Reengagement Policy Brief: Cities Setting Goals for Opportunity Youth
October 2017

Stating a clear target helps city leaders and partners stay focused, align around a common vision, avoid duplication of services, and ultimately, achieve goals. To map a path to achievement, collaboratives focused on reengaging disconnected 16 to 24-year-olds in the cities of Philadelphia, Seattle, Chicago, and San Diego all recently set or refreshed ambitious goals to reach by the year 2020. This positions these cities as leaders among the localities grappling with the challenge of reconnecting 4.9 million opportunity youth nationwide, and other cities can follow their lead to set driving goals.

The chart below depicts the four cities' goals, several focused on reducing the overall rate of youth disconnection -- the percent of youth simultaneously out of school and work. The broadest goals center around increasing the numbers of youth reengaging and earning credentials, as well as lowering the rate of disconnection. By comparison with baselines, the four cities have set ambitious goals that will require focused effort and likely, newly mustered resources.

Recently Established Citywide Goals Across the Reengagement Network			
City	**Broadest OY Reconnection Goal**	**Sample additional goal**	**Baseline**
Philadelphia	Increase the number of young people who re-engage to 70% and ensure 50% of re-engaged young people earn their high school degree/equivalency through high quality programs.	Reduce the number of students who disconnect from high school to 20%.	2008-2012 Cohort: 50% of disconnected youth reengage, and 35% complete high school, in a city with approximately 14,000 high school dropouts.
South King County/Seattle	Increase reenrollment so that 70% of youth who drop out reengage within 2 years of leaving, and 50% of reengaged young people earn a secondary credential within 2 years.	Increase the percent of reengaged youth who complete a secondary credential enroll in post-secondary to 60%.	2014: 42% of youth who drop out reengage within 2 years, and 31% enroll in post-secondary, in an area with approximately 20,000 opportunity youth ages 16-24.
San Diego	Reduce the rate of disconnection to 7.3% and reconnect 10,800 youth, by pursuing 0.5% annual rate reductions.	Halve the gap between the neighborhoods, so no neighborhood falls more than 4.4 percent above the countywide average disconnection rate.	2015 Census Estimates: 9.7% or 43,210 youth in San Diego are "disconnected" or opportunity youth.
Chicago	Reconnect 10,000 youth, ages 16-24, to school or work by 2020.	Build a data infrastructure to better understand the needs and trends of Opportunity Youth.	2015 Urban Labs/Congressional Research Service Estimates: Some 60,000 Opportunity Youth, live in Chicago.

Important trends and distinctions emerge among the four cities' goals and approaches. San Diego's "Halve the Gap" goal focuses on cutting disconnection in specific high poverty neighborhoods. South Seattle and Philadelphia share a goal to improve the percent of drop outs who reengage with school to 70%, and improve high school completion. South Seattle set goals to establish parity with high-

performing Washington schools, including targets for moving previously disconnected youth into post-secondary education.

Goal Setting Methods and Sources: To determine baselines prior to setting goals, some cities turn to Measure of America's recent report, Promising Gains, Persistent Gaps (2017), as well as the MOA online tool which provides disconnection rates by metro area, county, and state. Several collaboratives turn to partners such as local universities to provide data analysis about their youth populations. For example, University of Chicago Urban Labs helps to build a data infrastructure for the local collaborative.

Strategies To Achieve Goals

To push the needle, cities have adopted a variety of approaches with the idea that no one-size -fits-all solution exists. The tactics all in some way embody "collective impact" which relies on organizations across sectors all working on the same goals.

- Philadelphia will expand access to accelerated high school programs, night classes, GED programs, and early college options.
- In the South Seattle region, "Open Doors" centers provide reengagement to high school and workforce training in alignment with Washington state law, and the city-collaborative Road Map Project plans to expand systems of apprenticeship, employment, and wraparound services.
- Thrive Chicago has created working group teams of stakeholders to expand reconnection options, youth apprenticeships, and youth employment supports.
- San Diego Workforce Partnership engages with the local government, nonprofits, and employers to increase internship, employment and coaching opportunities.

Further Detail: Who Sets Goals, and By What Methods?

- **Philadelphia:** Philadelphia's Youth Network (PYN) Project U-Turn brings together city leaders, nonprofits, educators and administrators from many sectors to create education pathways for disconnected youth. An advisory group helped PYN update goals originally set several years ago. The alliance includes three groups that meet regularly, an executive committee of city leaders, a steering committee of system level leaders, and action teams composed of service providers and community members.
- **San Diego:** The San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) serves as the local workforce development agency. In April 2017, SDWP convened the Flip the Script Summit to announce new goals to develop pathways to reconnect 55,000 young people. The Flip the Script Report summarizes best practices and innovations, such as the local government youth internship program.. SDWP plans to reconvene each year to share progress and develop an action team with employers, nonprofit service providers, and others.
- **Seattle:** Road Map Project, a project of Community Center for Education Results, focuses on creating opportunity for youth in South Seattle and South King County, Washington — an underserved area with high rates of childhood poverty and disconnection. The Road Map Project brings together diverse stakeholders to advocate for changes in housing, health and education as well as periodically update driving goals, including goals for opportunity youth.
- **Chicago:** Thrive Chicago convened and led an Opportunity Youth Working Group between July 2016 and Febuary 2017, composed of private and public sector stakeholders. The group released 10 recommendations on March 14, 2017 at a local convening. Urban Labs created a detailed analysis of the disconnection problem to include in event materials.