

# Arkansas

14.9% of 16-24 year-olds in Arkansas are Opportunity Youth, or young people who are disconnected from education, employment, and service opportunities.

They are referred to as Opportunity Youth because they are both **seeking opportunities** and **present a tremendous opportunity** for their communities and the county – if we invest in them.

## The impact this investment would make in Arkansas:



### About the Campaign:

Since 2017, we've worked with elected officials to ensure youth and young adults disconnected from education and employment are prioritized in budget decisions, policies and programs. Equitable access to education, employment and service pathways lead to intergenerational economic mobility for youth, young adults, and their families.



For more information, visit [ReconnectingYouthCampaign.org](http://ReconnectingYouthCampaign.org)



"On my first day of YouthBuild, I didn't even know how to read the marks on a tape measure. When I graduated, I was OSHA-certified and built energy-efficient homes for local low-income families very much like my own."

-Ruben Castro, YouthBuild Alum

#### Data Sources:

1 Measure of America (2023)

2 The percentage of Opportunity Youth reached through federal programs in the country would increase from 6% to 19%, decreasing the number of Opportunity Youth in each district by an average of 13%.

3 Belfield, C, Levin, H, and Rosen, R. (2012). The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth. CNCS and City University of New York. Uses Current Population Survey data to calculate

that the average working young person contributes \$2,430 in taxes while the average opportunity youth contributes \$750 in taxes per year. The paper notes that this is a conservative estimate of the tax gap because it does not include consumption taxes.

4Ibid. Savings come from reduced: Governmental crime expenditures for disconnected youth (juvenile corrections, police protection, judicial and legal expenses); Welfare expenditures for disconnected youth: (Supplemental Security Income, Public Assistance, TANF, Housing Assistance, WIC, SNAP); and Government healthcare expenditures for disconnected youth (Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, DoD, DVA)

# Programs and their Impact

## **ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION**

This U.S. Department of Education program supports adult learners (ages 16 and up) prepare for High School Equivalency exams, offering a critical second chance for many American high school dropouts.

## **AMERICORPS NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS**

Youth respond to various environmental crises and disasters, rebuilding communities while earning a living allowance and an education award for college.

## **AMERICORPS STATE/NATIONAL**

AmeriCorps State/National funding provides support to a wide range of service programs that strengthen communities and build leaders through direct community and national service.

## **CHAFEE EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS**

Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this program increases college attendance rates among foster youth by providing tuition support for former foster youth enrolling in post-secondary educational and training programs.

## **JOB CORPS**

This a full-time, residential, education, and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and implemented in over 100 locations by for-profit, public, and nonprofit entities. Youth earn a high school diploma or GED, learn career skills, and connect to job opportunities.

## **NATIONAL GUARD CHALLENGE**

Funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, this program helps adolescents improve their education and employment success.

## **RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), youth REO projects focus on pre- and post-release services, including case management, educational and occupational skills training, tutoring, credit retrieval, job placement and other supportive services.

## **SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS**

Youth are engaged in service projects coupled with job training, mentoring and academic programming. These programs are supported by a combination of agencies, including the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Labor and AmeriCorps.

## **WIOA YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), youth programs are designed to help youth with education, and/or occupational skills and training.

## **YOUTHBUILD**

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), this community-based alternative education program provides hands-on job training, educational and community service opportunities.



Robert Clark  
YouthBuild Alum

**"I am proud to be a YouthBuild graduate."**

It was here that I learned the importance of education and service."