

Report says youth unemployment chronic, concentrated and deeply rooted

By **Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz**
Contact Reporters

Chicago is making scant progress in its ongoing battle against rampant youth joblessness, new statistics show, though there is a modicum of good news.

The share of 20- to 24-year-old black men who were neither working nor in school declined modestly between 2014 and 2015, from a dismal 47 percent to a still-dismal 43 percent, according to a report set to be presented Monday at the Chicago Urban League's annual forum on the youth unemployment crisis.

But even more sobering are long-term data showing how Chicago came to be a national leader in joblessness among young people, particularly young black people living in the highly segregated neighborhoods wracked by violence.

The steep decline of well-paying manufacturing jobs, the rise of low-paying retail jobs and the "emptying out of jobs" from the neighborhoods as commerce centralized downtown changed the economic structure of the city to the detriment of black and, to a lesser extent, Latino youth, the study found.



Darron Gunnings, 18
Community Christian Alternative Academy
Darron Gunnings, 18, lives in Altgeld Gardens and goes to high school at CCA Academy. After a short time in jail and on house arrest after he was caught with a gun at school, that experience, plus several mentors that were important to him, help set him straight and obtain a summer job.

Teresa Cordova, director of the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago and co-author of the report, said it's easy to blame individual weaknesses for employment struggles, but the trends suggest a far more complex challenge that demands a comprehensive response.

"The solutions have to address some of these structural dynamics," Cordova said.

"More than ever it makes the case about why this is everybody's problem."

The forum, in its sixth year, comes as Chicago draws national headlines — and President Donald Trump's attention — for soaring violence that won't seem to quit. Chicago experienced its worst violence in two decades last year, with more than 4,300 people shot and 762 killed, according to Police Department statistics. The violence has continued at comparable levels so far in January.

Trump tweeted on Tuesday that he would "send in the Feds!" if Chicago doesn't fix the "carnage," though it wasn't clear if he meant troops or another kind of intervention.

Cordova had a suggestion.

"If he wants to involve the federal government in helping to address our problem of violence, then send us federal dollars for summer employment, jobs programs and dollars to revitalize our neighborhoods," she said.

Joblessness is among multiple factors contributing to Chicago's violence, the report said. Of the city's 77 community areas, just five accounted for a third of the homicides



Toni Ross works at Food and Paper Supply Co. on Jan. 27, 2017, in Chicago's Grand Crossing neighborhood. Ross has worked at the food service distributor for 27 years; she was hired through a youth program and is now store manager. The business' co-owner is slated to speak at a forum on youth unemployment Jan. 30, 2017. (Phil Velasquez / Chicago Tribune)

last year, and those same five had jobless rates ranging from 79 to 92 percent for teens and 49 to 70 percent for young adults.

Joblessness, which in this context describes anyone who is not working, is not the same as unemployment, which describes those who are not working but are actively looking for work.

Youth have said at past forums that jobs offer income and exposure to opportunities that demonstrate an alternative to the illegal activities happening outside their doorsteps. They also have said jobs are difficult to land.

Darron Gunnings, 18, who is one of six young people scheduled to speak at Monday's forum, feels lucky that his mom was on him to study and find a summer job, because many of his peers don't have that influence.

"They don't come from that kind of family," said Gunnings, who worked summers as a youth leader in agriculture at UCan, a social services organization in North Lawndale where his mom works.

Gunnings, who lives in the Altgeld Gardens public housing project on the city's southern edge, had his own struggles. He got into fights, and was placed on 24-hour house arrest for a summer after a gun was found in his backpack at school. He said he had taken it off of a friend who brought it to ward off bullies who tried to rob students heading home from school.

The experience changed him. He got his grades up and committed to being a leader.

Gunnings, who belongs to several youth groups, also credits several mentors — his stepfather taught work ethic and humility, his basketball coach taught him how to look people in the eye — for setting him on a solid path and exposing him to a broader world. Gunnings, who is on track to graduate from CCA Academy this June, speaks eagerly of visiting the green landscapes of Ireland, the cherry blossoms in Japan and the Hawaiian reefs.

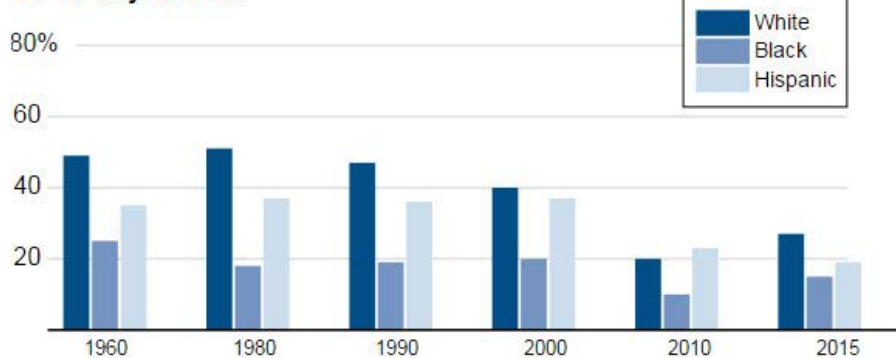
Jack Wuest, executive director of the Alternative Schools Network, which commissioned the Great Cities report, worries not enough kids are having that experience.

A lack of federal funding for summer jobs has left kids without early work experience and the elemental skills, such as how to take direction or show up on time, that make them good employees, he said.

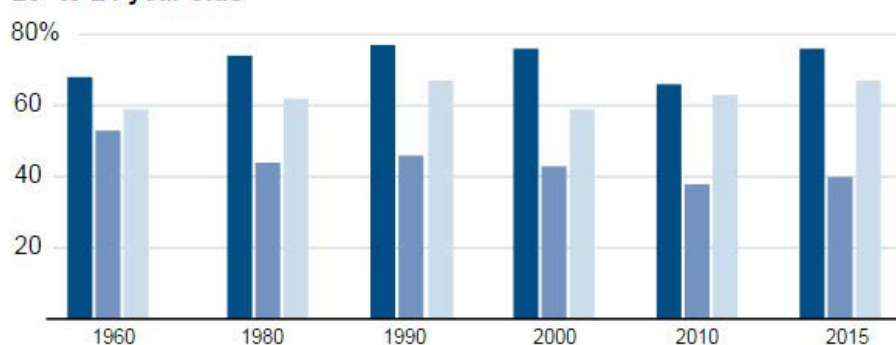
"There has just been this huge gap, and I think it's going to affect the economy

Chicago employment by race, ethnicity

16- to-19 year olds



20- to-24 year olds



NOTE: Black and white categories do not include Hispanic or Latino respondents

SOURCE: Analysis of Census and American Community Survey data by University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute

TRIBUNE

because of the labor shortages businesses already are talking about," Wuest said.

Chicago's problems with youth unemployment have stood out because of severe racial disparities that are starker than in cities like New York City and Los Angeles, especially among 20- to 24-year-olds. On most measures, blacks do far worse and whites do significantly better in Chicago than in those cities and compared with national averages. Chicago's Latino youth employment rate, meanwhile, largely mirrors the nation's.

Take the statistics on early 20-somethings who were both out of school and out of work, a population that worries policymakers. In Chicago in 2015, 40 percent of young blacks fell into that category, compared with 7 percent of whites and 21 percent of Hispanics, according to Great Cities. Nationally, the rate was 25 percent of young blacks, 13 percent of whites and 19 percent of Hispanics.

The racial disparities were not so great among 16- to 19-year-olds who were not working or in school. Thirteen percent of black Chicago teens and 6.3 percent of white Chicago teens fell into that category, both a notch above the national averages, and 8

percent of Hispanic teens, a notch below.

It isn't clear why the racial gap widens so drastically after the teen years. But it appears that it has gotten worse over the decades.

The economic forces driving some of those trends can be traced to Chicago's heavy reliance on manufacturing jobs and their steep decline, according to the Great Cities report.

The city's youth were more likely than youth nationally to work in manufacturing, so the industry's fall hit them harder, particularly Hispanics.

The jobs that filled the void tell the other part of the story.

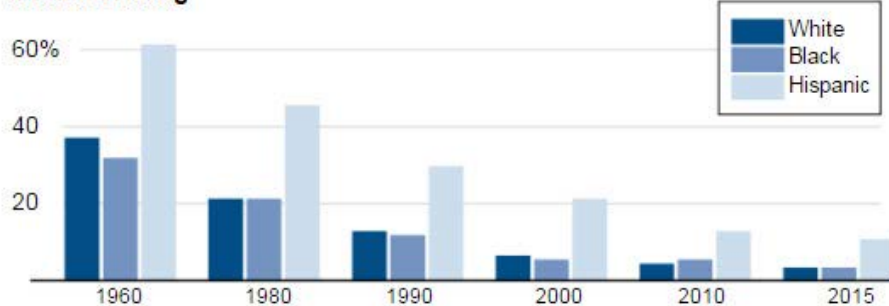
By 2015, nearly half of employed black 20- to 24-year-olds and 40 percent of Hispanics in that age group were working in retail, compared with 30 percent of whites. Whites were more likely to work in professional and related services jobs, a diverse category that includes hospitals and legal services.

Those differences were felt in people's paychecks. More than 70 percent of retail jobs held by early 20-somethings in 2015 paid less than \$20,000. That compares with 61

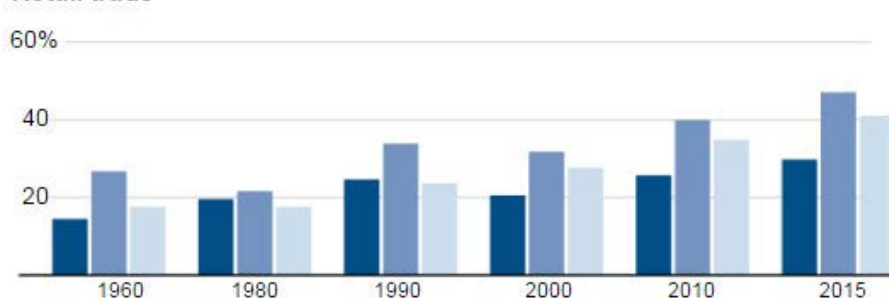
Employment type by race, ethnicity

For 20- to 24 year olds in Chicago

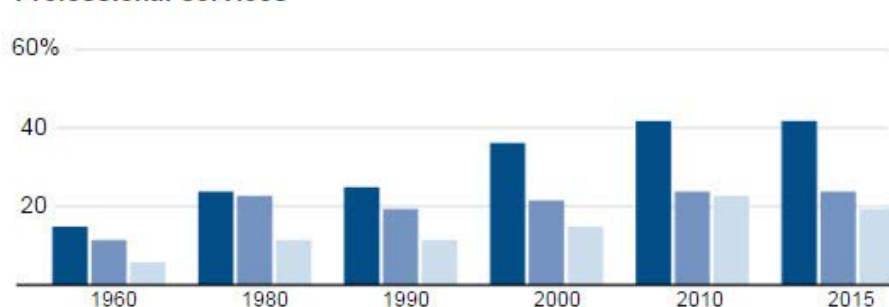
Manufacturing



Retail trade



Professional Services



NOTE: Black and white categories do not include Hispanic or Latino respondents

SOURCE: Analysis of Census and American Community Survey data by University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute

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percent of professional and related services jobs in 2015 and just 36 percent of manufacturing jobs in 1960.

The earnings of youth have greatly suffered with the industry shifts, the report said. No longer can an early job pay for a home, bills or college tuition.

At the same time, jobs left the neighborhoods, which leads to population and business flight that compounds community hardships, according to Great Cities, which crunched data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Manufacturing jobs, which in 1970 were present in all Chicago ZIP codes, are nearly wiped off the map in 2015. Retail jobs, which in 1970 had big hubs in certain South

and West side neighborhoods, by 2015 were concentrated downtown and on the North Side.

To be sure, youth of all races have struggled with employment, particularly teens, who have seen employment rates plunge over the past 15 years. The employment rates among white and black teens have recovered some since the recession but have not returned to pre-recession levels, while rates for Latino teens have continued to fall even during the economic recovery.

But black youth in Chicago are consistently at the back of the hiring line. Among 20- to 24-year-olds, only blacks had lower employment rates in 2015 than they did in 1960.

Among the broad recommendations in the

report are to revive economically abandoned neighborhoods, prepare young people from those neighborhoods for available jobs, reduce employment barriers for youth with criminal records and create new opportunities, such as apprenticeships.

Wuest says he hopes Trump will consider these youth if he moves forward with a big infrastructure project.

The issue is getting some resources, including \$36 million that the city will invest in mentorship programs.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, who will join Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and two dozen other public officials at the forum, said the county since 2013 has put \$11.5 million toward addressing community dysfunction on the front end, before youth get into the criminal justice system. Most of that is for violence prevention, anti-recidivism and restorative justice, but \$1 million of it is for a pilot employment program, expected to start in June, to help 200 "opportunity youth" (16- to 24-year-olds who are not working or in school or at risk of getting involved in the justice system) in select communities get training.

Still, Shari Runner, president and CEO of the Chicago Urban League, feels frustrated by the lack of progress.

Though last year's widely-read Great Cities report highlighting the racial disparities drew outrage, "there wasn't much movement" taken to combat it in the aftermath, Runner said. In part that's because the state's budget standoff is not encouraging businesses to invest in neighborhoods that need an infusion, but there are also deep-seated challenges with schools not preparing students for jobs that are available, she said.

The next step, she said, is for the business community to invest in the city youth who need it most, training those who are out of school already as well as kids who are in school now.

Danny Friedman, vice president and co-owner of Food and Paper Supply Co. in the Grand Crossing neighborhood on the South Side, said businesses will be better for it.

Friedman, one of two business owners scheduled to speak at the forum, hires youth from the community as well as from a job prep program for kids who are wards of the state. Many are long-term employees and two are now managers.

The interview process is eye-opening, he said. Some kids come in a suit and tie; others are far underdressed. But he looks past initial

perceptions to see if they have the right personality and ability to lift things. The company, founded in 1976, delivers paper and food products to restaurants and operates a wholesale store.

Friedman said he would hire more youth if the government would subsidize an internship program, reducing his risk. There are sometimes challenges, such as having to re-emphasize the dress code, but he says that's true for most teens without job experience.

"These are kids who are ready to learn and our government should be involved for a greater self-interest," he said. "A good citizen is not a burden on society, but is a benefit."

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Editorial: Fix Chicago's violence? Start by helping kids land jobs

By Editorial Board

The despair that courses through Chicago's West Side and South Side neighborhoods has many causes. Underperforming schools. The prevalence of guns. The scourge of gangs. Sometimes, troubles at home. And, youth joblessness.

A new report by the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago dives deep into that last cause. In 2015, about 43 percent of black men ages 20 to 24 were neither working nor in school, the report says. That's an improvement over the figure for 2014, which was 47 percent. Either statistic speaks volumes about the trough where young people — dethatched from educational attainment and jobs — in so many impoverished neighborhoods find themselves.

Joblessness almost certainly is a big reason that violence in Chicago has spiraled into an urgent crisis and national headlines. According to the report, five of the city's 77 community areas accounted for a third of Chicago homicides in 2016. Those same five community areas had jobless rates of 79 to 92 percent for teenagers, and 49 to 70 percent for young adults.

Young people who don't work, or who aren't involved in schooling, make perfect recruits for gangs. It's not just Englewood's problem, or Roseland's problem. Employers and citizens across the city and the metropolitan area have a stake: Chicago's epic struggle with violence has grave ripple effects for a region that needs to ceaselessly grow new generations of dependable workers, skilled professionals and prospering consumers. The city's overall health — its economic health included — depends on what happens to young people in Roseland and Englewood.

Government can throw money at the problem, but too often that approach yields a heap of red tape and a dearth of results. There'll never be enough public jobs, or enough public funding, to engage all of the young people who need jobs. What's a better



The Manufacturing Careers Internship Program is one of several efforts aimed at reducing unemployment among young people, training them for careers in the manufacturing industry. (Terrence Antonio James / Chicago Tribune)

answer?

Consider this a new bullet point in the job description for the region's business community: When you're penciling in teens for summer jobs, pencil in a teen from the South or West sides. When you're looking for internship candidates, look at 20-somethings from the city's bleakest neighborhoods. When you're thinking about hiring three kids for summer jobs, ask yourself if you can afford to hire four.

Asking employers in those neighborhoods to provide those jobs is a limited solution, because for the most part the employers just aren't there. Those neighborhoods have been ravaged by a yearslong, relentless flight of people and businesses. But there's still a strong, viable labor pool in those neighborhoods in need of that first toe-dip into the workaday world, a first taste of responsibility, reliability, routine: getting to work on time, hitting deadlines, collaborating with co-workers.

Every youth — from Gurnee to Glen Ellyn, Franklin Park to Ford Heights — needs that experience. But for youths growing up in Chicago's gang-ravaged neighborhoods on

the South and West sides, the need is acute. Why? Because jobs can firewall youths from the lure of gangs, drugs and guns in those neighborhoods. For teens and young adults, jobs do much more than put a little spending money in jeans pockets. They imbue a sense of self-responsibility and self-worth, and perhaps, in the case of an internship, a step toward a career.

The institute's report cites youths from Chicago's broken neighborhoods talking about jobs and violence. One youth's plaintive request:

"Everyone wants drugs and violence to stop. Well then ... get us off the streets and get us into some work clothes and you will see the change."

Chicago hasn't forgotten President Donald Trump's impetuous tweet Jan. 24 warning that he would "send in the Feds!" if the city doesn't solve the "carnage." We have a better proposal. "Send in the employers!"

Putting teens and young adults to work isn't the only fix to Chicago's violence — but it's a good start.

February 7, 2017

Black leaders to Trump: Chicago needs urban renewal not tweets

By Maudlyne Ihejirika

A coalition of black community leaders on Tuesday said they had a message for a U.S. president that keeps tweeting about Chicago's violence.

They said the nation's inner cities are at crisis, in desperate need of an urban renewal plan hoped for but never realized under President Barack Obama. So stop tweeting and put money behind rhetoric, the leaders said.

"With more than 750 murders last year — at our parish in West Garfield Park, 12 victims in one parish alone — the pain is real," said the Rev. Marshall Hatch, pastor of New Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church and Co-Chair of citywide clergy group the Leaders Network.

"We welcome any help that is substantial, that is resourceful. We encourage any kind of interface with the federal government that engages with community leadership. But the pain is much too real to be anybody's football," Hatch said, echoing others.

He and some dozen leaders led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson of Rainbow PUSH Coalition and Cook County Commissioner Richard Boykin held their news conference in the West Side Austin neighborhood, to shift focus to poverty and unemployment they've long called root causes of Chicago's violence.

Austin is among nine communities with unemployment above 20 percent — and some of the city's highest crime stats. Leaders were armed with data from a University of Illinois at Chicago report finding joblessness among young people in those communities at all-time highs.

President Donald Trump's tweets slamming the city for out-of-control violence and threatening federal action — including a recent influx of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm agents — are way off target, leaders said. And they extended an invitation to Trump to work with them on real solutions. "In varying degrees, Chicago, Baltimore, St. Louis, East St. Louis, New Orleans all



Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson (AP File Photo/Ben Margot)

have the same basic crisis of rising violence that correlates with poverty, a weapon of mass destruction. These have become zones, doughnut holes in the middle of urban centers," asserted Jackson.

"We deserve better. So if the president wants to come to Chicago with a serious plan for urban reconstruction, we welcome it. But this should not be a political foil for conversation," Jackson said. "Chicago can be a model."

UIC Sociologist Teresa Cordova shared sobering statistics from the new report bolstering arguments for neighborhood revitalization to fight crime. Joblessness among black 24-year-olds in 2015 was at 60 percent in Chicago, compared to 45 percent in New York City and Los Angeles, and 38 percent nationwide. In Austin, joblessness among 16- to 19-year-olds in 2015 stood at 91 percent, among the highest of all 77 communities.

"What we have found is joblessness is very much tied to the conditions of the neighborhoods. Joblessness is chronic. It's concentrated. It's tied to the decline of industry from neighborhoods," said Cordova, co-author of the recent UIC Great Cities Institute report, "Abandoned in their Neighbor-

hoods: Youth Joblessness amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity."

"A focus on revitalization of neighborhoods is indeed what needs to happen," Cordova said.

Potential solutions include legislation such as a bill sponsored by Boykin and expected to be introduced this week before the Cook County Board, leaders said. The Cook County Neighborhood Revitalization Act would create a homeownership program for teachers and first responders in beleaguered communities like Austin.

"That bill will provide free homes for police officers, teachers, firefighters and paramedics. But it actually requires developers to use 30 percent of the residents from at-risk communities to do the rehab and to build the homes. I think we need to pass that bill immediately," said Boykin.

"In the month of January alone, 310 people shot, 59 people killed; and the sad thing about this is that it's genocide; 49 of the 59 people killed were African-Americans. Eight of the other 10 were Latinos," Boykin said. "We are in a virtual state of emergency here in Chicago. We need real solutions, not rhetoric."

Laura Washington: Job skills and opportunities deter violence

By Laura Washington

They are denigrated and disregarded. To some, they are deplorables of the “inner city.”

They live in a “war zone,” and reside in “hell,” says the president of the United States.

Most of the victims of Chicago’s murderous violence are black and Latino young people from the city’s South and West sides. The headlines tell us they are victims and criminals.

They tell us they want — and desperately need — work. That’s the headline from a panel of six strivers who spoke at a recent symposium at the Chicago Urban League.

OPINION

The Jan. 30 program kicked off with a report, “Abandoned in their Neighborhoods: Youth Joblessness Amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity.” There is a “high correlation” with violence and unemployment, shows the study, commissioned by the Alternative Schools Network and produced by the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Great Cities Institute.

Teens and young adults are trapped in “a downward and long-term trend of economic abandonment in many of Chicago’s neighborhoods, leaving behind chronic and concentrated conditions of joblessness,” researchers found.

In 2015, about 89 percent of Chicago’s black male teens ages 16 to 19, and 82 percent of Latino teens were out of work. Forty-three percent of black men ages 20 to 24 and 18 percent of Latinos were jobless and out of school.

Behind the grim numbers are the voices of young people who have emerged from chaos. The six speakers were articulate, passionate, and prepared. They represent thousands of young Chicagoans who don’t want to be another number.



(Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)

Listen.

Darron Gunnings, 18, has lost many young friends to the streets. Would it have been different if they had been able to get jobs?

“My friends that passed on, they were good friends of mine,” he told the audience. His snappy, red jacket and tie belied the somber moment. “My friends, they were out in the streets. They were. But they loved to work.”

There was no work, so “they just got wrapped up into the wrong path.”

Gunnings had a close call with jail. His mother pushed him into job training and mentoring programs. He will soon graduate from CCA Academy on Chicago’s West Side.

Everett Sprags loses friends “every day,” he said. “It’s hard finding a job especially at 16 years old. You try every day, to help your family out, try to make friends, try to become something in a society where hope has died.”

He told the audience, “It’s hard talking about

it, because, it’s like, you guys, y’all, don’t go through the same things that we go through, that we see every day.”

Everett connected with the Chicago Area Project, an agency that gave him “a sense of home, where someone actually cares about, and ... what we want to do.”

Devin Wise, 22, has been homeless. The group La Casa Norte helped him get a job and stay in school. He is reaching back, eager to share job opportunities with his peers.

“And I will tell them ‘look, you come to my job.’” They say, “well, your job turned me away.” And I said, like, “that’s impossible. They just hired 20 more people.”

They were turned away. That’s 20 more who may end up dead.

An antidote to the violence is job readiness and skills training, and mentoring. Don’t let hope die.

Send letters to letters@suntimes.com

January 28, 2017

Chicago joblessness and crime are connected, U of I report concludes

By Greg Hinz

There's a close connection between Chicago's high murder rate and its loss of industrial jobs, with African-American and to a lesser extent Latino men having trouble adapting to a now-dominant downtown service economy.

That's the bottom line of a fascinating new report being released on Monday that provides some answers to Chicago's troubles, even if, in my view, it gets a little too pat in drawing racial conclusions.

The report was written by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute for the Alternative Schools Network. Officials including U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other officials are to discuss it at a hearing called by the Chicago Urban League and other groups.

Overall, the report, using U.S. Census Bureau data, finds that there's been some recovery here from the great subprime recession. For instance, the percentage of blacks aged 16-19 that is working has risen from 9.6 percent in 2010 to 15 percent last year.

But the good news is limited, with nearly 4 in 10 young black adults aged 20 to 24 out



Photo by Brian Cassella/Chicago Tribune/TNS/Alamy Live News

of school and jobless, compared to a quarter nationwide, 39 percent versus 25 percent.

One chart in particular underlines what's happened.

In 1960, when Chicago's neighborhoods were filled with factory jobs, 22.3 percent of

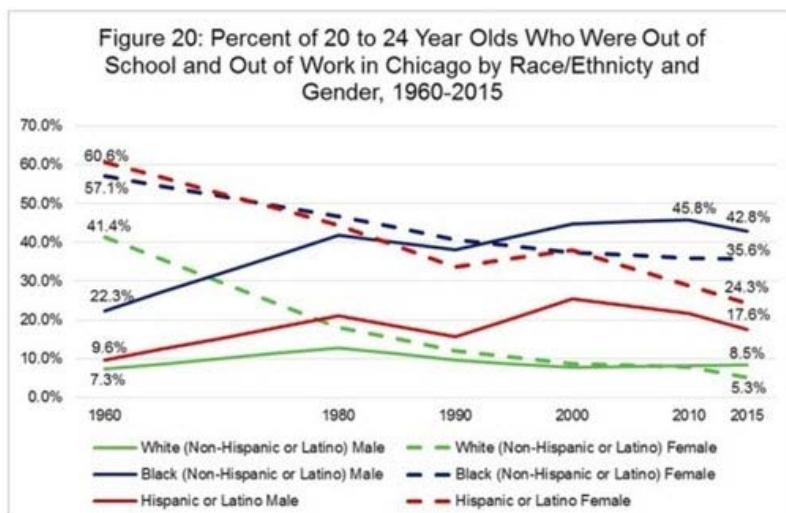
African-American men aged 20 to 24 neither held a job nor were in or finishing school. Figures among Latino and white men were somewhat higher, while most women of any race or ethnic background were out of the workforce, most likely being housewives.

By 2015, the nonworking/not-in-school figure for that age range had dropped among all groups except white men, where it held about constant, and Latino men, where it rose about eight percentage points. But among black men, the idleness figure doubled, going from 22.3 percent to 45.8 percent before dipping a little in 2015 to 42.8 percent.

In other words, joblessness and poverty have become more concentrated.

That at least partially explains, the report suggests, why just five neighborhoods — Austin, Englewood, New City, West Englewood and Grand Crossing — accounted for a third of the homicides citywide in 2016. Jobless rates among teens in those neighborhoods ranged from 79 percent to 91 percent.

“Joblessness among young people is tied



Data Source: 1960, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses and 2010 and 2015 American Community Survey, public use files. Tabulations by Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago.

to the emptying out of jobs from neighborhoods,” the report concludes. “In contrast, jobs (are) being centralized in Chicago’s downtown areas where whites are employed in professional and related services.”

In a statement, schools network Executive Director Jack Wuest goes even farther: “The best jobs are moving north and east, while black and Latino youth are locked into” other neighborhoods “It’s little wonder that so many of our youth succumb to the gangs.”

I’m not sure I buy that. Black men should be able to get jobs downtown just like whites and many Latino and black women.

Still, it’s fair to conclude that black men in particular have had trouble adopting to the loss of factory jobs, report co-author Matt Wilson told me. But it’s also fair to say that many African-Americans attend inferior schools, and some South Side areas do not have as good a connection to the Loop as the North Side.

Read the report and decide for yourself. But overall, I think it’s fair to conclude that it provides some solid evidence that gang violence and murder need an economic remedy, not just a policing one.

Find the report at www.asnchicago.org/youth-employment-hearing-2017

Commentary: Hopelessness: A Byproduct of violence in Chicago

By Inger E. Burnett-Zeigler

A long with many other South Side Chicago natives, I bemoan the detestable way President Donald Trump describes our beloved city as a “war zone.”

These characterizations do not reflect the experience that I had growing up in the Chatham neighborhood. My parents were productive citizens in the community; they had careers in the Chicago Public Schools, and most of their friends did too.

I spent summers in enrichment programs, riding my bike around the neighborhood. My friends and I didn't carry or own guns. We were never involved in criminal activity or police encounters. We graduated from college and now have successful careers.

It is true that my experience is not reflective of all people on the South Side of Chicago. The culture of the South Side is diverse and richly textured. The violence is a multifaceted problem for which there is no easy fix.

In the first 29 days of January, there were 295 shooting victims and 50 homicides in Chicago, up 5.5 percent from this time last year. Trump has called Chicago's violence problem “very easily fixable,” promising to “send in the Feds!” if things don't start improving soon.

The problem of Chicago violence extends far beyond the tragic premature loss of lives. For months and years to come, friends, family and community members — as well as the perpetrators of violence — are left to cope with grief and fear.

The shootings are concentrated on the South and West sides, where the majority of residents are black. In the Austin neighborhood, where there have been more than 40 shooting victims and at least 9 homicides this month, 86 percent of the residents are black. One-fourth of its residents do not have a high school diploma, 21 percent are unemployed and 27 percent have a household income below poverty level.

The Great Cities Institute report released

this month examined data from Chicago, New York and Los Angeles and suggests that spikes in violence in Chicago can be in part explained by youth joblessness. In 2014 and 2015, Chicago had the highest total percent, or 42.8 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds who were out of work and out of school. Chicago also had the highest percentage of black 16- to 19-year-olds, at more than 16 percent, who were out of work and out of school. Communities with high jobless rates are primarily on the predominantly black South and West sides.

The report includes testimonies of youth who commented, “Jobs solve violence. If you are busy working, you don't have time for violence.” Or, “If you want to save lives, you want to see a difference, give these teens jobs.”

Despite the desire to work, and for violence to end, the lack of economic investment and resources in communities on the South and West sides may cause many to feel hopeless.

“Feeling a sense of worth when surrounded by messages that black lives don't matter is difficult.”

In my experience as a clinical psychologist and assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Northwestern University, I understand that feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness are critical signs of a poor mental and emotional state that can severely impact one's ability to be productive and function.

It is a universal human need to want to know that you are valued, that you have a purpose and that your life matters. When these needs aren't met, it can negatively impact self-esteem, which in turn impacts behavior. Existing in an environment where you are experiencing constant social and environmental stress has far-reaching negative implications for the individual, family and community at large.

Feeling a sense of worth when surrounded by messages that black lives don't matter is difficult. Feeling purposeful when resources are cut and the available opportunities are

scarce and bleak is almost impossible. Hope is elusive when you question if you'll live to see tomorrow.

Stricter gun laws and increased policing have been offered as short-term solutions to the violence. Community investment, education and training opportunities and job creation have been offered as long-term solutions.

While Trump's promise to bring in the feds may temporarily resolve the immediate problem, it does little to address the institutional structures and policies that have led to the conditions at hand, nor the hopelessness and despair that is being left in the wake of what Trump calls “carnage.”

Instead of federal intervention, what the people of Chicago need is equitable access to readily available and visible resources, which reinforce self-worth and provide a sense of hope.

Opportunities inspire hope. All people are motivated by a sense of possibility.

Inger E. Burnett-Zeigler is a clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. She is an NU Public Voices Fellow with The OpEd Project.

January 30, 2017
10:33 AM



Study Ties Loss Of Jobs To Rise In Violent Crime

File under: [Craig Dellimore, Crime, study finds, University of Illinois at Chicago, Violent Crime](#)

Click the following link to hear WBBM Newsradio's Craig Dellimore report from January 30, 2017 - <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2017/01/30/study-ties-loss-of-jobs-to-rise-in-violent-crime/>

Click the following link for the full report by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute, *Abandoned in their Neighborhoods: Youth Joblessness Amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity* - www.asnchicago.org/youth/employment-hearing-2017

CHICAGO (CBS) — A new study out this week suggests that the loss of jobs in Chicago's inner city has been a major factor in the rising crime rates in some neighborhoods.

A new report on youth joblessness draws a strong connection between the loss of jobs in several neighborhoods and violent crime.

The report is called "Abandoned in their Neighborhoods," and co-author Teresa Codova, director of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute, said it shows the connection between the loss of manufacturing jobs and Chicago's spate of violence.

"In a sense, what's happened here is the chickens have come home to roost. This is part of a trend that has gone on now for decades," she said. "It is clearly something that we knew is happening, that we've known is happening."

Cordova said communities that have lost the most manufacturing jobs are among those that have the highest crime.



Job seekers wait in line at a job fair hosted by the city of Chicago. (Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)

"We now see, all these years later, very dramatically, that there really has been an impact from the departure of jobs from these areas, and if it's a structural problem, then we must come up with structural solutions," she said.

The study found joblessness for African Americans between 20 and 24 years old rose from 58.7 percent in 2014 to 60.2 percent in 2015. It also found black men and women from 20 to 24 years old had a much higher jobless rate in Chicago than New York and Los Angeles, as well as the state of Illinois and the U.S. overall.

January 30, 2017



Panel Tackles Youth Unemployment, Chicago Violence

By Leah Hope



Click the pic above to view the ABC 7 Eyewitness News coverage from January 30, 2017

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Jobs are the solution to the gun violence problem in Chicago, according to many of the city's community leaders. Many of those leaders gathered young people and employers to discuss the problem on Monday.

"I'm not Martin Luther King, not at all. But I have a dream," said Madre Morson, an Innovation High School student.

The Youth Employment Hearing hosted by Chicago Urban League reveals as violence in Chicago has increased, so has youth unemployment.

"The underground economy that has grown into these neighborhoods right now is one way for them to do that. And that's unfortunate," said Shari Runner, president, Chicago Urban League.

Some young people share their personal challenges trying to find jobs.

"Being with the wrong friends led me to going to juvenile detention centers, to the county jail, to gaining a criminal background, to not being able to finding employment. And it just made it hard," participant Mari Rivera said.

"You lose friends every day, it means a lot to you. But for us to have a job, it gives us the opportunity to stay off the street, gives us the opportunity to learn work ethic, responsibility, be independent," participant Everett Spraggs said.

Employers in the audience were urged to consider more young, urban applicants and lawmakers were urged get more funding to

agencies that support young people getting on track.

"These programs guarantee a gateway for us, for not only in the working field and experience in it, yet the gateway to have fellowship with others, connections, individual growth and skills that will last a lifetime," said Alleny Pena.

"Now let's see how many of us will provide jobs for the youth so there won't be another suspect to these streets," Morson said in a spoken word poem.

The employers at the forum said the young people they have taken on have been the most loyal and focused because the young employees know what's at stake.



January 30, 2017

Chronic Youth Unemployment Hurts Chicago

By Natalie Moore / WBEZ

**Click the following Link to Hear the News Story on WBEZ 91.5 Chicago News Radio from
January 30, 2017 -**

<https://www.wbez.org/shows/wbez-news/chronic-youth-unemployment-hurts-chicago/d23ae0fa-69da-4bd1-afe9-1bef3862bdc1>

Youth joblessness continues to hurt young black males the most--60 percent for this group ages 20 to 24. That's what the Chicago Urban League is addressing at a hearing on youth joblessness Monday. Sen. Dick Durbin is expected to attend as well as Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. The report was commissioned by the Alternative Schools Network and prepared by the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



January 30, 2017

‘Chronic’ Unemployment Of Young People Of Color Tied To Crime: Study

By **Stephen Gossett**

A study released on Monday indicates a strong connection between violent crime and joblessness, which runs alarmingly high among young black men in Chicago. Among certain age ranges, it is the worst in the nation, the report found.

Prepared by the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Great Cities Institute, the report was presented on Monday at the Chicago Urban League among officials such as U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. Perhaps the most alarming conclusion in the report, titled *Abandoned in their Neighborhoods: Youth Joblessness Amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity*, is that joblessness among black 20 to 24-year-olds rose to 60.2 percent in 2015, up from 58.7 percent the year prior. Black men and women within that age range both had a higher jobless rate (roughly 60 percent for either gender) than New York (50.3), Los Angeles (48.4), the state of Illinois (51.6) at large and the country overall (45.2).

Young Latinos meanwhile have had a particularly difficult job of rebounding from the recession. Latinos in Chicago, ages 16 to 19, actually continued to decline after 2010.

Joblessness among young people of color in Chicago is “chronic and concentrated,” the report found. The decline in available jobs is directly tied the decline of manufacturing sector in Chicago and “the emptying out of jobs from neighborhoods,” a contrast from the professional level services” downtown, the report notes.

Forty-three percent of black men between the ages of 20 and 24 are neither employed nor attending school, researchers found. That’s a sobering contrast to when Chicago’s manufacturing employment thrived decades ago: In 1960, only 22.3 percent of black man within the age range were



Getty Images / Photo: Bill Publano

unemployed or out of school.

While proposed anti-violence solutions in Chicago tend to revolve around tougher sentencing and increasing police stops, researchers argue that the chronic unemployment options for young people of color are a significant influence as well.

“While rampant joblessness may not completely explain violence, we learn from young people that it is no doubt a contributing factor and conversely, providing a job can mitigate the conditions that lead to criminal activities,” the report states.

For the full report by the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Great Cities Institute, *Abandoned in their Neighborhoods: Youth Joblessness Amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity* - www.asnchicago.org/youth-employment-hearing-2017