



MY-CIL Practice Brief #5

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Demographics of youth and young adults with disabilities who are not working and not in school: descriptive findings from national survey data

In this brief: Youth and young adults aged 16-24 with disabilities and, in particular, those in this group who are neither in school nor working, are an increasingly important target population for Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Understanding the characteristics of nonworking OSY with disabilities in their areas may allow CILs to increase outreach to these underserved groups including minorities. This brief presents characteristics of nonworking OSY with a disability nationally and at the county level and focuses on both demographic as well as socioeconomic characteristics.

We used data from the IPUMS USA version of American Community Survey (ACS) from 2009 through 2019. The ACS is representative of the United States population and is the only publicly available data source that supports estimates of disability prevalence at the county level. The ACS identifies individuals with disabilities as those who report difficulty with at least one of the following: hearing, vision, cognition, mobility, self-care, or independent living. However, it may miss many individuals with disabilities, particularly those with mental health conditions.

About the MY-CIL Project: Minority Youth and Centers for Independent Living (MY-CIL) is a collaborative effort of Hunter College, the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY), Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), and Mathematica. The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research and the Office of Independent Living Programs at the Administration for Community Living funded MY-CIL to improve outcomes for out-of-school youth with disabilities (OSY). It seeks to produce and share knowledge that empowers Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to improve outcomes for OSY from minority backgrounds.

Clarifying terms:

“Youth from minority backgrounds”: MY-CIL uses the term youth from minority backgrounds to refer to transition aged youth and young adults (ages 16-24) from nationally recognized racial and ethnic minority groups.

“Out-of-school youth with disabilities (OSY)”: MY-CIL uses the term OSY to refer to transition aged youth and young adults (ages 16-24) who have completed or otherwise left secondary education.

Demographic characteristics of OSY with disabilities who are not working

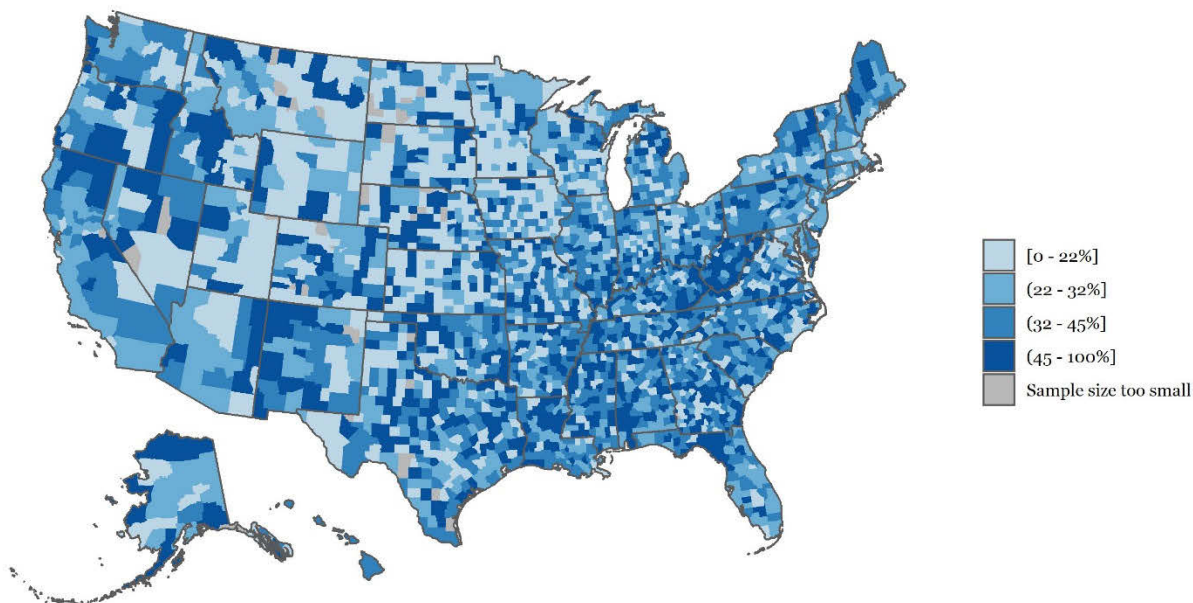
United States counties range in population from 174 to over 10 million persons with an average population around 100,000, and youth and young adults with disabilities make up around one percent of a county’s population on average. Among youth and young adults with disabilities, those who are not working nor in school are likely to be eligible for and in need of services that CILs provide. While CILs are aware of the characteristics of their

customers, they may be less aware of the composition of the group of potential customers who live in the areas that they serve. In the following figures, we describe the composition of this group with respect to impairment type, demographic characteristics, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status in order to provide CILs with information about groups of potential

customers that may have a particular need for support and possibly to improve outreach to these in-need groups.

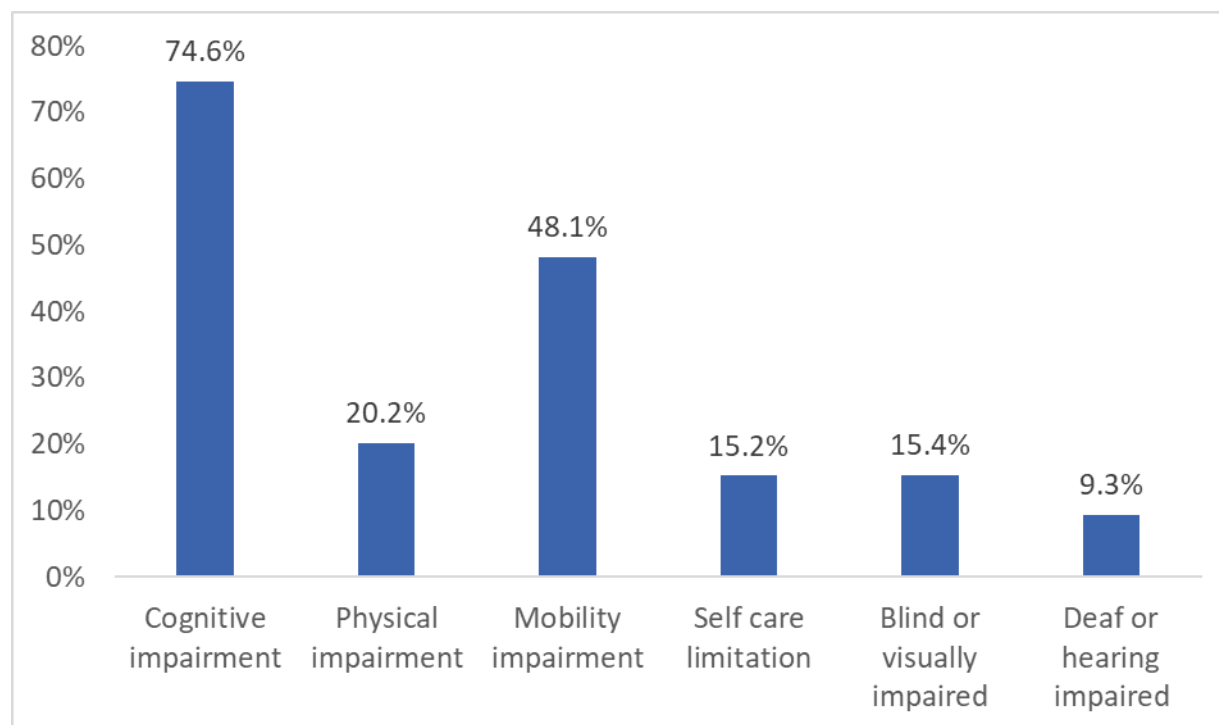
Overall, about 31 percent of youth and young adults with disabilities are not working and not in school (nonworking OSY). Figure 1 shows the share of the group who are not working and not in school in a map of the United States at the county level. There is considerable geographic variation in the share who both are not working and not in school, though there is not an obvious geographic pattern.

Figure 1. County-level percentage of youth and young adults with disabilities who are not working and not in school



Source: Authors calculations using IPUMS USA (2009-2019), a harmonized version of the American Community Survey. Full county-level data are available at <https://mathematica.org/dataviz/nonworking-osy-disability-maps>.

Figure 2. Composition of nonworking OSY with disabilities by impairment

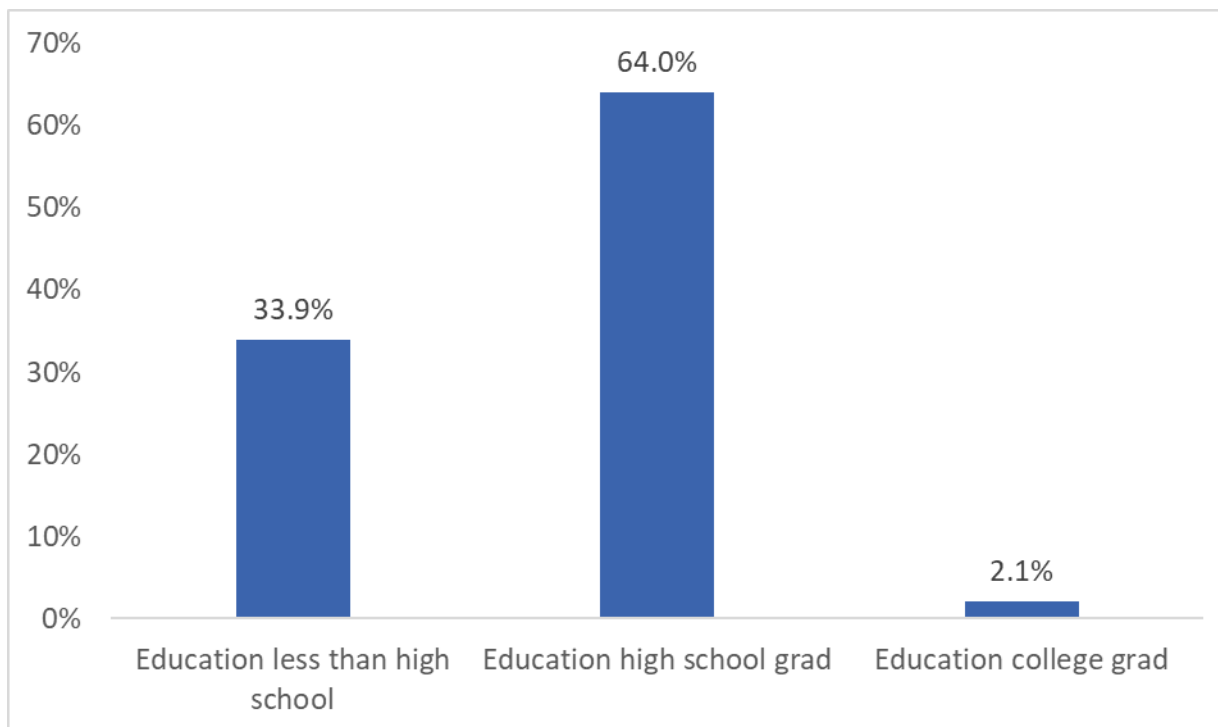


Source: Authors' calculations using IPUMS USA (2009-2019), a harmonized version of the American Community Survey.

The most prevalent impairments among nonworking OSY with disabilities are cognitive and mobility impairments (Figure 2). Most nonworking OSY with disabilities have a high school diploma or equivalent terminal degree (64 percent) while around one third did not finish high school (34 percent). Only a very small share, 2 percent, have college degrees (see Figure 3). Services in support of obtaining a high school equivalency certificate might be of value to some people in this group who did not finish high school, while employment-related services and coordination with other service providers like Vocational Rehabilitation agencies might be a more appropriate focus for a broader set of the group.

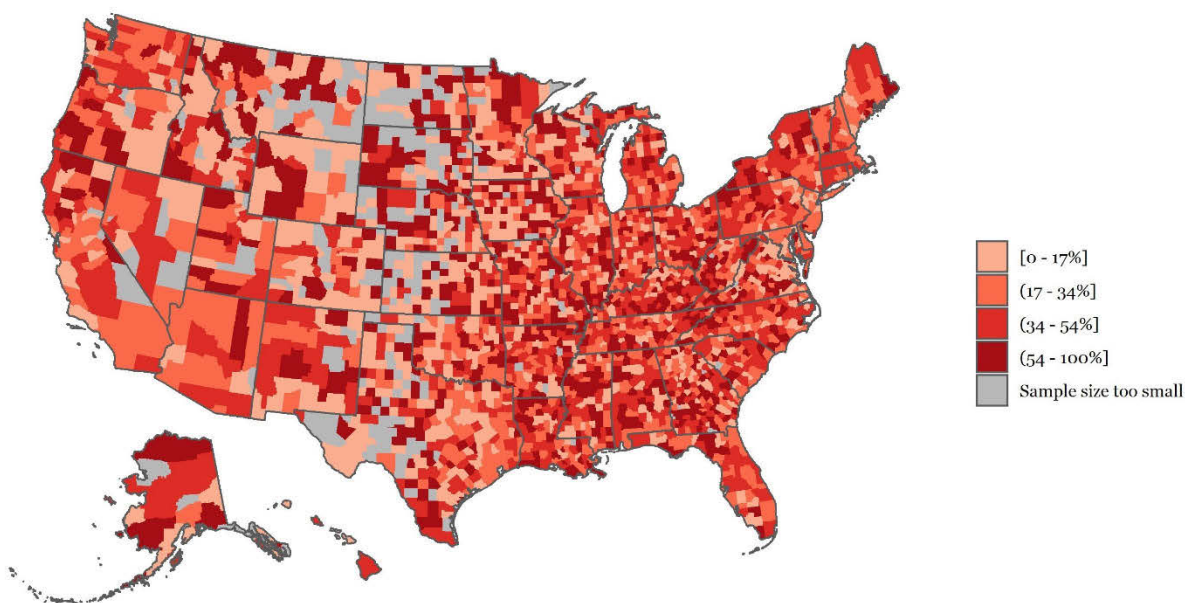
Finally, nonworking OSY with disabilities have an average poverty rate at the county level of 38 percent, which is substantially higher than the rate of poverty among all youth and young adults with disabilities (30%). Figure 4 shows the share of nonworking OSY with disabilities who are living in poverty at the county level. While there is not a clear geographic pattern in poverty rates in this group, there is considerable variation across counties in the share of nonworking OSY with disabilities who are living in poverty.

Figure 3. Composition of nonworking OSY with disabilities by educational attainment



Source: Authors calculations using IPUMS USA (2009-2019), a harmonized version of the American Community Survey.

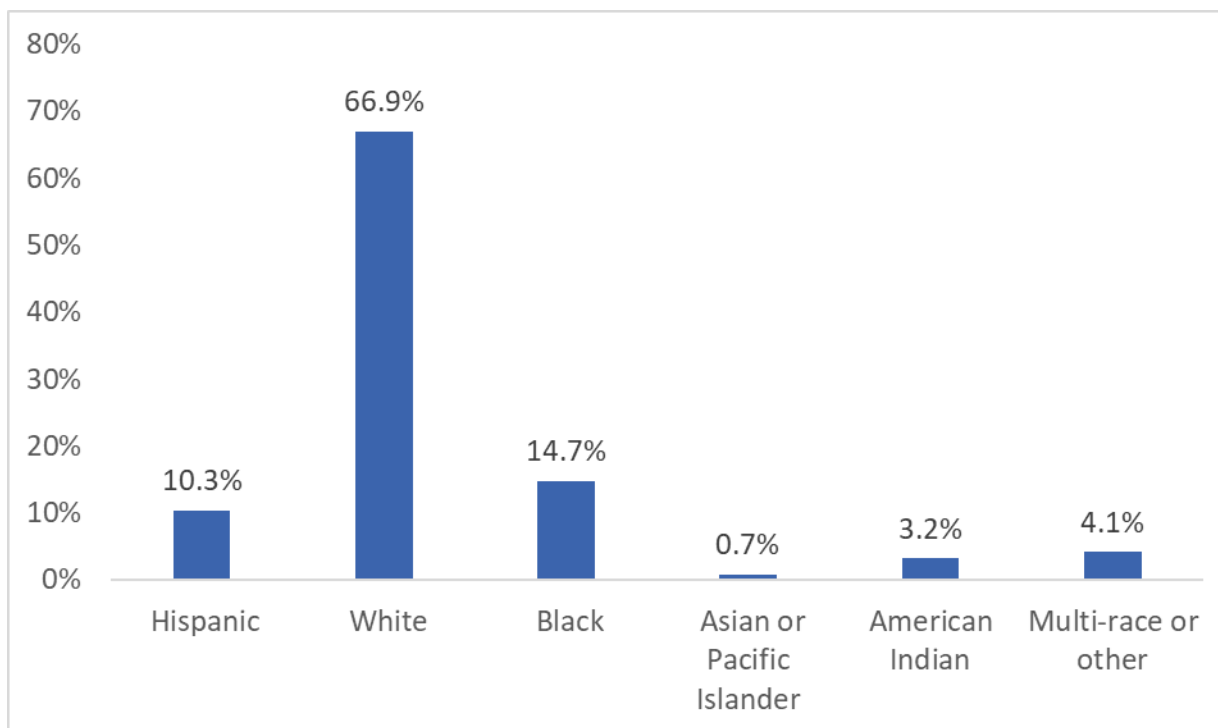
Figure 4. County-level percentage of nonworking OSY with disabilities who are living in poverty



Source: Authors calculations using IPUMS USA (2009-2019), a harmonized version of the American Community Survey. Full county-level data are available at <https://mathematica.org/dataviz/nonworking-osy-disability-maps>.

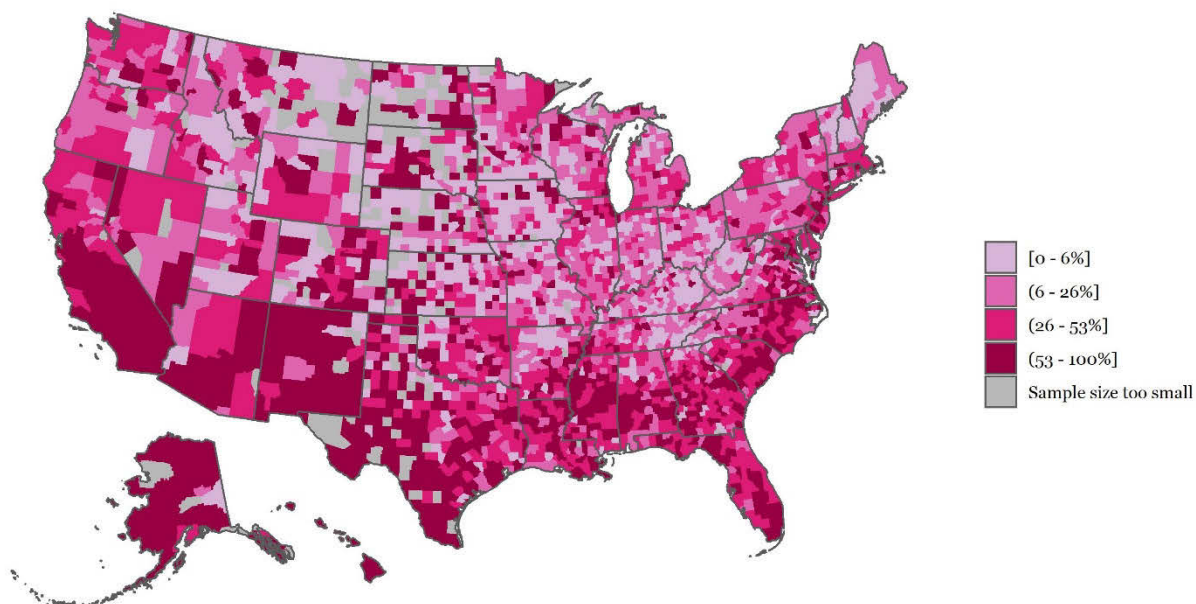
The majority of OSY with disabilities who are not working and not in school are White while Hispanic and Black OSY make up the next largest segments of this population (Figure 5). However, there is significant geographic variation in the racial and ethnic composition of nonworking OSY with disabilities—Figure 5 shows the share of the group who are from minority backgrounds in a map at the county level. The share of the group who are from racial and ethnic minority populations is much larger in the south and on the east and west coasts of the United States and smaller in the northeast, north central, and western regions.

Figure 5. Composition of nonworking OSY with disabilities by race and ethnicity



Source: Authors calculations using IPUMS USA (2009-2019), a harmonized version of the American Community Survey.

Figure 6. County-level percentage of nonworking OSY with disabilities who are from minority backgrounds



Source: Authors calculations using IPUMS USA (2009-2019), a harmonized version of the American Community Survey. Full county-level data are available at <https://mathematica.org/dataviz/nonworking-osy-disability-maps>.

Conclusions

This brief focuses on OSY with disabilities and, in particular, those who are not working. Nonworking OSY with disabilities tend to have low educational attainment and high rates of poverty. Racial and ethnic minority OSY with disabilities appear to be concentrated in the southern and coastal regions of the United States. This reflects patterns of race and ethnicity in the US population, but racial and ethnic minorities make up a larger share of nonworking OSY with disabilities than they do the whole population in many counties. For example, Taylor County in Florida has a population that is 72 percent White but the share of nonworking OSY with disabilities who are White is 27 percent.¹ CILs might succeed in expanding services to minority customers by targeted outreach. Tailored outreach to OSY from minority groups might include informational materials in several languages or in-person outreach in targeted neighborhoods or community centers.

Stay tuned for the next practice briefs:

Upcoming practice briefs will describe services that CILs have provided to OSY from minority backgrounds, services staff identified as most critical for employment and education success, and barriers CILs have identified to serving this consumer group. MY-CIL will also be sharing data briefs customized to each CIL on the characteristics of OSY in the counties they serve.

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/research/americas-racial-diversity-in-six-maps/>

MY-CIL training and technical assistance to increase and improve services to OSY

MY-CIL offers CILs support to increase and improve services to OSY from minority backgrounds, through a series of learning collaboratives and through one-on-one support to develop and test pilot programs.

Learning collaboratives. The MY-CIL Learning Collaborative involves much more than training. From April 2021 to November 2021, facilitators have worked with a dedicated group of six CILs to support one another as they plan to create or expand programs and services for youth and young adults with disabilities who are out of postsecondary school, with an emphasis on racial and ethnic minority groups. Participants have access to:

- Leaders who are well-versed in working with youth with disabilities who are out of postsecondary school and from racial and ethnic minority groups
- Opportunities to learn, share promising practices, and brainstorm solutions to challenges with CIL peers
- Monthly meetings and additional workshops and coaching sessions
- Resources to help with goal setting and organizational planning

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To learn about participation in the next learning collaborative, contact Joey Vega at Jose.Vega@memorialhermann.org or 832-454-1057.

Customized development of pilot programs. MY-CIL also offers more intensive, one-on-one support. MY-CIL advisors facilitate activities to help CIL staff build capacity and develop pilot strategies to increase and improve services for OSY with disabilities from minority backgrounds. Collaboratively with staff, we identify problems, analyze root causes, develop strategies, and road-test potential interventions. In the months ahead, MY-CIL will continue with one-on-one learning to assist CILs in assessing the feasibility and benefit of new pilot interventions. If your CIL is interested in participating in future pilot program activities, contact Frank Martin at fmartin@mathematica-mpr.com or 202-484-4684.
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To learn more about MY-CIL

To learn more about MY-CIL, please visit: <https://minorityyouthcil.com/>

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References

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