



FACT SHEET

LOST: THE CRISIS OF JOBLESS AND OUT OF SCHOOL TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS IN CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, NEW YORK CITY, ILLINOIS AND THE U.S.

Prepared for the Alternative Schools Network
by the University of Illinois Chicago's Great Cities Institute
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The Alternative Schools Network (ASN) in Chicago commissioned the University of Illinois Chicago's Great Cities Institute to prepare a report – [Lost: The Crisis Of Jobless and Out Of School Teens and Young Adults In Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Illinois and the U.S.](#) – highlighting the severe labor market problems of teens and young adults in the U.S., the state of Illinois, and the city of Chicago, with comparisons to New York City and Los Angeles. The report shows that teens and young adults in Chicago aren't keeping up with the rest of the nation, or even with other major cities.

EMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE STILL NOT AT PRE-RECESSION LEVELS

Nationwide, 16-24 year olds were hard hit by the recession. The downward trend had reversed after 2011, but by 2014 the percentage of that group who had found jobs was still below the 2005 rate.

- **The percentage of 16-19 year olds who were employed had dropped to 26 percent in 2011, from 37 percent in 2005 and had only climbed to 29 percent by 2014.**
- **For 20-24 year olds, just under 60 percent had jobs in 2011, while 68 percent were working in 2005. By 2014 this group had only edged back up to 63.5 percent.**

CHICAGO'S BLACK YOUTH FALLING FARTHER BEHIND THOSE IN OTHER MAJOR CITIES

But as bad as it was nationwide, it was worse in Chicago. Chicago youth lag behind not only the national averages, but also behind those living in the major cities of New York and Los Angeles. And while Black and Hispanic youth are struggling disproportionately across the board, their access to jobs in Chicago is at desperation levels.

- **Nationwide, 18.2 percent of youth 20-24 were out of school and out of work in 2014, compared to 17.1 percent in Illinois, 22.9 percent in Chicago, 21.1 percent in New York City and 16.4 percent in Los Angeles.**
- **The situation was particularly acute for Blacks 20-24, 40.9 percent of who were out of school and out of work, compared to 27.3 percent in New York City and 29.3 percent in Los Angeles.**
- **Of 20-24 Hispanic youths in Chicago, 24.8 percent were out of school and out of work.**
- **For Chicago's white youth, 20-24, 6.7 percent were out of school and out of work.**

THE CRISIS WAS MOST ACUTE FOR MALES WITH DEVASTATING NUMBERS FOR BLACKS

Joblessness was worse in 2014 than in 2005 in every group, when looked at by age, race or gender. But the crisis was most acute for Black males, especially in Chicago.

- **In Chicago a staggering 88.5 percent of Black males 16-19 and 87.4 percent of Hispanic males were jobless in 2014.**
- **Of Chicago's white males in that age range, 75.2 percent were without jobs.**
- **While 40.9 percent of Chicago's Blacks age 20-24 were out of school and out of work in 2014, that number was 46.7 for Black males, compared to 18.2 percent of all 20-24 year olds nationwide.**

JOBLESSNESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE OF COLOR IS CHRONIC AND CONCENTRATED

The report breaks down the racial demographics and employment levels by Chicago community areas, illustrating the strong connection between segregation and employment opportunities.

- Areas with high concentrations of White (non-Hispanic or Latino) population on the North Side including Lincoln Park (67.2 percent), Lakeview (73.6 percent), Forest Glen (76.8 percent) and Norwood Park (70.1 percent) had some of the lowest rates of jobless individuals ages 16 to 19.
- Jobless rates for those ages 20 to 24 are highest on the South and West Sides of the city and are lowest in on the North, Northwest and Southwest sides of the City.
- Areas with 40.1 percent to 60.0 percent and 60.1 percent to 80.0 percent ranges of jobless individuals are remarkably similar to the areas where over 90 percent of 18 to 24 year olds are Black.

The reduction in work experience at a young age has negative longer-term consequences on economic and educational outcomes in adulthood, reducing long-term earnings, increasing the risk of deviant, delinquent and violent behaviors, and reducing the likelihood of moving on to post-secondary education. As Richard Wooten, a newly retired Chicago police officer told the Chicago Sun-Times in a September 2015 interview:

“Communities are so economically destroyed that people are much more agitated, aggressive. People don’t care about going to jail any more. More mentally ill are walking the streets. There’s no athletic or other programs to involve kids in. That’s what the streets offer them.”

The report, *Lost: The Crisis of Jobless, Out of School Teens and Young Adults in Chicago, Illinois and the U.S.*, is part of an ongoing series commissioned by the Alternative Schools Network (ASN). It can be found on the web at <http://www.ASNChicago.org/Youth-Employment-Hearing-2016>