

# Mediating Exclusion, Promoting Opportunity: Community Based Youth Serving Organizations and the Economic Integration of Disconnected Youth in the San Joaquin Valley

**M. Anne Visser, Ph.D.**  
Department Of Human Ecology  
University Of California, Davis

---

Generous support for the analyses presented was provided by:



# MY PURPOSE TODAY:

---

- Share findings of a ongoing research study that examines economic integration of disconnected youth in the US
  - 5 year mixed-method study based in the San Joaquin Valley
  - Focused on the role of community institutions and networks in influencing economic integration of this youth population
- Engage in a discussion about the implications of the findings as they relate to foster youth and former foster youth more generally

# ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

---

- Ways in and extent to which young adults participate in and access:
  - labor markets
  - public services
  - housing markets
  - education
  - health sectors

(Wheatly 2007; Dertwinkel 2008)

# COMING OF AGE DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION

---

- Great Recession has had a “hang over” effect on the youth labor market
- Household formation rates of young adults have dropped by 50%
- Household ownership rates among those ages 18-29 was 15% in 2015 (down from 22% in 2005)

# COMING OF AGE DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION

---

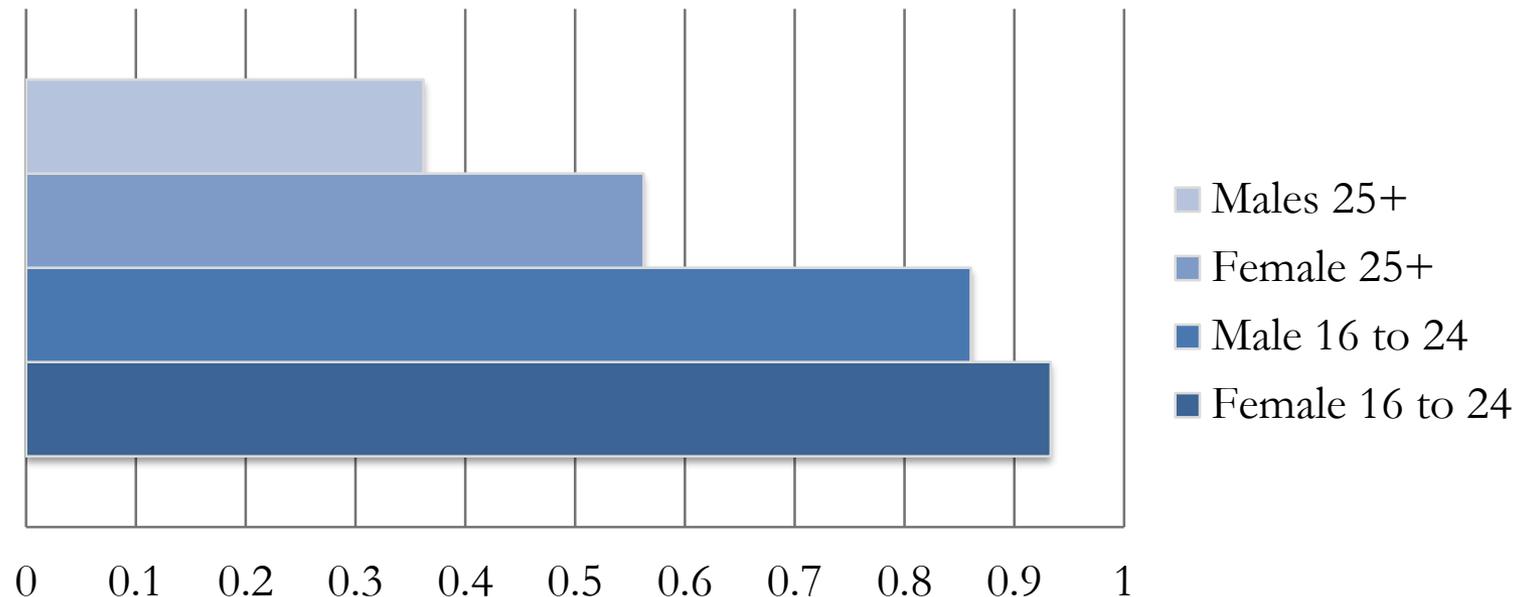
- Rates of participation in post-secondary education increased nationally during 2008-2013
- Average student debt in California is better than most states but borrowers report more difficulty repaying

	Public 4-Year Institutions and Private Non-Profit 4-Year Institutions			
	Average Debt **	Rank *	Proportion with Debt **	Rank *
State Average	\$22,191	48	54%	42

Source: Institute for College Access and Success, 2016

# COMING OF AGE DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION

- Probability of engaging in low wage work during the Great Recession increased among all workers

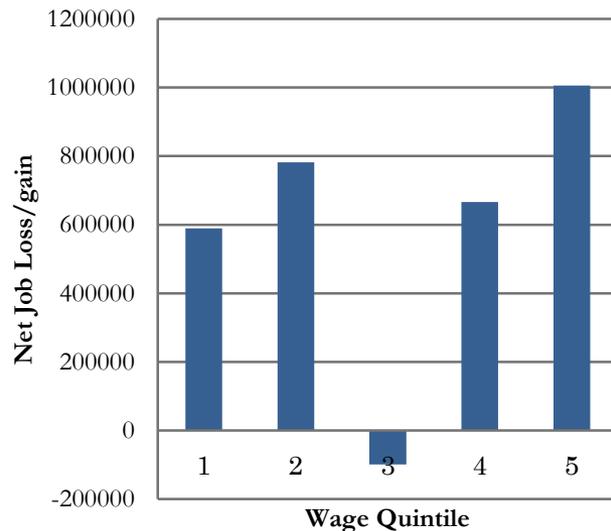


Source: Visser and Melendez, 2015

# COMING OF AGE DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION

- Current labor markets exhibiting increased job polarization and were impacted by job losses during the recession

US 07-13

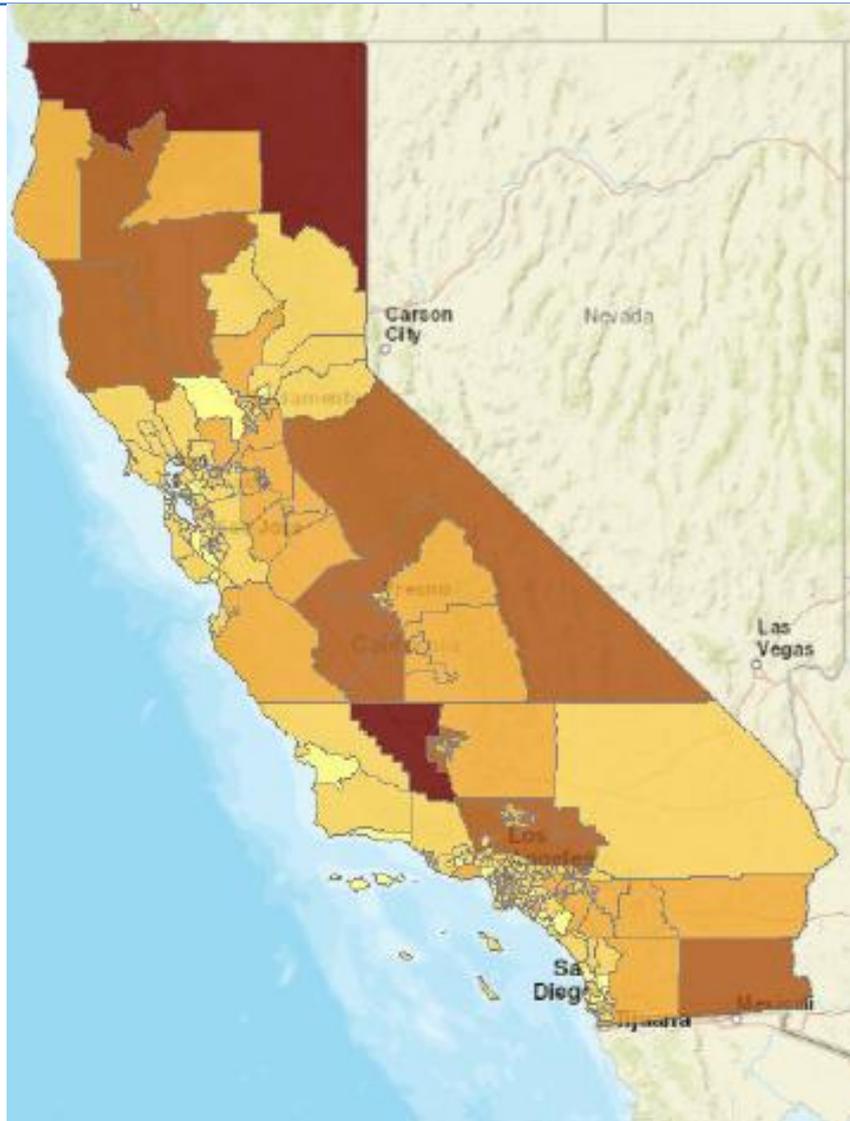


CA 07-13



Source: (Visser, 2016)

# DISCONNECTED YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA— 2010



## Legend

### All - % Out of Work and School

- 0% - 9.9%
- 10% - 19.9%
- 20% - 29.9%
- 30% - 39.9%
- Over 40%

Source: UC Davis Center for Regional Change, 2016

# “COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS” AND DISCONNECTED YOUTH

---

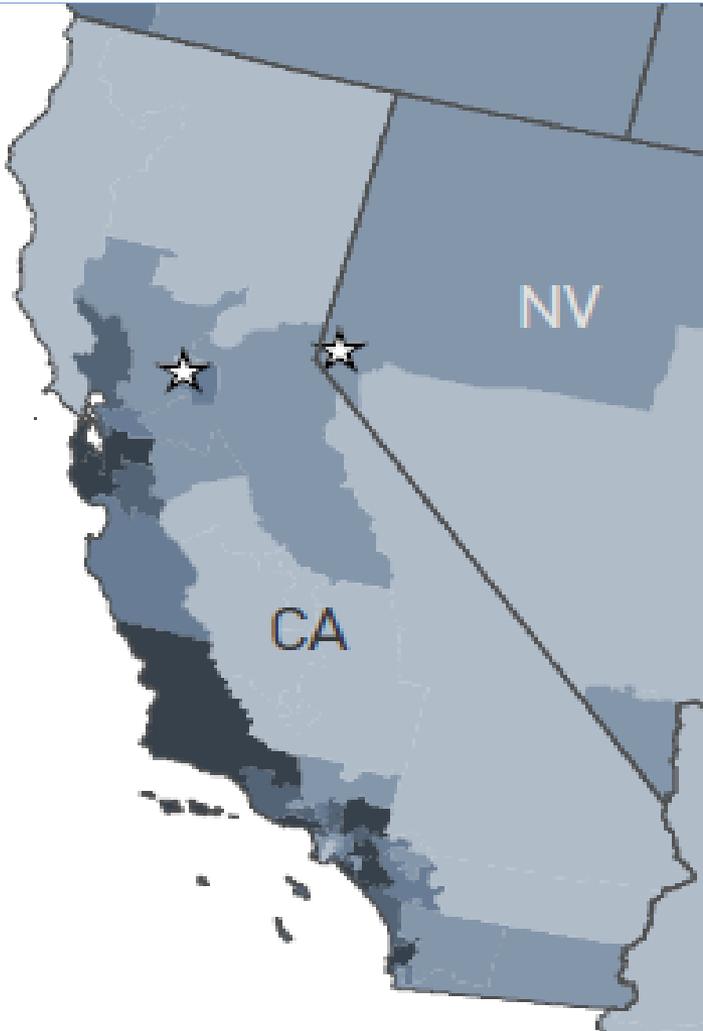
- Theory strongly suggests that community institutions and policy networks offer opportunities to influence developmental trajectories of youth.
- Community Based Youth Serving Organizations:
  - “seek to engage youth via after-school programs, youth programs, youth activities, community programs, extracurricular activities and programs during non-school hours and are not based in a school setting or within the context of a faith-based institution” (D’Agostino and Visser, 2009, 23).

# OVERVIEW OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY STUDY

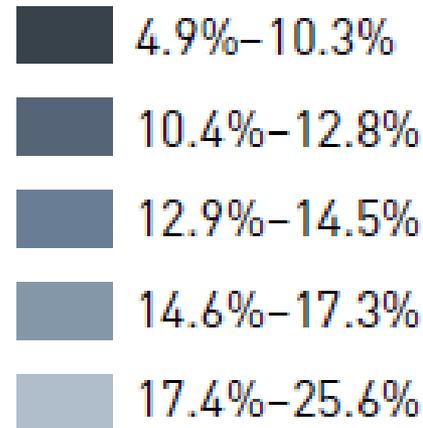
---

- 5 year study examining the role and impact of the interactions disconnected youth have with community institutions and policy networks on economic integration
- Includes information gathered from 52 CBYSOs and interviews with 150 disconnected youth across 8 counties: Kings, Merced, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, San Joaquin, Kern, and Stanislaus.
- In-depth ethnographic study of 3 CBYSOs (in progress)

# DISCONNECTED YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA AND THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - 2015



## DISCONNECTED YOUTH



Source: American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)/  
Measure of America 2016

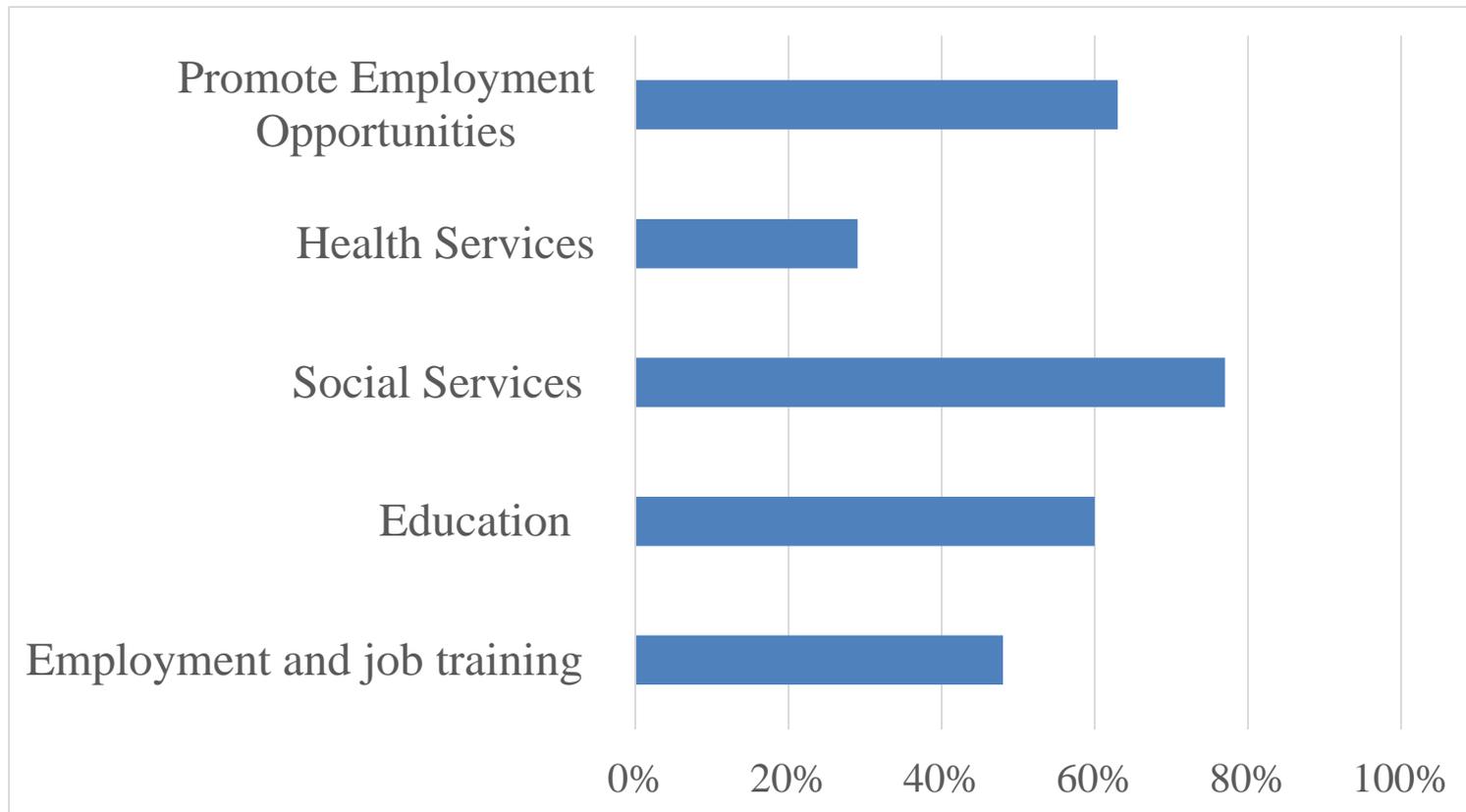
# CHARACTERISTICS OF CBYSOs SERVING DISCONNECTED YOUTH

---

- Many CBYSOs are not consciously “disconnected youth serving organizations”
- Majority receive funding primarily from private donors followed by federal and county governments
- Over 64% of CBYSOs report annual incomes of less than \$1,000,000, and upwards of 70% of income is directed towards services utilized by disconnected youth

# SERVICES PROVIDED BY CBYSOs TO DISCONNECTED YOUTH BY CATEGORY

---



# CBYSOs AS INTERMEDIARIES AND BROKERS FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH

---

## Economic Intermediaries and Brokers

- Job fairs
- Job matching and placement\*
- Computer literacy courses
- Vocational courses
- Job safety training
- Certification and training programs\*
- Support youth participation in local job fairs
- Referrals to external job training programs\*
- Internships
- Employ disconnected youth\*

# CBYSOs AS INTERMEDIARIES AND BROKERS FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH

---

## Social Intermediaries and Brokers

- Emergency shelter\*
- Transitional housing\*
- Basic subsistence services\*
- Child care services\*
- Provide direct services/offer referrals to medical services, mental health treatment, prenatal health, chronic disease management and health care\*

# CBYSOs AS INTERMEDIARIES AND BROKERS FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH

---

State/Political  
Intermediaries  
and  
Brokers

- Advocacy\*
- Testimony in formal policy settings\*
- Provide information to policymakers
- Partnerships with schools and community colleges\*
- Referrals to external GED and adult education programs
- Offer GED course programs\*
- Assist with applying to government medical insurance and social assistance programs\*

# MECHANISMS THROUGH WHICH CBYSOs UNDERTAKE INTERMEDIARY/BROKER ACTIVITIES

	High Resource Dependence	Low Resource Dependence
Formal	Institutionalized activities, where staff exercise agency, and a high level of organizational resources are utilized	Institutionalized activities, but where staff do little, and few organizational resources are utilized
Informal	<b>Not institutionalized activities, but the CBYSO provides them regardless, and a high level of organizational resources are utilized</b>	<b>Not institutionalized activities, where staff does little or nothing, and few organizational resources are utilized</b>

# BARRIERS TO SERVING DISCONNECTED YOUTH IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

---

- Identifying and recruiting disconnected youth
- Growing and diverse client populations
- Financial challenges
- Staffing challenges
- Relationships with government
- Demonstrating impact

# FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVENESS OF CBYSOs IN SERVING DISCONNECTED YOUTH WHOM ARE FOSTER/FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

---

- Stability over time
- Resiliency to economic, political, and social shifts
- Capacity to provide/broker services related to sensitive issues
- Integration with outside institutions and networks

# SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORTING DISCONNECTED YOUTH WHOM ARE FOSTER YOUTH/FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

---

- CBYSOs are critical bridges that allow marginalized older youth to access resources that are otherwise difficult to reach without strong social networks and community ties
- CBYSOs serve a complex substitution function for marginalized older youth
- CBYSOs may have more of an impact on youth economic integration than the presence of concentrated poverty

# SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORTING DISCONNECTED YOUTH WHOM ARE FOSTER YOUTH/FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

---

- CBYSOs face complex questions of strategy and collaboration in relation to serving this population of disconnected youth
  - How to engage/serve this youth population
  - When/how to collaborate with public education system
  - When/how to collaborate with employers/government

# AREAS OF POLICY INTERVENTION & INVESTMENT

---

- Increase public resources available to CBYSOs who serve disconnected youth who are current or former foster youth
- Prioritize and support policies that address root causes of disconnection among foster youth/former foster youth
- Invest in long-term policy options that respond to changing economic landscapes while also providing “stop-gap” support to this youth population

# AREAS OF POLICY INTERVENTION & INVESTMENT

---

- Develop strategies to identify the needs of current and former foster youth whom are disconnected youth and the work of community institutions and networks that support them
- Promote effective collaboration among CBYSOs, industry, and government
- Encourage anti-poverty policy experimentation

# *THANK YOU*

---

For more information or a copy of the presentation:

Email: [mavisser@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mavisser@ucdavis.edu)



@MAnneVisser

Related policy reports and briefs are available online through the  
Institute for Public Anthropology (CSU Fresno):

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/socialsciences/anthropology/ipa/>