



# ***NYS YOUTHBUILD COALITION***

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## **2022 YouthBuild, Part of the Solution**

On behalf of the thousands of at-risk youth our program serves throughout the state, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide you with an overview of YouthBuild. NYS YouthBuild Coalition represents 18 YouthBuild programs across the state with programs on Long Island, in all five boroughs of New York City, on both sides of the Hudson River from Newburgh to Albany, and west from Schenectady to Buffalo.

As we enter into year three of the pandemic, it is very evident the resulting disruptions have compromised the stability of our families and communities. Laying bare, existing inequalities that have, for decades disproportionately impacted youth of color. And one needs to look no further than the daily newspaper and television news to know that youth crime and youth gun violence is on the rise. As we hope to put COVID-19 in our rearview mirror, YouthBuild can be an enormous resource to a state willing to make the necessary investments in its next generation. Our programming and efficacy rates have been shown to address the very issues our policy makers and community leaders are grappling with. As such, the NYS YouthBuild Coalition is requesting this year that both the Senate and the Assembly, include in their one-house budget bills and enacted budget, an investment in NYS YouthBuild programs by passing the NYS YouthBuild ACT and fully funding it with a \$10M investment.

Such an investment will put the funds in the hands of YouthBuild programs who are already working closely with the youth in their communities who need assistance and have already implemented strategies to address the issues the Governor has stated are important for the youth of New York State.

### **Some of those strategies that YouthBuild programs address include:**

- a) **Mental health intervention/assistance for participants.** Full funding for YouthBuild will allow programs to expand the already in-place mental health intervention strategy which has been exacerbated by the Covid19 pandemic. The pandemic has compromised the safety and stability of families and has resulted in youth experiencing a greater incidence of mental health issues.
- b) **Gun and Community Violence Intervention for participants.** Every community where there is a YouthBuild program is experiencing an increase in gun violence and general community violence. YouthBuild programs are already collaborating with established violence intervention organizations in their community to solve the issue for the youth they serve. Full funding for YB will allow programs to hire more staff to create a robust system for presenting the best information/knowledge for participants that will focus on community violence and gun violence intervention.

- c) **Education.** The number of young people 18-24 who are out of school and out of work likely doubled as a result of Covid19. Those are precisely the youth that YouthBuild programs provide services for. Participants are re-engaged in getting a high school diploma so they have a chance at success and the opportunity to enter post-secondary career programs.
- d) **One-on-one Case Management.** YouthBuild programs employ a full-time case manager who provides regular case management to assist participants with barriers to success, behavior issues, and family issues that impede their progress.
- e) **Hand-on Skills Work Training.** YouthBuild programs provide hands-on skills training for participants which is designed to assist in understanding what it means to report for work and maintain a good work ethic.
- f) **Leadership Development.** As part of a YouthBuild program, Leadership Development is integrated throughout all components and is designed to promote youth leadership. Participants plan and identify workshops they want to be presented, meet with their local elected officials and speak at city council meetings on issues important to them, especially youth justice policy issues.
- g) **Employment Readiness and Job Placement.** YouthBuild programs employ a full-time Job Developer/Placement Specialist who works with employer partners, and the American Job One-Stop Career Centers to maintain a connection for placement of participants once they complete the YouthBuild program. Participants are placed in jobs or a post-secondary education program and the Job Developer follows their placement progress for 12 months after program exit.

The Executive Budget Proposal calls for the development of apprenticeship, violence interrupter and gun violence prevention programs. We recommend we not re-invent the wheel, but instead, finally adequately fund the state's YouthBuild programs. The comprehensive structure of a YouthBuild program clearly indicates the effectiveness of the training provided to our youth participants. We appeal to you for support of the NYS YouthBuild Act bill and to fully fund NYS YouthBuild programs so we can assist the Governor and the state Legislature in addressing the issues important to the success of New York's youth.

As you are aware, the bill has passed the Senate for the last several years, but has yet to gain the necessary momentum in the Assembly. We feel strongly that this is the year to see it come to fruition, especially given the current climate related to an increase in crime and gun violence. **YouthBuild is the investment that can be part of the solution**, our programming and efficacy rates indicate we have been successful in addressing the very issues the Governor has articulated.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Landi  
NYS YouthBuild Coalition Chair