

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5582

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 8, 2023

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman LISA SWAIN

District 38 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblyman ERIK K. SIMONSEN

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

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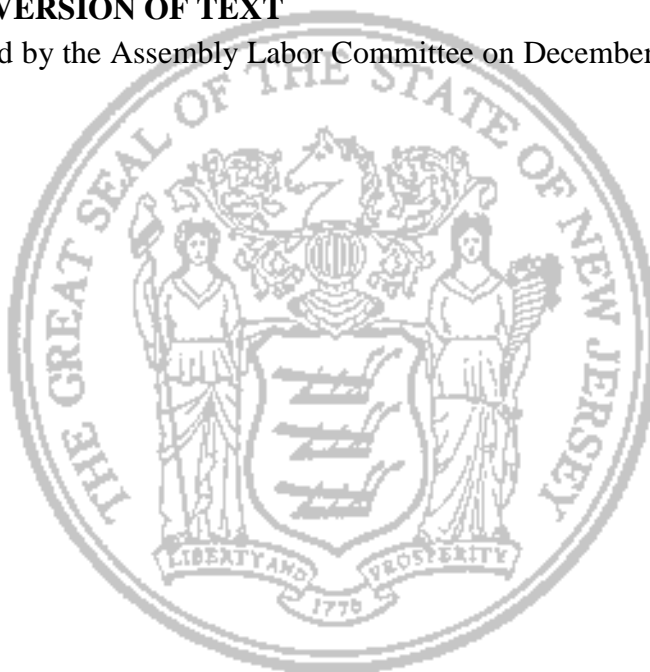
Assemblymen Sampson, McClellan, Freiman and Assemblywoman Mosquera

SYNOPSIS

Establishes grant program for NJ YouthBuild programs through DOLWD; makes appropriation.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Labor Committee on December 14, 2023, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/21/2023)

1 AN ACT creating YouthBuild programs, supplementing Title 34 of
2 the Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as ¹the¹ “¹**[The]**¹
8 New Jersey YouthBuild Act.”

9
10 2. The purpose of the “¹**[The]**¹ New Jersey YouthBuild Act”
11 shall be to:

12 a. Enable economically disadvantaged youth, especially youth
13 who have not finished high school, to obtain the education, job
14 skills training, personal counseling, leadership development skills
15 training, job placement assistance, and long-term follow-up leading
16 to economic self-sufficiency;

17 b. Provide communities the opportunity to establish or rebuild
18 neighborhood stability in economically depressed and low-income
19 areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration or preservation,
20 while providing economically disadvantaged youth and youth who
21 have not finished high school an opportunity for meaningful
22 participation in society;

23 c. Allow communities to maintain and expand the supply of
24 affordable housing for homeless and other low-income individuals
25 by utilizing the energies and talents of economically disadvantaged
26 youth and young people who have not graduated from high school;
27 and

28 d. Foster the development of leadership skills and a
29 commitment to community development among youth.

30
31 3. As used in this act:

32 "Applicant" means a public or private not-for-profit agency
33 eligible to provide education and employment training under federal
34 or State employment training programs.

35 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of the Department of
36 Labor and Workforce Development.

37 “Department” means the Department of Labor and Workforce
38 Development.

39 “Eligible entity” means a public or private nonprofit agency or
40 organization, including a consortium of public or private nonprofit
41 agencies or organizations, including but not limited to:

42 (1) a community-based organization;

43 (2) a faith-based organization;

44 (3) an entity carrying out activities under this act, such as a local
45 board;

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly ALA committee amendments adopted December 14, 2023.

- 1 (4) a community action agency;
- 2 (5) a State or local housing development agency;
- 3 (6) an Indian tribe or other agency primarily serving Indians;
- 4 (7) a community development corporation;
- 5 (8) a State or local youth service or conservation corps; and
- 6 (9) any other entity eligible to provide education or employment
- 7 training under a federal program (other than the program carried out
- 8 under this section).

9 "YouthBuild" means the program established by this act that
10 provides disadvantaged youth with opportunities for comprehensive
11 education, employment, leadership development, and training in the
12 construction or rehabilitation of housing for special needs
13 populations, very low-income households and low-income
14 households.

15

16 4. a. The commissioner shall, subject to appropriation, make
17 grants to applicants for the purpose of carrying out ¹**["Youthbuild"]**
18 YouthBuild¹ programs as approved under this section. All
19 programs funded pursuant to the provisions of this section shall
20 reflect strong youth and community involvement. In addition,
21 funding provided under this section shall be used by each
22 ¹**["Youthbuild"]** YouthBuild¹ program to provide, at a minimum, the
23 following services:

24 (1) integrated education and job skills training services and
25 activities which are evenly divided within the program, with 50
26 percent of students' time spent in classroom-based instruction,
27 counseling, and leadership development instruction and 50 percent
28 of their time spent in service learning experiences at construction
29 sites. The programs shall include, at a minimum, the following
30 elements:

31 (a) an education component which includes basic skills
32 instruction, secondary education services, and other activities
33 designed to lead to the attainment of a high school diploma or its
34 equivalent. The curriculum for this component shall include math,
35 language arts, vocational education, life skills training, social
36 studies related to the cultural and community history of the
37 students, leadership skills, and other topics at the discretion of the
38 programs;

39 (b) a vocational learning experience and skills training
40 component apprenticeship program that includes the construction
41 and rehabilitation activities described in paragraph (4) of this
42 subsection. The process of construction shall be tied with skills
43 training and with close on-site supervision by experienced trainers.
44 The curriculum for this component shall contain a set of locally
45 agreed upon skills and competencies that are systematically taught,
46 with a student's mastery assessed individually on a regular, ongoing
47 basis. Safety skills shall be taught at the outset. The vocational
48 learning experience and skills training component shall be

1 coordinated to the maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship
2 and apprenticeship programs. In order to receive grant funding,
3 programs shall offer vocational learning experiences that conclude
4 with the administration of assessments to obtain an industry-valued
5 credential, per the list provided by the Department of Labor and
6 Workforce Development; and

7 (c) assistance in attaining post-secondary education and
8 required financial aid to be made available to participants prior to
9 graduation;

10 (2) counseling services designed to assist participants to
11 positively participate in society, which should include all of the
12 following if necessary: outreach, assessment, and orientation;
13 individual and peer counseling; life skills training, drug and alcohol
14 abuse education and prevention; and referral to appropriate drug
15 rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal, housing, and other
16 services and resources in the community;

17 (3) leadership development training that provides participants
18 with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership skills such as
19 decision making, problem solving, and negotiating. The program
20 shall also encourage participants to develop strong peer group ties
21 that support their mutual pursuit of skills and values. All programs
22 shall establish a youth council in which participants are afforded
23 opportunities to develop public speaking and negotiating skills, and
24 management and policy-making participation in specific aspects of
25 the program; and

26 (4) assistance with the acquisition, rehabilitation, acquisition
27 and rehabilitation, or construction of housing and related facilities
28 which will serve as the vocational training sites and then to be used
29 for the purpose of providing home ownership for disadvantaged
30 persons, residential housing for homeless individuals, and low-
31 income and very low-income families, or transitional housing for
32 persons who are homeless, have disabilities, are ill, are de-
33 institutionalized, or have special needs and rehabilitation or
34 construction of community facilities owned by not-for-profit or
35 public agencies.

36 b. A YouthBuild program shall provide a stipend to
37 participants to cover the costs associated with their full time
38 participation in the program. The stipend shall not be considered as
39 income in determining eligibility for other State or federal
40 assistance programs. Stipends may be distributed in a manner that
41 offers incentives for good performance.

42 c. Full-time participation in a YouthBuild program shall be
43 offered for a period of not less than six months and not more than
44 24 months.

45 d. A concentrated effort shall be made to find jobs for all
46 graduates of the program who have performed well. The skills
47 training curriculum shall provide participants with basic preparation
48 for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and

1 assistance in job-seeking shall also be provided to participants for
2 the 12 months following graduation from the program.

3 e. All programs serving 20 trainees or more are required to
4 have a full-time director responsible for the coordination of all
5 aspects of the YouthBuild program.

6
7 5. a. Eligible participants in a YouthBuild program shall be
8 youth, 16 to 24 years old, who are economically disadvantaged as
9 defined in 29 U.S.C. s.1503, and who are part of one of at least one
10 of the following groups:

11 (1) persons who are not attending any school and not received a
12 secondary school diploma or its equivalent;

13 (2) persons currently enrolled in a traditional or alternative
14 school setting or a high school equivalency testing program and
15 who are in danger of dropping out of school; or

16 (3) a member of a low-income family, a youth in foster care
17 (including a youth aging-out of foster care), a youth offender, a
18 youth with a disability, a child or incarcerated parents, or a migrant
19 youth.

20 b. Not more than 25 percent of participants in the program may
21 be individuals who do not meet the requirements of paragraphs (1)
22 or (2) of subsection a. of this section, but who are deficient in basic
23 skills despite having attained a secondary school diploma, high
24 school equivalency certificate, or other State-recognized equivalent,
25 or who have been referred by a local secondary school for
26 participation in a YouthBuild program leading to the attainment of a
27 secondary school diploma.

28
29 6. Eligible entities to be awarded funds under this act are not-
30 for-profit private agencies with experience operating a YouthBuild
31 program or entities that have received a federal Housing and Urban
32 Development (HUD) YouthBuild grant or have experience in
33 serving this population and have plans to incubate a YouthBuild
34 program. Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall be
35 given to applicants with experience in operating YouthBuild
36 programs or organizations that have received HUD YouthBuild
37 funding. Only not-for-profit private agencies that are affiliates of
38 YouthBuild USA or have received a federal HUD YouthBuild grant
39 shall be eligible to use the term YouthBuild.

40
41 7. The commissioner shall require that an application for
42 YouthBuild funds under this act contain at a minimum:

43 a. A request for an implementation grant, specifying the
44 amount of the grant requested and its proposed uses;

45 b. A description of the applicant and a statement of its
46 qualifications, including a description of the applicant's past
47 experience running a YouthBuild program, and with housing
48 rehabilitation or construction and with youth and youth education,

- 1 youth leadership development and employment training programs
2 and other relevant community organizations;
- 3 c. A description of the educational and job training activities,
4 work opportunities, and other services that will be provided to
5 participants;
- 6 d. A description of the proposed construction or rehabilitation
7 activities to be undertaken and the anticipated schedule for carrying
8 out those activities;
- 9 e. A description of the manner in which eligible youths will be
10 recruited and selected, including a description of the arrangements
11 which will be made with community-based organizations, local
12 educational agencies, public assistance agencies, the courts of
13 jurisdiction for status and youth offenders, shelters for homeless
14 individuals and other agencies that serve homeless youth, foster
15 care agencies, and other appropriate public and private agencies;
- 16 f. A description of the special efforts that will be undertaken to
17 recruit eligible young women (including young women with
18 dependent children) with plans for addressing appropriate supports
19 they may need, especially childcare;
- 20 g. A description of how the proposed program will be
21 coordinated with other youth serving agencies in the service area;
- 22 h. Assurances that there will be a sufficient number of
23 adequately trained supervisory personnel in the program who have
24 attained the level of journeyman or its equivalent;
- 25 i. A description of the applicant's relationship with any local
26 building trade unions, which may exist, regarding their involvement
27 in training, and the relationship of the YouthBuild program with
28 established apprenticeship programs;
- 29 j. A description of activities that will be undertaken to develop
30 the leadership skills of participants, including their role in decision
31 making;
- 32 k. A detailed budget and a description of the system of fiscal
33 controls and auditing and accountability procedures that will be
34 used to ensure fiscal soundness;
- 35 l. A description of any contracts and arrangements entered into
36 between the applicant and other agencies and entities including all
37 in-kind donations and grants from both public and private entities
38 that will serve to augment State YouthBuild funds;
- 39 m. The qualifications and past experience of the person who
40 will fill the full-time program director position; and
- 41 n. Other information or factors as deemed necessary by the
42 commissioner.
- 43
- 44 8. a. An applicant selected for funding under this act shall
45 provide to the department information on program and participant
46 outcomes, including but not limited to: attendance, retention, GED
47 attainment, high school diplomas issued, educational improvement

1 levels, placement, construction outcomes and community service
2 accomplishments.

3 b. The department shall prepare and submit annual evaluation
4 reports to the Governor and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of
5 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) on the progress of individual
6 programs funded under this act. The department shall prepare and
7 submit a final evaluation report to the Governor and the Legislature,
8 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), on
9 individual programs at the times of program completion. The final
10 evaluation report shall include, but not be limited to, information on
11 the effectiveness of the program, the status of program participants
12 and recommendations on program administration at the State and
13 local level. The Department shall submit the first evaluation report
14 by July 1, 2024, and subsequent annual reports by July 1 of each
15 year thereafter.

16
17 9. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
18 Department of Labor and Workforce Development ¹funds¹ from
19 ¹the federal “CARES Act,” Pub.L. 116-136, and the “American
20 Rescue Plan Act of 2021,” Pub.L. 117-2, provided to this State and
21 which may be available for the purposes of this act, federal block
22 grants, or other available federal funding sources sufficient¹ to
23 effectuate the provisions of this act¹]:

- 24 a. \$4,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
25 b. \$4,400,000 for fiscal year 2025;
26 c. \$4,900,000 for fiscal year 2026;
27 d. \$5,400,000 for fiscal year 2027; and
28 e. \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2028¹.
29

30 10. This act shall take effect immediately.