

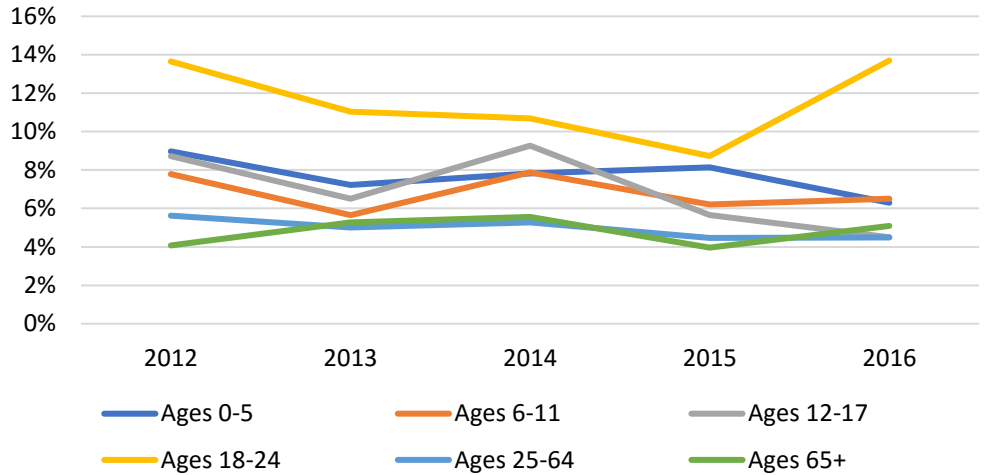


Transitional-Age Youth in Johnson County

United Community Services tracks the trends and needs of young adults 18 – 24 years of age in Johnson County, often referred to as transitional-age youth (TAY). Young adults are in a critical developmental stage of life. It is a time when many prepare to launch into independence, higher education, or full-time employment, setting the foundation for their future. Those who enter this stage without the support of family connections or a financial safety net are more likely to experience poverty as adults.

Transitional-age youth are the most likely age group to experience poverty in Johnson County. According to the most recent data (2016) from the U.S. Census Bureau, TAY are the only age group to experience a significant increase in their poverty rate from the previous year. The poverty rate for TAY (13.7%) is more than double the poverty rate of the total population (5.6%).

Transitional-age youth have the highest poverty rate of any age group in Johnson County



Other characteristics of Johnson County transitional-age youth (TAY) include:

- 29% of TAY live alone or with a non-family member (for example, a roommate or romantic partner)
- 11% of TAY do not have health insurance. By comparison, only 5% of the total Johnson County population is uninsured.
- 77% of TAY work either part-time or full-time. (note: U.S. Census includes 16 and 17 year olds in employment estimates)

The risk of experiencing poverty is especially high for youth who age out of foster care or juvenile justice systems, experience homelessness, are diagnosed with mental health issues, are pregnant or parenting, or identify as LGBT. Every year, on average, 36 Johnson County youth age out of the Kansas foster care system, representing 54% of the 67 youth on average who age out of foster care in the five county Kansas City region annually.

UCS facilitates the Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Planning Project which convenes youth-serving agencies to plan and implement system improvements. The project aims to improve outcomes for TAY in the areas of housing, health and wellbeing, education, employment, financial opportunity, and social connections. In 2016, UCS published [From Foster Care to Independence: An Assessment of Best Practices to Support Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care](#).

Poverty Rates for Transitional-Age Youth
 U.S.: 22%
 Kansas: 26%
 Johnson County: 13%

Supporting transitional-age youth requires thoughtful and thorough assessment of the system that serves them, followed by strategic actions to ensure that they have the best possible supports to start life as adults in our community.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 1-year estimates 2012-2016
Published December 2017

