

Millennials and the Workforce

Young people have realized job gains over the last two years, but too many Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin's Workforce

- **1 in 5 young blacks in Milwaukee are both out of work and out of school:** 19.9 percent of black residents between the ages of 16 and 24 in the Milwaukee metro area are both out of work and out of school.¹
- **Wages for young workers are down while the state's overall workforce has seen positive wage growth:** In 2014, the median annual income for a young adult worker in Wisconsin was \$27,000, down \$360 (when controlled for inflation) since the Great Recession. The median annual income for Wisconsin's overall workforce is \$40,000, up \$898 (when controlled for inflation) since the Great Recession.²
- **The generational divide in worker income is up more than 12 percent since the Great Recession:** The income divide between young Wisconsin workers and the state's overall workforce is 48.2 percent as compared to 42.9 percent in 2007.³
- **Nearly 1 in 5, or a quarter million, young adults in Wisconsin are living in poverty:** The poverty rate for 18- to 34-year-olds in Wisconsin stands at 19.5 percent, up more than 20 percent from 16.2 percent before the Great Recession. There are 237,000 young adults in Wisconsin living in poverty.⁴
- **Wisconsin's young adult poverty rate is nearly 50 percent higher than its overall poverty rate:** The poverty rate for Wisconsin residents between the ages of 18 and 34 is 19.5 percent, 47.8 percent higher than the state's overall 13.2 percent rate.⁵
- **Young adult poverty growth is exceeding young adult population growth in Wisconsin:** Wisconsin has 45,000 additional young adults living in poverty today than before the Great Recession, despite the fact that the state's young adult population has grown by just 31,000 during the same time period.⁶

¹ Kristen Lewis and Sarah Burd-Sharps, Zeroing In on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities, (Brooklyn, NY: Measure of America, 2015), 5, accessed 3/29/2016, <http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MOA-Zeroing-In-Final.pdf>.

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 Ibid.

⁴ Analysis of American Community Survey, 2014 and 2007 1-year estimates, US Census Bureau.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.