

Millennials and the Workforce

Young people have realized job gains over the last two years, but too many Millennials in the Lone Star State 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 Texas's Workforce

- **Roughly 1 in 5 youth in McAllen and more than 1 in 7 youth in El Paso and San Antonio metro areas are both out of work and out of school:** 19.8 percent of residents between the ages of 16 and 24 in the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metro area are both out of work and out of school. The same is true for 14.9 percent in El Paso and 14.8 percent in San Antonio-New Braunfels metro areas. Youth disconnection varies substantially by race, with 21.3 percent young blacks in Dallas being both out of work and out of school. The same is true of 20.8 percent in San Antonio, 19.1 percent in Houston, and 17.8 percent in Austin.¹
- **While overall median wages have gone up, wages for young Texas workers are down \$1,150 since the Great Recession:** In 2014, the median annual income for a young adult worker in Texas was \$26,211, down \$1,149 (when controlled for inflation) since the Great Recession. But not all workers have seen their wages go down. The median annual income for Texas's overall workforce is \$36,000, up \$660 (when controlled for inflation) since the Great Recession.²
- **The generational divide in worker income is up nearly 30 percent since the Great Recession:** In 2014, the income divide between young workers and the overall workforce in Texas was 37.4 percent as compared to a divide of 29.2 percent in 2007 -- representing a 28.1 percent increase in the generational divide in worker income since the Great Recession.³
- **More than 1.2 million, or nearly 1 in 5, Texas Millennials are living in poverty:** The poverty rate for 18- to 34-year-olds in Texas stands at 19.4 percent, up nearly 5.1 percent from 18.5 percent before the Great Recession. There are currently 1,235,395 Millennials in Texas living in poverty.⁴
- **Texas's young adult poverty rate is nearly 13 percent higher than its overall poverty rate:** As of 2014, the poverty rate for Texas residents between the ages of 18 and 34 is 19.4 percent, 12.8 percent higher than the state's overall 17.2 percent poverty rate.⁵

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), 5-6, accessed 7/28/2016, <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.