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ISSUE BRIEF

DISCONNECTED YOUNG ADULTS

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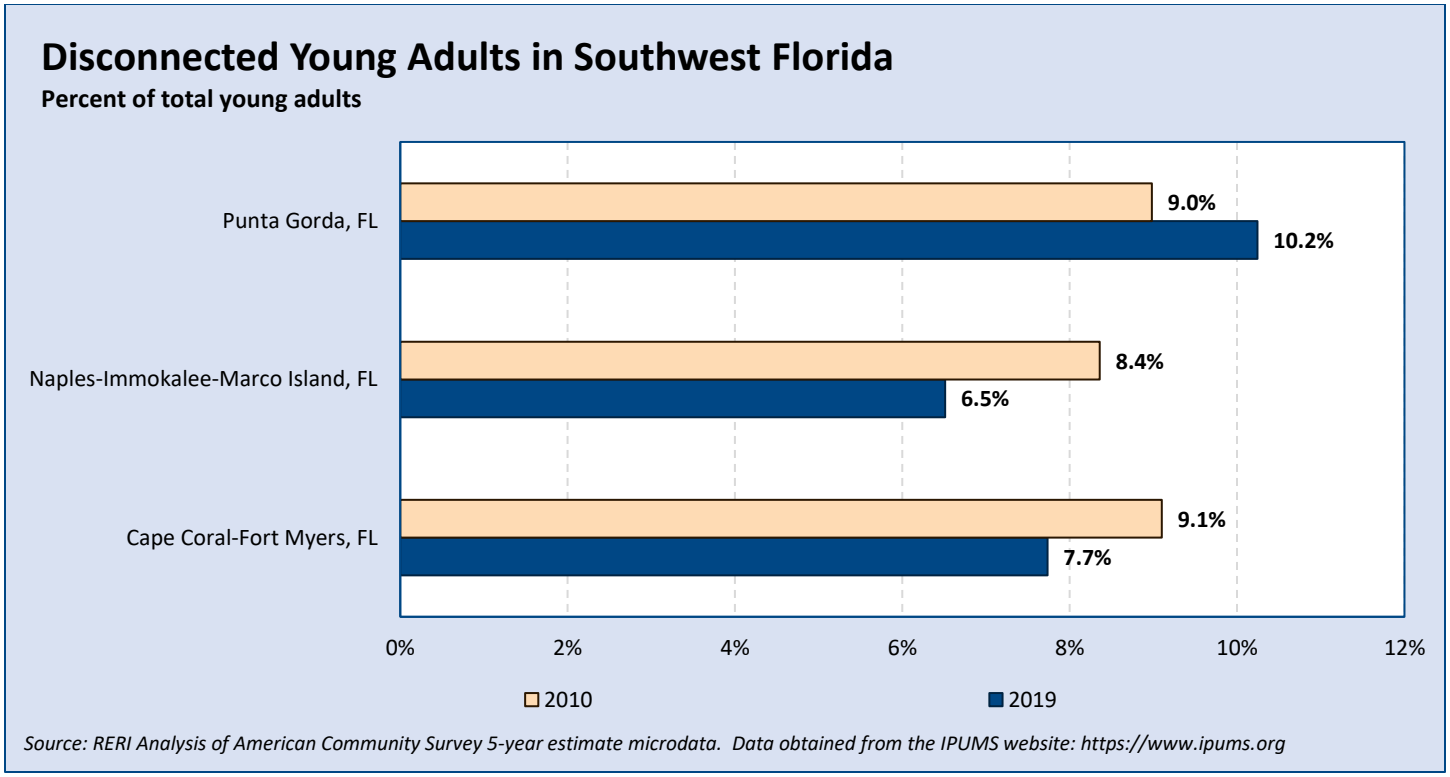
Introduction

The period between graduating high school (or earning a GED) and joining the workforce can be labeled as one of the most important times in anyone's life. This is the point in time when young adults begin to figure out what they want to do with their life and how they want to make a living. Some people might choose to immediately join the workforce after graduation and forego any potential earnings from improving their human capital in a traditional college and vocational degree. Others might decide instead to obtain further education through a traditional four-year college degree or vocational program. However, this period of transition between graduation and adulthood never comes quite as easy for some. Some youth that graduate might never figure out what they want to do for a livelihood, and pursue neither option.

In this issue brief, we look at young adults (residents between the ages of 18 and 24 years old) in Southwest Florida that have become disconnected, what the demographics of these young adults are, and how have these indicators changed over time. Disconnected youth refer to the young population that are not in education, employment or training. Learning more about this subset of the population is vital, as these disconnected young adults represent an untapped market for employers to find and train potential workers and citizens.

For this issue brief, we define a disconnected young adult as a resident between the ages of 18 and 24 years old that is currently not enrolled in school, has no degree beyond a high school diploma or GED, has not taken any college courses, and is currently not in the labor force. Because this subset of the population is not in the labor force, this means that not only are the not employed, but they are also not looking for work. We use American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates microdata from the IPUMS website to perform our analysis. Microdata provided by IPUMS website is only available for geographical regions with no fewer than 100,000 people, so our definition of Southwest Florida in this issue brief only contains Charlotte, Collier, and Lee Counties only.

The issue brief also contains two sections in the appendix to enhance the analysis: first, information is provided on the number of disconnected young adults by MSA, to see how each of the three Southwest Florida MSA's compare to the rest of the MSA's in the state. Second, more information on total young adults in the region is provided. This table is provided to help identify whether a change in the proportion of disconnected young adults is due to a change in total disconnected young adults in the area or a change in total young adults.



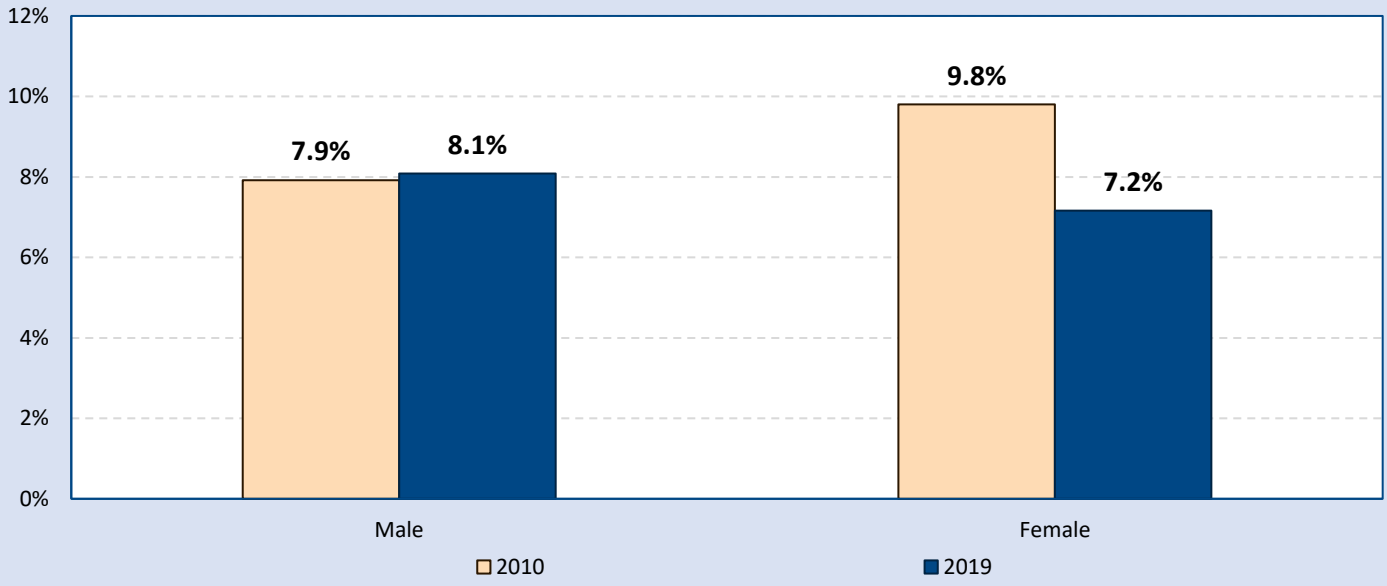
Source: RERI Analysis of American Community Survey 5-year estimate microdata. Data obtained from the IPUMS website: https://www.ipums.org

Disconnected Young Adults in Southwest Florida

The figure above shows the percent of young adults considered disconnected by Southwest Florida MSA. In 2010, the Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA had the lowest percentage of young adults disconnected, measured at 8.4 percent. The Punta Gorda MSA and Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA had similar percentages during the same year (9.0 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively). The latest available data shows that the percent of disconnected young adults declined in 2019 for both the Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA (6.5 percent) and the Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA (7.7 percent). However, Punta Gorda has seen an increase since 2010, with 10.2 percent of all young adults classified as disconnected.

Appendix I shows the young population in Southwest Florida by geography and demographics. Between 2010 and 2019, the youth population in the Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA grew by 10.4 percent, in the Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA by 17.3 percent, and in the Punta Gorda MSA by 4.9 percent. These two trends combined show that the Punta Gorda experienced an increase in the number of disconnected youth from 2010 to 2019, despite an increase in total number of young adults for the MSA. Meanwhile, both the Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA and the Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA saw a decline in disconnected youth rates despite an increase in total number of young adults, suggesting these MSAs were more likely to engage young adults in education, employment or training over the nine-year period.

The Appendix II shows the percentage of disconnected young adults for all available MSAs in 2019, ranked from the highest percentage and lowest percentage.



Source: RERI Analysis of American Community Survey 5-year estimate microdata. Data obtained from the IPUMS website: https://www.ipums.org

Disconnected Young Adults by Gender

The above chart shows the percent of disconnected young adults in Southwest Florida broken down by gender. Although the growth of youth population has been similar for both gender between 2010 and 2019 (12.3 percent for male youth population and 11.1 percent for female youth population) the trends in disconnected youth were quite different. From 2010 to 2019, the proportion of disconnected young females in Southwest Florida declined, from 9.8 percent to 7.2 percent. On the other hand, the proportion of disconnected young males increased over the same period, slightly rising from 7.9 percent to 8.1 percent. These numbers suggest a higher increase in the disconnected male youth which is not only explained population growth.

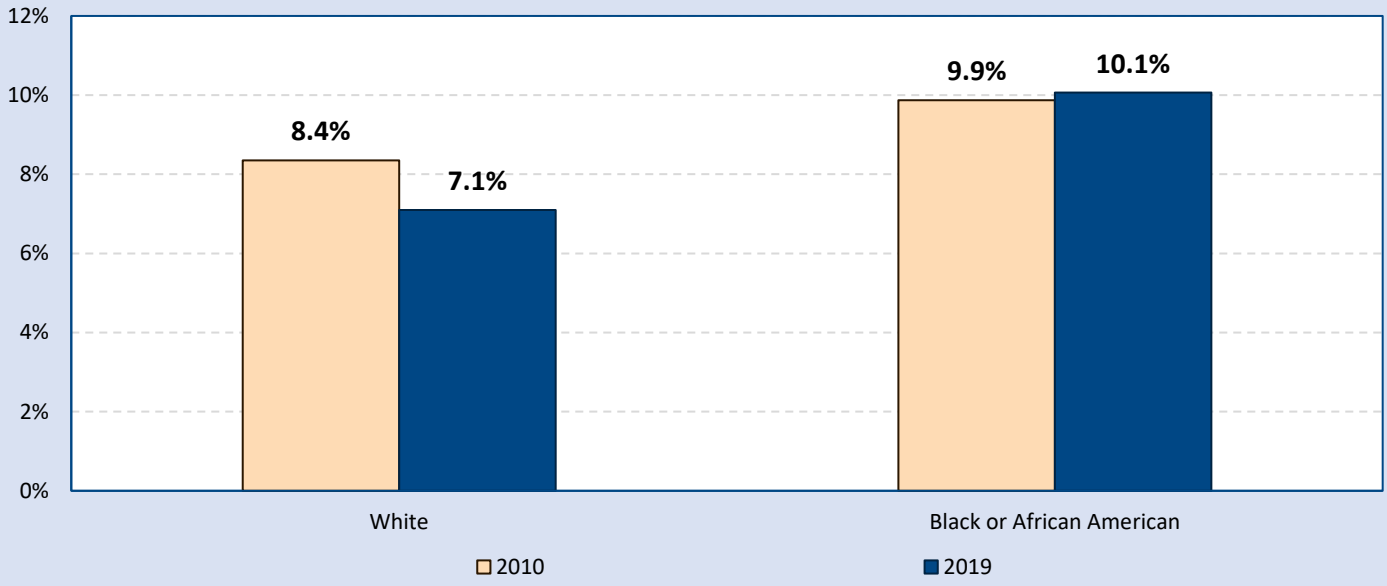
The table below shows a breakdown of the female youth population from 2010 to 2019 by labor force status and school status. From 2010 to 2019, the Southwest Florida region saw a substantial increase in labor force participation for young females, including a 70.3 percent increase in the subset of the population that was in the labor force, not in school, but had some college experience. Moreover, the region had increases in young females that were in the labor force and in school (26.6 percent increase for in labor force, in school, with college experience and 37.4 percent increase for in labor force, in school, and no college experience).

Young Adults in Southwest Florida by Labor Force Status and School Status

Female Population

Status	2010	2019	Change	Percent Change
In labor force, in school, college experience	7,365	9,321	1,956	26.6%
In labor force, in school, no college experience	3,367	4,627	1,260	37.4%
In labor force, not in school, college experience	4,447	7,573	3,126	70.3%
In labor force, not in school, no college experience	9,965	9,001	-964	-9.7%
Not in labor force, in school, college experience	4,762	3,701	-1,061	-22.3%
Not in labor force, in school, no college experience	2,738	3,140	402	14.7%
Not in labor force, not in school, college experience	747	814	67	9.0%
Not in labor force, not in school, no college experience	3,628	2,946	-682	-18.8%
Total Young Adult Population	**37,019**	**41,123**	**4,104**	**11.1%**

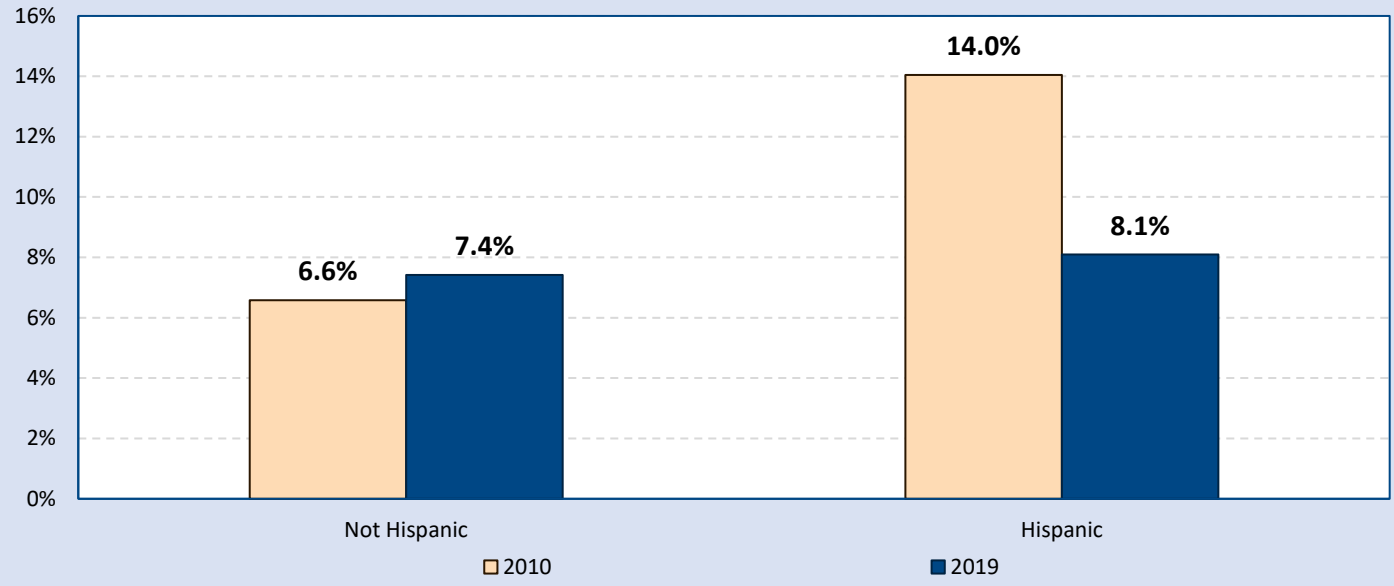
Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates Microdata. Obtained from IPUMS website.



Source: RERI Analysis of American Community Survey 5-year estimate microdata. Data obtained from the IPUMS website: https://www.ipums.org

Disconnected Young Adults by Race

The above chart shows the percent of disconnected young adults in Southwest Florida broken down by race. Note that only data for white and black or African American residents was available for this analysis. From 2010 to 2019, the proportion of disconnected young white residents in Southwest Florida declined (from 8.4 percent to 7.1 percent), while the total number of young adults increased over the same period by 13.8 percent. On the other hand, the proportion of disconnected young black or African American residents increased, slightly rising from 9.9 percent in 2010 to 10.1 percent in 2019. However, the total number of young adults increased over 37 percent in the nine-year period. This shows that the growth in disconnected young black or African Americans the growth rate for all young black or African Americans in the region. This is worrisome given existing educational and employment outcome gaps Southwest Florida is dealing with.



Source: RERI Analysis of American Community Survey 5-year estimate microdata. Data obtained from the IPUMS website: https://www.ipums.org

Disconnected Young Adults by Ethnicity

The data was also broken down by ethnicity, with the results shown in the chart above. The Southwest Florida region had a steep decline of disconnected young Hispanic residents from 2010 to 2019, dropping from 14.0 percent to 8.1 percent over the nine-year period. During this same period, the total number of Hispanic young adults increased by 23 percent, resulting in a more pronounced change over the time frame. Meanwhile, the non-Hispanic population saw an increase in disconnected young adults (jumping from 6.6 percent in 2010 to 7.4 percent in 2019) while also having an increase in the total number of young adults, of 6.9 percent

In light of the large share of the Hispanic population in the region, young adults are being incorporated and taking opportunities in terms of education, employment, and training. The table below shows a breakdown of the Hispanic youth population from 2010 to 2019 by labor force status and especially school status. From 2010 to 2019, the Southwest Florida region saw a substantial increase in college experience for the young Hispanic population, with the subset of the population in the labor force, not in school, and having college experience growing by 173.2 percent. The group of young Hispanic adults that were not in the labor force, in school, and had college experienced grew by 159.3 percent from 2010 to 2019, while the group that was not in the labor force, not in school, but had college experience grew by 217.8 percent over the same nine-year period.

Young Adults in Southwest Florida by Labor Force Status and School Status

Hispanic Population

Status	2010	2019	Change	Percent Change
In labor force, in school, college experience	2,630	4,868	2,238	85.1%
In labor force, in school, no college experience	1,702	2,627	925	54.3%
In labor force, not in school, college experience	1,334	3,644	2,310	173.2%
In labor force, not in school, no college experience	11,612	9,746	-1,866	-16.1%
Not in labor force, in school, college experience	749	1,942	1,193	159.3%
Not in labor force, in school, no college experience	1,585	2,510	925	58.4%
Not in labor force, not in school, college experience	242	769	527	217.8%
Not in labor force, not in school, no college experience	3,245	2,300	-945	-29.1%
Total Young Adult Population	**23,099**	**28,406**	**5,307**	**23.0%**

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates Microdata. Obtained from IPUMS website.

Appendix I: Total Young Adults in Southwest Florida

The total number of young adults in Southwest Florida, broken down by MSA, gender, race and ethnicity, can be found in the table below. The Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA had a 17.3 percent increase in total young adults from 2010 to 2019, while the Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA and Punta Gorda MSA saw a 10.4 and 4.9 percent increase, respectively. Both genders saw a similar increase in total young adults over the nine-year period, with males (12.3 percent) slightly outpacing females (11.1 percent). The black or African American population had a 37.4 percent increase in total young adults in Southwest Florida, while the white population had a 13.8 percent increase. Finally, the Hispanic population had a 23.0 percent increase in total young adults from 2010 to 2019, compared to 6.9 percent for non-Hispanic young adults.

Total Young Adults in Southwest Florida
2010 and 2019

Category	2010	2019	Percent Change
MSA			
Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA	46,573	51,422	10.4%
Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA	21,700	25,450	17.3%
Punta Gorda MSA	8,858	9,293	4.9%
Gender			
Male	40,112	45,042	12.3%
Female	37,019	41,123	11.1%
Race			
White	59,219	67,380	13.8%
Black or African American	7,671	10,543	37.4%
Ethnicity			
Hispanic	23,099	28,406	23.0%
Non-Hispanic	54,032	57,759	6.9%
Total	**77,131**	**86,165**	**11.7%**

Source: RERI Analysis of American Community Survey 5-year estimate microdata. Data obtained from the IPUMS website: https://www.ipums.org

Appendix II: Disconnected Young Adults by MSA

The table below shows the number of disconnected young adults, number of total young adults, and percentage of disconnected young adults in each recorded MSA. Due to limitations in the ACS microdata, information for five Florida MSAs were not available.

The Punta Gorda MSA had the fourth highest portion of disconnected young adults in 2019, while the Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA ranked as the ninth highest. The Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island MSA, measured at 6.5 percent, had the second lowest portion amongst the 17 available MSAs, only higher than the Gainesville MSA.

Disconnected Young Adults
2019

Rank	MSA	# Disconnected Young Adults	# Young Adults	% Disconnected Young Adults
1	Ocala, FL	3,670	24,135	15.2%
2	Homosassa Springs, FL	917	7,743	11.8%
3	Sebastian-Vero Beach, FL	1,142	9,973	11.5%
4	Punta Gorda, FL	952	9,293	10.2%
5	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	5,886	57,862	10.2%
6	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	4,615	50,988	9.1%
7	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	19,057	243,167	7.8%
8	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	3,902	50,283	7.8%
9	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	3,977	51,422	7.7%
10	Jacksonville, FL	9,148	125,694	7.3%
11	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	3,100	43,075	7.2%
12	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	35,443	493,766	7.2%
13	Port St. Lucie, FL	2,343	33,035	7.1%
14	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	16,023	237,260	6.8%
15	Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL	3,320	50,836	6.5%
16	Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island, FL	1,657	25,450	6.5%
17	Gainesville, FL	2,443	56,007	4.4%
--	Not in identifiable area	19,702	184,104	10.7%
--	**Florida**	**137,297**	**1,754,093**	**7.8%**

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates Microdata. Obtained from IPUMS website.