

By: Representative Hines

To: Public Health and Human
Services; Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 758

1 AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE "MISSISSIPPI YOUTHBUILD ACT"; TO
2 REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF THE
3 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ADMINISTER THE ACT; TO PROVIDE
4 THAT CERTAIN DISADVANTAGED YOUTH WILL BE PROVIDED WITH
5 OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH YOUTHBUILD PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYMENT,
6 EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS
7 DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OR REHABILITATION OF
8 HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEED POPULATIONS, VERY LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS
9 OR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS; TO PRESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTHBUILD
10 PROGRAMS; TO DESCRIBE ACTIVITIES AND ENTITIES ELIGIBLE FOR A
11 YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM GRANT; TO PRESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTHBUILD
12 PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATIONS; AND FOR RELATED 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 purposes of this act are as follows:

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 disadvantaged youth and young people who have not finished high
37 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, the following words and
41 phrases have the meanings respectively ascribed in this section
42 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

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

46 (b) "Director" means the Director of the Division of
47 Family and Children's Services of the Department of Human
48 Services.

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

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

59 **SECTION 4.** (1) The director may make grants to applicants
60 for the purpose of carrying out Youthbuild programs. All programs
61 funded under this act must reflect strong youth and community
62 involvement. In addition, funding provided under this act must be
63 used by each Youthbuild program to provide, at a minimum, the
64 following services:

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

73 (b) Integrated education and job skills training
74 services and activities, with fifty percent (50%) of students'
75 time in the program devoted to classroom-based instruction,
76 counseling and leadership development instruction and the
77 remaining fifty percent (50%) of students' time spent in
78 experimental training on the construction site. The programs must
79 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 must
84 include math, language arts, vocational education, life skills
85 training, social studies related to the cultural and community
86 history of the students, leadership skills and other topics at the
87 discretion of the program. Bilingual services must be available
88 for individuals with limited English proficiency. The desired
89 minimum teacher to student ratio is one (1) teacher for every
90 twelve (12) students.

91 (ii) A work experience and skills training
92 apprenticeship program component that includes the construction
93 and rehabilitation activities described in paragraph (a) of this
94 subsection. The process of construction must be coupled with
95 skills training and with close on-site supervision by experienced
96 trainers. The curriculum for this component must contain a set of
97 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 must be
100 taught at the outset. The desired trainer to student ratio is one
101 (1) trainer for every seven (7) students. The work experience and
102 skills training component must be coordinated to the maximum
103 extent feasible with preapprenticeship and apprenticeship
104 programs.

105 (iii) Assistance in attaining post secondary
106 education and required financial aid, which must be made available
107 to 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
111 orientation; individual and peer counseling; life skills training;
112 drug and 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 is one (1) counselor for
116 every twenty-four (24) 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 also must 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 to participate in management and policy
125 making in specific aspects of the program.

126 (e) A training subsidy, living allowance or stipend
127 that is no less than the minimum wage, which must be provided to
128 program participants for the time spent at the work site in
129 construction training. For those participants who receive public
130 assistance, this training subsidy, living allowance or stipend

131 will not affect their housing benefits, medical benefits, child
132 care benefits or food stamp benefits. Stipends and wages may be
133 distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good
134 performance.

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

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

145 (4) All programs serving twenty-four (24) trainees or more
146 must have a full-time director responsible for the coordination of
147 all aspects of the Youthbuild program.

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

151 (a) Legal fees for housing acquisition.

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

157 (c) Defraying costs of the ongoing training and
158 technical assistance needs of the recipients which are related to
159 developing and carrying out the Youthbuild program. The director
160 may reserve up to five percent (5%) of the Mississippi Youthbuild
161 program appropriations to enter into a contract with Youthbuild
162 USA to provide assistance to the director in providing training

163 and technical assistance to, or in the management, supervision and
164 coordination of, Youthbuild programs.

165 **SECTION 6.** To be eligible to participate, an individual must
166 be at least sixteen (16) but no more than twenty-four (24) years
167 of age and must be economically disadvantaged, as defined in 29
168 USCS Section 1508, and except as otherwise provided in this
169 section, must be a member of one (1) of the following groups:

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

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

175 (c) Very low-income persons.

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

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

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

190 **SECTION 8.** The director shall require that an application
191 for Youthbuild funds under this act contain the following, at a
192 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 operating a Youthbuild program and with housing
198 rehabilitation or construction and youth and youth education,
199 youth leadership development and employment training programs, and
200 a description of its relationship with local unions and youth
201 apprenticeship 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 child care;

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, particularly
232 regarding the trade unions' involvement in training, and the
233 relationship of the Youthbuild program with established
234 apprenticeship programs;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

258 **SECTION 9.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
259 and after July 1, 2007.