

Nearly 1 out of every 8 Texas youth are disconnected from school and work.

What would it take to reconnect opportunity youth to education and work equitably and at scale across Texas?

In April 2021, more than 80 champions of opportunity youth, including young people themselves, came together to imagine a path forward for this powerful population.



The convening discussion focused on three questions:

What do opportunity youth need to secure meaningful education and employment?

- A clear and energizing vision of the future codesigned and led by youth. Advisors, peers and role models can help build aspirations and show the way forward.
- Opportunities to earn and learn. Work-study positions, paid internships, and apprenticeships can provide young people with the financial stability and practical skills they need.
- Coaching and seamless wrap-around supports, including mental health care.
- Opportunities to advise, celebrate, and lead. Many young people look for ways to give back and to support their peers after they've received help themselves.

What would it take for our communities to meet those needs?

- A deep commitment to equity. Education and workforce systems need to concentrate resources where they are most needed.
- Understanding of the opportunity youth population through active listening and data gathering.
- Full participation from every player in the ecosystem. It is especially important to find employers who are willing to provide work-based-learning and employment for youth.
- Consistent leadership commitment and robust, reliable funding.

What now?

- Don't wait to get involved. An estimated 462,000 young Texans are disconnected from school and work.
- Look at your work through an opportunity youth lens - there is a strong likelihood that your mission intersects with the need to serve opportunity youth.
- Maximize the impact of your investments in opportunity youth. Our full report lists many ways that funders can influence change.

Disconnection at this level signals a systems-level failure, but Texas has the resources and the know-how to reconnect these young people to education and employment. There has never been a more important time to invest in the opportunity youth of Texas.

To read the full report from the convening, [visit](#).

