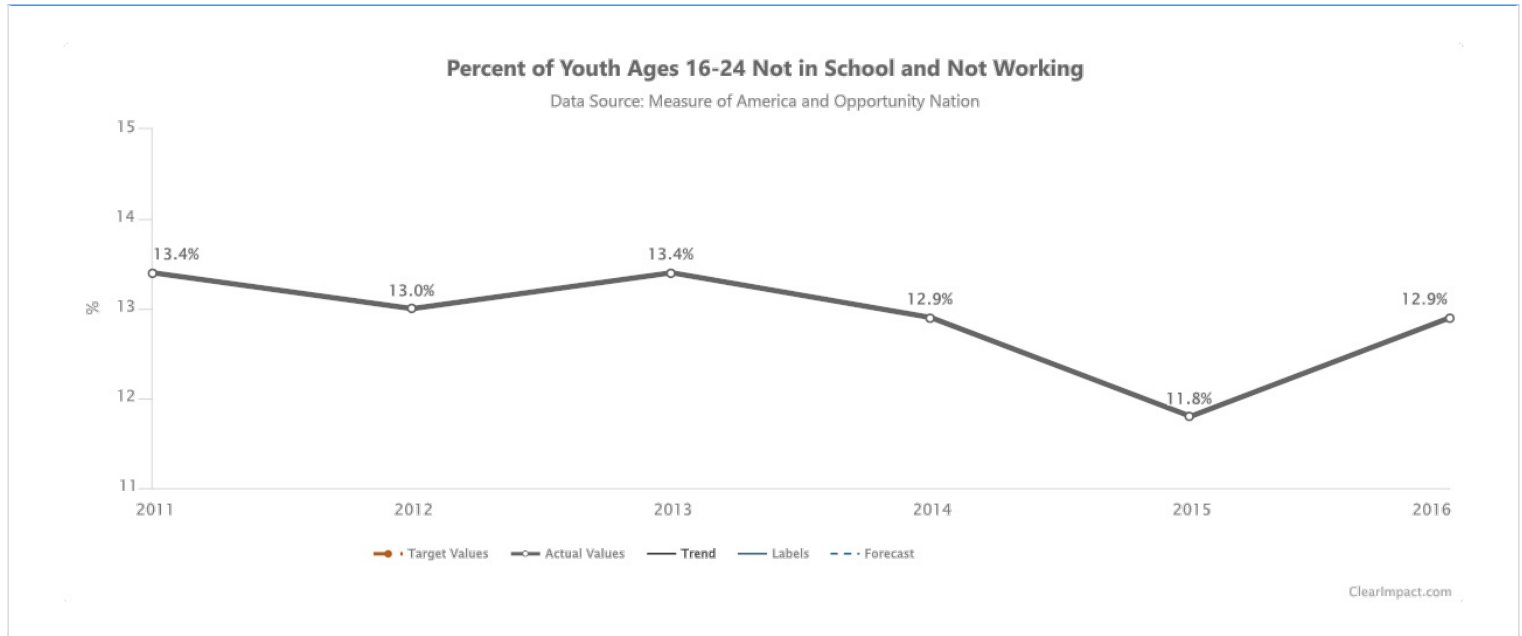


R Youth Have Opportunities for Employment or Career Readiness (Statewide)

I Percent of Youth Ages 16-24 Not in School and Not Working



Story Behind the Curve

Disconnected or "Opportunity" Youth are 16- to 24-year-olds who are not working and not in school. While the rate of Disconnected/Opportunity Youth in the State has been decreasing since 2013, the number slightly increased this year, to 92,275 youth, or 12.9% of the total population of 16- to 24-year-olds.

The state's overall disconnection rate is lower than the national average, but race and place tell a different story. In 2016, eleven (11) jurisdictions had greater rates of disconnection than the national average and some had much greater rates. In Washington County, one in every five youth age 16 to 24 was disconnected from work and school. In Worcester County, that number was nearly one in four. The national rate is one in seven. In Baltimore City, the rate was just short of one in five, which has held steady for the past several years.

When disaggregated by race, the data demonstrate a widening gap in the rate of connectedness. In 1990, white youth represented 46.5% of all Opportunity Youth and youth of color represented about 53%.^[1] In 2014, white youth represented about 35% of all Opportunity Youth and youth of color represented 65%. Over that same period, the raw number of white youth who were disconnected did not change much, even as the total number of Opportunity Youth grew by 25%. However the raw number of youth of color increased from 1990 – 2014 by more than 52%.

What Works

Reconnecting youth to work and school is one of four strategic goals that Governor Hogan has charged the Children's Cabinet with addressing. In the early spring, the Children's Cabinet will release its three-year plan, which includes specific, interagency strategies for removing barriers to work and education, creating opportunities for job training and work, and supporting smooth transitions for youth moving out of systems.

Given the diverse nature of the population, effective strategies for improving outcomes must be based on local data, specific challenges, and particular needs. Local jurisdictions are uniquely positioned to identify and address the barriers in their communities and design appropriate interventions to ensure youth are successfully transitioning into the adult workforce.

Because one program/strategy cannot meet all needs, the FY18 Notice of Funding Availability strongly encourages Local Management Boards to adopt a "collective impact" approach, whereby the Board convenes a variety of partners to work together to provide programming, remove barriers, and support long-term goals, with each partner playing a distinct but complementary role.

Data Discussion