

By: Representatives Hines, Bailey,  
Straughter

To: Education;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 921

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; AND TO SET FORTH REQUIREMENTS FOR  
12 YOUTHBUILD 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, with disabilities, are ill, are deinstitutionalized  
71 or have special needs, and rehabilitation or construction of  
72 community 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 component apprenticeship program 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, 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 and who are in danger of dropping  
174 out 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, 2006.