

Bleak employment picture painted for young adults

One in five adults in Philadelphia between the ages of 19 and 21 is jobless and not enrolled in school, according to a report released Wednesday.

The report, "The State of Youth Employment," by the [Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children](#), also found one in seven rural young adults and just more than one in nine suburban young adults in the state to be out of work and not enrolled in school.

The statistics paint a bleak picture for the state, said Joan L. Benson, president and CEO of Partnerships for Children, a nonprofit that provides policy recommendations based on its research and analysis of children's issues.

"Work experience is a valuable part of a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Learning how to be a responsible employee in the teen years creates a smoother transition into the workforce as an adult," Benson said.

Just 60 percent of the state's youth, between 19 and 21, was employed from 2002-2004. Sixty percent of the state's "idle", defined as not employed and not enrolled in school, were white, while one in three African American and Hispanic youth was "idle."

The number of youth between the ages of 16 and 18 that work during the summer is also declining, the study found. From 2002 to 2004, less than half of youth 16-18 worked.

Youth employment is being impacted by a surge of retired workers re-entering the workforce, new college graduates taking jobs that do not require a college degree and a lack of jobs.

Career and technical education is essential to prepare the youth workforce, as well as addressing the needs of youth who have not successfully completed their high school education, the report stated.