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## **ONE IN SEVEN PENNSYLVANIANS 19-21 IS JOBLESS AND NOT IN SCHOOL**

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children issues report on Youth Employment

HARRISBURG, PA (Aug. 3) – Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC), a nonprofit organization that provides policy recommendations based on research and analysis of children’s issues, today released a fact sheet on teens and young adults not working in Pennsylvania. “The State of Youth Employment” report shows that one in 11 Pennsylvania youth 16-21 is idle, defined as not working and not enrolled in school. One in seven Pennsylvanians 19-21 is not working and not enrolled in school.

Broken down by geographic area, one in five urban Pennsylvanians 19-21 is idle; one in seven rural youth 19-21 is idle; and slightly more than one in nine PA youth ages 19-21 living in suburban areas are not employed and not enrolled.

The data, an analysis of 2000 U.S. Census Bureau statistics and Current Population Surveys from 1996-2004, show that only 60 percent of Pennsylvanians 19-21 were employed from 2002-2004. While 60 percent of idle youth in Pennsylvania are white, the employment challenges facing racial minorities are even greater: 1 in 3 African American and Hispanic youth (19-21) is idle.

“The picture in Pennsylvania of idle youth – those not working and not in school – looks quite bleak,” said Joan L. Benso, president and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. “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.”

Summer youth employment for high school students has been declining over recent years, too. From 2002 to 2004, less than half of Pennsylvania 16-18-year olds worked during the summer. Increased competition from jobless adults, a surge of retired workers re-entering the workforce, new college graduates working at jobs that do not require a college degree and a lack of jobs all impact youth employment.

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PPC's report depicts job creation strategies as well as strategies to engage and employ in-school youth and out-of-school youth. Youth who are enrolled in school or who have graduated from high school face different challenges than those who have not graduated. The report explains why career and technical education (CTE) is a valuable component of the high school experience, particularly for students who do not go on to college.

While focusing attention on career and technical education is essential in preparing tomorrow's workforce, it is equally important to address the needs of young adults who have not successfully completed their high school education. PPC's youth unemployment report provides information on "second chance systems" and other strategies for out-of-school youth. For example, education programs that connect out-of-school youth to high-growth industries have specific roles for employers in providing quality assurance and on-the-job training and are operated by a range of organizations with strong connections to business and education. The PPC reports cites some models.

"The State of Youth Employment" report is second in a series of three fact sheets to be released on Youth in Transition to Adulthood by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children this year. The project - funded by The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the William Penn Foundation - focuses on young people moving from middle school to high school, high school to postsecondary education or work and beyond.

**To view the Youth Employment fact sheet or tables of youth unemployment rates, visit the special report section at: <http://www.papartnerships.org/youthunemployment/>**

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