



**Youth Employment Hearing**  
**January 30, 2017, Monday, 9 AM – 12 Noon**  
**Chicago Urban League, 4510 S. Michigan Ave.**

## **Recommendations to Successfully Educate, Employ and Graduate Out-Of-School and Jobless High School Dropouts**

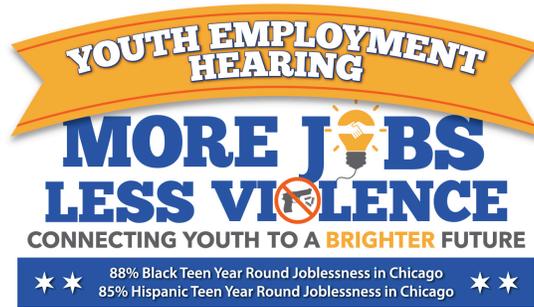
The numbers of youth and young adults who are out-of-school and jobless need the opportunity to finish their high school diploma and gain work experience so that they can take the next steps to become successful adults. The recommendations below will help these jobless and out-of-school high school dropouts to have the opportunity to succeed. Doing this will also help reduce violence by providing positive alternatives and will strengthen the economy by providing a strong workforce for businesses that are facing labor shortages of workers who are prepared and skilled.

- 1. Employ 1.2 Million Jobless, Out-of-School High School Dropouts with \$3 Billion Annual Investment from the National Infrastructure Program. There should also be a focus on very low attending high school students who most likely will drop out of high school.**

The proposed federal infrastructure program should provide \$3 billion per year to employ 1.2 million out-of-school, jobless high school dropouts (16 to 24) with a focus on low-income youth and young adults across the country. This will pay significant dividends for both large and small businesses across the country that are facing a prepared and skilled worker shortage. This employment and education proposed will provide the framework and foundation to meet the worker and skills gap that US companies are experiencing, and in so doing, will help strengthen the local, state, regional and US economy. This will also help these youth and young adults to become successful adults by earning their high school diploma, reducing taxpayer payments over the lifetime of the graduated high school dropout by over \$290,000, and equally as important, this will help significantly reduce the unrest and violence that plagues not only inner-city neighborhoods, but also many suburban and rural areas that suffer not only from high youth and young adult joblessness, but significant addictions opioid, heroin and other types of drug abuse that lead to petty and even major crime as they struggle to satisfy their addictions.

Year round employment would be full time (35 hours) for youth not in school and older than 19 years old with programming to provide participants the opportunity to earn a high school diploma or GED, as well as to combine programming linked to specific skills training that would provide the participants with specific work related credentials. Linkage with community colleges and other skill training programs will be critical. Part time employment (5 to 10 hours) would be provided for youth, 16 to 24, who are enrolled in school. These programs would provide creative and engaging employment as well as comprehensive support services to keep participants engaged through a myriad of problems and challenges they face.





It is critical that there be follow-through programs for participants to assist them when they are ready to enter the private sector so that they will receive the type of services that will help them remain employed and earn the educational and skill training credentials they will need to continue to be competitive in the job market.

**2. Develop Comprehensive Education/Employment Programs Using Evidence Based/Best Program Practices for the 1.2 Million Youth and Young Adults to be Served through the Infrastructure Program.**

Extensive research and experiences documenting ways to successfully re-enroll, educate, graduate and employ jobless high school dropouts. There are numerous broad based programs in Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, Boston and other cities that have demonstrated successful evidence based/best program practices for this type of programming. One example is the Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS) in Chicago that has 19 years of experience of graduating over 20,000 high-risk, low-income high school dropouts utilizing small (150-200 students), community based, not-for-profit schools, the Soledad in Los Angeles, The Soledad Enrichment Action

Program (SEA), the Los Angeles Conservation Corp., The TransCenter for Youth in Milwaukee, The Alternative Schools Network (ASN) in Chicago, and the YouthBuild Charter School of California multi-site programs have also demonstrated evidence based/best program practices for high school dropouts. These types of programs should be supported through federal funds providing incentives to establish, develop and expand more of these types of programs to reach significant numbers of high school dropouts, ages 16 to 24.

**3. Urge the Trump Administration to Seriously Consider and then Implement Recommendations #1 and #2.**

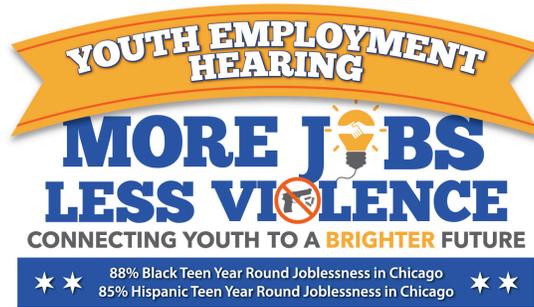
We hope these recommendations will be taken to heart and implemented by the Trump Administration. As a candidate, President Trump highlighted the violence in many inner-city areas, particularly Chicago, and has pointed to a 58% jobless rate of Black youth. In fact, as this report demonstrates, the jobless rate among Black, Hispanic and White youth and young adults in many cases exceeds the 58% rate he highlighted. We hope that the Trump Administration will put significant funding, as mentioned in recommendation #2 and utilizing the evidence based/best program practices, as outlined in recommendation #1, to address this crisis.

**4. Restart the Federally Funded Summer Youth Employment Program at \$1.3 Billion to Employ 700,000 Low-Income Youth (16 to 21 Years Old) Utilizing Community Based Organizations.**

Summer youth employment would be 25 hours per week for 8 weeks combined with various social, therapeutic, and support-based programing to enhance not only the participants' academic skills but also their life and social skills.

**5. We propose that there be a state commitment to employ 35,000 jobless, disconnected youth in the type of summer and year round programs described above.**





6. We propose that there be a Cook County commitment to employ 10,000 jobless, disconnected youth and a Chicago commitment to employ 10,000 jobless, disconnected youth.
7. Initiatives like the 100,000 Opportunities developed by a coalition of leading US based companies are a good beginning to open up the doorway for disconnected youth (16-24). More emphasis has to be placed on employing the most disconnected youth who are jobless and out of school. More initiatives like this would be developed with the leadership of the President and state and local corporate and political leadership.
8. We propose that there be a Youth Employment Crisis Action Task Force to address the State of Illinois and Cook County and Chicago crisis situation of disconnected youth.
9. The investments outlined above will produce 3 significant results:
  - a. Prepare and support youth with the skills they will need to become productive and successful adults.
  - b. Prepare and develop the workforce that Chicago, Cook County, Illinois and the country will need to remain competitive in a global economy.
  - c. Help lessen and prevent the tragic violence that continues to plague our country in too many communities.
10. The cost of not doing this investment has already proven to be staggering in terms of crime, prison costs, healthcare, welfare and other costs.

The cost of doing nothing must not be an option.

**Background**

Youth employment (16-24 years old) has had a dramatic decline across the country from 46% in 1998-2000 to 27% in 2011-13.

Over 3.6 million Latino youth and young adults, as of July, 2015, were jobless and over 2.5 million Black youth and young adults were jobless.

Over 2 million of these youth and young adults are not in school and are jobless. They are disconnected from society.

Clear and consistent research shows that the more a youth works then the more they will work as an adult.

Until 2000, there was a national summer youth employment program that provided over 650,000 low-income youth with jobs.





Since then, there have been only sporadic programs that provide youth jobs in the summer and hardly any programs to provide youth jobs throughout the year.

We are losing a generation of youth who have no opportunity to work in their neighborhoods.

A national focus and program must be developed, along with state and local based programs, to give the youth of our country the opportunity and skills they will need to become successful adults in an economy growing more competitive each year.

The problem disconnected youth face is a lack of work experience because of the economic depression of their communities.

The aim of these employment and training programs is to provide the disconnected youth of our country the employment experiences that middle class and upper class children have in order to build their work habits and other critical skills that will prepare them to enter the private sector economy.

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