Denver Disconnected Youth Fact Sheet

The vision of the Office of Children’s Affairs is to deliver a world class City where all children, youth, and their families have the opportunity to succeed. The economic health and quality of life in Denver depend on educated and engaged citizens. In order to achieve this, we must support the needs of all youth particularly as they transition into adulthood. This transition can be challenging for any young person, but is even more challenging for disconnected youth. Disconnected youth are young people typically between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school and who do not have a job. Disconnected youth have measurable social, economic, and personal costs to themselves and their communities.

In 2012, approximately eight percent of Colorado teens ages 16 through 19 were not attending school and not working. The disconnected youth rate in Denver has dropped from 11 percent or approximately 3,000 young people in 2011 to eight percent, or approximately 2,000 youth in 2012.Disconnected youth are disproportionately male (63 percent male, 37 percent female). Additionally, the rate of Denver’s disconnected Latino youth and young adults (ages 16-24) was greater than the national average with more than 19 percent estimated as disconnected in 2010. The rate of disconnected African American youth and young adults was 15.8 percent and greater than non-Hispanic white youth (11 percent).

Subgroups of disconnected youth include:
- Young unmarried parents
- Immigrant youth
- Homeless youth
- Incarcerated youth
- Foster youth/youth transitioning out of public systems
- Youth with a disability or special needs
- High school drop outs

**Disconnected Youth (ages 16-24) by Race/Ethnicity**

[Diagram showing percentages of disconnected youth by race/ethnicity for Denver and the United States.]

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Based on high rates of adult unemployment, adults with less than a bachelor’s degree, poverty rate, youth unemployment, and youth not enrolled in school, some areas in Denver are at higher risk for youth disconnection than others.  

Denver matches the national average and ranks ninth among the twenty-five cities in the United States, with populations between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people, with eight percent disconnected youth in 2012.

City Ranking of Disconnected Youth

For more information about the Office of Children’s Affairs go to:  
www.denvergov.org/childrensaffairs

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