

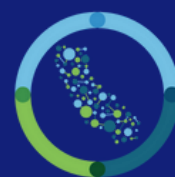


LOS ANGELES COUNTY Disconnected Youth



Updated Data on LA County's Out-of-School,
Out-of-Work Teens & Young Adults

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COYN
CALIFORNIA OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK

Every young person deserves an opportunity

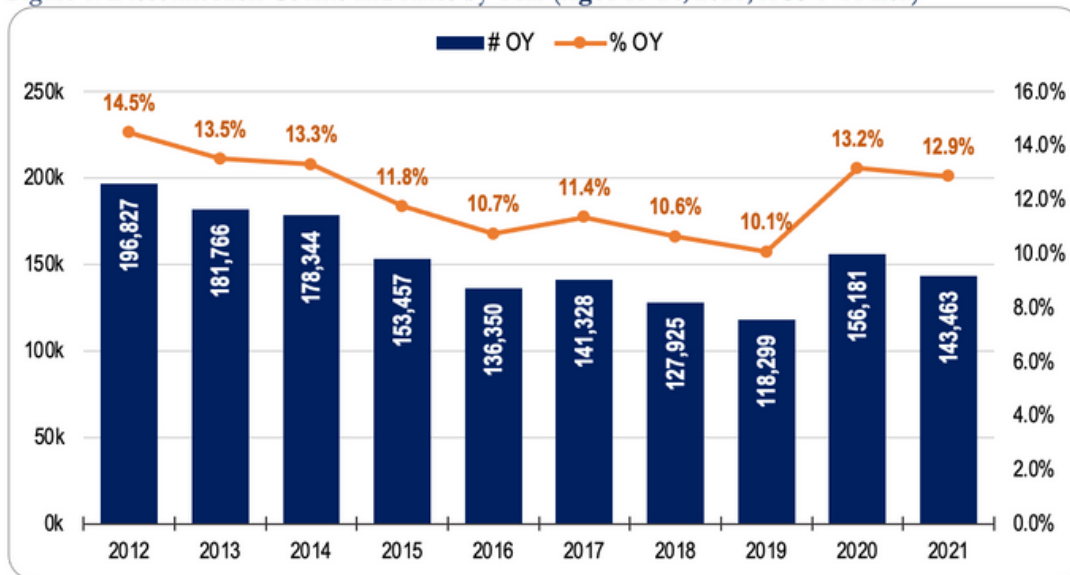
This brief paper serves as an update to the 2020 Los Angeles County Disconnected or (Opportunity) Youth report. According to data collected through the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), there were just under 1.2 million 16-24-year-olds living in LA County, and 12.9% (~144,000) were neither in school nor at work. These data indicate a decrease in both the disconnection rate and count relative to 2020 (13.2% and 156,181, respectively).



DISCONNECTED YOUTH DATA

In the years following the Great Recession, a lot of work was done to connect youth to education and/or employment opportunities – and these efforts paid off. In 2010, disconnection rates began to decline and continued to do so for almost a decade. In 2012, for example, close to 200,000 16-24-year-olds in LA County were disconnected from both school and work (more than one in seven; 14.5%). Four years later, the rate dropped to 10.7% and three years after that, the rate hit a new low (10.1% in 2019). In 2020, however, COVID-19 led to significant increases in both the rate and count of disconnected youth (13.2%; 156,181). The most recent declines in disconnection mirrors the trend in the US overall and may potentially be explained by the quick labor market recovery. Given the Census Bureau’s recommendation against comparing 2020 data to other years, we opted to minimize such analyses as much as possible.

Figure 1. Disconnection Counts and Rates by Year (Ages 16-24; 2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)



13.2%

25,000 more disconnected young people in 2021 than in 2019

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION DATA



Table 1 below shows employment and education data for teens and young adults (16-24) in LA. These data indicate that over half were unemployed or not in the labor force at all (57.0%; 635,511), and over a third were not in school (36.8%; 172,823). Of those who were out of school, 45,464 youth were unemployed and 97,999 were out of the labor force. Together, these 143,463 individuals comprised LA County’s OY population in 2021.

Disconnection may look different for teens aged 16-19 than it does for young adults aged 20-24. High school, for example, is likely to be the teens’ primary activity until graduation, whereas many young adults are in a different phase of their lives and may engage in a broader array of activities. Examining disconnection for each sub-group separately may reveal important trends that would otherwise be concealed. Tables 2 and 3 show employment and education data for teens and young adults, respectively.

Table 1. Employment and Education Status of Teens and Young Adults (16-24; 2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)

	Not in School	In School	Total
Employed	266,446	213,551	479,997
Not Employed	45,464	36,022	81,486
Not in Labor Force	97,999	455,799	553,798
Total	409,909	705,372	1,115,281

LOS ANGELES TEENS AGES 16-19



- Youth in their late teens comprised 43.0% (479,770) of all 16-24-year-olds in LA County. Many were (1) enrolled in school (86.7%; 415,809), and/or (2) unemployed or not in the labor force (80.5%; 386,307).



- These data are consistent with what we expect: high school, rather than work, is the primary activity for teens.

- A substantial proportion of teens, however, were not in school (13.3%; 63,961).



- Overall, 35,661 (7.4%) teens were disconnected from school and work, and approximately one in seven (13.6%, 65,163) were connected to both





Table 2. Employment and Education Status of Teens (16-19; 2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)

	Not in School	In School	Total
Employed	28,300	65,163	93,463
Not Employed	7,512	16,730	24,242
Not in Labor Force	28,149	333,916	362,065
Total	63,961	415,809	479,770

Table 3 shows the same data as Tables 1 and 2, but specifically and only for young adults (i.e., 20-24). This sub-group comprised over half (57.0%; 635,511) of the entire teen and young adult population in LA County. There were more young adults out of school than in school (54.4% and 45.6%, respectively), and more with jobs than without (60.8% and 39.2%, respectively). Furthermore, a larger proportion of young adults were connected to both school and work (23.3%; 148,388), relative to those who were disconnected from both (17.0%; 107,802).

Table 3. Employment and Education Status of Young Adults (20-24; 2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)

	Not in School	In School	Total
Employed	238,146	148,388	386,534
Not Employed	37,952	19,292	57,244
Not in Labor Force	69,850	121,883	191,733
Total	345,948	289,563	635,511



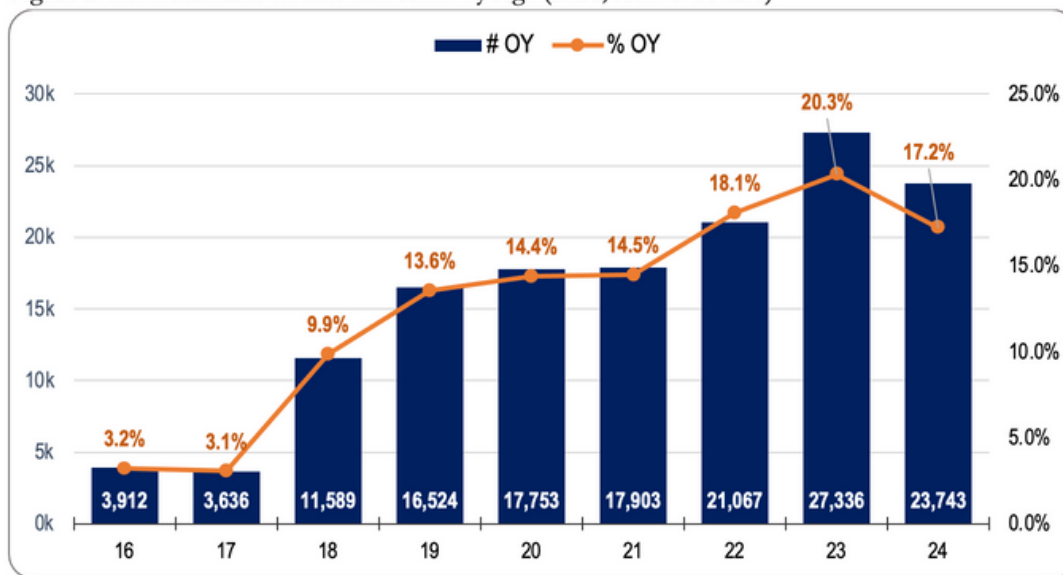
Overall, of the nearly 1.2 million young people (16-24) living in LA County in 2021, 12.9% were neither in school nor at work. Proportionally, however, there were significant differences between teen and young adult disconnection. Although teens (16-19) made up 43.0% of the total 16-24-year-old population, they comprised only 24.9% of the total disconnected population. In contrast, young adults comprised 57.0% of the 16-24-year-old population but accounted for 75.1% of the total disconnected population. Whereas most teens (86.7%) were in enrolled in school a smaller majority (60.8%) of young adults were connected to the labor market.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS



A more granular analysis of the link between age and disconnection is provided in Figure 2 below. The results suggest that the largest variations in disconnection occur between the youngest and oldest youth. According to the data, there were almost six times as many disconnected 23- and 24-year-olds than there were 16- and 17-year-olds. There is also a relatively steep increase in the disconnection rate after age 17. This finding suggests that many teens finish high school (or leave before earning their diploma) and do not continue their education or enter the workforce. As noted in the sub-sections above, young adults comprised a large proportion of OY, and, as shown below in Figure 2, 23- and 24-year-olds alone comprised 37.5% of all disconnected youth (and only 24.4% of all 16-24-year-olds).

Figure 2. Disconnection Counts and Rates by Age (2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)



The Dynamic Impact of Education & Employment

Most of the important experiences, skills, and knowledge needed to lead satisfying and productive lives are acquired through education or employment, particularly in early adulthood. Teens and young adults who are in school and/or working are actively investing (money and time) in their social capital in the hopes of earning higher and better returns-on-investment over time. Disconnection from both school and work can significantly reduce not only one's social capital, but also the capacity to develop more of it throughout life.



EDUCATION ATTAINMENT



Figures 3 and 4 provide additional information on the employment and education of LA County's disconnected youth population. According to the educational attainment data presented in Figure 3, approximately one in seven (14.3%; 20,536) disconnected young adults (19-24) did not finish high school. And, although not shown in the figure, whereas 63.4% of 23-24-year-olds earned their diplomas (or equivalent) or took some college courses, less than one in five (18.5%; 9,433) completed at least a bachelor's degree.

Figure 3. Educational Attainment of Disconnected Young Adults (19-24; 2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)

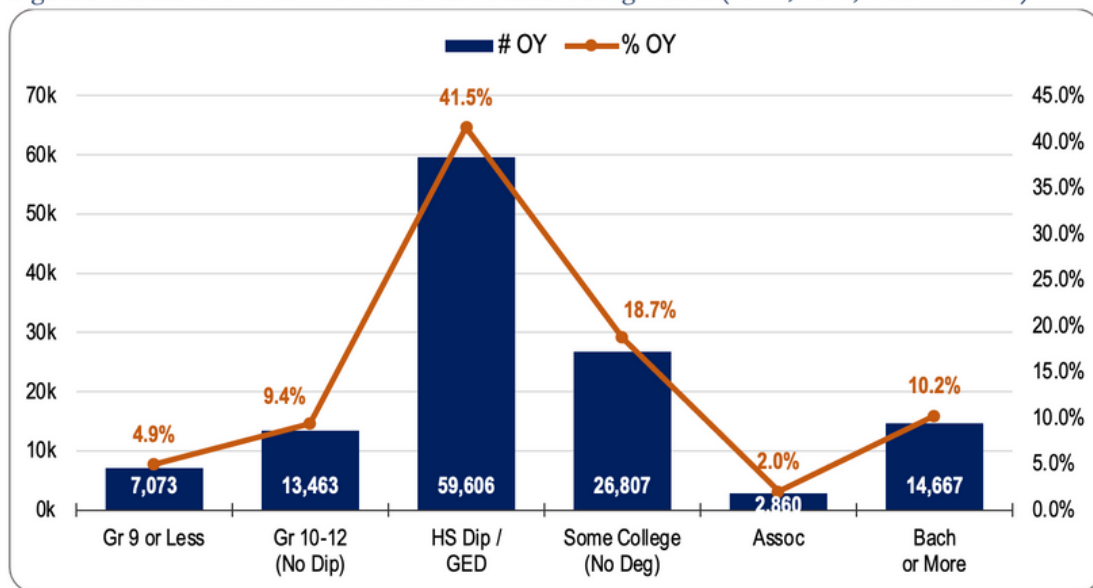
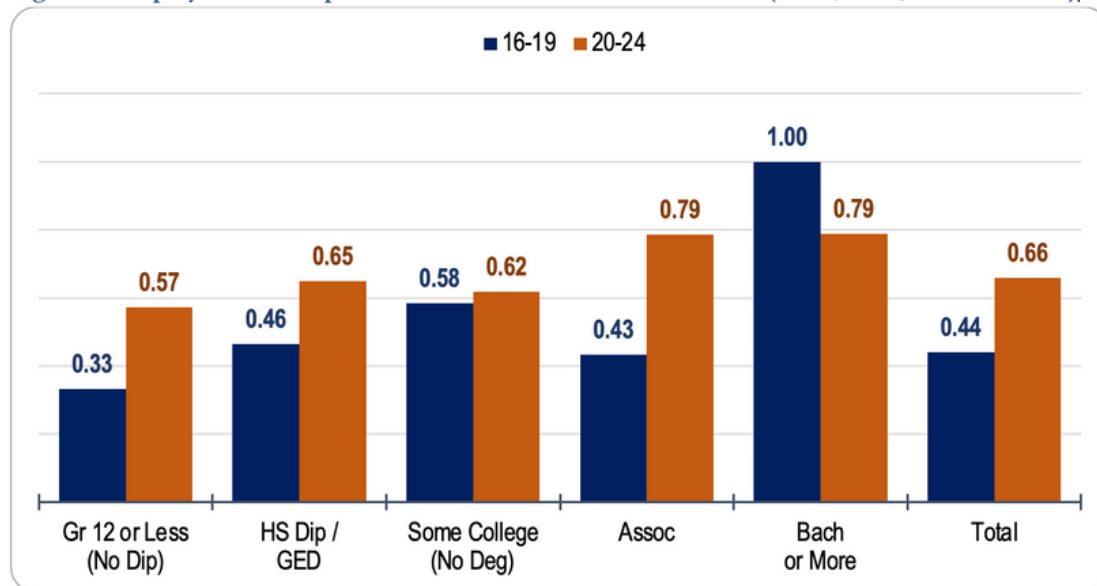




Figure 4 below shows the employment-to-population ratio for out-of-school-youth (16-24) by educational attainment. The data indicate that 44% of out-of-school 16-19-year-olds and 66% of out-of-school 20-24-year-olds were employed at some point in 2021. These further demonstrate the positive relationship between educational attainment and employment, underscoring the importance of parlaying one source of social capital (education) to increase overall gains through a second source (work).

Figure 4. Employment-to-Population Ratio for Out-of-School Youth (16-24; 2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)

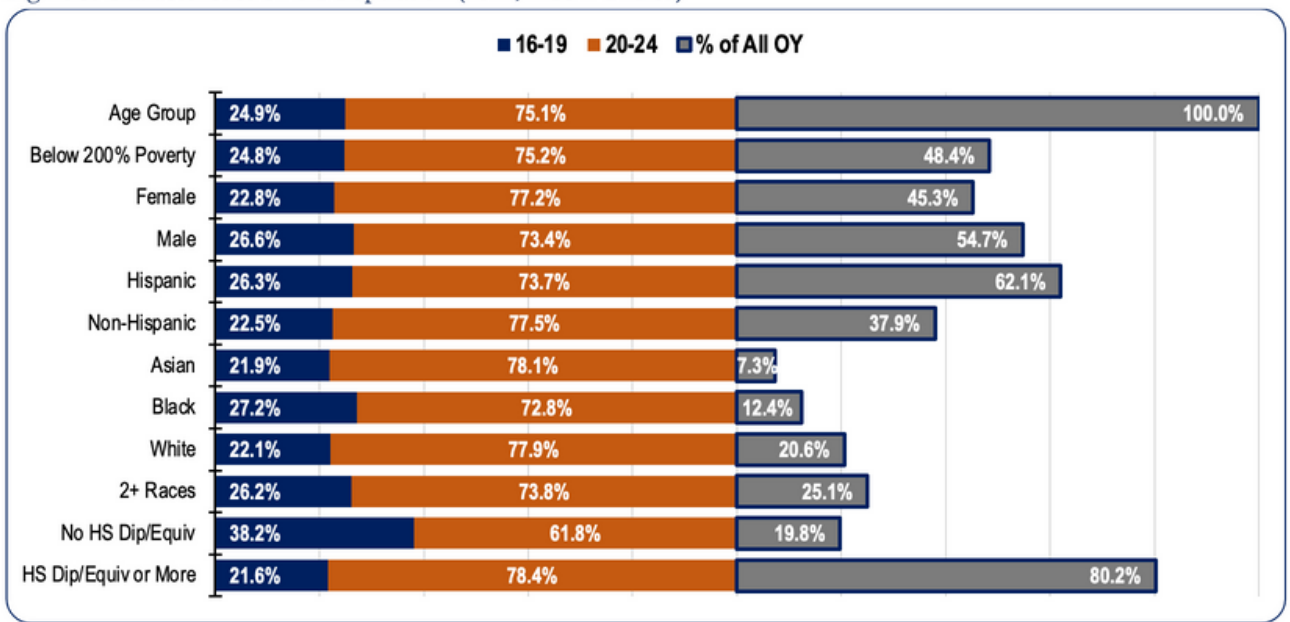


DEMOGRAPHICS



Figures 5 and 6 provide additional detail on LA County’s disconnected youth. As discussed earlier, young adults were over-represented in the disconnected population – for every four disconnected youth, three were between the ages of 20 and 24. These data also indicate that nearly half (48.4%) of the overall OY population lived below the poverty line. Many of these individuals were Latino/a (62.1%) and most had at least a high school diploma (or equivalent; 80.2%). One-in-four individuals identified as two or more races, one-in-five identified as White alone, one-in-eight identified as Black alone, and one-in-thirteen identified as Asian alone.

Figure 5. Characteristics of OY Population (2021, ACS 1-Yr Est.)



Virtually any pathway to experiencing positive life outcomes can be linked to consistent school and/or workplace exposure. Young people detached from education and employment are not only less likely to experience such outcomes, but they are also more likely to experience a broad array of hardships that negatively impact their social, emotional, economic, and physical well-being. Figure 6 on the following page reveals some of the different life circumstances experienced by disconnected youth, relative to their connected peers.

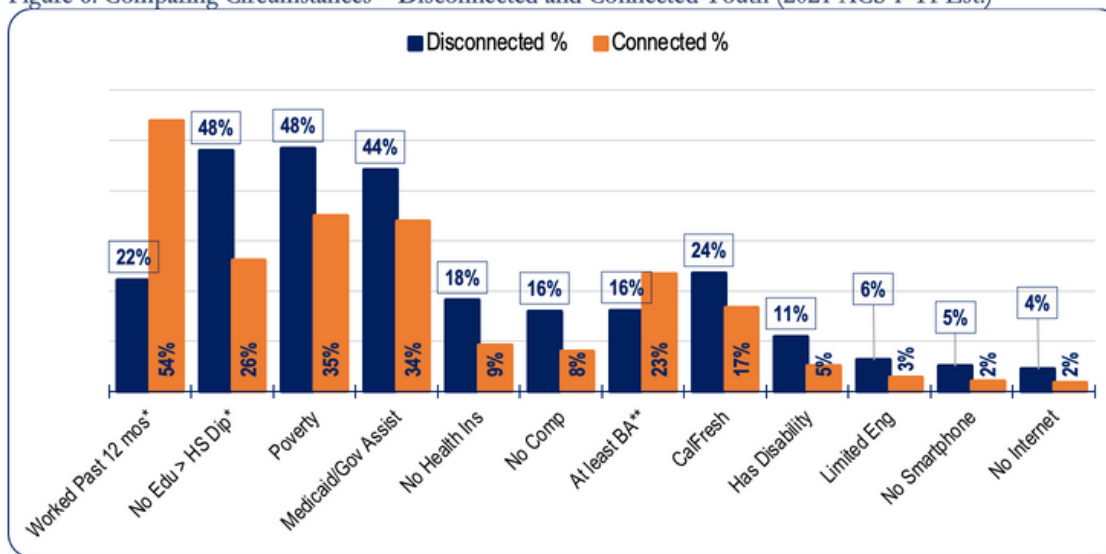
Disconnected youth are more likely to:

- Have HS dip/GED, but no further; 19-24)
- Receive food stamps
- Receive Medicaid
- Live in poverty
- Have children of their own (females)
- Have a disability

..And less likely to:

- Have worked in the past 12 mos. (19-24)
- Have a bachelor’s degree (21-24)
- Have health insurance
- Be proficient in English
- Have a computer

Figure 6. Comparing Circumstances – Disconnected and Connected Youth (2021 ACS 1-Yr Est.)



Note: *19-24; Note: **21-24

Starting in 2012, the ACS collected and analyzed data at the Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA) level. According to the US Census Bureau, PUMAs are “non-overlapping, statistical geographic areas that partition each state or equivalent entity into geographic areas containing no fewer than 100,000 people each”. In other words, PUMAs provide an additional layer of specificity that allows for a meaningful analysis of geographical distribution. This section of the paper indicates the number of disconnected youth in each of LA County’s 69 PUMAs. Each of the 69 PUMAs are located in one of the ten regions across the county. Table 4 provides a regional overview of where teens and young adults lived in 2020, how many were disconnected, and the associated rates. Table 5 provides rates of disconnection at the PUMA level. Both tables are sorted by disconnection rates of youth ages 16-24.

At the regional level, these data are not surprising. Whereas the highest rates of disconnection are found in the south central, south, and north central parts of the county, the lowest rates are further west. Approximately 64% of all teens and young adults in the county lived in one of four regions (i.e., central, south central, east central, and southeast), and these regions were home to 67% of the county’s disconnected population.

Table 4. Summary OY Data by Region (2021 ACS 1-Yr Est.)

Region	16-24			16-19			20-24		
	# OY	Total	% OY	# OY	Total	% OY	# OY	Total	% OY
North Central	12,824	77,772	16.5%	3,309	36,217	9.1%	9,515	41,555	22.9%
South	13,803	84,066	16.4%	3,022	35,208	8.6%	10,781	48,858	22.1%
South Central	22,860	140,795	16.2%	7,289	59,824	12.2%	15,571	80,971	19.2%
LA City (North)	11,408	87,383	13.1%	3,028	39,235	7.7%	8,380	48,148	17.4%
Central	44,048	346,143	12.7%	10,145	146,898	6.9%	33,903	199,245	17.0%
Southwest	3,637	29,087	12.5%	643	13,266	4.8%	2,994	15,821	18.9%
Northwest	8,863	81,251	10.9%	1,521	33,592	4.5%	7,342	47,659	15.4%
East Central	12,489	122,936	10.2%	4,060	52,496	7.7%	8,429	70,440	12.0%
Southeast	9,133	98,195	9.3%	2,341	44,997	5.2%	6,792	53,198	12.8%
West Central	4,398	47,653	9.2%	303	18,037	1.7%	4,095	29,616	13.8%
TOTAL	143,463	1,115,281	12.9%	35,661	479,770	7.4%	107,802	635,511	17.0%

Disconnected Youth around LA County



Table 5. Opportunity Youth Rates in Each LA County PUMA (2021 ACS 1-Yr Est.)

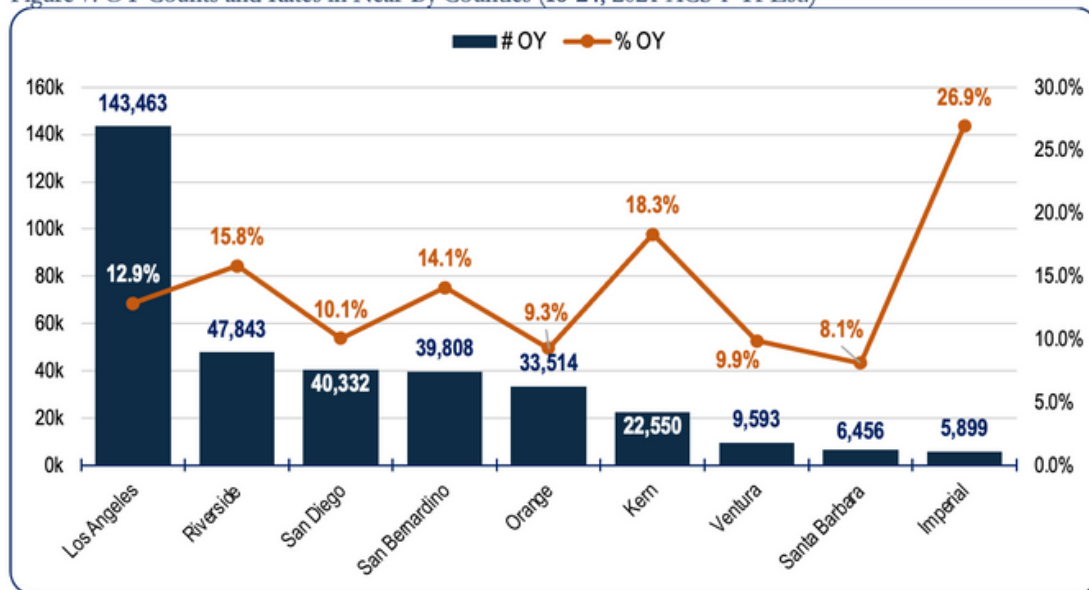
	16-19	20-24	16-24		16-19	20-24	16-24
NORTH CENTRAL				SOUTH CENTRAL			
Lancaster	13.5%	27.6%	21.2%	Compton, West Rancho Dominguez	26.9%	31.4%	29.3%
Arleta, Pacoima, San Fernando	9.0%	21.7%	16.4%	Westmont	13.2%	22.6%	18.8%
Castaic	7.1%	21.8%	14.5%	Watts	9.1%	22.8%	17.2%
Palmdale	6.4%	19.1%	12.7%	Gardena, Lawndale, West Athens	8.2%	18.5%	14.3%
SOUTH				SOUTHEAST			
San Pedro	13.5%	23.7%	19.3%	Long Beach City N.	13.5%	12.1%	12.7%
Long Beach City S.W., Port	3.2%	34.1%	19.1%	Carson	8.7%	13.6%	11.1%
South Gate, Lynwood	10.9%	18.2%	15.2%	Hawthorne	7.0%	12.2%	10.3%
Lakewood, Cerritos, Artesia, Hawaiian Gardens	4.9%	21.3%	14.1%	Torrance	3.5%	12.0%	7.7%
Downey	3.9%	17.8%	13.2%	SOUTHWEST			
CENTRAL				CITY OF LA – NORTH			
Central City, Boyle Heights	9.2%	24.2%	18.5%	Mission Hills, Panorama	9.0%	19.7%	15.4%
Huntington Park, Florence (Graham, Walnut Park)	9.0%	27.5%	17.6%	Granada Hills, Sylmar	8.1%	24.3%	15.3%
Silver Lake, Echo Park, Westlake*	7.0%	22.7%	17.6%	North Hollywood, Valley Village	6.8%	19.5%	14.3%
Bell Gardens, Bell, Maywood, Cudahy, Commerce	7.7%	24.2%	16.5%	Sunland, Sun Valley, Tujunga	5.9%	14.8%	11.2%
West Adams, Baldwin Hills	5.4%	22.6%	15.3%	Chatsworth, Porter Ranch	8.1%	11.7%	10.0%
San Gabriel Valley - North	7.7%	26.0%	15.0%	WEST CENTRAL			
Koreatown	7.2%	19.5%	14.6%	Hancock Park, Mid-Wilshire	8.6%	21.8%	18.3%
Alhambra, S. Pasadena	7.9%	18.8%	14.0%	Westwood, W. Los Angeles	0.0%	9.9%	5.7%
E. Vernon	6.7%	18.9%	13.8%	SOUTHWEST			
Pacific Palisades	0.0%	23.2%	13.4%	Santa Monica	9.4%	18.4%	15.0%
El Monte, South El Monte	7.1%	19.4%	13.1%	Palos Verdes	2.3%	25.4%	14.6%
Hollywood	1.0%	17.1%	12.6%	Redondo, Manhattan, Hermosa*	4.5%	13.8%	9.2%
West Hollywood, Beverly Hills	2.5%	22.6%	12.5%	NORTHWEST			
Mt. Washing, Highland Park, Glassell Park*	6.0%	16.6%	12.4%	Van Nuys & N. Sherman Oaks	2.2%	20.5%	14.7%
Pico Rivera, Montebello	6.6%	17.9%	12.4%	Encino & Tarzana	11.9%	15.4%	14.0%
Monterey Park, Rosemead	10.4%	13.2%	12.1%	Canoga Park, Winnetka & Woodland Hills	4.8%	17.6%	11.8%
Glendale	13.4%	9.9%	11.5%	Calabasas, Agoura Hills, Malibu, & Westlake Village	0.0%	15.3%	7.1%
USC, Exposition Park*	6.4%	9.9%	8.6%	Santa Clarita	3.4%	9.0%	6.7%
Inglewood	6.2%	10.0%	8.5%				
E. Los Angeles	5.2%	10.2%	7.9%				
Pasadena	2.8%	8.8%	6.3%				
Marina del Rey, Westchester, Culver City*	8.9%	2.3%	4.9%				
Burbank	4.8%	3.2%	3.9%				

*Note: These PUMAs were not pre-grouped into a region. The research team assigned regions based on geography.

DATA: ADJACENT COUNTIES

Finally, Figure 7 below shows the counts and rates of disconnected youth in counties adjacent or close to LA. It is immediately clear that, as of 2021, LA had far more disconnected teens and young adults than any other county in the area (but LA is also home to many more young people overall). Of California's 58 counties, the nine shown below collectively accounted for 61.0% (349,458) of California's OY population (572,756) in 2021.

Figure 7. OY Counts and Rates in Near-By Counties (16-24; 2021 ACS 1-Yr Est.)



CONCLUSION

One of the most important steps in helping Los Angeles County's disconnected teens and young adults is understanding who and where they are. For this reason, we provided a high-level summary of just this type of information. It is our hope that these data be used to spark discussion, initiate action, inform policy, and generally make data-driven decisions that optimize the chances of success for as many youth as possible.

We would like to thank the California Opportunity Youth Network (COYN), the Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Coalition, and our generous funders, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Stuart Foundation, and Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for their dedication not only to our region's Opportunity Youth population, but our larger community as well. By tirelessly working to connect and reconnect teens and young adults to the education and employment opportunities they need to flourish, they are laying the foundation for today's young Angelenos and countless more in the future.