

Youth Disconnection in the Pandemic

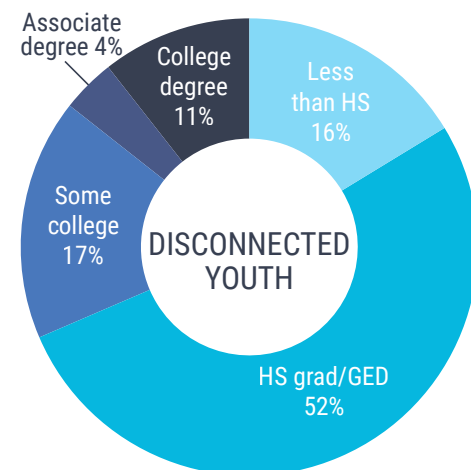
The latest data on young San Diegans' access to education and employment

EDUCATION & DISCONNECTION

Less than 1 in 3 disconnected youth has any post-secondary education, and 1 in 6 lack a high school diploma. To combat disconnection, the Workforce Partnership can help youth earn a high school diploma (workforce.org/possibilityproject) access post-secondary education, get paid on-the-job work experience and one-on-one support. Here's what two participants in our youth programs (workforce.org/getajob) had to say about getting training and education:

"Use the free resources that are out there! At the end of the day, it's not always an easy journey but as long as you keep pushing, the moment you finally land a position tastes that much sweeter." –Brian, 18

"Don't give up. There are going to be obstacles that you encounter. Keep your eyes on the prize." –Taylor, 24

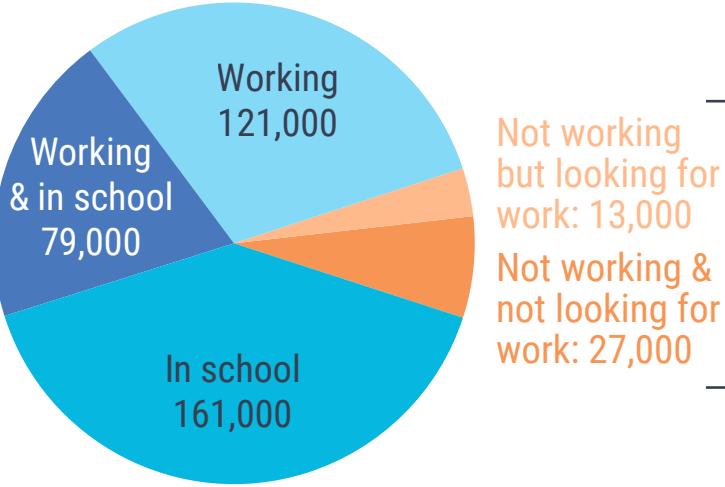


Source: 2020 ACS



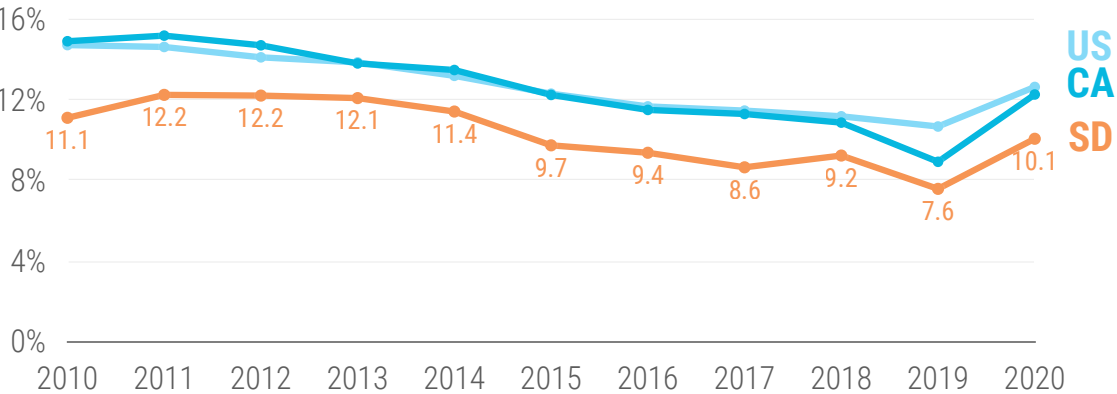
CUT THE RATE

An update on our region-wide goal to reduce the number of youth age 16–24 who are both not in school and not working. These numbers are drawn from the most recent available Census data—the 2020 American Community Survey. (About 75% of this data was collected in or after mid March, when unemployment spiked due to COVID-19.)



40,000 disconnected youth in 2020

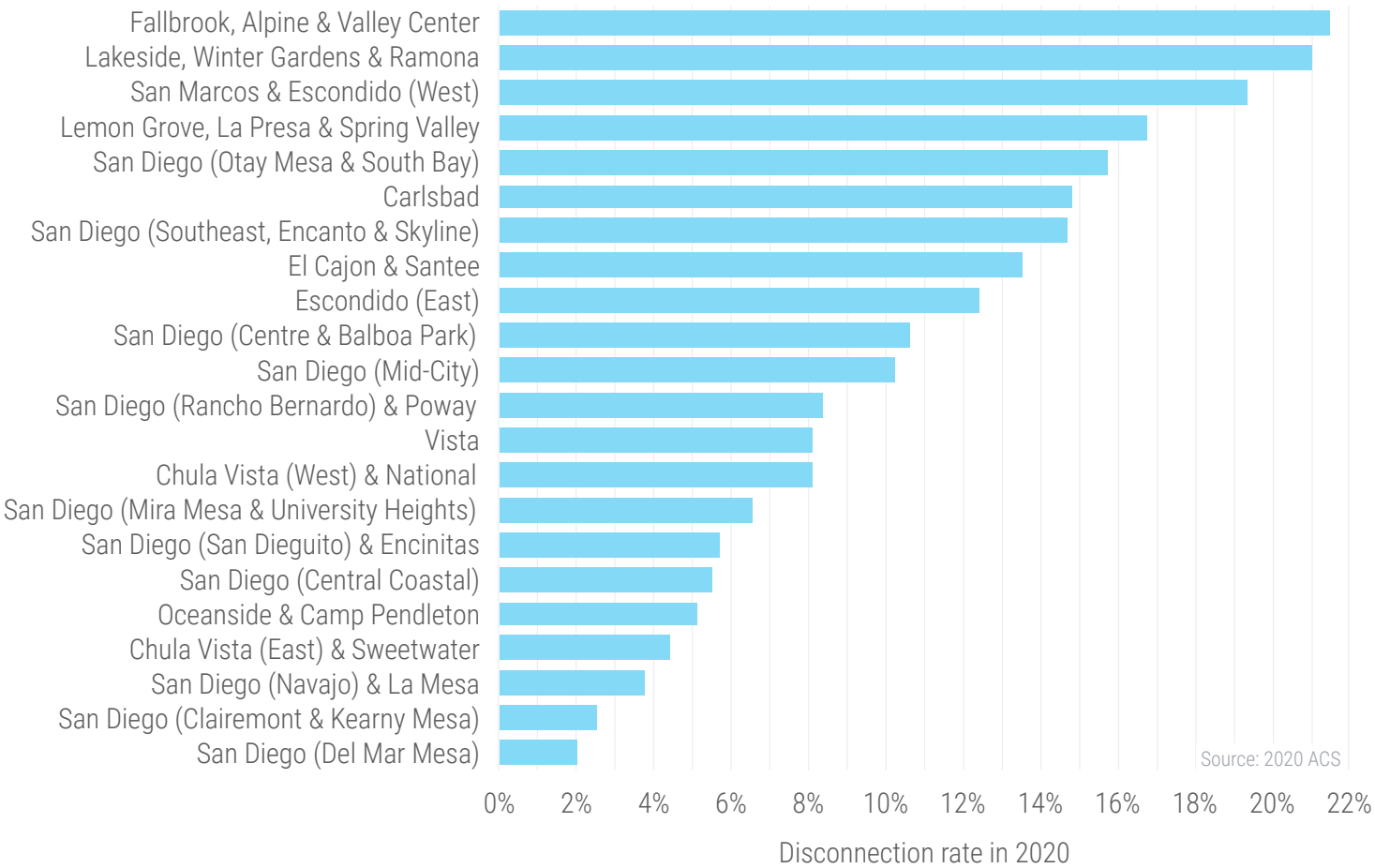
(10.1% of the 401,000 San Diegans aged 16–24)
Source: 2020 American Community Survey (ACS)



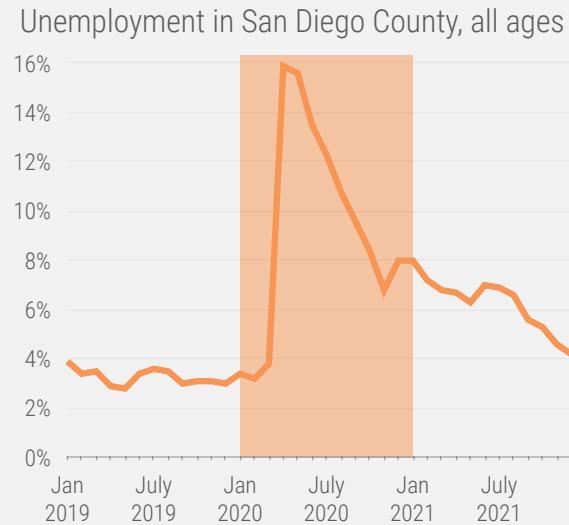
San Diego County's youth disconnection rate increased significantly in 2020 but remained below the statewide and national averages.
Source: 2010–2020 ACS

REDUCE THE GAPS

A child's zip code should not determine their future. To reduce the gap in disconnection between rich and poor areas we must act intentionally—connecting youth to education, internships, employment and transportation, and addressing structural barriers like racism and intergenerational poverty. When we work together as a community with these shared values, we can provide hope for all youth.



COVID-19 & DATA QUALITY



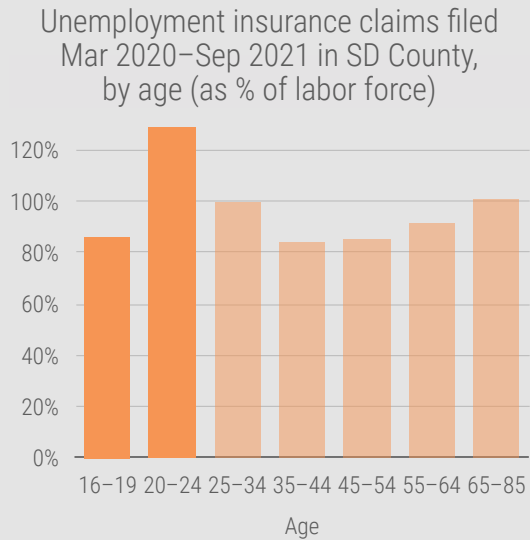
Three factors make it difficult to assess unemployment rates since the onset of the pandemic. First, the most recent data on youth unemployment is from the US Census Bureau's 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), but unemployment has decreased significantly since it peaked in 2020.

Second, the pandemic caused lower response rates and sample sizes in the 2020 ACS, especially among people who are Black, Hispanic, or living in group quarters. (About 10% of San Diego youth live in group quarters.) The Census uses statistical techniques to account for these issues, but these are imperfect.

Third, the unemployment rate changed dramatically over the course of 2020 (see chart), so the "average" rate doesn't reflect the range of unemployment rates youth experienced that year.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics survey (2019–2021)

PANDEMIC RECESSION & YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT



In March and April 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic caused the sharpest unemployment spike in modern US history and the shortest recession on record. (See our report: workforce.org/news/covidimpact.) Without local data by age, it has been difficult to track rapidly shifting youth unemployment rates through the pandemic recession and recovery.

We do know youth have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The chart to the left shows the number of initial unemployment insurance (UI) claims submitted in San Diego County from March 2020 to September 2021. Claims are displayed by age (as a proportion of the labor force).

The chart shows that youth ages 20–24 had the highest incidence of filing UI claims. Their claims were 129% of average labor-force participation because there are about 189,000 workers aged 20–24, and from March 2020 to September 2021, they submitted 244,000 initial claims.

Source: UI claims from CA Employment Dev. Dept; labor-force participation from ACS 5-year data (2015–2019)