

SENATE No. 297

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Steven A. Tolman

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:

Steven A. Tolman

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,
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 high
7 school, to obtain the education, job skills training, personal counseling, leadership development
8 skills training, job placement assistance, and long-term follow-up leading to economic self
9 sufficiency.

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

12 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 homeless
15 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 development
18 among youth.

19 Section 91: Definitions. In this Act:

20 "Applicant" means a public or private not-for-profit agency eligible to provide education and
21 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 providing
29 YouthBuild programs as approved under this Section. All programs funded pursuant to the
30 provisions of this Section shall reflect strong youth and community involvement. In addition,

31 funding provided under this Section shall be used by each YouthBuild program to provide, at a
32 minimum, the following services:

33 (a) Integrated education and job skills training services and activities which are evenly divided
34 within the program, with 50% of students' time spent in classroom-based instruction, counseling,
35 and leadership development instruction and 50% of their time spent in service learning
36 experiences at construction sites. The programs shall include, at a minimum, the following
37 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 program that
44 includes the construction and rehabilitation activities described in subsection (e). The process of
45 construction must be coupled with skills training and with close on-site supervision by
46 experienced trainers. The curriculum for this component shall contain a set of locally agreed
47 upon skills and competencies that are systematically taught, with a student's mastery assessed
48 individually on a regular, ongoing basis. Safety skills shall be taught at the outset. The
49 vocational learning experience and skills training component shall be coordinated to the
50 maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

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

53 (b) Counseling services designed to assist participants to positively participate in society,
54 which should include all of the following if necessary: outreach, assessment, and orientation;
55 individual and peer counseling; life skills training, drug and alcohol abuse education and
56 prevention; and referral to appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal, housing,
57 and other services and resources in the community.

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

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

71 (e) A stipend must be provided to participants to cover the costs associated with their full time
72 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 less than
76 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 have
78 performed well. The skills training curriculum shall provide participants with basic preparation
79 for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and assistance in job-seeking shall also
80 be provided to participants for the 12 months following graduation from the program.

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

83 Section 93. Eligible participants.

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

85 (a) economically disadvantaged.

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

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

90 Section 94. Eligible Entities and Selection Criteria.

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

99 Section 95. Application requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

137 Section 97. Outcomes and evaluation.

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

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