-four. The LFP for the younger ages hovered near 48 percent in recent years and the older group at approximately 75 percent. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that LFP will continue to decline for both groups, with LFP in 2026 projected to be 32 percent for youth sixteen to nineteen and 69 percent for youth ages twenty to twenty-four (BLS 2018).

Among older youth ages twenty to twenty-four, declines in LFP have occurred since 1995 across gender and race-ethnicity groups with

**Figure 2.** Labor-Force Participation of Youth Ages Twenty to Twenty-Four, by Gender and Race

Source: Authors' compilation based on Current Population Survey data (BLS 2018).

Note: Published LFP data not available prior to 1995 for Hispanic men and women.

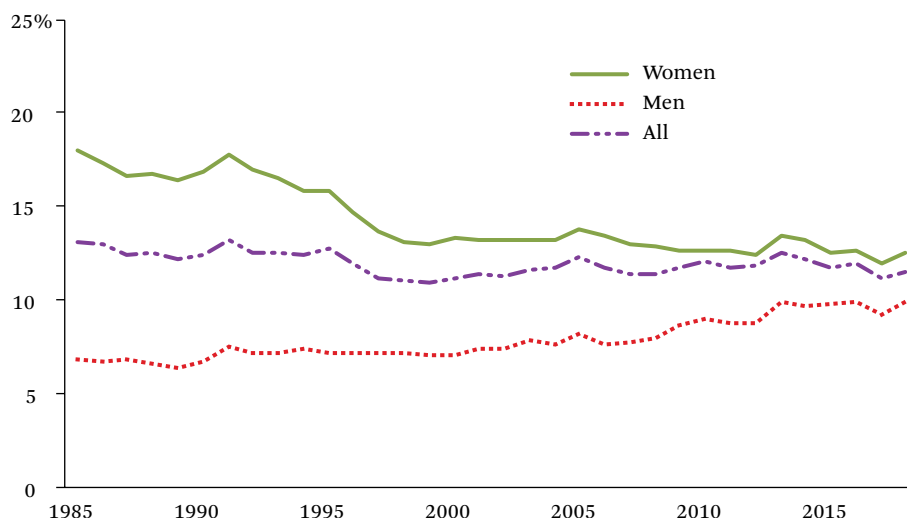
the exception of Hispanic women. Young white men and young Hispanic men have had the largest declines, but their LFP remains higher than the other groups. Most recently, in the last five years, rates have been fairly steady for all groups (figure 2).

At the same time that youth LFP was falling, more youth were attending school. From 1998 to 2014, the years of greatest decline in youth LFP, the percentage of youth in school rose, particularly among those ages sixteen to nineteen (Canon, Kudlyak, and Liu 2015). A recent study showed that over roughly the last decade, declines in employment among school enrollees coupled with an increase in school participation accounted for the majority of the overall decline in employment for those ages sixteen to twenty-four (Abraham and Kearney 2018). When young people's employment falls while they are in school, there may be less reason for concern about the consequences of lower employment, at least in the near term. This is especially true for those ages sixteen to nineteen, who are more likely to be in secondary school.

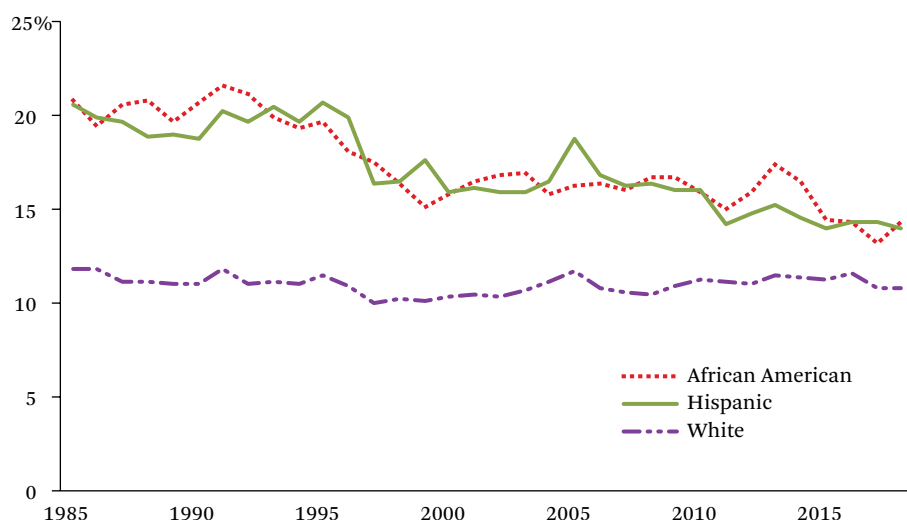
Despite these trends, there is still reason for concern about low employment rates among those not attending school, particularly for youth of postsecondary school age. Youth who

are not in the labor force and not in school are variously referred to as disconnected, opportunity youth, idle, or NEET (not employed or in education or training). (We refer to this group as disconnected throughout the rest of the article.) The percentage of youth ages twenty to twenty-four who are disconnected has remained relatively steady since 2007 (the beginning of the Great Recession), hovering around 12 percent despite small declines in LFP (figure 3). This suggests that the Great Recession, and recovery from it, did not have a large impact on the total numbers disconnected in this age group. However, the longer-term trends since 1985 show that, over time, young men have experienced an increasing rate of being disconnected and young women have experienced a decline. In 2018, almost 10 percent of all men ages twenty to twenty-four and 13 percent of all women were not working, actively seeking work, or in school. These numbers do not include those living in institutions, such as those incarcerated, so these percentages could be even higher.

The percentages of youth who are not working and not in school also differ by race and ethnicity (figure 4). Trends since 1985 show a decline in the percentage of African American

**Figure 3.** Percentage of Disconnected Youth Ages Twenty to Twenty-Four, by Gender

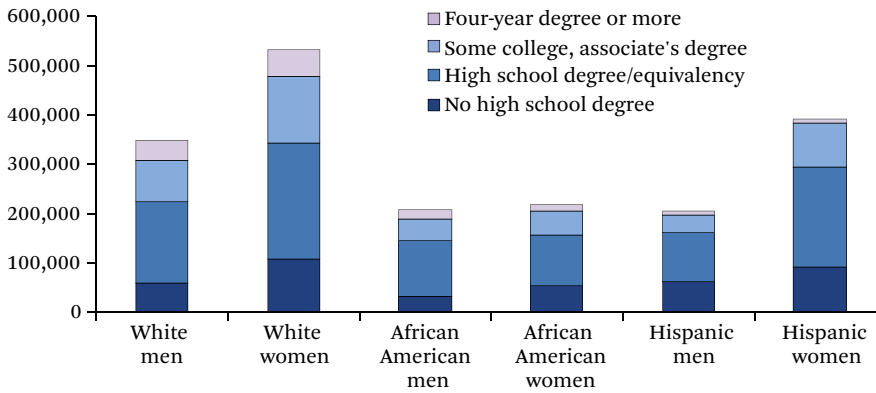
Source: Authors' compilation based on Current Population Survey data (BLS 2018).

**Figure 4.** Percentage of Disconnected Youth Ages Twenty to Twenty-Four, by Race and Ethnicity

Source: Authors' compilation based on Current Population Survey data (BLS 2018).

and Hispanic youth who are disconnected; the percentage of comparable white youth has remained relatively flat. An increase in the labor force participation of young Hispanic women may play a role in this decline (see figure 2). Despite the declines, the rate of disconnected African American youth and Hispanic youth remains higher than that of white youth.

Being disconnected from work and school is more common among youth with less education (Canon, Kudlyak, and Liu 2015). Of youth ages twenty to twenty-four with less than a high school degree, 29 percent are disconnected; of those with a high school degree or equivalency certificate, 16 percent are. This is relative to only 5 percent of those who have some college

**Figure 5.** Number of Disconnected Youth Ages Twenty to Twenty-Four

Source: Authors' calculations from Current Population Survey, ASEC 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

or a college degree.<sup>1</sup> This pattern is true across gender and race groups. More than 65 percent of disconnected youth of all gender and race groups have not attended school beyond receiving a high school diploma or equivalent (figure 5).

It is likely that some informal work activity among disconnected youth occurs and is not being captured in these data. However, little information is available on the extent of this activity among youth and whether it has the positive future impact of formal work. This is an area to continue to explore in future research.

### CAUSES OF YOUTH DISCONNECTION

Despite increases in the number of youth who are in school over time, over the last several decades, a substantial and steady percentage of youth who are not in school and not in the labor force remains. Understanding the reasons for these continued levels of disconnection among youth, particularly certain subgroups, can help target potential solutions.

A considerable literature addresses the causes of the overall decline in labor-force participation in the United States. Some of the reasons for the decline in prime-age labor-force participation are relevant for youth being disengaged from the labor market as well. For the population overall, declining employment has been accompanied by declining or stagnant

wages over the last several decades, particularly for less-educated men. In his article in this issue, William Rodgers (2019) discusses the disparities in wages for African American men relative to other groups. The wage premium for more educated workers continued to rise through 2000 and has remained relatively constant since then with continuing positive returns to those earning a college degree (Abel and Dietz 2014). Rodgers notes that the gap in wages for college-educated black men relative to similarly educated white men has actually widened over the past several decades. For less-skilled workers, the demand for labor has been negatively affected by multiple forces. Katharine Abraham and Melissa Kearney (2018) review the literature on the potential demand-side causes of the decline in prime-age employment, concluding that global competition and increases in automation are important factors. Technology that increases the relative productivity of higher-skilled workers has a negative impact on demand for less-skilled workers (Autor, Katz, and Kearney 2008). George Borjas and Richard Freeman (2019) discuss the particular impact of technology replacing immigrant workers in the labor market. Similar factors play a role in the increase in schooling of young people but are relevant for the lack of employment opportunities for less-skilled youth not in school as well.

1. Authors' calculations from the 2018 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement to the Current Population Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

Another potential factor contributing to young people's being disconnected is a societal shift that may be making being out of work and school more culturally acceptable for young adults. For example, Alan Krueger (2017) presents measures of self-reported subjective well-being that show young men and women who are not in the labor force have as positive (if not more positive) a view of their life circumstances as employed youth. One theory is that improvements in video game technology have contributed to decreased employment among young men (Aguilar et al. 2017). Abraham and Kearney (2018) suggest an alternate explanation, that for young men, the stigma of being disconnected (and playing video games) has declined. Research on youth labor-market participation in the 1990s suggests that one way young workers adapted to depressed labor demand was to continue living with their parents, which in turn buffered against decreased income (Card and Lemieux 1997). In fact, a great deal of literature addresses the lengthening of adolescence and slower transitioning to adulthood, though this is often associated with higher income families (Twenge and Park 2017).

Another possible reason for young people being disconnected may be the increased abuse of opioids, although it is unclear whether drug abuse leads to declining labor-force participation or declining participation leads to drug abuse. Krueger (2017) discusses this for nonemployment of prime-age men, but it may also play a role for youth. Nonmedical use of prescription drugs is highest among youth ages eighteen to twenty-five (relative to older groups) and deaths due to prescription drug overdose increased fourfold from 1999 to 2014 for this group (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2015). It is not clear whether or how much this translates into or is related to declines in employment and schooling for this age group. One recent study, however, finds that opioid abuse leads to economic losses resulting from reduced hours in productive employment and household activity (Florence et al. 2016).

Involvement with the criminal justice system is another cause of disconnection among youth. Criminal justice involvement peaks in the teenage years and declines in the early twenties, but can have lasting impacts. Of course, those in-

carcerated are, by definition, detached from the labor market. Youth involved in the juvenile justice system often have trouble transitioning into adulthood. Criminal justice involvement interrupts connections to school, family, and work. Involvement in the system itself exposes youth to negative influences and increases the likelihood of further involvement in criminal activities (Scott and Steinberg 2008). Time incarcerated may lead to worse labor-market outcomes when released, due to less work experience and human capital as well as the stigma with employers of incarceration. Studies suggest incarceration as a juvenile or adult leads to diminished labor-market outcomes (Aizer and Doyle 2015; Mueller-Smith 2015; Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2006; Pager 2003) and a host of additional issues that could also affect employment including worse health, diminished social relationships and community connections, and increased likelihood of recidivism (Western 2006).

Other factors are important for understanding the lower employment rate of specific groups of young people, especially African Americans, youth involved with the criminal justice system, and young parents. Criminal justice involvement has a disproportionate effect on certain racial groups and, in turn, impacts employment. Despite decreases over the last decade in overall rates of incarceration and in racial disparities among those incarcerated (Carson 2018), differences remain for certain groups. African American, Latino, and Native American youth under eighteen are incarcerated at disproportionate rates relative to white youth (W. Haywood Burns Institute 2016). Young adults of color (ages eighteen to twenty-nine), both men and women, are also incarcerated at disproportionate rates, although rates are higher for men than women. In 2010, 8 percent of African American men ages twenty to twenty-four were incarcerated (Child Trends 2012). Other measures of justice system involvement—such as arrests, convictions, and sentence lengths—also reflect racial disparities. These differences reflect higher rates of criminal justice involvement, but are also likely the result of higher rates of surveillance and racial bias in law enforcement and sentencing (Liberman and Fontaine 2015).



Some of the differences across racial groups are likely due to structural racism and neighborhood effects of poverty, which disproportionately affect different groups and, in turn, can affect employment prospects of young adults (Spaulding et al. 2015). Young people of color tend to live in low-income, racially segregated communities due to both housing discrimination and income inequality (Rawlings 2015). Social isolation can limit access to employment networks, which are critical for finding and securing employment, particularly at young ages (Granovetter 1995). A related issue is a spatial mismatch to available job opportunities and limited transportation options to access jobs, and some research has shown that African Americans are more subject to these geographic issues than whites (Hellerstein, Neumark, and McInerney 2008; Ellwood 1986). Other neighborhood effects include a higher likelihood of attending substandard schools, as well as higher rates of crime and chances of arrest (Lieberman and Fontaine 2015; Holzer, Offner, and Sorensen 2005).

Discrimination is also a key issue for understanding lower employment rates and higher rates of unemployment and nonparticipation among African American youth. Discrimination in hiring has direct impacts on employment, confirmed by employment audit studies (where white and nonwhite job candidates of similar qualifications apply for jobs) that have shown worse outcomes for nonwhite candidates (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). Discrimination in other arenas, such as housing, criminal justice, and education systems, can all have an impact on the labor-market outcomes of these youth.

Educational disparities by race also affect young people's employment prospects. Although all groups of youth have experienced increases in school participation, a gap remains in educational attainment by race, which, given changes in returns to education, can disadvantage these groups in the labor market. African American and Latino youth ages twenty to twenty-four are less likely to have completed or be attending postsecondary schooling. In part, this reflects differences in earlier schooling levels by race, including the neighborhood effect of attending substandard schools (Rawlings

2015), differences in early childhood education and school readiness (Magnuson and Waldfogel 2005), and lower high school graduation rates (U.S. Department of Education 2018). Postsecondary education also poses difficulties. For example, students of color are disproportionately more likely to take out student loans and have higher rates of student loan debt (Holzer and Baum 2017).

Young adults who are parents may face particular challenges with respect to employment and education that could increase disconnection. In an analysis of young parents ages eighteen to twenty-four who live with their children, researchers found that about 27 percent did not hold a job in 2013 (Sick, Spaulding, and Park 2018). Nonparents age eighteen to twenty-four had only slightly higher rates of employment during the year, but were much more likely to go to school, 65 percent of nonparents attending school relative to only 23 percent of parents age eighteen to twenty-four.

For some young mothers, teen parenting creates challenges to completing school and diminishes economic opportunity. Teen birthrates have fallen significantly for all race and ethnic groups since 1990, but rates for Latino and African American teens remain more than twice as high as for white teens (Martin et al. 2018). Young women ages twenty to twenty-nine who gave birth in their teenage years are less likely to have a high school diploma relative to their counterparts who did not have a teen birth; rates are lowest for African American and Latina teen mothers (Manlove and Lantos 2018).

For young fathers, teen and out-of-wedlock childbearing also have labor-market consequences. It can lead some men to work more but accept low-paying jobs and drop out of school to pay for the immediate financial needs of their children. Some noncustodial fathers may also withdraw from the formal labor force if their child support orders are too high for them to pay, resulting in arrearages, which are often owed to the state, not the custodial parent and child. This may lead the young father to decide that it is more advantageous to work "off the books," where they will not be subject to arrears payments and the money they make can instead go directly to support their child (Holzer, Offner, and Sorensen 2005).

Lack of access to childcare is also a cause of disconnection for young parents. While managing schedules is a challenge for any parent, it can be especially challenging for young parents who work and go to school (Spaulding, Derrick-Mills, and Callan 2016). Availability of care for infants and toddlers is limited (Adams, Zaslow, and Tout 2007) and securing part-time and nontraditional hourly care can be difficult (Dobbins et al. 2016). Such care is often provided by friends and neighbors, and the childcare subsidy system has been moving away from such care as a result of improved quality standards that tend to focus on center-based care (Henly and Adams 2018). Also, resources to support childcare are limited; only 15 percent of those eligible for childcare subsidies are estimated to be able to access the vouchers to pay for care (Chien 2015). The limited availability and limited funding are major obstacles to employment for low-income parents (Chien 2015; McCready 2015).

The complexity and challenges of these interrelated issues and circumstances can contribute to trauma for young people. The traumatic conditions could emanate from childhood experiences, or could represent an intergenerational transmission of trauma that affects youth's ability to successfully transition to adulthood or to emerge from a high-risk or difficult situation.

### CONSEQUENCES OF DISCONNECTION AMONG YOUTH

What do we know about the consequences of low work, unemployment, or periods of no work and no school among youth? To start, research shows several positive effects of young people working. Work can increase specific job-related skills, build work readiness skills, and provide connections and labor-market knowledge for future work. In addition, work provides income, potentially increasing resources for future schooling. Being out of work or unemployed, especially for those not in school, could make it more difficult to find work if there is a loss of human capital.

Some employment while in school, if well planned as in internships or cooperative ar-

rangements, can complement education and help build work experience. However, working while in school, at least for a substantial number of hours, particularly for teenagers, can have negative impacts on schooling and therefore future labor-market outcomes. Working too many hours while in school has the potential to distract from or leave less time and energy for school, potentially having negative consequences on academics or school completion (Mortimer 2010).

The literature is extensive on the question of whether youth unemployment might be “scarring,” that is, leading to diminished labor-market outcomes later in life. Some of this research is in response to concerns about youth starting their working lives during periods of high unemployment. Several studies from the early 1980s found that work among youth generally led to higher future wages and that the impact of youth unemployment was not persistent.<sup>2</sup> Later studies have found negative impacts of youth unemployment on future wages and work. In one study, a period of unemployment for young workers led to increases in participation in training, but even so, left a lasting impact of lower wages even nine years later (Mroz and Savage 2006). Using United Kingdom data, David Bell and David Blanchflower (2011) found that periods of unemployment when young had negative impacts for adults, even decades later.

Peter Edelman and his colleagues suggest that youth, particularly less-educated African American youth, who are not in school or work have responded to what appears to them to be a decline in long-term employment opportunities by giving up on mainstream possibilities and institutions (Edelman, Holzer, and Offner 2006; Edelman and Holzer 2013). This behavior is framed as being largely a response to declining demand for their labor.

In addition to negative impacts on future labor-market outcomes, being disconnected is correlated with other negative outcomes, including criminal activity, depression, and substance abuse—though the direction of causality is not clear. Furthermore, impacts on the children of young adults are possible, especially

2. See multiple studies in Freeman and Wise 1982.



if childbearing occurs when the parents are teens or young adults (Berzin and De Marco 2010; Mosle and Patel 2012).

### **PROGRAM AND POLICY SOLUTIONS TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY**

Given the consequences of being disconnected, we discuss here specific program and policy solutions that can bring such youth back into education and labor-market activity. We focus on four sets of solutions: programs to increase young people's work readiness and occupational skills; ways to improve community college systems to better serve disadvantaged youth; solutions that address barriers to work and schooling faced by disconnected youth; and demand-side policies that can improve job opportunities for youth. Our focus in each is on policies and program options rooted in evidence that target or include youth in their late teens or early twenties. To actually reverse the overall downward trend in youth employment that occurred over the past several decades will require multiple interventions on a large national scale, not just one approach. It will also require targeted approaches to meet the needs of specific youth, for example those without a high school credential, who have been involved with the criminal justice system, or who are young parents.

The behavior of young people reflects the institutions, environment, and culture in which they grow up. This means that changes to broader factors—such as improvements in early childhood and secondary education, reductions in neighborhood violence and family poverty rates, changes to the criminal justice system and reduced discrimination—could each affect the individual and family circumstances of these youth. This in turn could affect their employment and educational opportunities and choices. Ideas and research on how to improve these societal conditions are plentiful, but beyond the scope of this article. These changes are important for the role they could play in preventing youth from being disconnected in the first place.

The broader economic factors that play a role in declining labor-market participation for prime-age workers, including the role of global

competition, stagnant wages, and the impact of automation and technology, likely play a role in declining opportunities for young workers as well. A number of policy solutions have been put forward on these fronts, including ways to improve overall productivity, increase the average workers' share of productivity gains and wages, increase worker power through unions or other strategies, and increase demand for labor (Shambaugh and Nunn 2018). Other articles in this volume focus on some of these issues, including the evidence on the minimum wage and regulation of hours. Thomas Kochan and William Kimball (2019), for example, examine the history of unions and explore ideas for improving labor-management relations, increasing productivity, and developing a wage-enhancing social contract for the current and future labor market. Discussion of these broader policies is beyond the scope of this article, but if successful, they could open important opportunities and increase incentives for youth.

### **Increasing Work Readiness and Occupational Skills**

One way to improve outcomes for disconnected youth is to improve their human capital, including “soft skills” or work readiness skills, educational levels (including completing high school), and occupational job skills. Improving these skills should open new opportunities for higher paying jobs and careers that increase the incentives to engage in the labor market. Programs targeted to disconnected youth with multiple challenges can also help youth address these challenges and envision a more positive future. For adults, evidence shows that sector-focused training working toward credentials that are in demand by employers has positive impacts on work and earnings (Maguire et al. 2010; Hendra et al. 2016). In the following section, we review programs that incorporate these aspects of training for in-demand skills and connecting with employers, as well as services focused particularly on disconnected youth.

### **Integrated Academic and Technical Skills in High School**

Integrating academic and technical education at the high school level, referred to as career and technical education (CTE), provides stu-

dents with marketable skills as well as information about and exposure to potential careers. This combination can have positive results on high school completion, seeking additional education, and employment. Although CTE is widespread and gaining in popularity, researchers and other experts agree that the quality and characteristics of the way CTE is offered—such as the presence of smaller learning communities, depth of student involvement, and inclusion of work-opportunities or internships—are important for success.

In the last decade, interest is renewed in CTE, formerly referred to as vocational education, at the federal and state levels. In 2018, Congress passed and the president signed into law H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, which reauthorizes the 2006 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and provides funding to states for CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Several states have recently increased funding for CTE programs (Jacob 2017). In fact, about 85 percent of high school students take at least one CTE course (U.S. Department of Education 2018). One goal of the rebranding from vocational education to CTE is to reduce some of the longstanding stereotypes associated with vocational or trade schools. Today, a positive shift in public support for CTE is apparent (Jacob 2017). For example, some CTE courses, programs, and camps for high school (and younger) students focus on in-demand subjects like computer coding, robotics, advanced manufacturing, and various science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs.

Models and implementation of CTE vary and studies of effectiveness are limited, but show some promising results. Two recent studies of technical high schools found positive results on student outcomes. One study of high-quality regional technical high schools in Massachusetts used a quasi-experimental design and found positive impacts on graduation and receipt of industry-recognized credentials, particularly for low-income students (Dougherty 2018). Another found higher earnings and lower rates of “idleness” (not working nor in school) among those taking upper-level voca-

tional classes, suggesting the value of more intensive involvement in CTE (Kreisman and Stange 2017).

Career academies, a specific model of integrating secondary-level academic and career skill learning, have strong positive impacts on young men. These academies provide smaller supportive learning communities within the larger high school focusing on a specific career theme and often include exposure to employers through work-based opportunities and internships. The National Career Academy Coalition estimates the total number of career academies in the United States at seven thousand. An evaluation of nine career academies found positive and sustained impacts on earnings (16 percent annual increase) eight years after the year of graduation for men. Impacts for young women were not significant. Those on high school completion or postsecondary education were entirely lacking, but even with increases in work, no negative impact on future schooling was discernable (Kemple 2008). In California, the Linked Learning program expanded the career academy model to nine school systems. A study found that participating students had decreased dropout rates, increased graduation rates, earned more credits, and were as likely to enroll in college compared with a matched group of students in traditional high school. Results were similar for female and male students. The study did not include employment outcomes (Warner et al. 2016). A current evaluation of a career academy model called Youth Career Connect, which is targeted to particular occupations and has formal linkages between high schools and postsecondary schools, will also soon have findings (U.S. Department of Labor 2018).

### **Job Training and Employment Programs for Youth**

Outside the school setting, the most successful efforts to increase the work readiness and specific skills of youth include strong connections to in-demand sectors and careers and often paid work experiences, such as internships. Programs showing promise include some summer employment programs, and youth targeted sector-based training programs including apprenticeships. For disconnected youth who

face particular challenges, such as dropping out of high school, involvement in the criminal justice system, having physical or cognitive limitations, or coming from difficult family circumstances, evidence is fairly strong that including developmentally appropriate comprehensive supportive services in addition to training and work experiences are necessary to achieve the most benefits.

Summer youth employment programs (SYEP) are perhaps the most widespread training programs for young people, and large-scale programs operate in many urban areas. Summer jobs offer youth exposure to employers and the opportunity to build work habits and skills while still in school. Outcomes of these programs are mixed, but some evidence suggests well-designed programs—including ones incorporating classroom “work readiness” components, can have positive effects on youth. Evaluations have found relatively limited impacts on subsequent employment or earnings, although some impacts for certain subgroups. For example, a study of Boston’s SYEP found no overall impact on employment and wages, but significant impacts on employment and quarterly earnings for older (ages nineteen to twenty-four) African American males during the subsequent academic year (Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development 2017). A study of a Chicago SYEP again found no overall impacts on employment but did find improved employment for youth who were less criminally involved and more engaged in school (Davis and Heller 2017). Multiple evaluations have also found that SYEP led to significant declines in criminal activity and violence, some improvements in academic outcomes, and improved social, emotional, and work readiness skills.<sup>3</sup>

Apprenticeship programs combine classroom instruction, structured work-based training, jobs with wages, and contributions to work. Apprenticeships for adults raise wages and are cost-effective (Reed et al. 2012). Robert Lerman and Arnold Packer (2015) describe the benefits of apprenticeships for youth including mentorship, income, accommodating different learning styles, and developing real-world skills. Youth apprenticeship programs for in-

school youth in Wisconsin and Georgia have shown promising results. Georgia youth apprentices have higher graduation rates than comparable youth. Wisconsin provides apprenticeship opportunities to 2,500 juniors and seniors. Increasing the availability of apprenticeships to youth in and out of school is a way to increase skills and employment.

Challenges in expanding apprenticeships include obtaining and maintaining business interest in engaging in apprenticeships on a regular basis (rather than just when it is difficult to recruit) and providing opportunities for individuals that employers might not otherwise consider (Case Western Reserve University 2016). Increasing the number of young woman in apprenticeships is also a challenge. Overall, women are underrepresented in apprenticeships, partly because many apprenticeship programs are in traditionally male-dominated fields. Female apprentices expressed the need for greater access to childcare supports and the need to address harassment and discrimination (Reed et al. 2012). Female apprentices make far less than men, but African Americans garner the lowest wages of all apprentices. Historical racial and gender disparities in apprenticeship have led many to argue that expansions in apprenticeship in the United States must reflect strategies to address these inequities (Kuehn 2017; Spaulding et al. 2015).

Several nationwide youth-targeted job training programs with a sector-based, career focus have shown positive impacts and serve relatively large numbers of youth. Year Up is a program for urban young adults aged eighteen to twenty-four with a high school diploma or equivalent. The program provides six months of full-time customized training in the IT and financial service sectors followed by six-month internships at major firms. The full-time program provides extensive supports—including weekly stipends—and puts a heavy emphasis on professional as well as technical skills. Employer payments to Year Up for interns finance 59 percent of the program’s \$28,290 per participant cost. The program has grown rapidly following its inception in Boston in 2000: by 2018 it served more than four thousand young adults

3. For a brief review of these studies, see Ross 2018.

in sixteen metropolitan areas. Early evaluation findings show large positive impacts on earnings of 53 percent, almost \$2,000 a quarter higher than control participants six to seven quarters after random assignment. Impacts decreased but remained large (about 40 percent) over the following year (Fein and Hamadyk 2018).

YouthBuild is a nationwide program serving more than ten thousand low-income, out-of-school youth ages sixteen to twenty-four each year. The program provides construction-related training along with educational services, counseling, and leadership-development opportunities. Early results from a rigorous evaluation find that, relative to a control group, two and a half years after entering the program participants had higher completion of GED, enrollment in community college, and receipt of industry certifications, but limited impacts on employment (Miller et al. 2016). Longer-term results are forthcoming. Both programs can be expanded to additional communities.

Job Corps is a federally funded educational and vocational residential program, serving sixty thousand low-income youth ages sixteen to twenty-four annually.<sup>4</sup> Its 120 Job Corps centers are located throughout the United States. Many participants are deficient in basic skills and more than half have dropped out of high school. Job Corps provides comprehensive one-on-one career preparation services, including work toward high school equivalence diploma, career counseling, work readiness services, and small stipends during job training. Because most participants live at Job Corps centers, they also receive food and shelter. An evaluation of Job Corps found it increased literacy and educational attainment (high school or GED completion), reduced criminal involvement, and increased earnings for the first two years after participation. Longer-term follow-up over ten years found earnings gains persisted for youth who were older when they enrolled (twenty-to-twenty-four-year-olds) (Schochet, Burghardt, and McConnell 2008). Recent work using data

from the Job Corps evaluation found a large increase in earnings and a decrease in disability benefits in the four-year period after enrollment for participants with medical limitations (Hock et al. 2017).

Another program serving disconnected youth is the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program, targeting low-income high school dropouts ages sixteen to eighteen at thirty-nine sites in twenty-eight states. The program does not provide job skills training but focuses on helping prepare disadvantaged young people reengage with work and schooling. The program is a twenty-week residential quasi-military educational program that focuses on building life and work-readiness skills, as well as leadership, self-discipline, personal responsibility and service to community. Students work toward earning their high school equivalency diploma. After the residential phase is a fifty-two-week phase during which each student works one-on-one with an adult mentor. Evaluation results show that the program increased high school or equivalency completion and showed positive earnings outcomes (about 20 percent higher than control group members) three years after program entry, which would be about a year after program completion (Miltenky et al. 2011). This program is promising for a subset of youth who may have considerable disadvantages to overcome. An evaluation testing the impact of adding a job-specific component to the Nation Guard Youth ChalleNGe model is under way and will provide new findings on this approach.<sup>5</sup>

Several of the interventions discussed in the previous sections also incorporate developmentally appropriate interventions and supports. For example, several SYEP programs include social-emotional learning curriculum, based on cognitive behavioral therapy principles alongside work. YouthBuild and National Guard Youth ChalleNGe provide periods of posttraining follow-up, including mentorship. Career Academies recognize the importance of smaller learning communities that provide

4. <https://www.jobcorps.gov/citizens>, accessed September 7, 2019.

5. See U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office, "National Guard Youth Challenge and Job Challenge Evaluation," Project Summary, accessed July 7, 2019, [https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/National\\_Guard\\_Youth\\_Challenge\\_and\\_Job\\_Challenge\\_Evaluation.htm](https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/National_Guard_Youth_Challenge_and_Job_Challenge_Evaluation.htm).

peer support and relationships with teachers. Efforts to engage the most disadvantaged youth—for example, those who have experienced violence or trauma, are involved in or exiting the criminal justice system, have aged out of the foster care system, or are teen parents—require services and considerations, in addition to education and training.

### **IMPROVING COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO BETTER SERVE DISCONNECTED YOUTH**

Access to postsecondary education and credentials could open up better job opportunities and the promise of a career for many disconnected youth. In most communities, the community college system is the natural place for these youth to turn. These public institutions offer two-year degrees, vocational and technical certificates, and a pathway to transfer to a four-year institution. Because community colleges have mostly open-access admissions policies and low tuition, they serve many low-income and other students underrepresented in colleges. However, disconnected youth who dropped out of high school, would be first-generation college students, lack financial support, or have not done well in academic settings may find it challenging to succeed at these institutions. Rates of community college completion in general are low: six-year completion rates (at starting or transfer institutions) for the 2011 entering cohort of 42 percent for first-time, full-time degree seeking students and 30 percent for first-time, part-time students (National Student Clearinghouse 2018).

Focus is considerable on the need to reform community colleges to improve completion rates (Loprest and Hyman 2018). The design of community college programs often does not meet the needs of disconnected youth, for example, not having clear program pathways oriented toward careers, assuming the presence of family support and guidance, or not accommodating work and family responsibilities of students. Addressing these barriers could increase attainment of postsecondary credentials and subsequent employment.

A substantial number of young people do not have the reading, writing, and mathematics skill levels to start college-level coursework. More than one-third of community college stu-

dents are taking developmental classes to address these basic skills deficiencies (U.S. Department of Education 2018). When students are required to complete a number of these noncredit classes before moving on to a degree or credential program, it can extend overall time in school and derail progress toward completion. A number of models for redesigning basic skills education at community colleges focus on ways to target and accelerate acquisition of basic skills necessary for success. For example, Accelerating Opportunity, an initiative operating in seven states and eighty-five colleges, integrates basic skill learning with occupational classes. This program encouraged states to reform their policies and practice by allowing community and technical colleges to enroll students with low basic skills in for-credit courses on defined career pathways while they earn their high school credentials, improve their basic academic skills, or build their English-language abilities. The evaluation of this effort found it had a positive impact on the number of credentials students earned and mixed impacts across sites on employment and earnings (Eyster et al. 2018). A structured approach to guidance and counseling can be quite important for low-income and first-generation college students. Some colleges are creating more structured program pathways (sometimes called guided pathways) that clarify what classes are necessary to reach certain goals, particularly degrees and credentials that are in demand by employers (Loprest and Hyman 2018). This keeps students from floundering and taking more credits than necessary. In addition, some colleges are attempting to support students with expanded college and career advising by “navigators” that are either on staff at educational institutions or embedded partners from community-based organizations (Eyster et al. 2018; Choitz 2010). These navigators can help students adjust to college. When students of color and first-generation college students feel supported and have a sense of belonging in college, the impacts on academic performance and persistence are positive (Yeager et al. 2016). Some evidence indicates that mentoring can also help students, although impacts have generally been small and shown variation depending on the struc-



ture and focus of mentorship programs (Eby et al. 2008).

One successful community college reform initiative, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at the City University of New York (CUNY), combines multiple proven approaches. The three-year program provides students with financial assistance (including tuition waivers, textbooks, and transportation assistance), structured pathways to “support momentum” including full-time enrollment, block scheduling of classes to make it easier for students to combine work and study, integrated or simultaneous basic skills education enrollment, and extensive advising, tutoring, and career advancement supports over the course of the three years. A rigorous evaluation found that the program substantially increased associate degree completion, from 22 percent to 40 percent, almost doubling graduation rates relative to a comparison group, and increased the rates of transfer to four-year colleges (Scrivener et al. 2015). Although ASAP did require meetings with a career counselor every semester, the evaluation has not yet tracked student employment or earnings outcomes. Additional studies of outcomes found that ASAP led to substantially higher graduation rates for all race, ethnicity, and gender subgroups. ASAP has since been expanded to a greater number of students, including implementation of ASAP for all students of Bronx Community College, adoption of a similar model at some four-year CUNY schools, and replication in three Ohio community colleges. A recent evaluation of the Ohio effort showed similar positive impacts as the initial CUNY study with a more than doubling of graduation rates for the treatment group (Sommo, Cullinan, and Manno 2018).

One challenge in reforming community colleges is bringing to scale the many smaller programs, such as ASAP, that have been found to be effective. The U.S. Department of Labor implemented the Trade Adjustment Act Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program, which awarded billions of dollars to community colleges to build their capacity around career pathways and demand driven occupational training, among other areas. Colleges across the country implemented changes to integrate adult education with

career-focused content; accelerate the pace of credential attainment by changing program requirements, scheduling, and structures; increase engagement with industry and the development of skills that are in demand; and transform the supports available to students so that they are better able to complete programs and obtain credentials. The national TAACCCT evaluation is still under way and may yield lessons about broader changes needed to help community colleges better meet the needs of young people so they can succeed.

### **REDUCING BARRIERS TO WORK AND SCHOOLING**

Many disconnected youth have challenges that make it difficult for them to participate in training or school or maintain a job. Efforts to engage the most disadvantaged youth—for example, those who have experienced violence or trauma, have dropped out of high school, are involved in or exiting the criminal justice system, have disabilities, have aged out of the foster care system, or are teen parents—require services and considerations in addition to education and training. Here we discuss several important steps that can be taken to reduce some of the most common barriers.

Interest is growing in trauma-informed policy and practice, which involves designing interventions and programs that acknowledge the compounding effect of an individual's circumstances, environment, and social condition (SAMHSA 2014). Research is being done on programs serving those with criminal justice involvement or mental health conditions, and also in Native American and some low-income urban communities where populations have been subjected to generations of discrimination in society. Existence of deep trauma conditions among some subgroups of disconnected youth suggest that services or interventions that could lead to economic well-being should address that trauma as well as provide remedial training or education.

For young adults who are parents, access to affordable childcare is critical if they are to work or go to school. In some cases, childcare services are included in public workforce development, job training, and community college systems. Intuitively this should improve out-



comes for parents, but rigorous research is still scant on the outcomes of these efforts for young parents (Spaulding and Gebrekristos 2018). “Two-Generation” strategies, where high quality early childhood education is available for children of parents who are in school or training, aim to address parents’ needs for childcare, education, and training yet also recognize the needs of their children (Chase-Lansdale, Lindsay and Brooks-Gunn 2014). The federal government is focusing on participants’ need for childcare while in education and training through the Strengthening Working Families Initiative, funded by the Department of Labor.<sup>6</sup> Finally, businesses and employers are also supporting expanded access to childcare. Ready Nation, for example, involves a public-private partnership with businesses involved in training programs (Ready Nation 2017). Better integration of childcare into work more generally is needed, along with further research to understand the role that childcare plays in helping low-income young adults be successful in education, training, and jobs. Funding for childcare is also an issue in terms of making it more accessible to young parents, as is the need to increase the supply of quality care in communities.

For noncustodial parents, child support responsibilities, especially arrearages, can be a disincentive to formal work. This is particularly true in cases when custodial parents are receiving welfare benefits or when arrearages are owed, because money earned by the noncustodial parent often goes back to the state rather than to the custodial parent and their child or children. Some states have addressed this issue by allowing more money to “pass through” to the custodial parent and their child and disregarding child support paid when determining the level of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) assistance for the family. Employment programs that combine education and training with assistance navigating the child support system appear promising (Spaulding, Grossman, and Wallace 2009).

Criminal justice involvement and the record

of that involvement often are barriers to employment for young adults, particularly for young African American, Latino, and Native American men. Policy reforms and strategic interventions are needed to address the causes of mass incarceration and reform the criminal justice system, as well as to mitigate the negative effects that contact with the criminal justice system can have on employment prospects. Emerging evidence from neuroscience and adolescent development suggests the brain continues to develop into the mid-twenties, affecting youth behavior related to criminal activity, such as impulsivity. Recognition of this evidence is leading to some transformations in the juvenile criminal justice system, including limiting the circumstances in which youth are treated as adults and consideration of mitigating factors in sentencing (Scott and Steinberg 2008). Reforms to policing and sentencing that address racial inequities are also important systemic reforms.

For those who are arrested or incarcerated, programs that help justice-involved youth build skills and connect to the labor market should be expanded. Many prison-based education programs have been eliminated except for those that involve pursuing secondary school credentials. This is due in part to restrictions on use of federal financial aid funding through the Pell Grants program for postsecondary school and training by individuals with felony convictions as well as other concerns about the costs of such programs (Esperian 2010). A number of studies have shown that prison-based education programs, including apprenticeship programs, for adults are associated with reduced recidivism, even though employment impacts are limited or often fade over time (Davis et al. 2013). Expanding prison-based education and training for young adults could prepare more people for employment once they return to their communities.

To improve employment opportunities for those with criminal records once they are released, some experts support limiting the use of criminal background checks and disclosed

6. See “US Labor Department Announces \$54m in Grants to Improve Access to Skills Training and Quality, Affordable Child Care for Parents,” News Release, June 14, 2016, <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20160614>, accessed July 14, 2019.

information on criminal justice involvement in the hiring process. Employers often ask about arrest records even in the absence of conviction, juvenile records, or crimes related to the work being performed. Given the high rates of young African Americans and Latinos involved in the criminal justice system, particularly young men, these groups are at a disadvantage in the labor market. These concerns have led states and localities to pass “ban the box” laws, which prohibit employers from asking about criminal justice involvement on job applications, thus allowing applicants to get further in the hiring process before disclosing their criminal background. According to the National Employment Law Project, thirty-two states and 150 municipalities have passed such legislation.<sup>7</sup> Further research is needed to assess whether such policies are associated with increased hiring of individuals with criminal records or result in unintended consequences. For example, some evidence indicates that criminal background checks by employers actually reduce discrimination against African American men who do not have criminal records (Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2006).

Finally, because services disconnected youth need might involve a variety of systems and programs, communities across the country are consciously trying to improve the ways systems coordinate, sometimes referred to as community-wide collective impact activities. No evaluations have yet been made, but the initiatives are serving very large numbers of youth, and a review of recent efforts shows some promise (Treskon 2016). Citywide reengagement centers, where youth can connect to services and programs, are intended to help them move forward in education and training. Data from fifteen of these centers showed ten thousand youth were placed in education and training programs. Similarly, efforts such as Philadelphia’s Project U-Turn, serving youth, hire dedicated staff to coordinate services across a number of agencies, using common terminology and performance metrics and sharing program data to track student activities and prog-

ress. The Aspen Institute’s Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund is another initiative supporting community-wide efforts to improve employment, promote high school graduation, and provide internships in twenty-one communities, serving more than ten thousand young people, roughly three-fourths of whom are African American, Latino, or Native American (Community Solutions 2017).

### ADDRESSING DEMAND-SIDE ISSUES

Building the skills and supporting work for disconnected youth is only one part of the answer. Finding jobs (and for some youth even getting employers to consider them for jobs) is still an issue, despite national low unemployment rates. Increasing job opportunities, especially with higher wages, is a solution for engaging young people into the labor market.

Some of the negative consequences of disconnection for young adults could be addressed by developing a well-structured subsidized jobs program, at scale, that aims to help people, including youth, build skills valued in the labor market and avoid some of the negative consequences of being unemployed. Subsidized employment offers are often targeted to individuals who face challenges to employment and aim to provide income, work experience, and the opportunity to develop skills. Subsidized jobs are also sometimes adopted to address severe cyclical concerns during recessions. Evidence is limited that subsidized jobs programs have lasting effects on employment, though they do provide participants with income (Dutta-Gupta et al. 2016). However, with the appropriate structure, primarily through connection to skill training for jobs that are in demand and supports targeted to individual needs (ranging from social services, to mentoring or more intensive counseling), this type of paid employment may have potential to enhance outcomes for disadvantaged youth. Some models, such as the Milwaukee New Hope Project, in the 1990s provided a guaranteed publicly funded job when individuals were unable to find regular work or full-time hours. A combi-

7. See Beth Avery, “Ban the Box: U.S. Cities, Counties, and States Adopt Fair Hiring Policies,” NELP, April 18, 2019, <https://www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide>, accessed July 8, 2019.

nation of guaranteed job plus training could be particularly beneficial to young people just beginning their work lives to buffer them from labor-market instability. Ensuring that young people have quality job placements that make it possible to build skills needed for the labor market remains a challenge.

On-the-job training (OJT), a type of subsidized employment, has been a part of federal workforce programs since their inception in the 1960s. In federal OJT programs, employers are reimbursed for part of the cost of formal and informal training for newly hired workers. In theory, OJT can be an effective tool for assisting young adults who lack experience and skills by providing resources to employers for initial hiring and training costs. Burt Barnow and Shayne Spaulding (2015) review the evidence of federal OJT programs and find that, although OJT appears to be as effective as classroom training, none of the research has involved randomized control trials on the effects of OJT alone. Furthermore, impacts on youth have been mixed, suggesting the need for more intensive supports for youth (Dutta-Gupta et al. 2016). One option would be to provide subsidies for formal apprenticeships, which have strong evidence of improving employment outcomes. More research is needed to understand the effectiveness of OJT and other forms of subsidized jobs and to determine how to effectively structure these efforts to meet the needs of young adults.

Publicly provided wage supplements offer an additional way to increase the incentives to work. The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has been shown to increase employment, but it is focused mainly on individuals with children (Meyer 2010). A pilot project to evaluate the impact of a wage subsidy for workers without dependent children, Paycheck Plus, is being tested in New York City and Atlanta. Interim results for New York City found the wage supplement led to a modest increase in employment, and that results were larger for women than men (Miller et al. 2017). Wage supplements could be explored on a pilot basis with young adult job seekers to determine whether it is a viable strategy for increasing employment. One study, using evidence from the early 2000s, suggests that increased wages do

draw disconnected youth back into the labor market (Morissette, Chan, and Lu 2015).

Finally, efforts can be made to change employer perceptions of youth and reduce discrimination, especially for certain populations of young people. One effort is the Grads of Life public service campaign, which seeks to change employers' perceptions of disconnected young people. Another is the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, launched in 2015, a large-scale effort by a coalition of employers that focuses on improving employment outcomes for disconnected youth by changing hiring, retention, and advancement strategies and creating opportunities for employment, internships, and apprenticeships. Individual workforce organizations can also work to change employer perceptions and practices through the partnerships they create with employers to meet their hiring needs (Spaulding and Blount 2018; Dawson 2016). Engagement of employers appears to be a critical feature of effective workforce program models (Barnow and Spaulding 2015), but these relationships can be difficult to build and maintain, particularly when working with hard-to-employ populations. Evaluations of employer-focused efforts may provide important information on what works in this emerging field.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Labor-force participation of young people has been falling over the last few decades, mainly due to declines from youth ages sixteen to twenty who have increased their participation in school. Participation by older youth from twenty to twenty-four has remained relatively steady, although unpacking this by race, ethnicity, and gender shows some declines in the participation of white and Hispanic young men. We argue that for youth an even greater concern than declining labor force participation is the rate of young people who are not working, searching for work, or in school. These youth are disconnected from the most important avenues in our society for building human capital and getting on a path to a successful future.

Even in a strong job market and overall unemployment of less than 4 percent, youth disconnection from work and schooling remains a challenge, more so for African Americans and

Hispanics than for whites or youth overall. Declines in the rate of disconnected youth in past decades notwithstanding, since 2000 data trends show the rate of disconnected youth has been relatively stable, even through the Great Recession and subsequent recovery. This suggests the need for targeted strategies, beyond improving overall economic conditions, to increase participation of youth. Improving employment outcomes for young people will require implementing programs and changing systems and policies to specifically target and meet the needs of these youth, including subgroups of youth characterized by varying causes and consequences of disconnection. Only then can we ensure that those who are not working and not in school reengage and acquire the skills needed to access available and future jobs.

Increasing young people's human capital through education and training is a key part of the solution. A growing evidence base shows that effective education and training programs for youth target in-demand sectors and include connections to employers or work-based learning, whether as part of secondary school education, at community colleges, or postsecondary job training. For youth, exposure to and knowledge about the world of work and career opportunities is also important. Programs successfully engaging disconnected youth (those targeting low-income, justice-system involved, young parents, or other disadvantaged groups) reflect comprehensive programming and services, including work readiness classes, mentoring, counseling or trauma-informed services. Barriers to school and work, some individual and some systemic, also need to be addressed. Improved access to childcare, reforms in the juvenile justice system, and changes to child support systems are critical areas for disconnected youth. Communities with high rates of youth disconnection may require a more integrated approach that aim to address the variety of causes and consequences of detachment from work and school. Finally, demand-side changes that improve job opportunities for youth, such as subsidized jobs programs, wage supplements, or ways to change employer perceptions about some youth are also an important part of the solution.

We have described a number of promising programs and approaches, but further evaluation is necessary to expand our knowledge of what increases employment and economic well-being in the short and long term. In particular, program evaluation that focuses on the impact for youth of different models of comprehensive services in combination with job training are needed. Another gap in knowledge is our understanding of the longer-term effects of different interventions. Few evaluations are able to follow participants for a long enough period to estimate these impacts, which are particularly important for youth. Increasing evaluators' access to existing federal data sources on employment and earnings, such as the National Directory of New Hires, could reduce the cost of assessing these long-term impacts. Finally, the need for official statistics measuring disconnection is clear. The Bureau of Labor Statistics produces labor-force participation statistics, but does not produce a statistic or series that combines that information with whether an individual is in school. The federal government should produce statistics that track disconnection, for all youth and subgroups.

Another need is to scale and expand effective programs and find ways to integrate these into public systems. This will ensure that the issues that currently prevent large numbers of disconnected youth from accessing programs are addressed. Community-wide interventions that take an integrated approach to solving the problem of youth disconnection, especially in localities with large numbers of disconnected youth, should be explored. Large-scale programs and systemic reforms will require significant resources and political will. Wider access to skill-building opportunities as well as strategies to improve access to jobs would likely carry a high cost. Mobilizing these resources to affect change will require the involvement of stakeholders at every level of government, the private sector (including businesses and philanthropy), service providers, and young people themselves.

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