

FactSheet

Connected by 25



Many youth make the transition from teenager to adulthood easily. By the age of 25 they have successfully completed their education, are fully employed, and have developed positive relationships. But one in twelve youth in New York State lose their way. Defined as “disconnected youth,” they are young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school and not working. They do not get the education they need, miss that crucial connection with the working world, struggle with damaging distractions and enter adulthood without the tools required to succeed. They are likely to be former foster care youth, high school dropouts, teen mothers, or in contact with the justice system.

New York must ensure that the needs of disconnected youth—and those at risk for disconnection—are a top priority. The State urgently needs to support and expand effective programs that can prevent disconnection in the first place and get those already disconnected back on track.



Key Facts

- ▶ In New York approximately 16% or 319,000 youth, ages 16 to 24, were out of school, not working and with no degree beyond high school in 2010. Nationally, 17% of the 16 to 24-year-old population were disconnected.
- ▶ Sixty percent of disconnected youth are Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino and 34% are White.
- ▶ Each 16-year-old who is disconnected will cost taxpayers a total of \$258,000 in lost taxes, welfare expenses, criminal justice costs, etc. The burden to society is over three times that amount.
- ▶ Nationally in 2011, the unemployment rate was 18% for disconnected youth actively looking for work or twice the overall unemployment rate. The rate was higher for minorities; 30% for African-American and 20% for Hispanics.
- ▶ In 2011, the average wage for young adults ages 25 to 28 exceeded \$30,000 per year. Disconnected young adults earned far less. For those under-employed, earnings were just above \$20,000. For those who were chronically disconnected, earnings were just over \$15,000.

We Can Do Better

- ▶ Prevent disconnection in the first place by identifying at-risk youth early, providing them with needed educational supports to achieve success academically, positive out-of-school time experiences for career exploration and educational support, and part-time job opportunities to obtain needed work experience.
- ▶ For those youth who are already disconnected, offer multiple pathways to achieve academic milestones, learn needed workplace skills, and gain employment.
- ▶ Programs such as Say Yes to Education in Syracuse, and Multiple Pathways to Education and Young Men’s Initiative in New York City can serve as models for prevention and reconnection.
- ▶ Governor Cuomo’s New York Youth Works Program, serving 2,900 16 to 24-year-olds in 12 cities across the state is a much needed initiative to help young people enter the world of work. More is needed to meet the demand: either additional slots or added initiatives that connect young people to work.

Westchester County—Connected by 25

Key Facts

- ▶ 900 out of 11,060 or one in twelve high school students in Westchester in the 2006 cohort (class of 2010) did not graduate in four years.
- ▶ In 2009, only 46% of Westchester County Public School students (5,050) were prepared for college based on Regents test scores.
- ▶ In 2012, there are 1,204 18 to 24-year-olds on probation.
- ▶ In 2008, 2,102 babies were born to mothers ages 10-24.
- ▶ In 2011, 189 single 18 to 24-year-olds entered the homeless system. This is over a 100% increase since 2009 [2009 – 88; 2010 – 139].
- ▶ 10,288 youth ages 16-24 are unemployed; unemployed only refers to the population out-of-school and actively seeking employment.

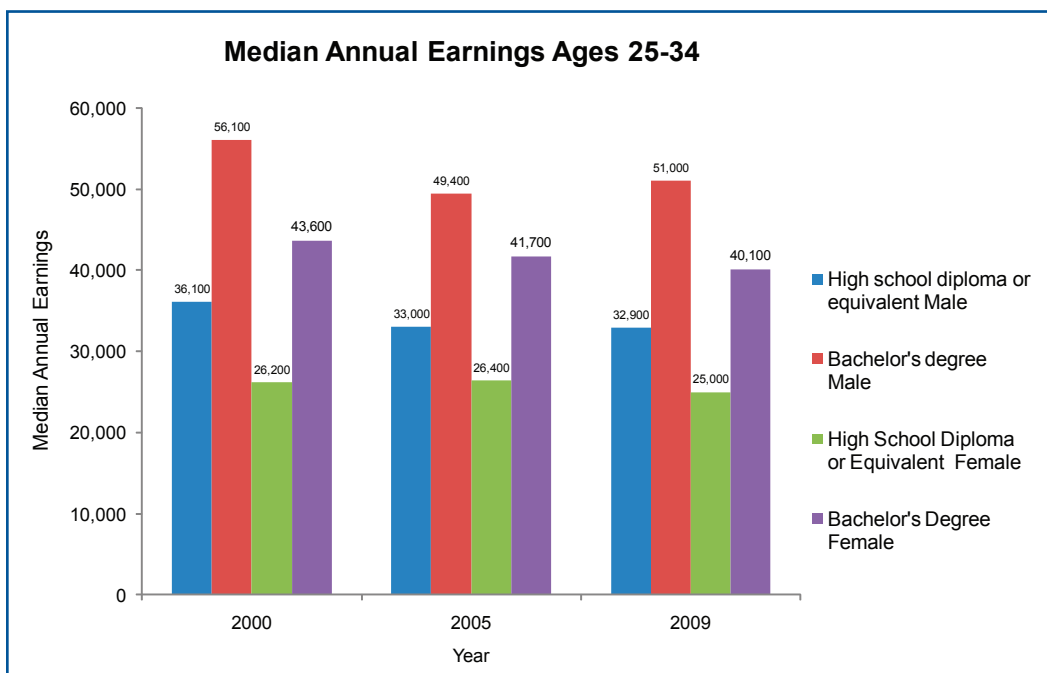
2010 Westchester County Population

15 to 19-year-olds: 65,316
 20 to 24-year-olds: 53,580

We Can Do Better

- ▶ Support the future of our youth through increasing educational and career planning services by coordinating efforts of schools, communities and businesses.
- ▶ For those youth at risk for antisocial behavior, offer support programs like gang prevention and programs that connect youth and police.
- ▶ Protect access to contraceptive and sex education services, as well as aid to young pregnant mothers.

- ▶ Protect homeless youth and provide them with housing and resources.
- ▶ Provide assistance and services to youth in foster care and support for those aging out of care.
- ▶ Continue collaborations or initiatives such as the READI campaign and the College Internship Program to prepare youth for the workforce, and Youth Employment which gives businesses financial incentives to hire young people.
- ▶ Reinvest in therapeutic models that support and strengthen families.



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