

Introduction

Who are Disconnected Youth/TAY?

Disconnected youth are young people who are not succeeding in education or employment and are not positively connected to social support systems. These young people face many barriers in trying to become successful, independent young adults. They are at risk for a number of negative outcomes, including substantial periods of unemployment, homelessness, involvement with the criminal justice system and poverty.

Disconnected transitional age youth (TAY) are those 16-24 year olds who are most at risk of becoming disconnected and not making a successful transition to adulthood. TAY include 16-24 year olds who:

- are academically off-track or have dropped out of high school;
- have had contact with public systems (e.g. foster care, juvenile justice, criminal justice, or special education);
- are homeless or marginally-housed;
- have a disability or another special need (including substance abuse);
- are young, unmarried parents;
- are undocumented;
- are immigrants and/or English Learners; and/or
- are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQQ).



Disconnected TAY face multiple challenges in connecting with education, entering the workforce and creating strong, positive support networks. They often have limited educational achievement and may lack basic academic and work readiness skills needed to obtain and maintain employment. Disconnected youth may also face mental health problems, disabilities, or drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, and isolation from positive communities.

How Many Disconnected TAY are in San Francisco?

Current estimates indicate about 10% of 16-24 year olds in San Francisco, or roughly 8,000 of our young people, are at risk of not transitioning successfully into adulthood, or reaching adulthood at all. Indeed, 42% of San Francisco's homicide victims in 2012 were age 25 and youngerⁱ. While many young people are disconnected altogether from services and supports, a significant number of youth and young adults are involved in public services. This connection provides an opportunity to better connect them with the resources and supports they need to succeed.

Disconnected Youth & Young Adults

- 1902 young people under age 25 were identified as homeless in San Francisco during the 2013 Point-in-Time Count and Survey; 25% of these homeless youth identified as former foster youth; almost 30% identified as LGBTQ.ⁱⁱ
- 5,700 12-24 year olds are homeless/marginally-housed or at risk of becoming homeless each year.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 6,000 16-24 year olds are without health insurance coverage.^{iv}
- 7,700 18-24 year olds have not yet obtained a high school diploma.^v
- 9,000 18-24 year olds are neither working nor attending school.^{vi}
- 1,800 students in San Francisco Unified are **currently** off-track by one or more years and at risk of not graduating with their peers.^{vii}
- 700 students drop out of middle or high school **each year**, resulting in over \$122 million in lost earnings and societal costs.^{viii}

System-Involved Youth & Young Adults

- More than 500 youth aged 16 and older were in foster care placements in 2011; in that same year, 124 aged out of services.^{ix}
- More than 2,000 youth and young adults are currently involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.^x
- **Each year**, nearly 3,000 youth and young adults access public mental health and substance abuse services.^{xi}
- **Each month**, approximately 1,400 18-24 year olds receive cash welfare benefits and nearly 4,000 18-24 year olds receive Food Stamps.^{xii}

Cross-System Involvement

Disconnected TAY frequently are involved in multiple systems (Exhibit A):

- 80% of young adults age 18-25 on Adult Probation lack a high school diploma or GED; 75% were unemployed at the time of arrest.^{xiii}
- Between 2005 and 2009, 15% of foster children had an episode of involvement with the Juvenile Probation Department;^{xiv} 7% of youth on probation had an episode of foster care.^{xv}
- In 2011, approximately 8% of foster youth age 16 or older ran away from placement.^{xvi}
- 37% of foster care youth are currently in mental health services.

What do TAY Need to be Successful?

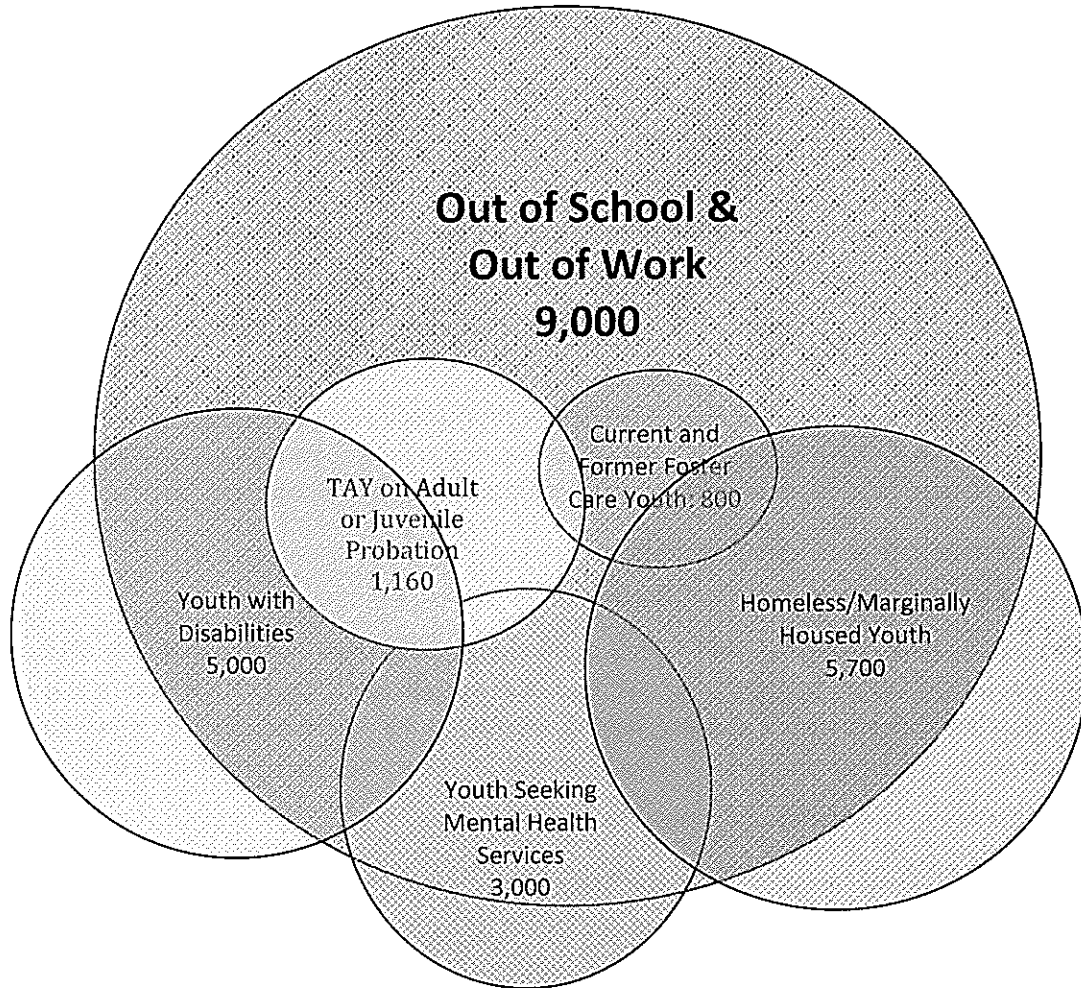
Like all young people, vulnerable young adults need developmentally and culturally appropriate opportunities and support to become successful adults. Young people need health and wellness services, education and employment, and safe and stable housing to create a foundation on which to grow. High quality, transformative experiences can address the range of psychological/ emotional, circumstantial, and skills barriers that disconnected youth face and can change the trajectory of their lives. Meanwhile, reforms in the education, health, housing and employment system must address systemic barriers that lead to and perpetuate disconnection. Finally, TAY need strategies and supports to help them (re-)connect positively to families and other caring and supportive adults in their lives.

Next Steps for San Francisco to Support Disconnected Youth

As a city, San Francisco is making progress in providing transitional age youth with the supports they need to become productive workers, responsible parents, and engaged citizens, but there is still much work to be done.

This document provides a road map for next steps that will support our young people in thriving into adulthood. Part I outlines goals and recommendations for system-level supports, while Part II focuses more specifically on the four key areas of education, employment, health, and housing services. Each section includes an articulation of the long-term outcomes, a summary of the current reality, and recommendations for next steps that build on current progress and move toward our common goals.

Disconnected Transition Age Youth in San Francisco



8.4% of all 16-24 year olds are not working and not in school

EDUCATION	WORKFORCE	HEALTH & WELLBEING	HOUSING
7,700 18-24 year olds have not obtained a High School Diploma or GED	5,000 undocumented 14-24 year olds have little to no legal options for employment	6,000 16-24 year-olds without health insurance	1,902 Homeless youth and young adults are under 25 years old
Over 700 students drop out of middle and high school each year	1,400 18-24 year olds receive cash welfare; 4,000 receive food stamps	42% of San Francisco's homicide victims were age 25 and younger	25 % of the homeless population is children and youth under 25 years old
At least 1,800 students SFUSD are currently off-track by 1 or more years			

ⁱ San Francisco Police Department, 2013.

ⁱⁱ 2013 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey

ⁱⁱⁱ Larkin Street Youth Services, 2010, *Youth Homelessness in San Francisco: 2010 Report on Incidence and Needs*

^{iv} California Health Interview Survey, 2009

^v Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota 2010 (<http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>)

^{vi} *ibid*

^{vii} John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, November 19, 2010. *Youth Data Archive Analysis of San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Students, Credit Completion, and Course Failures.*

^{viii} 714 students dropped out in 2009-10, the most current year of data available according to the California Dropout Research Project

^{ix} Data from CWS/CMS as of 8/6/12 provided by the Human Services Agency. As state legislation extending eligibility for foster care services is implemented through AB12 beginning in 2012, the number of young adults "emancipating" or "aging out" of foster care is expected to decrease. As of August 2012, 88 young adults were in extended foster care in San Francisco.

^x As reported by the Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments

^{xi} As reported by the San Francisco Department of Public Health

^{xii} June 2012 snapshot provided by the Human Services Agency. Public welfare programs include CalWORKs (n=764) and County Adult Assistance Programs (n=670). When 16 and 17 year olds are included in the CalWORKs data, the monthly number of aided TAY increases by approximately 500. Due to caseload churning, monthly snapshots under-represent the total number of TAY aided annually. A study conducted by HSA found that over 1,600 unduplicated 18-24 year olds were served by CAAP alone in 2009.

^{xiii} Statistics provided by the Adult Probation Department, 2012.

^{xiv} Statistics from the Shared Youth Database provided by the Human Services Agency, August 2012.

^{xv} Statistics from the Shared Youth Database provided by the Human Services Agency, August 2012

^{xvi} Data from CWS/CMS as of 8/6/12 provided by the Human Services Agency.