

By: Representatives Straughter, Evans,  
Green, Hines, Robinson (63rd), Wallace, West

To: Public Health and  
Welfare; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1618

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI YOUTHBUILD ACT TO BE  
2 ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF  
3 THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES; TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN  
4 DISADVANTAGES YOUTH WILL BE PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
5 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURIAL  
6 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND TRAINING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OR  
7 REHABILITATION OF HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEED POPULATIONS, VERY  
8 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, OR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS; TO ESTABLISH  
9 REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTHBUILD PROGRAMS, ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES,  
10 ENTITIES ELIGIBLE TO ADMINISTER A YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM, AND GRANT  
11 APPLICATIONS TO ADMINISTER A YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED  
12 PURPOSES.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

14 **SECTION 1.** This act may be cited as the "Mississippi  
15 Youthbuild Act."

16 **SECTION 2.** The purpose of this act is:

17 (a) To enable economically disadvantaged youth,  
18 especially youth who have not finished high school, to obtain the  
19 education, job skills training, personal counseling, leadership  
20 development skills training, job placement assistance, and  
21 long-term follow-up services necessary for them to achieve  
22 permanent economic self-sufficiency, while at the same time  
23 providing valuable community service that addresses urgent  
24 community needs including the demand for affordable housing and  
25 the need for young role models and mentors for younger teenagers  
26 and children;

27 (b) To provide communities the opportunity to establish  
28 or rebuild neighborhood stability in economically depressed and  
29 low-income areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration  
30 or preservation, while providing economically disadvantaged youth  
31 and youth who have not finished high school an opportunity for  
32 meaningful participation in society;



33 (c) To allow communities to expand the supply of  
34 affordable housing for homeless and other low-income individuals  
35 by utilizing the energies and talents of economically  
36 disadvantages youth and young people who have not graduated from  
37 high school; and

38 (d) To foster the development of leadership skills and  
39 a commitment to community development among youth.

40 **SECTION 3.** As used in this act:

41 (a) "Applicant" means a public or private  
42 not-for-profit agency eligible to provide education and employment  
43 training under federal or state employment training programs.

44 (b) "Director" means the Director of the Office of  
45 Family and Children's Services of the Department of Human  
46 Services.

47 (c) "Very low-income" means a person or household whose  
48 income is at or below fifty percent (50%) of the median family  
49 income, adjusted for household size, for the county where the  
50 household is located.

51 (d) "Youthbuild" means any program that provides  
52 disadvantaged youth with opportunities for employment, education,  
53 leadership development, entrepreneurial skills development, and  
54 training in the construction or rehabilitation of housing for  
55 special need populations, very low-income households or low-income  
56 households.

57 **SECTION 4.** The director is authorized to make grants to  
58 applicants for the purpose of carrying out Youthbuild programs as  
59 approved under this section. All programs funded under the  
60 provisions of this section shall reflect strong youth and  
61 community involvement. In addition, funding provided under this  
62 section shall be used by each Youthbuild program to provide, at a  
63 minimum, the following services:

64 (a) Acquisition, rehabilitation, acquisition and  
65 rehabilitation, or construction of housing and related facilities



66 to be used for the purpose of providing home ownership for  
67 disadvantaged persons, residential housing for homeless  
68 individuals, and low-income and very low-income families, or  
69 transitional housing for persons who are homeless, have  
70 disabilities, are ill, are deinstitutionalized, or have special  
71 needs, and rehabilitation or construction of community facilities  
72 by not-for-profit or public agencies.

73 (b) Integrated education and job skills training  
74 services and activities, which are evenly divided within the  
75 program, with fifty percent (50%) of students' time spent in  
76 classroom-based instruction, counseling, and leadership  
77 development instruction and fifty percent (50%) of their time  
78 spent in experimental training on the construction site. The  
79 programs shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

80 (i) An education component that includes basic  
81 skills instruction, secondary education services, and other  
82 activities designed to lead to the attainment of a high school  
83 diploma or its equivalent. The curriculum for this component  
84 shall include math, language arts, vocational educational, life  
85 skills training, social studies related to the cultural and  
86 community history of the students, leadership skills, and other  
87 topics at the discretion of the programs. Bilingual services  
88 shall be available for individuals with limited-English  
89 proficiency. The desired minimum teacher to student ratio shall  
90 be one (1) teacher for every eighteen (18) students.

91 (ii) A work experience and skills training  
92 component apprenticeship program that includes the construction  
93 and rehabilitation activities described in paragraph (a) of this  
94 section. The process of construction must be coupled with skills  
95 training and with close on-site supervision by experienced  
96 trainers. The curriculum for this component shall contain a set  
97 of locally agreed upon skills and competencies that are  
98 systematically taught, with a student's mastery assessed



99 individually on a regular, ongoing basis. Safety skills shall be  
100 taught at the outset. The desired trainer to student ratio shall  
101 be one (1) trainer for every seven (7) students. The work  
102 experience and skills training component shall be coordinated to  
103 the maximum extent feasible with preapprenticeship and  
104 apprenticeship programs.

105 (iii) Assistance in attaining post secondary  
106 education and required financial aid shall be made available to  
107 participants before graduation.

108 (c) Counseling services designed to assist participants  
109 to positively participate in society, which should include all of  
110 the following if necessary: outreach, assessment and orientation;  
111 individual and peer counseling; life skills training, drug and  
112 alcohol abuse education and prevention; and referral to  
113 appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal,  
114 housing, and other services and resources in the community. The  
115 desired counselor to participant ratio shall be one (1) counselor  
116 for every twenty-eight (28) students.

117 (d) Leadership development training that provides  
118 participants with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership  
119 skills such as decision making, problem solving and negotiating.  
120 The program must also encourage participants to develop strong  
121 peer group ties that support their mutual pursuit of skills and  
122 values. All programs must establish a youth council in which  
123 participants are afforded opportunities to develop public speaking  
124 and negotiating skills, and management and policy making  
125 participation in specific aspects of the program.

126 (e) A training subsidy, living allowance or stipend  
127 that is no less than the minimum wage must be provided to program  
128 participants for the time spent at the work site in construction  
129 training. For those participants who receive public assistance,  
130 this training subsidy, living allowance, or stipend will not  
131 affect their housing benefits, medical benefits, child care



132 benefits or food stamp benefits. Stipends and wages may be  
133 distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good  
134 performance.

135 (f) Full-time participation in a Youthbuild program  
136 shall be offered for a period of not less than six (6) months and  
137 not more than twenty-four (24) months.

138 (g) A concentrated effort shall be made to find  
139 construction, construction-related, and nonconstruction jobs for  
140 all graduates of the program who have performed well. The skills  
141 training curriculum shall provide participants with basic  
142 preparation for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up  
143 counseling and assistance in job seeking also shall be provided to  
144 participants for twenty (12) months following graduation from the  
145 program.

146 (h) All programs serving twenty-eight (28) trainees or  
147 more are required to have a full-time director responsible for the  
148 coordination of all aspects of the Youthbuild program.

149 **SECTION 5.** Implementation grants may be used to carry out  
150 the activities listed in Section 4 of this act. Other eligible  
151 activities include the following:

152 (a) Legal fees for housing acquisition.

153 (b) Administrative costs of the applicant, which may  
154 not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of assistance  
155 provided, or such higher percentage as the director determines is  
156 necessary to support capacity development of a private nonprofit  
157 community-based organization.

158 (c) Defraying costs for the ongoing training and  
159 technical assistance needs of the recipients that are related to  
160 developing and carrying out the Youthbuild program, including the  
161 following: The director may reserve up to five percent (5%) of  
162 the Mississippi Youthbuild program appropriations to enter into a  
163 contract with Youthbuild USA to provide assistance to the director  
164 in providing training and technical assistance to, or in the



165 management, supervision, and coordination of, Youthbuild programs  
166 under this act.

167 **SECTION 6.** Eligible participants are youth sixteen (16) to  
168 twenty-four (24) years old who are economically disadvantaged as  
169 defined in 29 USCS Section 1503, and who are part of one (1) of  
170 the following groups:

171 (a) Persons who are not attending any school and have  
172 not received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent.

173 (b) Persons currently enrolled in a traditional or  
174 alternative school setting or a GED program and who are in danger  
175 of dropping out of school.

176 (c) Very low-income persons.

177 Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the participants in the  
178 program may be individuals who do not meet the requirements of  
179 paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this section, but who have  
180 educational needs despite the attainment of a high school diploma.

181 **SECTION 7.** (1) Those eligible to be awarded funds under  
182 this act are not-for-profit private agencies, or public agencies  
183 with experience operating a Youthbuild program or with a plan to  
184 incubate a Youthbuild program until it can be established as a  
185 not-for-profit private agency.

186 (2) Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall  
187 be given to applicants with experience in operating Youthbuild  
188 programs. Organizations claiming to have operated Youthbuild  
189 programs must be licensed by Youthbuild USA or be organizations  
190 that have received federal HUD Youthbuild funding.

191 **SECTION 8.** The director shall require that an application  
192 for Youthbuild funds under this act contain at a minimum:

193 (a) A request for an implementation grant, specifying  
194 the amount of the grant requested and its proposed uses;

195 (b) A description of the applicant and a statement of  
196 its qualifications, including a description of the applicant's  
197 past experience running a Youthbuild program, and with housing



198 rehabilitation or construction and with youth and youth education,  
199 youth leadership development and employment training programs, and  
200 its relationship with local unions and youth apprenticeship  
201 programs and other community groups;

202 (c) A description of the proposed construction site for  
203 the program and evidence of site control;

204 (d) A description of the educational and job training  
205 activities, work opportunities and other services that will be  
206 provided to participants;

207 (e) A description of the proposed construction or  
208 rehabilitation activities to be undertaken and the anticipated  
209 schedule for carrying out those activities;

210 (f) A description of the manner in which eligible  
211 youths will be recruited and selected, including a description of  
212 the arrangements that will be made with community-based  
213 organizations, local education agencies, including agencies of  
214 Native American nations, public assistance agencies, the courts of  
215 jurisdiction for status and youth offenders, shelters for homeless  
216 individuals and other agencies that serve homeless youth, foster  
217 care agencies, and other appropriate public and private agencies;

218 (g) A description of the special efforts that will be  
219 undertaken to recruit eligible young women (including young women  
220 with dependent children) with appropriate supports, especially  
221 childcare;

222 (h) A description of how the proposed program will be  
223 coordinated with other federal, state, and local activities and  
224 activities conducted by Native American nations, including public  
225 schools, national service, crime prevention programs, vocational,  
226 adult, and bilingual education programs and job training;

227 (i) Assurances that there will be a sufficient number  
228 of adequately trained supervisory personnel in the program who  
229 have attained the level of journeyman or its equivalent;



230 (j) A description of the applicant's relationship with  
231 any local building trade unions that may exist, regarding their  
232 involvement in training, and the relationship of the Youthbuild  
233 program with established apprenticeship programs;

234 (k) A description of activities that will be undertaken  
235 to develop the leadership skills of participants, including their  
236 role in decision making;

237 (l) A detailed budget and a description of the systems  
238 of fiscal controls and auditing and accountability procedures that  
239 will be used to ensure fiscal soundness;

240 (m) A description of any contracts and arrangements  
241 entered into between the applicant and other agencies and entities  
242 including all in-kind donations and grants from both public and  
243 private entities that will serve to augment funds appropriated for  
244 this act;

245 (n) Identification and description of the financing  
246 proposed for any acquisition of the property, rehabilitation or  
247 construction;

248 (o) Identification and description of the entity that  
249 will operate and manage the property;

250 (p) A certification that the applicant will comply with  
251 the requirements of the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil  
252 Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973,  
253 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and will affirmatively  
254 further fair housing; and

255 (q) The qualifications and past experience of the  
256 person who will fill the full-time director position.

257 **SECTION 9.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
258 and after July 1, 2002.

