

SENATE No. 297

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

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 SECTION 1. Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2002 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 89, the following sections:- “Section 90. There is
3 hereby established a grant program for YouthBuild. Said program shall be administered by the
4 department pursuant to these sections.

5 The purpose of the YouthBuild Programs shall be:

6 (a) to enable economically disadvantaged youth, especially youth who have not finished
7 high school, to obtain the education, job skills training, personal counseling, leadership
8 development skills training, job placement assistance, and long-term follow-up leading to
9 economic self sufficiency.

10 (b) to provide communities the opportunity to establish or rebuild neighborhood stability
11 in economically depressed and low-income areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration
12 or preservation, while providing economically disadvantaged youth and youth who have not
13 finished high school an opportunity for meaningful participation in society.

14 (c) to allow communities to maintain and expand the supply of affordable housing for
15 homeless and other low-income individuals by utilizing the energies and talents of economically
16 disadvantaged youth and young people who have not graduated from high school.

17 (d) to foster the development of leadership skills and a commitment to community
18 development among youth.

19 Section 91: Definitions. In this Act:

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

22 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of the Department of Education.

23 "YouthBuild" is a program that provides disadvantaged youth with opportunities for
24 comprehensive education, employment, leadership development, and training in the construction
25 or rehabilitation of housing for special needs populations, very low-income households and low-
26 income households.

27 Section 92: Program requirements.

28 The Commissioner is authorized to make grants to applicants for the purpose of
29 providing YouthBuild programs as approved under this Section. All programs funded pursuant
30 to the provisions of this Section shall reflect strong youth and community involvement. In
31 addition, funding provided under this Section shall be used by each YouthBuild program to
32 provide, at a minimum, the following services:

33 (a) Integrated education and job skills training services and activities which are evenly
34 divided within the program, with 50% of students' time spent in classroom-based instruction,

35 counseling, and leadership development instruction and 50% of their time spent in service
36 learning experiences at construction sites. The programs shall include, at a minimum, the
37 following elements:

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

43 (2) A vocational learning experience and skills training component apprenticeship
44 program that includes the construction and rehabilitation activities described in subsection (e).
45 The process of construction must be coupled with skills training and with close on-site
46 supervision by experienced trainers. The curriculum for this component shall contain a set of
47 locally agreed upon skills and competencies that are systematically taught, with a student's
48 mastery assessed individually on a regular, ongoing basis. Safety skills shall be taught at the
49 outset. The vocational learning experience and skills training component shall be coordinated to
50 the maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

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

53 (b) Counseling services designed to assist participants to positively participate in
54 society, which should include all of the following if necessary: outreach, assessment, and
55 orientation; individual and peer counseling; life skills training, drug and alcohol abuse education

56 and prevention; and referral to appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal,
57 housing, and other services and resources in the community.

58 (c) Leadership development training that provides participants with meaningful
59 opportunities to develop leadership skills such as decision making, problem solving, and
60 negotiating. The program must also encourage participants to develop strong peer group ties
61 that support their mutual pursuit of skills and values. All programs must establish a youth council
62 in which participants are afforded opportunities to develop public speaking and negotiating
63 skills, and management and policy-making participation in specific aspects of the program.

64 (d) Assist with the acquisition, rehabilitation, acquisition and rehabilitation, or
65 construction of housing and related facilities which will serve as the vocational training sites and
66 then to be used for the purpose of providing home ownership for disadvantaged persons,
67 residential housing for homeless individuals, and low-income and very low-income families, or
68 transitional housing for persons who are homeless, have disabilities, are ill, are de-
69 institutionalized, or have special needs, and rehabilitation or construction of community
70 facilities owned by not-for-profit or public agencies.

71 (e) A stipend must be provided to participants to cover the costs associated with their full
72 time participation in this program. This stipend shall not be considered as income in determining
73 eligibility for other state or federal assistance programs.

74 (f) Stipends may be distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good performance.

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

77 (h) A concentrated effort shall be made to find jobs for all graduates of the program who
78 have performed well. The skills training curriculum shall provide participants with basic
79 preparation for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and assistance in job-
80 seeking shall also be provided to participants for the 12 months following graduation from the
81 program.

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

84 Section 93. Eligible participants.

85 Eligible participants are youth 16 to 24 years and who are part of one of the following
86 groups:

87 (a) economically disadvantaged.

88 (b) persons who are not attending any school and have not received a secondary school
89 diploma or its equivalent.

90 (c) young people involved with other state agencies, including but not limited to, the
91 departments of social services, youth services and the court system.

92 Section 94. Eligible Entities and Selection Criteria.

93 Those eligible to be awarded funds under this act are not-for-profit private agencies with
94 experience operating a YouthBuild program or entities that have received a federal Housing and
95 urban Development YouthBuild grant or have experience in serving this population and have
96 plans to incubate a YouthBuild program. Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall be
97 given to applicants with experience in operating YouthBuild programs or organizations that have

98 received federal HUD YouthBuild funding. Only not for profit private agencies that are affiliates
99 of YouthBuild USA or have received a federal Housing and Urban Development YouthBuild
100 award are eligible to use the term YouthBuild.

101 Section 95. Application requirements.

102 The Commissioner shall require that an application for YouthBuild funds under this act
103 contain at a minimum:

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

106 (2) a description of the applicant and a statement of its qualifications, including a
107 description of the applicant's past experience running a YouthBuild program, and with housing
108 rehabilitation or construction and with youth and youth education, youth leadership development
109 and employment training programs and other relevant community organizations;

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

112 (4) A description of the proposed construction or rehabilitation activities to be undertaken
113 and the anticipated schedule for carrying out such activities;

114 (5) a description of the manner in which eligible youths will be recruited and selected,
115 including a description of the arrangements which will be made with community-based
116 organizations, local educational agencies, public assistance agencies, the courts of jurisdiction
117 for status and youth offenders, shelters for homeless individuals and other agencies that serve
118 homeless youth, foster care agencies, and other appropriate public and private agencies;

119 (6) a description of the special efforts that will be undertaken to recruit eligible young
120 women (including young women with dependent children) with plans for addressing appropriate
121 supports they may need, especially childcare;

122 (7) a description of how the proposed program will be coordinated with other youth
123 serving agencies in the service area;

124 (8) assurances that there will be a sufficient number of adequately trained supervisory
125 personnel in the program who have attained the level of journeyman or its equivalent;

126 (9) a description of the applicant's relationship with any local building trade unions,
127 which may exist, regarding their involvement in training, and the relationship of the
128 YouthBuild program with established apprenticeship programs;

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

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

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

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

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

139 Section 97. Outcomes and evaluation.

140 Subsection (a) An applicant selected for funding under this act shall provide to the
141 department information on program and participant accomplishments, including but not limited
142 to: attendance, retention, GED attainment, high school diplomas issued, educational
143 improvement levels, placement, construction outcomes and community service
144 accomplishments.

145 Subsection (b) The department shall prepare an initial evaluation report which shall be
146 made available to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees on the progress of
147 individual programs funded under this act. A final evaluation report shall be prepared on
148 individual programs at the times of their completion. The final evaluation report shall include,
149 but not be limited to, information on the effectiveness of the program, the status of program
150 participants and recommendations on program administration at the state and local level.”