
Los Angeles and Long Beach WIBs Collaborate on Study of Out-of-School and Out-of-Work Youth in Their Communities

Youth Council: City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board and Greater Long Beach Workforce Development System

Elements: Academic Excellence, Career Preparation, Comprehensive Approach

Function: Measuring Quality and Impact of Local Efforts, Convening Local Leadership to Take Action

Subject: Measuring Quality and Impact of Local Efforts, Serving Special Populations

The Challenge: Education and employment among young adults should be a vital part of workforce development strategies. It is important to understand the extent to which young adults participate in these activities and identify subgroups of young adults who fail to acquire formal education or to access employment. Nationally, an estimated 5.6 million youth between the ages of 16-24 are out-of-school and out-of-work. In 2000, there were 4.6 million disconnected youth in the nation and 638,000 in California. Disconnected youth accounted for 14.3 percent of all young adults in the nation, and 15.9 percent in California.

Youth in Los Angeles, particularly from South and East Los Angeles, have less exposure to jobs and lack early work experience. A report released in the fall of 2003 found that one out of every five Los Angeles youth ages 16-24 is both out-of-school and out-of-work. The numbers were based on U.S. Census data in 2000. Early work experience is considered necessary to gain early development of “soft skills” needed to compete and succeed in the workplace. This disconnection from work compounds the problem of low completion rates for high school, documented recently by this study and others on Los Angeles area youth and education.

The WIBs of Los Angeles City and Long Beach recognized that many of their youth were disconnected as well. However, to better understand the situation of local youth and the circumstances they face, the two WIBs saw that they needed more specific data. Robert Sainz, Assistant General Manager for City of Los Angeles Community Development Department says, “The national data presented compelled us to say, ‘Let’s look at this and address it as a significant issue for Los Angeles.’ We see the [out-of-school and out-of-work] youth on the street every day, but no one really knew the significance of the problem for Los Angeles.”

The Practice and the Evidence: In order to really look at the issues facing their community’s youth, the Workforce Investment Boards of the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach commissioned a study on out-of-school and out-of-work youth in their cities. The findings were published in *“One Out of Five”: A Report on Out-of-School and Out-of-Work Youth in Los Angeles and Long Beach*. The report provides a broad snapshot of the longer-term structural

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changes in the economic environment and the consequent increase in the demand for and the earnings premium of highly educated and skilled workers. Some key findings are as follows:

- Over 25,000 Los Angeles teens are not enrolled in school programs and are not in the workforce.
- One out of five 16-24 year olds in the City of Los Angeles is out of work. In the spring of 2000, 93,013 young adult residents of Los Angeles City, representing 19.8 percent of the city's total young adult population, were out of school and jobless - disconnected.
- In 2000, there were 11,500 disconnected youth in Long Beach City, accounting for 19.4 percent of youth.
- Among young college graduates, the earnings of bachelor's degree holders were 66 percent higher than those of high school graduates, up from 15 percent in the early 1970s.

In an effort to share the information gleaned from the study, the Cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach conducted public education activities to support sharing this information with youth workforce staff and the general public.

Sainz says that the study enabled them to make effective strategic plans. "Doing the research was critical for us to truly identify the problem and to move forward," he notes.

The Details: The City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and its Youth Council, in partnership with the City of Long Beach WIB and the U.S. National Conference of Mayors, conducted a special joint Youth Council meeting - *a Youth Summit* - on November 18, 2004. Invitations were extended to workforce areas and Youth Councils throughout Greater Los Angeles County and other surrounding communities.

The Summit, "Los Angeles/Long Beach Youth Summit: Our Future Workforce, A Report on Out-of-School Youth in Los Angeles and Long Beach," featured commentary from local leadership and a panel of youth discussing their perspective on the results. The Summit featured findings from the study, which were presented by the report author, Dr. Paul Harrington, national expert in youth employment and labor markets. Dr. Harrington is an economist and the Associate Director of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies. The study was jointly commissioned by the L.A. WIB's Youth Council, the City of Long Beach WIB, and the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department.

The Youth Council also conducted a panel discussion comprised of experts on the topics presented in the report. In addition, participants had a chance to hear stories and learn from the experiences of local, out of school youth. To see the agenda and a list of speakers, please go to www.lacity.org/wib/.

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In May of 2005, Los Angeles City's Workforce Investment Board Youth Council hosted their annual policy symposium, *Crossroads*, to share findings from the report with the greater community. The conference was intended for elected officials, managers of youth-serving organizations, business leaders, and local leaders to propose policy recommendations. Over 160 people attended the conference, held in Hollywood.

The conference focused on three themes: youth development, economic development, and employment. The goal of the symposium was to develop awareness and bring leaders together to commit resources in an effort to spearhead a long-term campaign for systemic change engaging leaders in education, business, government, community-based organizations, and public safety. The campaign will seek to improve graduation rates and attach youth to early work experience and quality jobs.

Where to Go for More Information

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Tools

To learn about the research findings or to download a copy of the report, go to <http://www.lacity.org/wib/youthsummit.htm>, or click the following links to access any of the following printed materials:

- [Youth Summit Brochure](http://www.lacity.org/wib/YouthSummit_Brochure_2004.pdf)
(http://www.lacity.org/wib/YouthSummit_Brochure_2004.pdf)
- [Executive Summary - Final Draft, November 2004](http://www.lacity.org/wib/YouthSummit_ExecSum_2004.pdf)
(http://www.lacity.org/wib/YouthSummit_ExecSum_2004.pdf)
- [Complete Report](http://www.lacity.org/wib/YouthSummit_Report_2004.pdf)
(http://www.lacity.org/wib/YouthSummit_Report_2004.pdf)
- ["One Out Of Five" Powerpoint: Education and Labor Market Outcomes of Young Adults in Los Angeles and Long Beach \(MS PowerPoint Document\)](http://www.lacity.org/wib/1OutOf5.ppt)
(<http://www.lacity.org/wib/1OutOf5.ppt>)