

[First Reprint]

**SENATE, No. 3781**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**220th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MAY 8, 2023

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JOSEPH A. LAGANA**

**District 38 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN**

**District 20 (Union)**

**SYNOPSIS**

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

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

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



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/27/2023)**

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 <sup>1</sup>the <sup>1</sup>“**[The]**<sup>1</sup>  
8 New Jersey YouthBuild Act.”

9  
10 2. The purpose of the <sup>1</sup>“**[The]**<sup>1</sup> 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 skills  
14 training, personal counseling, leadership development skills training,  
15 job placement assistance, and long-term follow-up leading to  
16 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 by  
25 utilizing the energies and talents of economically disadvantaged youth  
26 and young people who have not graduated from high school; and

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

29  
30 3. As used in this act:

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

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

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

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

- 41 (1) a community-based organization;  
42 (2) a faith-based organization;  
43 (3) an entity carrying out activities under this act, such as a local  
44 board;  
45 (4) a community action agency;

**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:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SLA committee amendments adopted December 14, 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

(b) a vocational learning experience and skills training component apprenticeship program that includes the construction and rehabilitation activities described in paragraph (4) of this subsection. The process of construction shall be tied with skills training and with close on-site supervision by experienced trainers. The curriculum for this component shall contain a set of locally agreed upon skills and competencies that are systematically taught, with a student's mastery assessed individually on a regular, ongoing basis. Safety skills shall be taught at the outset. The vocational learning experience and skills training component shall be coordinated to the maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. In order to receive grant funding, programs shall offer vocational learning experiences that conclude with the administration of assessments to

- 1 obtain an industry-valued credential, per the list provided by the  
2 Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and
- 3 (c) assistance in attaining post-secondary education and required  
4 financial aid to be made available to participants prior to graduation;
- 5 (2) counseling services designed to assist participants to positively  
6 participate in society, which should include all of the following if  
7 necessary: outreach, assessment, and orientation; individual and peer  
8 counseling; life skills training, drug and alcohol abuse education and  
9 prevention; and referral to appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical,  
10 mental health, legal, housing, and other services and resources in the  
11 community;
- 12 (3) leadership development training that provides participants with  
13 meaningful opportunities to develop leadership skills such as decision  
14 making, problem solving, and negotiating. The program shall also  
15 encourage participants to develop strong peer group ties that support  
16 their mutual pursuit of skills and values. All programs shall establish a  
17 youth council in which participants are afforded opportunities to  
18 develop public speaking and negotiating skills, and management and  
19 policy-making participation in specific aspects of the program; and
- 20 (4) assistance with the acquisition, rehabilitation, acquisition and  
21 rehabilitation, or construction of housing and related facilities which  
22 will serve as the vocational training sites and then to be used for the  
23 purpose of providing home ownership for disadvantaged persons,  
24 residential housing for homeless individuals, and low-income and very  
25 low-income families, or transitional housing for persons who are  
26 homeless, have disabilities, are ill, are de-institutionalized, or have  
27 special needs and rehabilitation or construction of community facilities  
28 owned by not-for-profit or public agencies.
- 29 b. A YouthBuild program shall provide a stipend to participants  
30 to cover the costs associated with their full time participation in the  
31 program. The stipend shall not be considered as income in  
32 determining eligibility for other State or federal assistance programs.  
33 Stipends may be distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good  
34 performance.
- 35 c. Full-time participation in a YouthBuild program shall be  
36 offered for a period of not less than six months and not more than 24  
37 months.
- 38 d. A concentrated effort shall be made to find jobs for all  
39 graduates of the program who have performed well. The skills  
40 training curriculum shall provide participants with basic preparation  
41 for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and  
42 assistance in job-seeking shall also be provided to participants for the  
43 12 months following graduation from the program.
- 44 e. All programs serving 20 trainees or more are required to have a  
45 full-time director responsible for the coordination of all aspects of the  
46 YouthBuild program.

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

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

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

10       (3) a member of a low-income family, a youth in foster care  
11 (including a youth aging-out of foster care), a youth offender, a  
12 youth with a disability, a child or incarcerated parents, or a migrant  
13 youth.

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

22  
23       6. Eligible entities to be awarded funds under this act are not-  
24 for-profit private agencies with experience operating a YouthBuild  
25 program or entities that have received a federal Housing and Urban  
26 Development (HUD) YouthBuild grant or have experience in  
27 serving this population and have plans to incubate a YouthBuild  
28 program. Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall be  
29 given to applicants with experience in operating YouthBuild  
30 programs or organizations that have received HUD YouthBuild  
31 funding. Only not-for-profit private agencies that are affiliates of  
32 YouthBuild USA or have received a federal HUD YouthBuild grant  
33 shall be eligible to use the term YouthBuild.

34  
35       7. The commissioner shall require that an application for  
36 YouthBuild funds under this act contain at a minimum:

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

39       b. A description of the applicant and a statement of its  
40 qualifications, including a description of the applicant's past  
41 experience running a YouthBuild program, and with housing  
42 rehabilitation or construction and with youth and youth education,  
43 youth leadership development and employment training programs  
44 and other relevant community organizations;

45       c. A description of the educational and job training activities,  
46 work opportunities, and other services that will be provided to  
47 participants;

- 1 d. A description of the proposed construction or rehabilitation
- 2 activities to be undertaken and the anticipated schedule for carrying
- 3 out those activities;
- 4 e. A description of the manner in which eligible youths will be
- 5 recruited and selected, including a description of the arrangements
- 6 which will be made with community-based organizations, local
- 7 educational agencies, public assistance agencies, the courts of
- 8 jurisdiction for status and youth offenders, shelters for homeless
- 9 individuals and other agencies that serve homeless youth, foster
- 10 care agencies, and other appropriate public and private agencies;
- 11 f. A description of the special efforts that will be undertaken to
- 12 recruit eligible young women (including young women with
- 13 dependent children) with plans for addressing appropriate supports
- 14 they may need, especially childcare;
- 15 g. A description of how the proposed program will be
- 16 coordinated with other youth serving agencies in the service area;
- 17 h. Assurances that there will be a sufficient number of
- 18 adequately trained supervisory personnel in the program who have
- 19 attained the level of journeyman or its equivalent;
- 20 i. A description of the applicant's relationship with any local
- 21 building trade unions, which may exist, regarding their involvement
- 22 in training, and the relationship of the YouthBuild program with
- 23 established apprenticeship programs;
- 24 j. A description of activities that will be undertaken to develop
- 25 the leadership skills of participants, including their role in decision
- 26 making;
- 27 k. A detailed budget and a description of the system of fiscal
- 28 controls and auditing and accountability procedures that will be
- 29 used to ensure fiscal soundness;
- 30 l. A description of any contracts and arrangements entered into
- 31 between the applicant and other agencies and entities including all
- 32 in-kind donations and grants from both public and private entities
- 33 that will serve to augment State YouthBuild funds;
- 34 m. The qualifications and past experience of the person who
- 35 will fill the full-time program director position; and
- 36 n. Other information or factors as deemed necessary by the
- 37 commissioner.
- 38
- 39 8. a. An applicant selected for funding under this act shall
- 40 provide to the department information on program and participant
- 41 outcomes, including but not limited to: attendance, retention, GED
- 42 attainment, high school diplomas issued, educational improvement
- 43 levels, placement, construction outcomes and community service
- 44 accomplishments.
- 45 b. The department shall prepare and submit annual evaluation
- 46 reports to the Governor and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of
- 47 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) on the progress of individual
- 48 programs funded under this act. The department shall prepare and

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

10  
11 9. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department  
12 of Labor and Workforce Development <sup>1</sup>funds<sup>1</sup> from <sup>1</sup>the federal  
13 “CARES Act,” Pub.L. 116-136, and the “American Rescue Plan Act  
14 of 2021,” Pub.L. 117-2, provided to this State and which may be  
15 available for the purposes of this act, federal block grants, or other  
16 available federal funding sources sufficient<sup>1</sup> to effectuate the  
17 provisions of this act<sup>1</sup>]:

- 18 a. \$4,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;  
19 b. \$4,400,000 for fiscal year 2025;  
20 c. \$4,900,000 for fiscal year 2026;  
21 d. \$5,400,000 for fiscal year 2027; and  
22 e. \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2028<sup>1</sup>.

23  
24 10. This act shall take effect immediately.