

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Tolman, Steven (SEN)

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the youthbuild program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Tolman, Steven (SEN)

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Suffolk and Middlesex

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. S00386 OF 2007-2008.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and 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, is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 89, the following sections:-

3 “Section 90. There is hereby established a grant program for YouthBuild. Said program shall be
4 administered by the 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 high school, to
7 obtain the education, job skills training, personal counseling, leadership development skills training, job
8 placement assistance, and long-term follow-up leading to economic self sufficiency.

9 (b) to provide communities the opportunity to establish or rebuild neighborhood stability in
10 economically depressed and low-income areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration or

11 preservation, while providing economically disadvantaged youth and youth who have not finished high
12 school an opportunity for meaningful participation in society.

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

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

18 Section 91: Definitions. In this Act:

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

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

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

25 Section 92: Program requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

52 appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal, housing, and other services and resources
53 in the community.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

78 Section 93. Eligible participants.

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

80 (a) economically disadvantaged.

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

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

85 Section 94. Eligible Entities and Selection Criteria.

86 Those eligible to be awarded funds under this act are not-for-profit private agencies with experience
87 operating a YouthBuild program or entities that have received a federal Housing and urban
88 Development YouthBuild grant or have experience in serving this population and have plans to incubate
89 a YouthBuild program. Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall be given to applicants with
90 experience in operating YouthBuild programs or organizations that have received federal HUD
91 YouthBuild funding. Only not for profit private agencies that are affiliates of YouthBuild USA or have

92 received a federal Housing and Urban Development YouthBuild award are eligible to use the term
93 YouthBuild.

94 Section 95. Application requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

132 Section 97. Outcomes and evaluation.

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

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