

Report examines 'opportunity youth' in New Orleans

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The Cowen Institute recommends expanded efforts to leverage the educational experiences of the city's opportunity youth to link them to employment.

More than 14 percent of 16-24 year olds in New Orleans are disconnected from employment and education, according to a new Cowen Institute at Tulane University [report](#) that paints a detailed portrait of "opportunity youth" in the city.

The report, [*No Longer Invisible: Opportunity Youth in New Orleans*](#), outlines the economic barriers facing this group of 6,820 individuals, a third of whom live below the poverty line and receive food stamps and are uninsured at high rates.

It also documents their untapped potential for the local economy: 64 percent of New Orleans' opportunity youth have at least a high school degree, 22 percent have some college experience and

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23 percent have worked in the past year.

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Amanda Kruger Hill

"Reconnecting youth who are out of school and work to economic opportunities is crucial to their individual success, as well as to building a stronger local economy and community," said Amanda Kruger Hill, executive director of the Cowen Institute. "This report provides information about who these young people are, as well as the supports they need to fully realize their potential."

To address a challenge as complex as youth disconnection, the report recommends expanded efforts to leverage the educational experiences of the city's opportunity youth to link them to employment. The Cowen Institute supports numerous initiatives to reconnect opportunity youth, such as the EMPLOY Collaborative, the Earn and Learn apprenticeship program and New Orleans Opportunity Works. EMPLOY's Youth Action Team, a committee of former opportunity youth reviewed and advised on the report.

The report, which was supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, is available at coweninstitute.org.