

# Texas Opportunity Youth Summit

OCT. 15–16, 2019 | HOUSTON, TEXAS



Federal Reserve  
Bank of Dallas



**EDUCATE TEXAS**  
at COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS

# Setting the Stage

- New Fed report: **“Opportunity Youth in Texas: Identifying and Reengaging the State’s Disconnected Young People”**
  - Available at [dallasfed.org/cd](https://dallasfed.org/cd)
  - Data from the American Community Survey (U.S. Census)
    - Current as of 2017
    - Surveys youth living in “group quarters” (correctional facilities, college dormitories, residential health facilities, etc.)
- National picture
  - There are 4.5 million opportunity youth nationwide.
  - Disconnection rate: 11.5% of all 16–24-year-olds

# Texas Picture

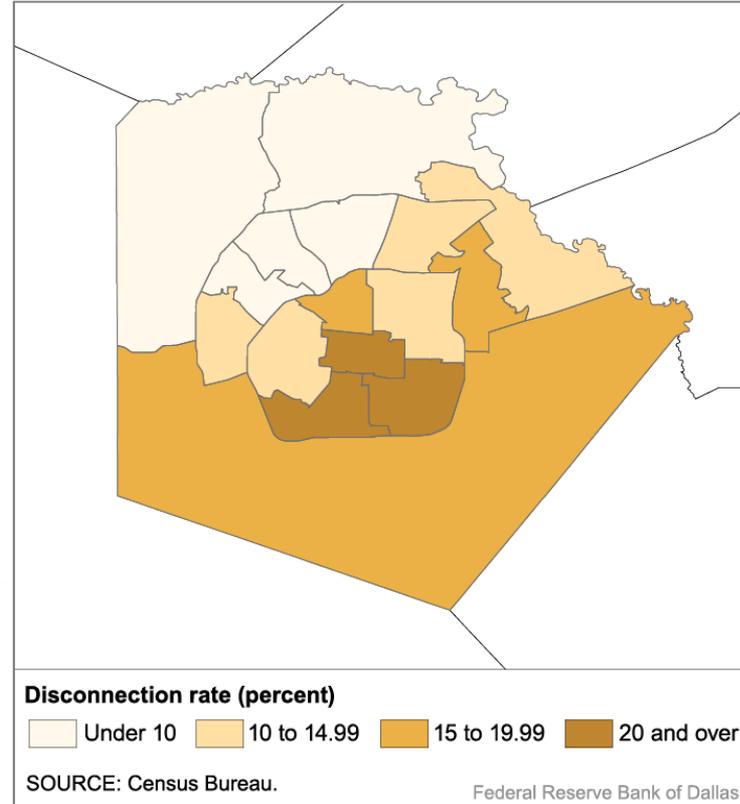
- Texas is home to 487,471 opportunity youth
  - Disconnection rate: 13.8% of 16–24-year-olds
- It's not just an urban issue
  - Harris County: 13.4%
  - “Deep East Texas” region: 30%
- Overrepresentation of black and Hispanic youth
  - 52% of Texas OY are Hispanic
  - 16% black
- Overrepresentation of girls and women
  - 52% female

# We looked further at four Texas counties...

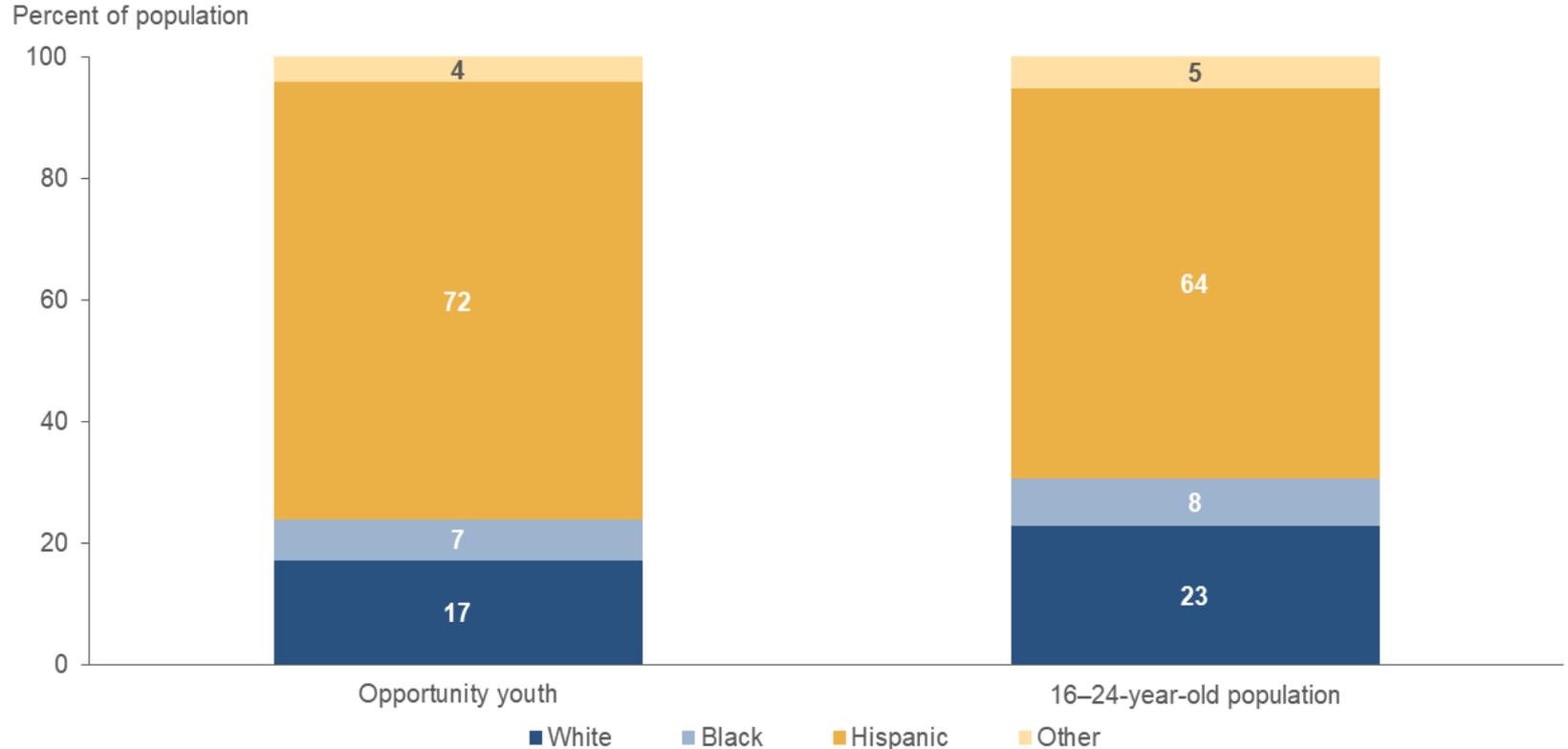
## Bexar County

33,613 opportunity youth

Disconnection rate: 13.2%

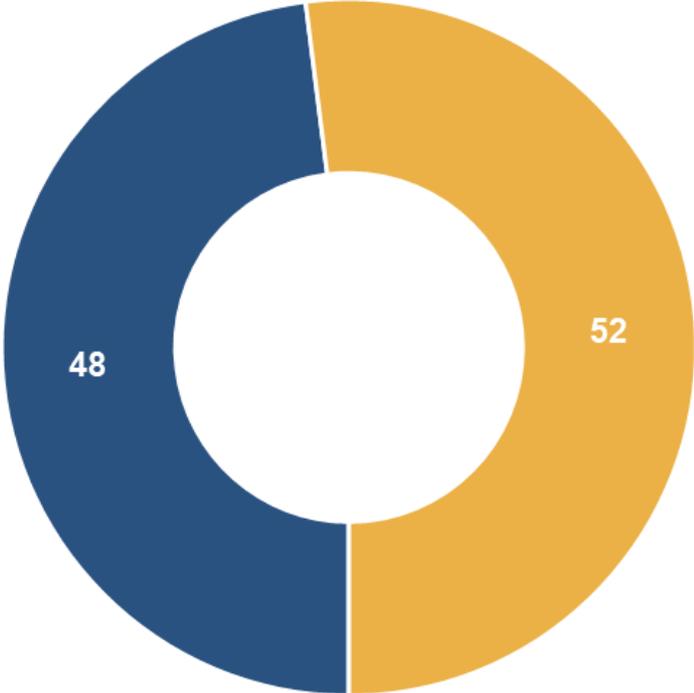


# Opportunity Youth By Race/Ethnicity in Bexar County



SOURCE: Census Bureau.

# Opportunity Youth By Gender in Bexar County



■ Male ■ Female

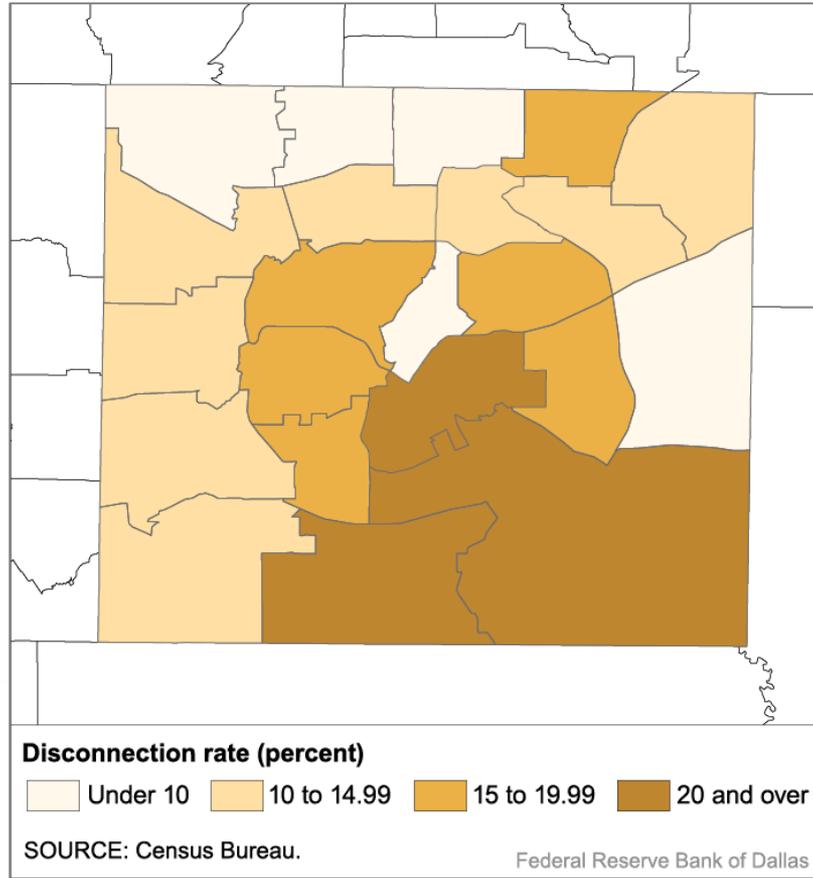
SOURCE: Census Bureau.

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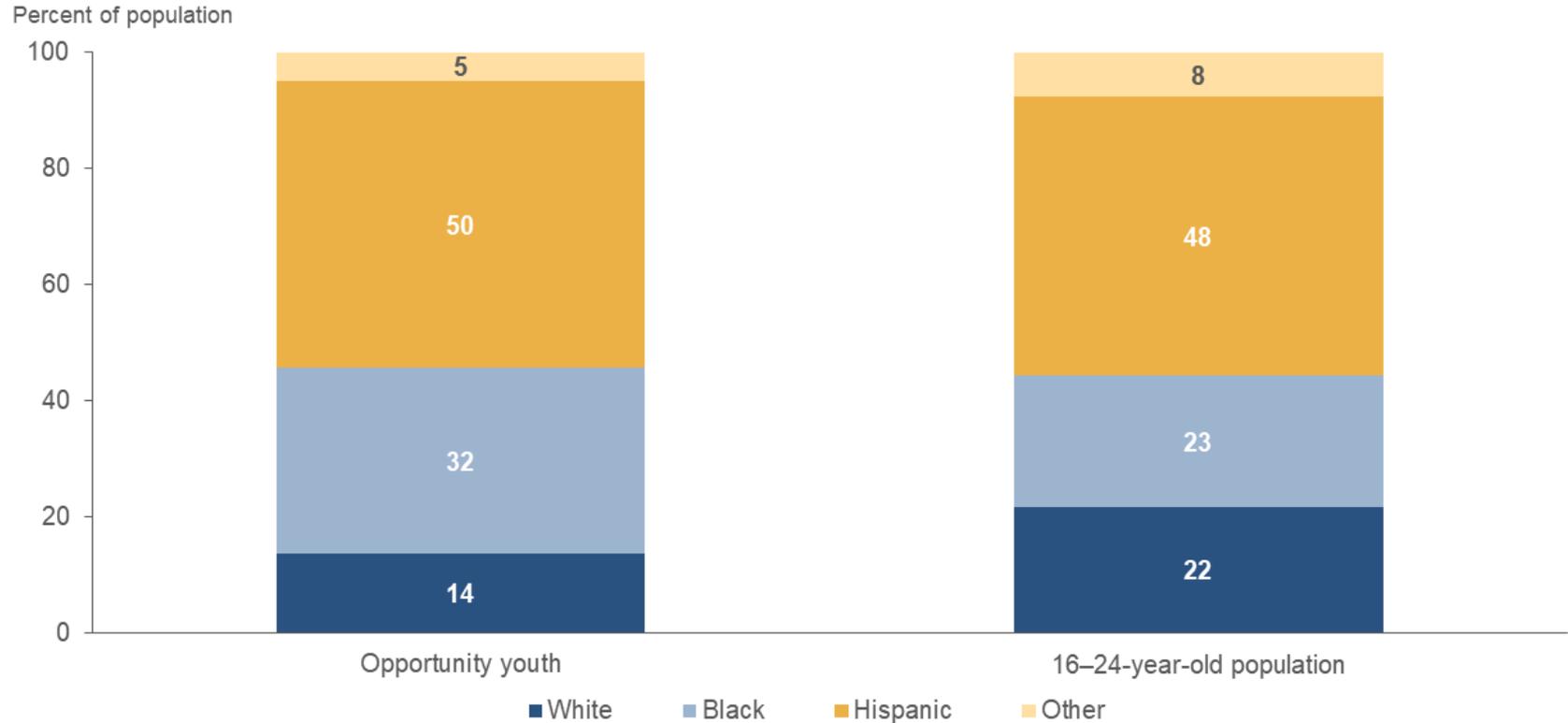
# Dallas County

45,010 opportunity youth

Disconnection rate: 14.2%



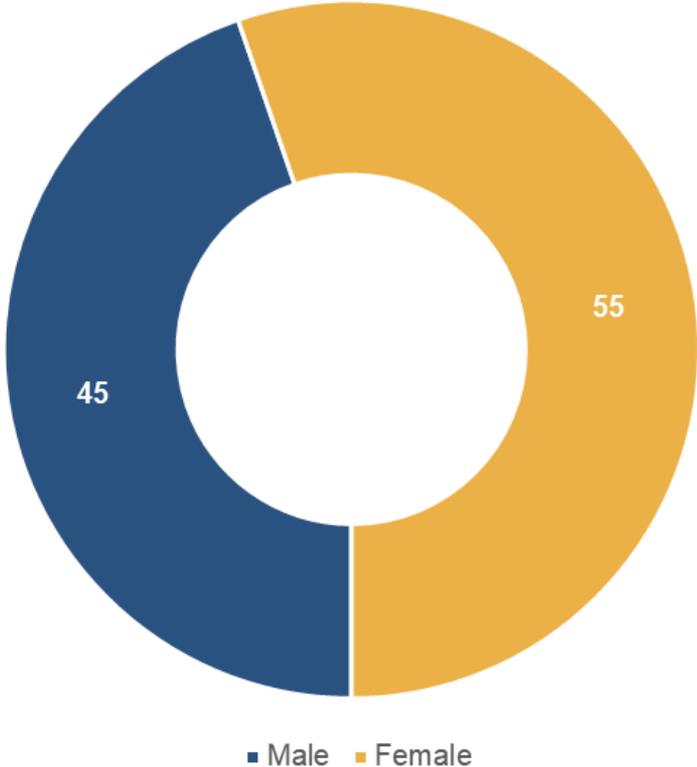
# Opportunity Youth By Race/Ethnicity in Dallas County



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Census Bureau.

# Opportunity Youth By Gender in Dallas County



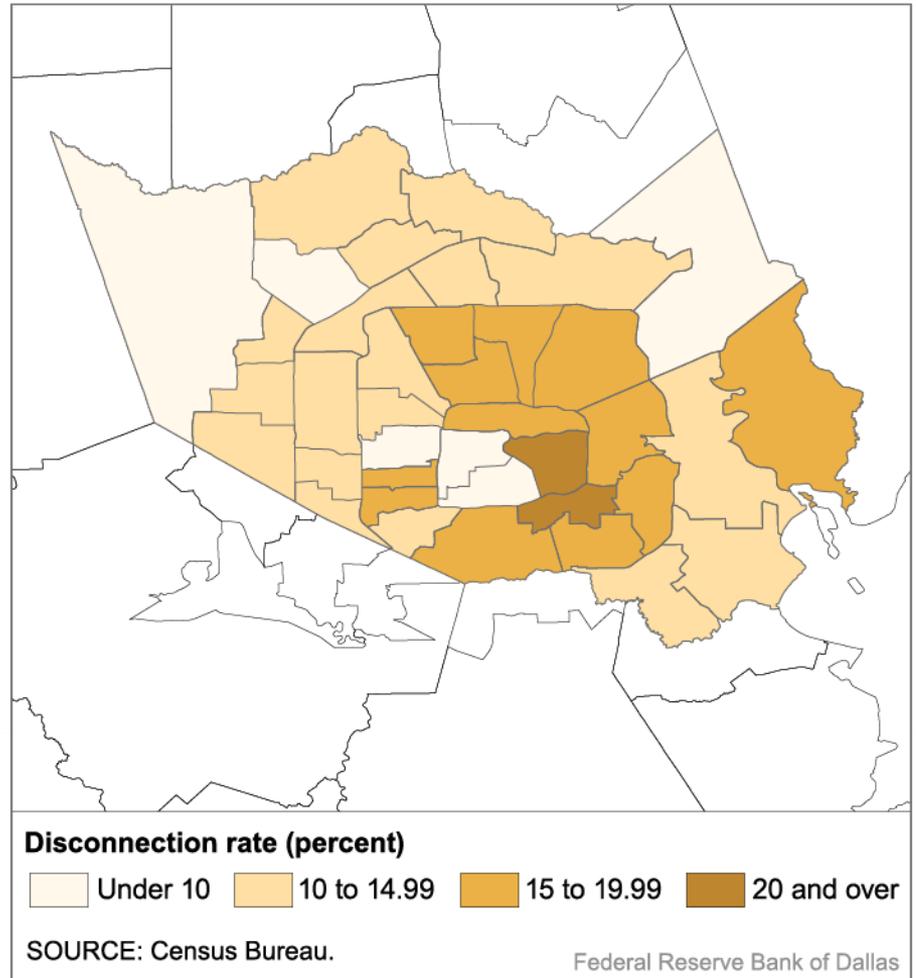
SOURCE: Census Bureau.

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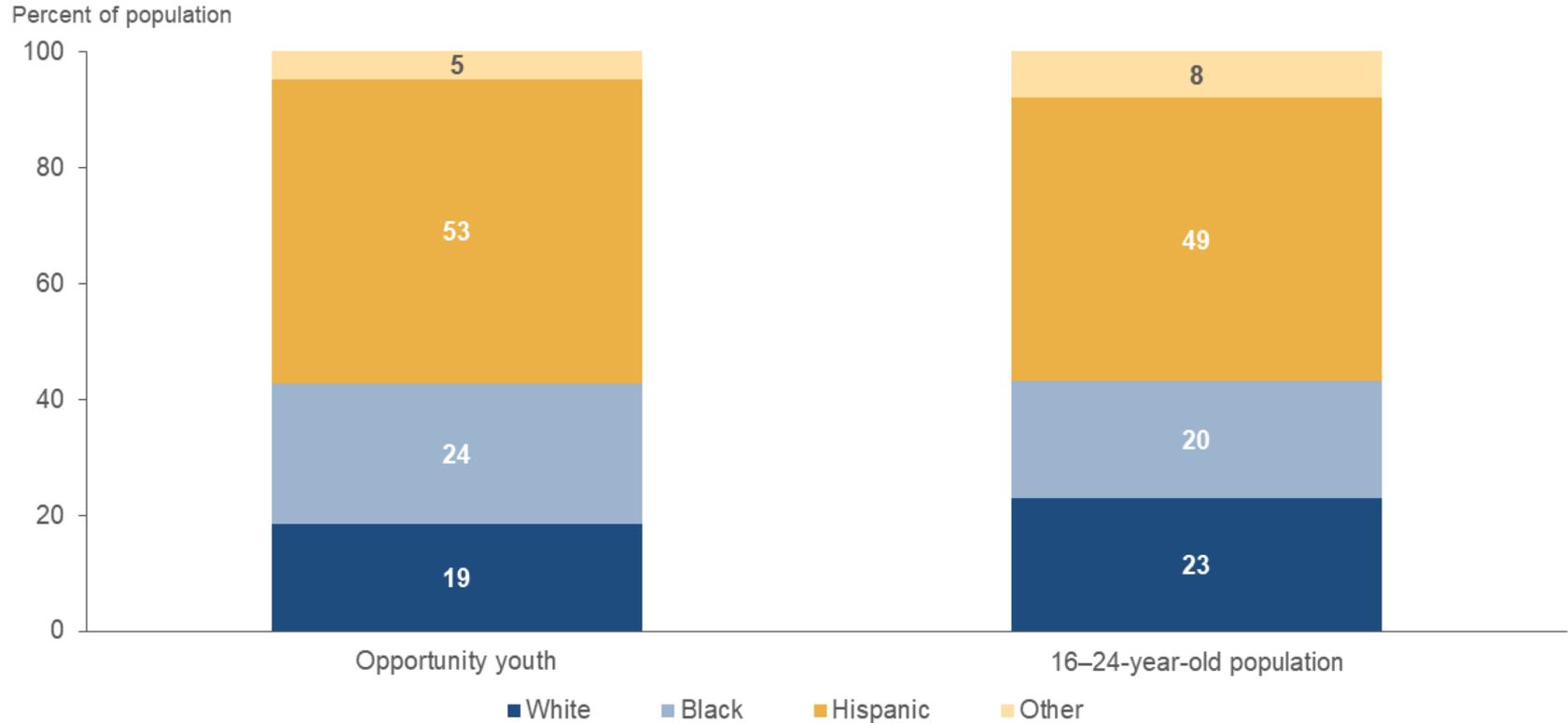
# Harris County

75,852 opportunity youth

Disconnection rate: 13.4%



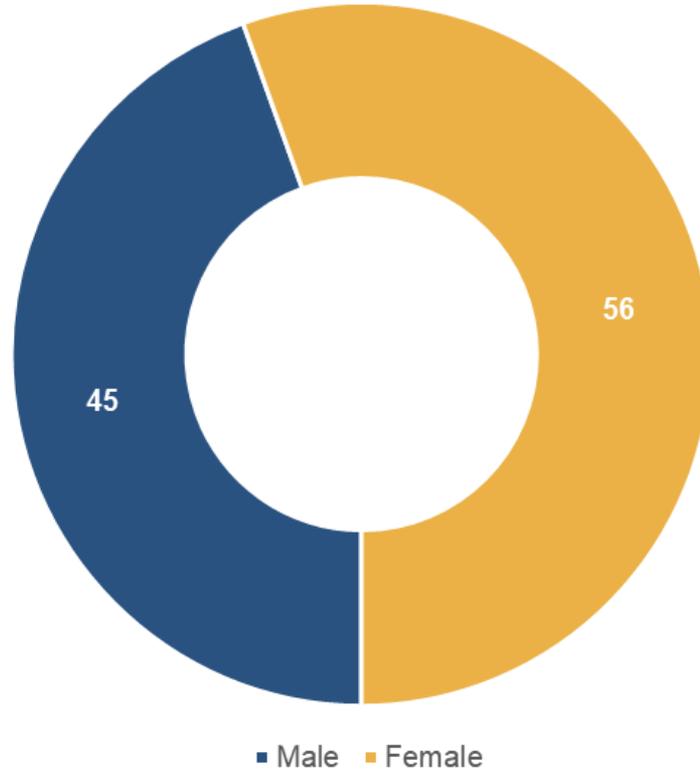
# Opportunity Youth By Race/Ethnicity in Harris County



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Census Bureau.

# Opportunity Youth By Gender in Harris County

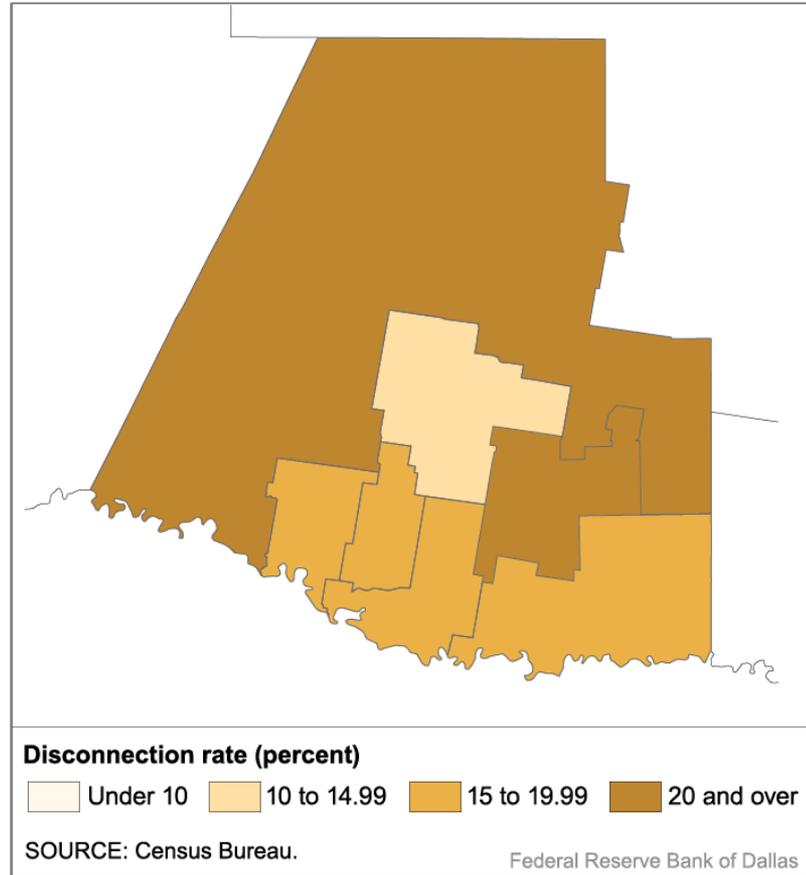


NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Census Bureau.

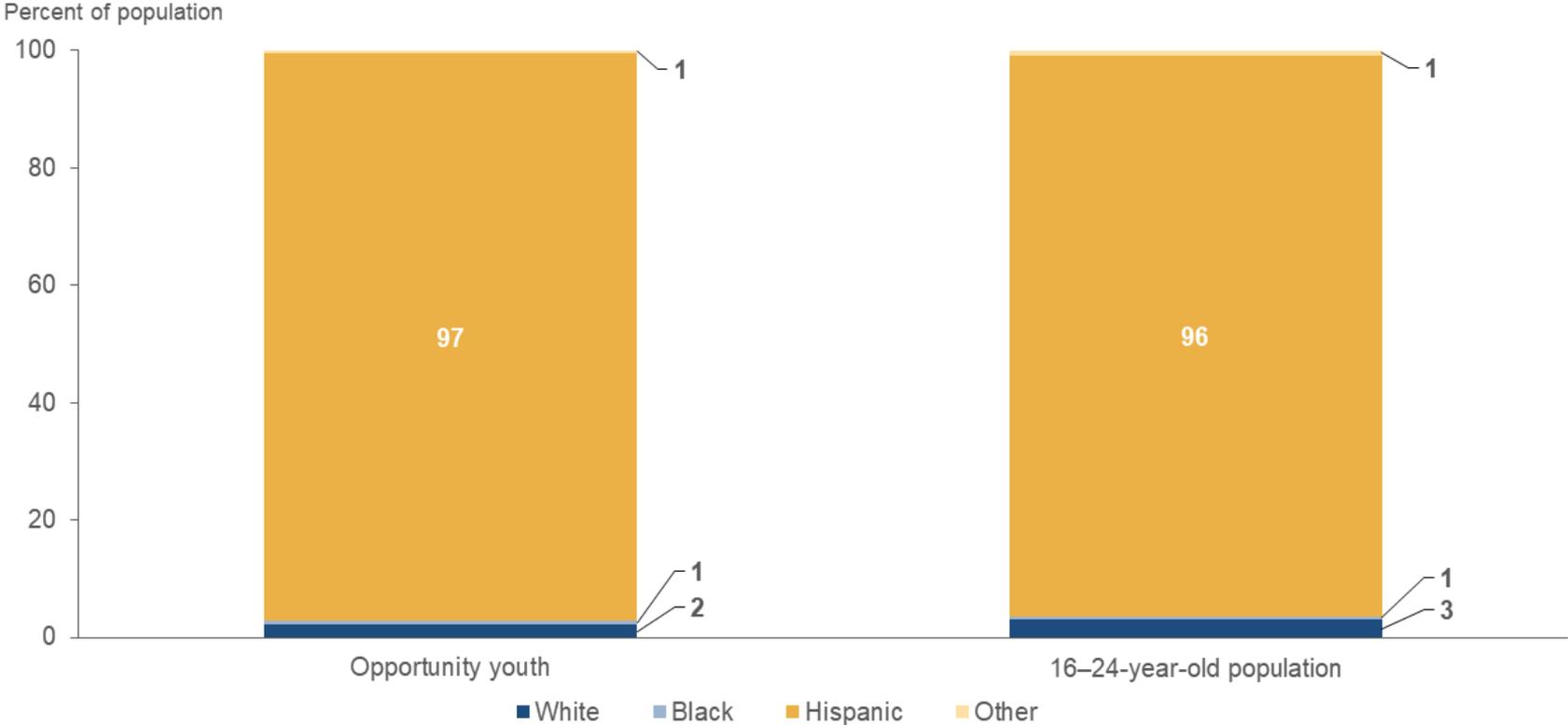
# Hidalgo County

22,601 opportunity youth

Disconnection rate: 18.5%

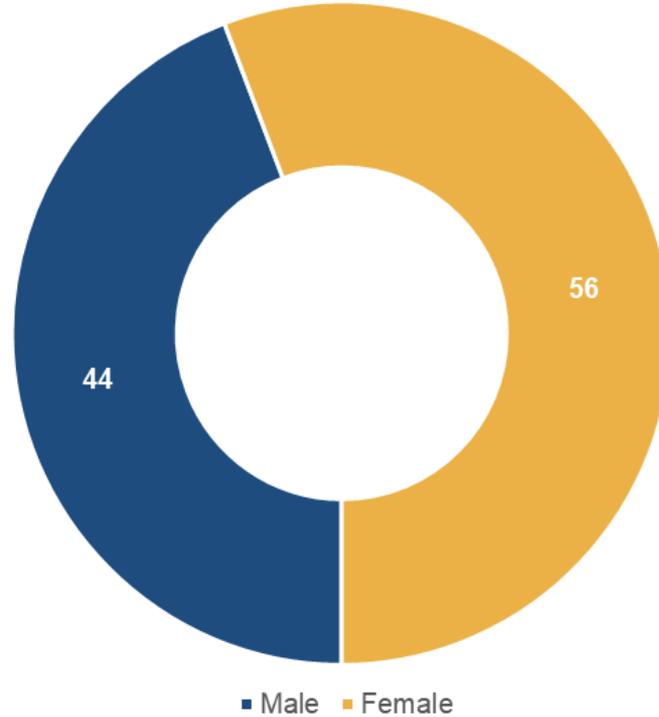


# Opportunity Youth By Race/Ethnicity in Hidalgo County



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Census Bureau.

# Opportunity Youth By Gender in Hidalgo County



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Census Bureau.

# Insights from Focus Groups

- We conducted three focus groups of former opportunity youth in Harris County and Hidalgo County
  - Disconnection is often the result of a difficult choice (e.g., family member falls ill and needs a caretaker)
  - Participants thrive with the investment, financial or emotional, of a trusted adult
  - Programs are most helpful when they're flexible (schedules, form of communication)
    - Continuation of services also important
- 

## Insights from Focus Groups, Continued

### Barriers to education:

- Curriculum/class offerings
- Financial aid forms
- Enrolling in courses
- Understanding requirements for graduation

### Barriers to employment:

- Online applications
- Lack of a social network

# Insights from Focus Groups, Continued

**Speak your mind.**

**Don't let anything  
hold you back.**

**Learn from  
my mistakes.**

**Be heard and not listened to.**

**No more self-doubt.**

**Admit your mistakes.**

**You only live once;  
make good decisions.**

**Don't get greedy—stick it out  
[by completing high school  
rather than working].**

**Give it [the program] a  
chance, and be open-minded.**

**Don't give up.**

**Work hard.**

**Keep going.**

**Read a lot.**

**You can't control  
everything that  
happens to you, but  
you can control the  
amount of effort you  
put into things.**

**Don't leave a  
stone unturned.**

## Reconnection Strategies

- We interviewed community practitioners in the four counties (plus in Austin and Lufkin), and they shared about reconnection strategies they've found successful:
  - Location and transportation
  - Continuity of services
  - Mental health services
  - Cultural competency
  - Cross-sector collaboration
  - Elimination of small-dollar barriers
  - Caring for the most vulnerable

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