Among youth between the ages of 16 and 19, about one in 12, as of 2014, were neither in school nor working, a proportion that has changed little over more than two decades.

Importance

The transition from youth into independent adulthood involves many challenges, one of the most important of which is gaining secure employment. While there are multiple pathways to success, the consequences of unemployment, under-employment, or not acquiring post-secondary education can be damaging and enduring. Males who are neither enrolled in school nor working are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior or illegal activities. Females in this group are more likely to become dependent on welfare. Young adults in the juvenile justice, foster care, and special education system are particularly vulnerable, since they tend to drop out of the workforce and school at an early age, leaving them ineligible for services meant to aid in the transition to adulthood. Even if these youth eventually do obtain jobs, their earnings tend to be low. In short, youth neither enrolled in school nor working are on the sidelines of achieving economic self-sufficiency, and at risk for multiple additional poor outcomes.
Trends

Between 1986 and 2014, the percentage of youth who were neither enrolled in school nor working has decreased slightly, from nine or ten percent between 1986 and 1996, to between seven and nine percent since then. In 2014, the proportion was eight percent. (Figure 1)

Differences by Gender

In 2014, there was no significant difference by gender in whether youth reported that they were neither in school nor working. This is a significant change from before welfare reform in 1996, when female youth were between two and three percentage points more likely to be neither in school nor working. (Appendix 1)
Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin

Both Hispanic and black youth are more likely than white or Asian youth to be neither enrolled in school nor working. In 2014, 10 percent, each, of Hispanic and black youth were neither enrolled in school nor working, compared with seven percent of white, and three percent of Asian or Pacific Islander youth. (Figure 2)

Figure 2

Percentage of Youth Ages 16 to 19 Neither Enrolled in School nor Working, by Race/Hispanic Origin, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Hispanic Origin</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanic</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Black includes African American, American Indian includes Alaska Native. Hispanic includes Latino and may be of any race.

Differences by Age

Older youth are more likely than younger youth to be neither working nor enrolled in school, and data for this age group are also more variable from year to year. In 2014, 12 percent of youth ages 18 to 19 were neither working nor enrolled in school, compared with four percent of youth ages 16 to 17. (Figure 3)

Differences by Citizenship

In 2014, youth who are not U. S. citizens are were more likely than U.S. born youth to be neither in school nor working (12 and eight percent, respectively). (Appendix 1)
State and Local Estimates

Estimates (using a different data source) for states and some cities, through 2013, are available at the KIDS COUNT Data Center: http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7261-teens-ages-16-to-19-not-attending-school-and-not-working?loc=1&loct=2

International Estimates

For international estimates of youth and older youth, ages 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29, who are not in education and unemployed, see the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Education at a Glance 2014 report at: http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm. (Table C5.2a)

National Goals

None.

What Works to Make Progress on This Indicator


Also, see Child Trends’ LINKS database (“Lifecourse Interventions to Nurture Kids Successfully”), for reviews of many rigorously evaluated programs, including the following which have been shown to be effective for this population:

- Youth Corps (American Conservation and Youth Service Corps): www.childtrends.org/?programs=youth-corps
- Quantum Opportunities Program: www.childtrends.org/?programs=quantum-opportunities-program-qop
- National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program: www.childtrends.org/?programs=national-guard-youth-challenge-program
- Jobs Corps: www.childtrends.org/?programs=job-corps
Youth Neither Enrolled in School Nor Working

January 2015

- Career Academies: [www.childtrends.org/?programs=career-academies](http://www.childtrends.org/?programs=career-academies)
- JobStart: [www.childtrends.org/?programs=jobstart](http://www.childtrends.org/?programs=jobstart)

Also see:


**Related Indicators**

- Educational Attainment (Youth): [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=educational-attainment](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=educational-attainment)
- Youth Employment: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=youth-employment](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=youth-employment)

**Definition**

This indicator measured the proportion of civilian, non-institutionalized youth, ages 16 to 19, who were neither enrolled in school nor employed in the week prior to the survey. The survey is conducted in March of each year.
Data Sources


Raw Data Source

Current Population Survey, March Supplement

## Appendix 1 - Percentage of Youth, Ages 16 to 19, Who are Neither Enrolled in School Nor Working: Selected Years, 1986-2014

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<sup>1</sup> Black includes African American

<sup>2</sup> Hispanic includes Latino, and may be of any race.

<sup>3</sup> Interpret data with caution, estimate is based on fewer than 20 cases.
Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Youth of Hispanic origin are excluded.

Endnotes


8 Hispanics may be of any race. Estimates for white, black, and Asian/Pacific Islander youth do not include Hispanics in this report.