

MASSACHUSETTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The state report is a resource to inform donors and funders about the local context of social issues affecting at-risk populations. This analysis can be used to better understand current local trends and the unique social and economic situation in which the

social issue exists. The information below complements the social issue report and the guide to giving by drawing attention to local initiatives related to the social issue.

FACTS: YOUTH CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS

\$467,023¹

Estimated lifetime cost² of one high school dropout in 2009 to the state government

X

8,296³

Number of dropouts during the 2010-2011 school year

=

\$3.8 billion

Estimated lifetime cost of all students who dropped out during the 2010-2011 school year to the state government, if they never complete high school

SOCIAL ISSUE INDICATORS

Number: In Massachusetts, the number of disengaged youth between ages 18-24 is currently **at least 75,000**, which is **11 percent** of the youth in that age group.⁴

Definition: Disengaged youth are persons aged 18-24 not attending school, not working, and lacking a degree beyond high school.⁵

Rationale: Programs in the field of youth career development focus on ensuring a youth's successful transition to productive adulthood. Thus, the number of disengaged youth serves as a good indicator since it represents the size of a population that has the highest risk of not becoming productive adults.

Methodology: The actual number and definition of disengaged youth is hard to identify because of variation in levels of disengagement and in terminology. Disengagement is cyclical in nature, ranging from intermittent attendance at school, to disengaging for months or a year at a time, to completely disengaging for multiple years with no intent of returning to school and no consistent employment.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count initiative is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. This initiative collects data each year on a wide variety of indicators to demonstrate the condition of children and youth throughout the country. The foundation's indicator—persons aged 18 to 24 not attending school, not working, and lacking a degree beyond high school—provides a good estimate of the number of disengaged youth in Massachusetts. The foundation calculates this indicator annually with data from the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau.⁶



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MASSACHUSETTS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Disengaged youth present an increasing challenge for the state of Massachusetts. The percentage of unemployed teens aged 16-19 has reached a high of 69 percent,⁷ and almost 3 percent⁸ of all students dropped out of school following the 2010-2011 school year. A 2011 analysis conducted by the Alliance for Excellent Education found that halving the number of state dropouts would amount to \$88 million in increased earnings and \$12 million in increased tax revenue.⁹ Realizing that funding focused on improving the outcomes of disengaged youth would benefit youth and the state as a whole, Governor Deval Patrick issued a directive in 2007 that incorporated a team of youth workforce development experts into the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB) Youth Committee. These experts included academics, researchers, employers, and practitioners who were called on to analyze and recommend improvements to the youth employment system in Massachusetts. Focusing on how best to develop youth academic and professional skills needed to succeed in the 21st

century, the committee made three recommendations:

- Increase the quantity and quality of work experiences and career exploration programs for all youth
- Facilitate and improve partnerships and collaboration among education, workforce, and service-providing agencies
- Pilot a “multiple pathways” approach, combining education, workforce development, and support services that are necessary to ensure a successful transition for youth into economically stable adulthood

Following the release of these recommendations, in the summer of 2009, state-subsidized workforce investment boards throughout the state offered employment and workplace learning to over 15,400 youth through the state's YouthWorks program.¹⁰ Despite this initiative, the problem of unemployed and disengaged youth in Massachusetts persists, especially following the recent recession.

In 2011, federal stimulus money that helped provide almost 2,000 Massachusetts youth with jobs was cut, and the state legislature is considering more cuts for youth employment programs amounting to as much as \$2 million.¹¹ Realizing the dire need to fund youth career development programs, Governor Patrick announced \$6 million in statewide funding for youth jobs in 2011 in the hopes of creating 3,000 jobs throughout the state, 15 percent of which were geared toward at-risk youth.¹² Most recently, as a part of the fiscal year 2013 state budget, the governor proposed \$8.6 million in funding for YouthWorks.¹³

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Youth Jobs Coalition

The Youth Jobs Coalition has been actively fighting for more funding for sustainable youth jobs throughout the state.¹⁴ In February 2012, the coalition, based in Dorchester, organized a rally in downtown Boston to demand more state funding for youth employment programs. The coalition, other nonprofits, and young people throughout Boston and the state continue to be outraged by the lack of funding for youth employment programs and companies' aversion to hiring youth employees.¹⁵ Community members throughout the state agree that increasing numbers of unemployed and disengaged youth lead directly to increases in youth crime, violence, and risky behavior. Members of the Youth Jobs Coalition request that the state government raise summer job funding to at least \$12.4 million this year to address youth career development.¹⁶

Youth Violence Prevention through Summer Employment

The Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative (YVFC), led by the State Street Foundation, is a network of local businesses, foundations, government agency funders, and key experts that have come together to work toward reducing youth violence in Boston. The collaborative views workforce development as one of several approaches to reducing youth violence in the city. The Youth Workforce Development and Education (WFDE) working group coordinates a Youth Violence Prevention through Summer Employment initiative to provide concentrated funding to increase levels of youth employment in struggling neighborhoods throughout Boston. In 2011, this initiative provided deserving Boston youth with a job and career development opportunities and provided researchers and funders the opportunity to understand the relationship between unemployment and youth violence. This will allow funders to allocate funding for the greatest sustained impact in the future.¹⁷ Collaborative funders donated \$800,000 to provide 450 youth with jobs at local Boston-area community organizations for the summer of 2011. The youth were placed at jobs in their own neighborhoods, where they gained meaningful work experience and were encouraged to get involved in their communities.¹⁸ Furthermore, the collaborative is currently working to institutionalize the initiative as a year-round opportunity for youth and to enable funders to contribute to youth violence prevention by funding youth jobs.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

ORGANIZATION

Alliance for Excellent Education
Center for Labor Market Studies
Youth Jobs Coalition

WEBSITE

www.all4ed.org
www.northeastern.edu/clms
www.youthjobscoalition.org

ABOUT SOCIAL IMPACT RESEARCH

Social Impact Research (SIR) is the independent research department of Root Cause, a research and consulting firm dedicated to mobilizing the nonprofit, public and business sectors to work collaboratively in a new social impact market. Modeled after private sector equity research firms, SIR conducts

research on social issues and independent analysis of program performance to provide leaders and funders with the rigorous, actionable information they need to make strategic decisions about creating and investing in social impact.

ENDNOTES

- Joseph McLaughlin, "The Fiscal Returns to Completing High School and Additional Years of Schooling Beyond High School in the U.S. and Massachusetts" (presentation, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Jan. 2012).
- Lifetime cost is calculated by subtracting transfers plus jail or prison costs from lifetime mean taxes paid.
- "High School Dropouts 2010-2011 Massachusetts Public Schools" (statistical report, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Feb. 7, 2012).
- "Persons age 18 to 24 not attending school, not working and no degree beyond high school," The Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=5063>.
- Ibid.
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- "Unemployed teens age 16 to 19," The Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=5051>.
- "High School Dropouts 2010-2011 Massachusetts Public Schools" (statistical report, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Feb. 7, 2012).
- "Boosting Massachusetts' Economy by Improving High School Graduation Rates," (state profile, Alliance for Excellent Education analysis of Education and the Economy, Mar. 2011).
- "Preparing Youth for Work and Learning in the 21st Century Economy" (report, Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board, Youth Committee, 2010).
- Megan Woolhouse, "For teen job-seekers, summer again offers dismal prospects," Boston.com, The Boston Globe, last modified May 17, 2011.
- "Governor Patrick Announces \$6 Million for Youth Summer Jobs Funding," The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, May 10, 2011.
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- Kevin Clang, "Will protest for work: Boston Youth rally for summer job programs," The Next Great Generation Boston (blog), Feb. 24, 2012.
- "About," Youth Jobs Coalition, <http://youthjobscoalition.org/about>.
- "Social Issue Brief: Youth Violence Prevention Through Summer Employment" (issue brief, Social Impact Research, Root Cause), 2010.
- "Mayor Menino Recognizes Youth Violence Prevention Funders for Stepping Up on Summer Jobs" (press release, City of Boston, Massachusetts, Office of the Mayor, Press Office, Aug. 8, 2011).