



NYS YOUTHBUILD COALITION

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THE NEW YORK STATE YOUTHBUILD PROJECT - FY2018-2019

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THE ASK - \$900,000

The NYS YouthBuild Coalition members operate 18 comprehensive statewide youth programs implementing the acclaimed YouthBuild training and youth development model. Building on that strength, the “New York State YouthBuild Project for FY2018-2019” provides a mechanism for the legislative branches to sustain and enhance those 18 programs at a cost of **\$900,000, based on \$50,000 per program**. The State funds will provide funding for comprehensive, life-changing YouthBuild opportunities for approximately 600 youth in the current 18 YouthBuild programs across the state, and follow-up/placement services to at least 500 more. YouthBuild programs provide their services and stipends to out-of-school, out-of-work youth aged 16-24, as well as ongoing placement services and support for thousands of YouthBuild alumni. The NYS investment is supplemented by Federal grants from the US Department of Labor YouthBuild initiative and NYC Discretionary grants, as well as other localized assets.

The YouthBuild movement began in New York State, and expanded nationally and internationally. YouthBuild is a New York “Best Practice” that now serves 20,000 youth a year in 21 countries; nearly 10,000 of the youth annually served are US-based, distributed among 44 states. Since 1994, 41,000 units of affordable housing have been produced or upgraded by 150,000 YouthBuild students across the US. Over 5,000 of those students have been New Yorkers.

YouthBuild programs are currently funded through a mix of public and private dollars. YouthBuild programs are typically 75% funded through the Federal government and are required to raise the additional funds needed as a match. The NYS Legislative appropriation is an integral part to maintaining our YouthBuild programs and meeting our required Federal match.

While adequate full funding of YouthBuild would require, at minimum, a \$10.1 million state infusion, members of the NY State Senate have consistently secured programmatic funding for 9 of the state’s 18 YouthBuild programs, (\$50,000 per program) totaling \$450,000. We are extremely grateful for that support and are hopeful that this year’s budget will include funding for all 18 programs throughout the state. Such an expansion would require a \$900,000 inclusion in the 2018/19 fiscal year budget. In requesting such an expansion, we hope that both the Senate *and* Assembly will work together to provide this critically needed support that offers a pathway for disconnected youth to productive sustainable futures.

ABOUT YOUTHBUILD

YouthBuild is a successful comprehensive education, training, service, and leadership development program that gives young adults who have left high school without a diploma, the opportunity to transform their life's direction and become responsible, contributing adults. It engages low-income, out-of-school youth for a two-year, all-inclusive process to earn high school equivalency (HSE), acquire job skills, certifications, and leadership competencies, and deliver hundreds of hours of community service while producing and preserving affordable housing in their communities. After participating in the comprehensive Program Year (usually nine months), YouthBuild students graduate and then move on to the Placement stage, at which point they may matriculate into college and/or find employment. YouthBuild students receive benefits they need, including stipends for the work they perform, while also giving back to the community in tangible, visible ways. Post-secondary studies are encouraged as the first option in placement, but YouthBuild students also receive vocational training and certifications, including construction, green industry training, OSHA, CPR, building maintenance, IT, health care, security, barista (Starbucks), food-handlers certification, retail and hospitality, etc. They are supported in this transition by program staff and mentors. In many YouthBuild programs, the students are also AmeriCorps members and earn education awards for providing service to their communities. Through YouthBuild, the students get the support they need for a life transformation, while providing needed services to their communities, and the economy is augmented by positive new youth participation. Studies show that every \$1 invested in YouthBuild saves \$7 of future public sector spending (source: www.youthbuild.org).

Components

YouthBuild is the only national program for disconnected (“Opportunity”) youth that includes equal measures of education and on-the-job training experience, and that has an emphasis on service and leadership development. In many communities across NYS, YouthBuild is the only viable option for out of school youth. Participating youth spend between nine months (actually ranges from six to 24 months) in a full-time program dividing their time equally between a construction site and a YouthBuild alternative school. YouthBuild’s comprehensive approach combines opportunities for young people to learn and develop in many ways concurrently through alternative education towards a diploma or HSE, on-site job training and apprenticeships, community service, leadership development and civic engagement, youth development and counseling, community development, and a long-term community of supportive peers and mentors. Programs provide a minimum of nine months of follow-up services that include counseling, education and job placement, mentoring, and alumni activities. While the basic model is consistent statewide, each program has the flexibility to adapt its components to address local circumstances and workforce priorities.

Current Sponsoring Organizations

There are 18 active YouthBuild programs statewide, housed in a variety of youth services and community development organizations. Those 18 program sites are listed below alphabetically by municipality or district:

- **Bronx, NY: New Settlement Apartments / “New Settlements YouthBuild”**
- **Bronx, NY: South Bronx Overall Economic Development Organization / “YouthBuild SoBRO”**
- **Brooklyn, NY: Settlement Housing Fund / “DREAMS YouthBuild”**
- **Buffalo, NY: Service Collaborative of Western New York / “WNY YouthBuild”**
- **Deer Park, NY: United Way of Long Island / “YouthBuild Long Island”**
- **East Harlem, NY: Youth Action Programs and Homes / “YouthBuild East Harlem”**
- **Harlem, NY: South Bronx Overall Economic Development Organization / “YouthBuild Harlem”**
- **Jamaica, Queens: YMCA of Greater NY / “Y-Roads YouthBuild”**
- **Kingston, NY: YMCA of Ulster and Kingston / “Ulster YouthBuild”**
- **Poughkeepsie, NY: Nubian Directions II Inc. / “New Directions YouthBuild”**
- **Rochester, NY: Urban League of Rochester / “YouthBuild Rochester”**
- **Schenectady, NY: SEAT Center / “YouthBuild Schenectady”**

- Staten Island, NY: Historic Tappen Park Partnership / “YouthBuild Staten Island”
- Troy, NY: Commission on Economic Opportunity / “YouthBuild Troy”
- Utica, NY: Mohawk Valley Community College / “Mohawk Valley YouthBuild”
- Utica, NY: Workforce Development Authority ”Utica YouthBuild”
- Washington Heights, NY: Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation / “YouthBuild NMIC”
- White Plains, NY: Westchester County Dept. of Social Services / “Westchester County YouthBuild”

Partnerships

NYS YouthBuild programs work in partnership with many other nonprofits and public institutions to provide education, social services, and construction and training opportunities. A key partnership that occurs in virtually every YouthBuild program is with the local public school systems, which provide teachers who prepare YouthBuild students for High School Equivalency exams and continuing education. Most YouthBuild programs also coordinate with one or more local community colleges, even in some cases co-enrolling students, so they can complete their YouthBuild curricula while already launching college careers.

YOUTHBUILD AND NEW YORK

The YouthBuild model originated in East Harlem in the late 1970’s with a mix of public and private funds and local engagement. The program was replicated around New York City with public, tax-levy funds during the 1980s, after which it spread around the State and then was replicated nationally with private funds and evaluated by researchers at MIT before being authorized as a federal program in 1992. Since then, the YouthBuild program has received an annual federal appropriation providing competitive grants to hundreds of YouthBuild programs sponsored by community-based, non-profit, faith-based, and public entities that compete directly for federal grants. It was administered by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development from 1992 to 2006, and then transferred to the U.S. Department of Labor as a key program for reconnecting disadvantaged youth to education and employment. It is now authorized at \$84 million per year under the Workforce Investment Act. Since 1992, over 150,000 YouthBuild students have produced or preserved more than 39,000 units of affordable housing nationwide, and provided a whopping 40 million hours of community service.

Currently in the US there are 270 YouthBuild programs in low-income urban and rural communities in 44 States that together engage about 10,000 young people each year. Many of the programs receive US/DOL funds, but the funding has become harder to obtain due to sharply increased national competition, and the grants do not cover the full program costs, so that local matching funds must be identified. For more information about the YouthBuild model, please visit www.youthbuild.org or contact the YouthBuild Coalition representatives listed at the end.

Youth who are “disconnected” from school and employment opportunities want to become productive adults, but face special obstacles. In New York City alone, 16% of youth 16-19 are out of school and out of work – 200,000 young people. In NYS, 11% of youth are “disconnected;” the national average is much lower at 7.7%¹. Approximately 35% of these youth are actively looking for work, while 65% are not, for a variety of reasons, including frustration and disappointment. They need a school or an employer to say “yes, come join us”, rather than a gang or drug operation. This is a role YouthBuild has played for 35 years: a rigorous, friendly, productive, creative, and need-responsive second chance for youth who need one badly.

¹ http://www.scaany.org/documents/disconnected_youth_whitepaper.pdf

The YouthBuild program is an effective resource to combat the problems faced by disconnected youth trying to keep hope alive. The proposed programs under the NYS YouthBuild Project target youth most in need of basic education and training, allowing them to re-engage in society and leading them to the path of self-sufficiency.

This is an historic opportunity for the State of New York to join with the federal government and local community organizations to preserve, enhance, and expand YouthBuild, an initiative that originated in New York and was replicated throughout the nation because of its positive impact on the lives of disconnected youth.

For more information:

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