

Millennials and the Workforce

Young people have realized job gains over the last two years, but too many Illinois Millennials have seen their social mobility stunted by the Great Recession. Millennials' unemployment rate remains over a third higher than the national average, and for those lucky enough to have found work, serious questions remain about whether these jobs are setting up young people for financial security. In response to some of the concerns we have heard from young people struggling to gain a foothold in today's economy, Young Invincibles put together a plan outlining our [2016 workforce development priorities](#). If adopted in full, these reforms could create over three million full-time, part-time, and summer jobs each year and would improve training opportunities for an additional one million young people at an annual cost of \$13.1 billion. We hope that policymakers and candidates for elected office will champion these commonsense reforms.

Snapshot: The State of Millennials in Illinois's Workforce

- **Nearly half of young black men in Illinois are out of work and out of school:** "Forty-seven percent of 20- to 24-year-old black men in Chicago, and 44 percent in Illinois, were out of school and out of work in 2014, compared with 20 percent of Hispanic men and 10 percent of white men in the same age group... The numbers for black men are far worse in Chicago and Illinois than elsewhere in the country. In Los Angeles and New York City, 31 percent of black 20- to 24-year-old men were out of school and out of work, in line with the national average of 32 percent."¹
- **Median income for young adult workers in Illinois is up \$600 since the Great Recession:** In 2014, the median annual income for a young adult worker in Illinois was \$29,100, up nearly \$600 (when controlled for inflation) since the Great Recession.²
- **Illinois has more than half a million young adults living in poverty:** Illinois has 72,000 additional young adults living in poverty today than before the Great Recession, despite the fact that there are nearly 28,000 fewer young adults living in the state. There are currently 519,000 young adults in Illinois living in poverty, up from 446,000 young adults in Illinois living in poverty just before the Great Recession.³
- **Illinois's young adult poverty rate is 25 percent higher than the state's overall poverty rate:** The poverty rate for Illinois residents between the ages of 18 and 34 is 17.9 percent, 24.9 percent higher than the state's overall 14.36 percent poverty rate.⁴
- **Young adult poverty rate is up 17.3 percent since the Great Recession:** The poverty rate for 18- to 34-year-olds in Illinois stands at 17.9 percent, up from 15.3 percent before the Great Recession.⁵

¹ Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz. "Nearly half of young black men in Chicago out of work, out of school: report," The Chicago Tribune, January 25, 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/ct-youth-unemployment-urban-league-0126-biz-20160124-story.html>.

² Data derived from "Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator," CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplements 2015, US Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html>.

³ Analysis of American Community Survey, 2014 and 2007 1-year estimates, US Census Bureau.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.