



Alternative Schools Network
CREATING FUTURES EVERY DAY

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**PRESS RELEASE
TEENS FACE SUMMER SCARCITY OF JOBS
*High Unemployment Rates Potentially Escalates Teen Violence Across Nation***

CHICAGO -- A new report's projection of continued high unemployment among teenagers, and the threat of cuts in funding for summer youth employment programs could be an early indicator of escalating violence in urban America's toughest neighborhoods.

The report, *The Summer Jobs Outlook for Teens in the U.S.*, conducted by the **Center for Labor Markets and Policy at Drexel University**, using a predictive model that has been accurate within 1 percent of the final figure for the last three years, projects that **nationwide the teen summer employment rate will be 29.8 percent this summer**. (Note the difference between the employment rate, which measures what percent of the teens looking for work can find jobs, and the percent of all teens who were employed.)

Labor force participation rate of teens has been falling steadily and unprecedentedly since 2000 after remaining 50 percent or higher in the decades of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s," according to the new report.

And labor force participation varies widely from state to state, with the average teen summer employment rate in 2013-14 ranging from 60.3 percent in South Dakota to 18.6 percent in Alabama. The remaining top 10 states: North Dakota, 58.7 percent; Iowa, 56.8 percent; Nebraska, 53.7 percent; Maine, 52.9 percent; New Hampshire, 50.1 percent; Wyoming, 50 percent; Vermont, 48.3 percent; Minnesota, 48.1 percent; and Wisconsin, 47.5 percent.

The remaining states with the lowest employment rate: Florida, 25.5 percent; Hawaii, 24.3 percent; Georgia, 23.7 percent; Arizona, 22.8 percent; Nevada, 22.4 percent; California, 20.8 percent; West Virginia, 20.2 percent; Mississippi percent; and the District of Columbia, 18.4 percent.

The national average of the percent of all teens 16-19 who were employed for the summers of 2013-2014 was 31.7 percent. But as the report points out, Black and Latino youth from low-income families fare much worse.

Nationally, only 20.2 percent of teens in homes with family income at \$20,000 or below were working in the summers of 2013 and 2014. But the average dropped to 12.8 percent for Black teens in that income group, and 18.1 percent of Hispanic teens.

By comparison, 41.7 percent of white teens whose family income was more than \$100,000 were employed.

"This report confirms the critical need for continuing at least the current level of government funding for summer youth employment programs across the," said Jack Wuest, executive director, of the Alternative Schools Network in Chicago. "Summer employment programs help the youth build their job skills, help build a stronger workforce for Illinois businesses and help make our streets and communities safer," Wuest said.

Other key points released in the report:

TEEN EMPLOYMENT DROPS BY 20 POINTS SINCE 1999-2000

- The percent of all teens 16-19 who were working was 51.9 percent in 1999-2000, 42.1 percent in 2006-07, 30.6 percent in 2010-11 and 31.7 percent in 2013-14.
- In 2013-14 there were 5.3 million teens working.
- If teen employment had returned to the 1999-2000 level after the Great Recession of 2007-08, 8.6 million teens would have been employed in 2013-14.

PICTURE EVEN BLEAKER FOR BLACK AND HISPANIC YOUTHS

- For Black teens, the percent who were working in 1999-2000 was 33.7 percent, 25.5 percent in 2006-07, 17.7 percent in 2010-11 and 19.7 percent in 2013-14.
- For all income levels, the average for 2013-14 of teens employed during the summer months was 38 percent for whites, 26.7 percent for Hispanics and 19.7 percent for Blacks.

As stated in the report, "Since 2011 more than 10 million payroll jobs have been created, the unemployment rate has fallen to 5 percent from its peak level of more than 9 percent in 2009 and 2010, and the real GDP has grown by more than \$1 trillion. However, teens in the nation are still facing tremendous difficulty in finding employment – both part-time, year-round and during summer months when they enter the labor market in droves."

Given this national trend, cutting funding for summer youth employment will have dire consequences, Wuest warned: "If we don't get this funding, we know what will happen. There will be more violence, more incarceration, more black males taken out of their communities, and an increased likelihood that there will be a higher incidence of unemployment, reduced earnings, and higher incidence of poverty in our children's futures."

ABOUT DREXEL UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR LABOR MARKETS AND POLICY

The Center for Labor Markets and Policy ([CLMP](#)) is an applied research, teaching and technical consulting unit within Drexel University that is focused on a variety of human resource development issues and their connections to the labor market. Paul Harrington, a co-author of the report, is Director of the Center and Professor of Education at Drexel.

ABOUT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS NETWORK

The Alternative Schools Network (ASN) is a not-for-profit organization based in Chicago that supports affiliated groups who operate education, employment and support service programs to provide quality education with a specific emphasis on former out of school inner-city children, youth and their families.

To read the full report, please go to www.asnchicago.org.

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