

Labor Market Experiences among Not Working, Not-in-School Young Adults in Arkansas

Who are they?

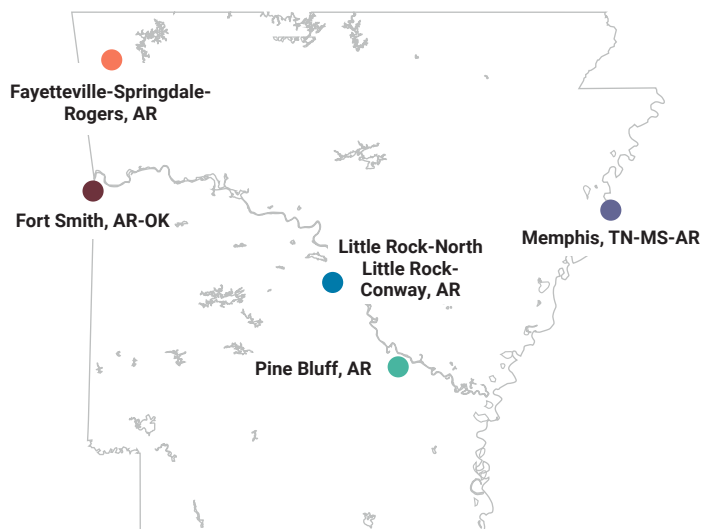
Young adults ages 18 to 24 who are neither working nor in school.

Why is this a problem?

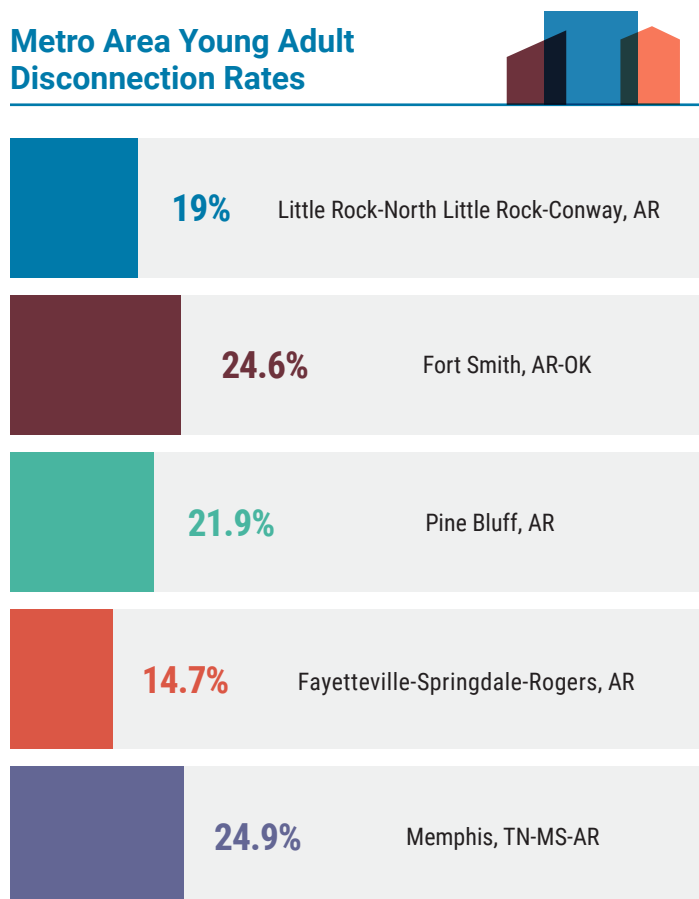
Economic disconnection can have negative effects for both the individual and the broader economy. For example, it makes it harder for young adults to reenter the labor force and more difficult for employers to fill open job positions.

How does it happen?

Barriers like a lack of access to affordable child care or transportation and difficulty getting or holding a job due to mental health challenges, disability or experience with the criminal justice system can impede young adults' participation in school or the labor force.



Metro Area Young Adult Disconnection Rates



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Young Adult Disconnection Rates by Selected Demographic Characteristics

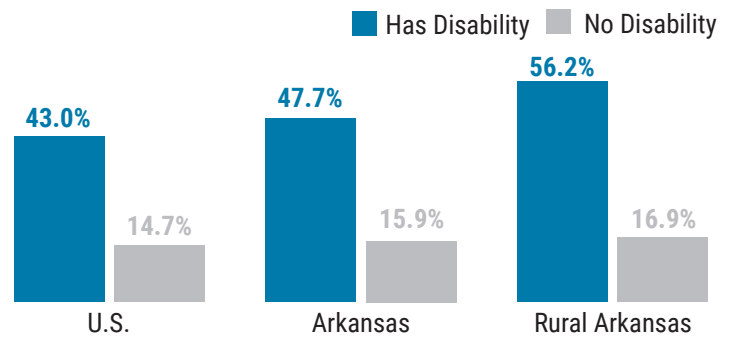


	U.S.	Arkansas	Rural Arkansas
Total	16.0%	17.6%	19.8%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	13.9%	16.8%	19.0%
Black	21.4%	20.9%	32.7%
Hispanic	17.9%	15.5%	15.8%
Other Race(s)	15.7%	20.6%	26.4%
Education			
Some High School	21.9%	23.6%	22.4%
High School Diploma	24.3%	26.1%	27.7%
Some College	8.7%	8.1%	11.5%
Bachelor's Degree or More	10.8%	9.2%	2.1%
Family Income			
< \$25K	25.0%	24.6%	29.3%
\$25K to < 35K	21.1%	18.9%	18.7%
\$35K to < 50K	18.3%	17.5%	22.5%
\$50K to < 75K	15.4%	16.1%	19.0%
\$75K to < 100K	13.4%	12.5%	15.0%
\$100K to < 150K	11.5%	14.6%	12.9%
\$150K or More	10.0%	10.5%	11.8%

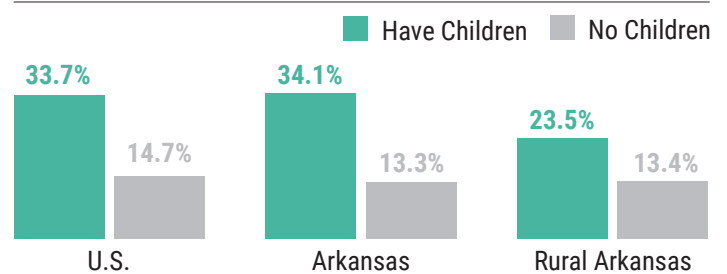
How to interpret: Out of all young adults in the U.S. with a high school diploma, for example, 24.9% of them are disconnected. Rural describes areas outside the state's metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas as identified in the Current Population Survey.

SOURCES: Current Population Survey microdata from January 2017 to June 2024 and Institute for Economic Equity calculations.

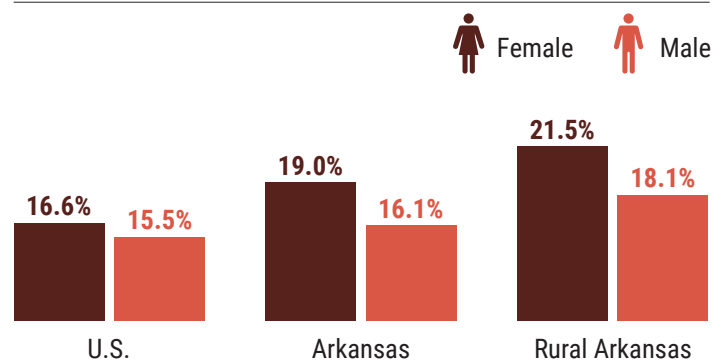
Disability



Children



Sex



Opportunities for Community Response

- Improve the child care ecosystem for families and providers

- Increase investment in and exposure to career pathways through experiential and project-based learning, internships, and career and technical education**

- Review accommodations for physical disabilities and mental health needs
- Assess whether there are local, entry-level job opportunities that do not require work experience or a college degree

- Promote a supportive environment for choosing employment directly out of high school**

- Create carpooling opportunities or offer shuttles to places of employment

Peak Innovation Center opened in 2022 to serve high school students from 22 school districts in the Fort Smith and River Valley region. The educational facility offers hands-on experience, technical training and real-world skills. Students can earn industry-specific certifications in advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, skilled trades, and emerging art and design.

The Academies of Central Arkansas partners with local organizations to provide experiential learning and mentorship opportunities to high school students in the four public school districts in Pulaski County. With more than 80 business partnerships in place with organizations like Baldwin & Shell Construction Co., Arkansas Children's, Baptist Health and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, students are provided opportunities for career exposure, career mentorship, concurrent college credits and industry-recognized credentials that better prepare them for life after high school graduation.