

By Mr. Lees, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 277) of Brian P. Lees, Paul J. Donato, Jeffrey Sanchez, Steven A. Tolman and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish a grant program for YouthBuild in the Department of Education, Education, Arts and Humanities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Three.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting
2 after section 89, the following sections:—
3 “Section 90. There is hereby established a grant program for
4 YouthBuild. Said program shall be administered by the depart-
5 ment pursuant to these sections. The purpose of the YouthBuild
6 Programs shall be:
7 (a) to enable economically disadvantaged youth, especially
8 youth who have not finished high school, to obtain the education,
9 job skills training, personal counseling, leadership development
10 skills training, job placement assistance, and long-term follow-up
11 leading to economic self sufficiency.
12 (b) to provide communities the opportunity to establish or
13 rebuild neighborhood stability in economically depressed and
14 low-income areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration or
15 preservation, while providing economically disadvantaged youth
16 and youth who have not finished high school an opportunity for
17 meaningful participation in society.
18 (c) to allow communities to maintain and expand the supply of
19 affordable housing for homeless and other low-income individuals
20 by utilizing the energies and talents of economically disadvantaged
21 youth and young people who have not graduated from high school.

22 (d) to foster the development of leadership skills and a commit-
23 ment to community development among youth.

24 Section 91: Definitions. In this Act:

25 “Applicant” means a public or private not-for-profit agency eli-
26 gible to provide education and employment training under federal
27 or State employment training programs.

28 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of the Department
29 of Education.

30 “YouthBuild” is a program that provides disadvantaged youth
31 with opportunities for comprehensive education, employment,
32 leadership development, and training in the construction or reha-
33 bilitation of housing for special needs populations, very low-
34 income households and low-income households.

35 Section 92: Program requirements. The Commissioner is
36 authorized to make grants to applicants for the purpose of pro-
37 viding YouthBuild programs as approved under this Section. All
38 programs funded pursuant to the provisions of this Section shall
39 reflect strong youth and community involvement. In addition,
40 funding provided under this Section shall be used by each Youth-
41 Build program to provide, at a minimum, the following services:

42 (a) Integrated education and job skills training services and
43 activities which are evenly divided within the program, with 50%
44 of students’ time spent in classroom-based instruction, counseling,
45 and leadership development instruction and 50% of their time
46 spent in service learning experiences at construction sites. The
47 programs shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

48 (1) An education component which includes basic skills instruc-
49 tion, secondary education services, and other activities designed to
50 lead to the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent.
51 The curriculum for this component shall include math, language
52 arts, vocational education, life skills training, social studies related
53 to the cultural and community history of the students, leadership
54 skills, and other topics at the discretion of the programs.

55 (2) A vocational learning experience and skills training compo-
56 nent apprenticeship program that includes the construction and
57 rehabilitation activities described in subsection (e). The process
58 of construction must be coupled with skills training and with
59 close on-site supervision by experienced trainers. The curriculum
60 for this component shall contain a set of locally agreed upon

61 skills and competencies that are systematically taught, with a
62 student's mastery assessed individually on a regular, ongoing
63 basis. Safety skills shall be taught at the outset. The vocational
64 learning experience and skills training component shall be coord-
65 inated to the maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship
66 and apprenticeship programs.

67 (3) Assistance in attaining post secondary education and
68 required financial aid shall be made available to participants
69 prior to graduation.

70 (b) Counseling services designed to assist participants to posi-
71 tively participate in society, which should include all of the
72 following if necessary: outreach, assessment, and orientation;
73 individual and peer counseling; life skills training, drug and
74 alcohol abuse education and prevention; and referral to appro-
75 priate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal, housing,
76 and other services and resources in the community.

77 (c) Leadership development training that provides participants
78 with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership skills such
79 as decision making, problem solving, and negotiating. The pro-
80 gram must also encourage participants to develop strong peer
81 group ties that support their mutual pursuit of skills and values.
82 All programs must establish a youth council in which partici-
83 pants are afforded opportunities to develop public speaking and
84 negotiating skills, and management and policy-making participa-
85 tion in specific aspects of the program.

86 (d) Assist with the acquisition, rehabilitation, acquisition and
87 rehabilitation, or construction of housing and related facilities
88 which will serve as the vocational training sites and then to be
89 used for the purpose of providing home ownership for disadvan-
90 taged persons, residential housing for homeless individuals, and
91 low-income and very low-income families, or transitional
92 housing for persons who are homeless, have disabilities, are ill,
93 are de-institutionalized, or have special needs, and rehabilitation
94 or construction of community facilities owned by not-for-profit
95 or public agencies.

96 (e) A stipend must be provided to participants to cover the
97 costs associated with their full time participation in this pro-
98 gram. This stipend shall not be considered as income in deter-
99 mining eligibility for other state or federal assistance programs.

100 (f) Stipends may be distributed in a manner that offers incen-
101 tives for good performance.

102 (g) Full time participation in a YouthBuild program shall be
103 offered for a period of not less than 6 months and not more than
104 24 months.

105 (h) A concentrated effort shall be made to find jobs for all
106 graduates of the program who have performed well. The skills
107 training curriculum shall provide participants with basic prepara-
108 tion for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and
109 assistance in job-seeking shall also be provided to participants for
110 the 12 months following graduation from the program.

111 (i) All programs serving 20 trainees or more are required to
112 have a full-time director responsible for the coordination of all
113 aspects of the YouthBuild program.

114 Section 93. Eligible participants. Eligible participants are youth
115 16 to 24 years and who are part of one of the following groups: (a)
116 economically disadvantaged. (b) persons who are not attending
117 any school and have not received a secondary school diploma or
118 its equivalent. (c) young people involved with other state agencies,
119 including but not limited to, the departments of social services,
120 youth services and the court system.

121 Section 94. Eligible Entities and Selection Criteria. Those eli-
122 gible to be awarded funds under this act are not-for-profit pri-
123 vate agencies with experience operating a YouthBuild program
124 or entities that have received a federal Housing and urban
125 Development YouthBuild grant or have experience in serving
126 this population and have plans to incubate a YouthBuild pro-
127 gram. Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall be
128 given to applicants with experience in operating YouthBuild
129 programs or organizations that have received federal HUD
130 YouthBuild funding. Only not for profit private agencies that are
131 affiliates of YouthBuild USA or have received a federal Housing
132 and Urban Development YouthBuild award are eligible to use
133 the term YouthBuild.

134 Section 95. Application requirements. The Commissioner shall
135 require that an application for YouthBuild funds under this act
136 contain at a minimum:

137 (1) a request for an implementation grant, specifying the
138 amount of the grant requested and its proposed uses;

139 (2) a description of the applicant and a statement of its quali-
140 fications, including a description of the applicant's past experi-
141 ence running a YouthBuild program, and with housing
142 rehabilitation or construction and with youth and youth educa-
143 tion, youth leadership development and employment training
144 programs and other relevant community organizations;

145 (3) a description of the educational and job training activities,
146 work opportunities, and other services that will be provided to
147 participants;

148 (4) A description of the proposed construction or rehabilita-
149 tion activities to be undertaken and the anticipated schedule for
150 carrying out such activities;

151 (5) a description of the manner in which eligible youths will
152 be recruited and selected, including a description of the arrange-
153 ments which will be made with community-based organizations,
154 local educational agencies, public assistance agencies, the courts
155 of jurisdiction for status and youth offenders, shelters for home-
156 less individuals and other agencies that serve homeless youth,
157 foster care agencies, and other appropriate public and private
158 agencies;

159 (6) a description of the special efforts that will be undertaken
160 to recruit eligible young women (including young women with
161 dependent children) with plans for addressing appropriate sup-
162 ports they may need, especially childcare;

163 (7) a description of how the proposed program will be coordi-
164 nated with other youth serving agencies in the service area;

165 (8) assurances that there will be a sufficient number of ade-
166 quately trained supervisory personnel in the program who have
167 attained the level of journeyman or its equivalent;

168 (9) a description of the applicant's relationship with any local
169 building trade unions, which may exist, regarding their involve-
170 ment in training, and the relationship of the YouthBuild program
171 with established apprenticeship programs;

172 (10) a description of activities that will be undertaken to
173 develop the leadership skills of participants, including their role
174 in decision making;

175 (11) a detailed budget and a description of the system of fiscal
176 controls and auditing and accountability procedures that will be
177 used to ensure fiscal soundness;

178 (12) a description of any contracts and arrangements entered
179 into between the applicant and other agencies and entities
180 including all in-kind donations and grants from both public and
181 private entities that will serve to augment state YouthBuild funds;

182 (13) the qualifications and past experience of the person who
183 will fill the full-time program director position.

184 (14) other information/factors as deemed necessary by the
185 Commissioner.

186 Section 97. Outcomes and evaluation. Subsection (a) An appli-
187 cant selected for funding under this act shall provide to the
188 department information on program and participant accomplish-
189 ments, including but not limited to: attendance, retention, GED
190 attainment, high school diplomas issued, educational improve-
191 ment levels, placement, construction outcomes and community
192 service accomplishments.

193 Subsection (b) The department shall prepare an initial evalua-
194 tion report which shall be made available to the Governor and
195 appropriate legislative committees on the progress of individual
196 programs funded under this act. A final evaluation report shall be
197 prepared on individual programs at the times of their completion.
198 The final evaluation report shall include, but not be limited to,
199 information on the effectiveness of the program, the status of pro-
200 gram participants and recommendations on program administra-
201 tion at the state and local level.”

