

May 16, 2018

REPORT: BLACK YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DOWN IN CHICAGO

By Adedamola Agboola

A new report on youth unemployment in Illinois found that the alarmingly high rate of young black men and women in Chicago who are neither working nor in school has dropped.

Data collected from 2012 through 2016 under the Obama administration and published by the University of Chicago's Great Cities Institute, found that there has been a decrease in out of work, and out of school rates for black 20- to 24-year-olds in Chicago in recent years, but that substantial racial and gender gaps still remain. And although the newly found statistics are encouraging, researchers found that **nearly a third** of black 20- to 24-year-olds and **37%** of black 20- to 24-year-old men are still out of work and not going to school.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Joblessness and out-of-school and out-of-work rates were **comparatively worse** in areas of south, west, and central Illinois compared to Cook County.
- The highest jobless rates for 20- to 24-year-olds in Illinois were located **outside of the Chicago Metro Area** in south, west, and central Illinois.
- Joblessness and out-of-school and out-of-work rates for the total population, black, white,



In this photo made May 18, 2010, Deji Ayoade, right, of Queens, who has been out of work for 6 months looks over a list of available jobs as Jaelyn Coughlan, center, a recruitment specialist with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York speaks to another job applicant during the "Putting New Yorkers Back to Work" Job Fair sponsored by The New York Society for Ethical Culture, in New York. The number of newly laid-off workers filing claims for unemployment benefits unexpectedly rose last week by the largest amount in three months. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

and Hispanic or Latino 20- to 24-year-olds were higher in sections of southern, western, and central Illinois than in Cook County.

- Five subsections of Illinois had an out-of-school and out-of-work rate for black 20- to 24-year-olds above **40%** and one area had a rate of **63.6%**

WHAT RESEARCHERS LEARNED

- Black 20-to 24-year-olds had large improvements in out-of-work figures: Black 20- to 24-year-olds in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois and the U.S.

had large decreases in out-of-work rates.

- There were improvements in out-of-school and out-of-work rates for black 20- to 24-year olds in Chicago and **worsening figures for Latinos** from 2014 to 2016.
- Teen employment in mid-sized cities and rural areas **declined substantially**: employment to population ratios for 16- to 19-year-olds in Illinois case study counties with mid-sized cities have decreased substantially since 1980.
- Economies of mid-sized cities

and rural economies are not incorporating young people into the workforce:

- The mix of jobs in rural economies has changed in similar ways to Chicago, resulting in fewer opportunities for young people as older populations are increasingly employed in industries that young people have historically been employed in, such as retail.
- Middle-class occupations are leaving medium-sized cities and rural areas as income inequalities grow: proportions of individuals in poverty and in high-income groups in Illinois case study counties are growing as middle-income groups are shrinking.

To Jack Wuest, executive director of the Alternative Schools Network, the data demonstrate an urgent need for more government-subsidized jobs so young people can gain basic work skills and become contributing members of the labor force. “Getting people on their feet, doing some work, out of the house, gives them a sense of dignity and power that they can spend money on what they like as well as take care of their family,” he said.

Read the [full report here](#).