

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3781

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

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 Budget and Appropriations Committee on January 4, 2024, 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 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 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;

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:

¹Senate SLA committee amendments adopted December 14, 2023.

²Senate SBA committee amendments adopted January 4, 2024.

- 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 programs
19 funded pursuant to the provisions of this section shall reflect strong
20 youth and community involvement. In addition, funding provided
21 under this section shall be used by each ¹**["Youthbuild"]** YouthBuild¹
22 program to provide, at a minimum, the following services:

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

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

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

1 experiences that conclude with the administration of assessments to
2 obtain an industry-valued credential, per the list provided by the
3 Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and

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

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

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

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

30 b. A YouthBuild program shall provide a stipend to participants
31 to cover the costs associated with their full time participation in the
32 program. The stipend shall not be considered as income in
33 determining eligibility for other State or federal assistance programs.
34 Stipends may be distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good
35 performance.

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

39 d. A concentrated effort shall be made to find jobs for all
40 graduates of the program who have performed well. The skills
41 training curriculum shall provide participants with basic preparation
42 for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and
43 assistance in job-seeking shall also be provided to participants for the
44 12 months following graduation from the program.

45 e. All programs serving 20 trainees or more are required to have a
46 full-time director responsible for the coordination of all aspects of the
47 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 ²[9. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
12 Department of Labor and Workforce Development ¹funds¹ from ¹the
13 federal “CARES Act,” Pub.L. 116-136, and the “American Rescue
14 Plan Act of 2021,” Pub.L. 117-2, provided to this State and which may
15 be available for the purposes of this act, federal block grants, or other
16 available federal funding sources sufficient¹ to effectuate the
17 provisions of this act¹:

- 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 2028¹.²

23
24 ²9. Subject to the availability of federal funds provided or made
25 accessible to the State via federal block grant funds allocated to the
26 State from the federal “CARES Act,” Pub.L. 116-136, the
27 “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021,” Pub.L. 117-2, or other
28 federal funding sources, an amount determined by the
29 Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, not to exceed
30 \$4.5 million, shall be made available to the Department of Labor
31 and Workforce Development to effectuate the purposes of this act,
32 subject to the approval of the Director of Budget and Accounting in
33 the Office of Management and Budget.²

34
35 10. This act shall take effect immediately.