

A. YouthBuild General Program Questions

1. Who is responsible for the Federal administration of the YouthBuild program?

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) will administer the YouthBuild program beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. Grants awarded prior to FY 2007 will continue to be administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) until the authority to expend these funds has expired.

2. How did the YouthBuild Transfer Act change the YouthBuild program?

The YouthBuild Transfer Act essentially maintains the same purpose and core components of the YouthBuild program that existed under the Cranston-Gonzalez Act as follows:

- A. To enable disadvantaged youth to obtain the education and employment skills necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency in occupations in demand and post-secondary education and training opportunities;
- B. To provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for meaningful work and service to communities;
- C. To foster the development of employment and leadership skills and commitment to community development among youth in low-income communities; and
- D. To expand the supply of permanent affordable housing for homeless individuals and low-income families by utilizing the energies and talents of disadvantaged youth.

The YouthBuild Transfer Act places greater emphasis on post-secondary transitions for participants and stronger linkages with the One-Stop Career Center System, community colleges, and apprenticeship programs. YouthBuild grantees will need to be knowledgeable about local labor market needs in order to prepare youth for employment in the construction industry and other high-growth, high-demand industries.

3. How will the FY 2007 YouthBuild program funds be dispersed?

DOL intends to fund YouthBuild program activities via Federal assistance grants to grantees selected on a competitive basis in accordance with criteria published in the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA). SGAs are also published in the Federal Register. Please see Section B for Frequently Asked Questions on the SGA process.

4. Will DOL be issuing regulations for the YouthBuild program?

Yes. We expect to issue new regulations governing the YouthBuild program under the authority of Section 189 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) [29 USC 2939(a)].

5. How will grants be monitored?

Grant oversight and monitoring will be provided by staff in the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) six regional offices in close collaboration with the Office of Workforce Investment's Division of Youth Services.

6. What is the regional office structure for ETA?

ETA has regional offices in the following six locations and each manages programs and grants in their respective states and territories:

- **Region 1 - Boston:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, U.S. Virgin Islands.
- **Region 2 - Philadelphia:** Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington D.C.
- **Region 3 - Atlanta:** Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.
- **Region 4 - Dallas:** Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.
- **Region 5 - Chicago:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin.
- **Region 6 - San Francisco:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, American Samoa, Saipan-CNMI, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, and Territory of Guam.

7. Under DOL, will each YouthBuild grantee have a Federal Project Officer (FPO) or will it be similar to the system under HUD where we have a regional officer?

Each grantee will be assigned an individual FPO at the time of award. This individual may work out of a DOL Regional Office.

8. How long does it take DOL to make funds available to grantees after awards are announced? How do grantees access those funds?

Funds are available to grantees after their award has been negotiated and executed (usually about four weeks after the announcement). Funds are made available through the Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System, an electronic processing system.

9. When can grantees start incurring costs - the date of the announcement or the date of an executed grant agreement?

The executed grant agreement will specify the date in which grantees can incur costs. This date will be on or about the date of the grant execution.

10. Are both internships and apprenticeships allowable during the program?

Both internships and apprenticeships are eligible activities under the YouthBuild Transfer Act. Section 173A(c) (2) states that eligible activities may include:

“(A) Education and workforce investment activities including

- (i) work experience and skills training (coordinated to the maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs)...
- (ii) ...
- (iii) other paid and unpaid work experiences including internships and job shadowing.”

The SGA will provide specific criteria that address both apprenticeships and internships.

11. Does the YouthBuild legislation allow training activities outside construction i.e., in high-demand occupations and industries such as technology/health care, etc.?

Construction-related training will be a required activity for all YouthBuild grantees. However, DOL funds can be used to support career pathway training in other high-demand occupations/industries offered within a YouthBuild program in addition to construction.

12. What will be the period of performance of the DOL YouthBuild grants?

The Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) will specify the length of the YouthBuild grant period of performance.

13. What is the minimum number of participants allowed in a YouthBuild program?

There is no minimum number of participants specified in the YouthBuild Transfer legislation.

14. Can YouthBuild participants be co-enrolled in other types of funded programs including WIA, AmeriCorps, etc?

Yes, this is allowable. Funding cannot be used for the exact same service, but services could be augmented and coordinated.

15. As a new program, how does the transfer of funding from HUD to DOL affect us?

Grants funded through HUD will continue to be administered by HUD. DOL has issued a new Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) and both existing and new YouthBuild grantees are eligible to apply if they meet the requirements of the SGA.

16. Could you use YouthBuild funds in conjunction with disaster NEGs (National Emergency Grants)?

As long as the participant meets the eligible requirements applicable to each program there is no general prohibition on using NEG funds in conjunction with other Federal funds, including funds awarded for YouthBuild programs.

17. How long can youth be served by YouthBuild grants?

Under the YouthBuild transfer legislation, program participants must receive services for at least six months and may receive services for up to two years, plus a year of follow-up services.

18. What are allowable activities under the new YouthBuild legislation?

Under Section 173A (c)(2) of the YouthBuild Transfer legislation, the following activities are eligible:

- A) Education and workforce activities, such as:
 - Basic skills instruction and remedial education;
 - Language instruction educational programs for individuals with limited English proficiency;
 - Secondary education services and activities, including tutoring, study skills training, and dropout prevention activities, designed to lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma, General Education Development (GED) credential, or other State-recognized equivalent (including recognized alternative standards for individuals with disabilities);
 - Counseling and assistance in obtaining postsecondary education and required financial aid;
 - Alternative secondary school services;
 - Work experience and skills training (coordinated, to the maximum extent feasible, with pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs) in housing rehabilitation and construction activities;
 - Occupational skills training; and
 - Other paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing.
- B) Counseling services and related activities, such as comprehensive guidance and counseling on drug and alcohol abuse and referral;
- C) Youth development activities, such as:
 - Community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors, and
 - Activities related to youth policy committees that allow YouthBuild participants to engage in local policy and decision-making related to the program.

- D) Supportive services and provision of need-based stipends necessary to enable individuals to participate in the program;
- E) Supportive services to assist individuals, for a period not to exceed 12 months after the completion of training, in obtaining or retaining employment, or applying for and transitioning to postsecondary education; and job search and assistance.
- F) Supervision and training for participants in the rehabilitation or construction of housing, including residential housing for homeless individuals or low-income families, or transitional housing for homeless individuals.
- G) Supervision and training for participants in the rehabilitation or construction of community and other public facilities.
- H) Payment of a portion of the administrative costs of the grantee.
- I) Mentoring of participants by qualified adults.
- J) Provision of wages, stipends, or benefits to participants in the program.
- K) Ongoing training and technical assistance for staff that are related to developing and carrying out the program.
- L) Follow-up services.
- M) Equipment and/or supplies related to the YouthBuild activities funded through this grant.

19. Exactly how is the income eligibility determined?

The legislation defines three general eligibility criteria for YouthBuild participants based on age, socio-economic status, and educational attainment. Within the second category, a participant may qualify under one or more of six subgroups, including as a member of a low-income family. Section 173A(b)(9) of the YouthBuild legislation further defines "low income family" using the description for that term set forth in the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(2)), as follows:

The term "low-income families" means those families whose incomes do not exceed 80 per centum of the median income for the area, as determined by the Secretary with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that the Secretary may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 80 per centum of the median for the area on the basis of the Secretary's findings that such variations are necessary because of prevailing levels of construction costs or unusually high or low family incomes.

To find the median for your area, go to HUD's Web site at:

<http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il.html>

20. Will participants have to go through One-Stop Career Centers for eligibility determination?

No, each YouthBuild grantee (which may be a One-Stop Career Center) will be responsible for determining the eligibility of their participants. However, it is expected that all YouthBuild programs will coordinate their efforts with One-Stop

Career Centers, local workforce investment boards and other partners of the workforce investment system.

- 21. Does a youth have to meet all of the eligibility criteria or just one? If there is a limit of 25% on High School diploma/GED recipients, who makes up the remaining 75%? Would this be high school dropouts, in-school youth, or a combination of both?**

The legislation states that to be eligible to participate in a YouthBuild program the youth must be:

- A. Not less than age 16 and not more than age 24, on the date of enrollment **AND**
- B. Be one or more of the following:
 - A member of a low-income family **OR**
 - A youth in foster care (including youth aging out of foster care) **OR**
 - A youth offender **OR**
 - A youth with a disability **OR**
 - The child of an incarcerated parent **OR**
 - A migrant youth
- C. **AND** a school dropout

EXCEPTION

Up to 25% of participants may be youth who do not meet parts two or three of the above requirements provided that they are:

- Basic skills deficient, even if they have their high school diploma or GED; **OR**
- Have been referred by a local secondary school to a YouthBuild program that leads to the attainment of a secondary school diploma.

- 22. Are those who are found academically deficient part of or in addition to the current 25% who have a GED/diploma and how is deficiency determined?**

They are part of the 25%. Basic skills deficient is defined as an individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. This can be measured using recognized assessments (i.e., TABE or CASAS). States, grantees, or contractors are not required to use the same assessment tool throughout their jurisdictions. However, programs must adhere to the following in choosing an assessment tool:

- The same assessment tool is administered to the participants for pre-testing and post-testing;
- The assessment tool and its scores must crosswalk directly to the educational functioning levels so that educational gains can be reported in terms of increase in one or more ABE or ESL levels; and

- Tests must be administered in a standardized manner throughout the jurisdiction (i.e., used consistently and reliably across programs and produce observable results).

23. Does the 25% exception rule mean that some of the participants do not have to meet the age, income/disadvantage or dropout criteria?

All youth must meet the age requirement of being between ages 16 and 24 at the date of enrollment. However, if a youth enters the program through the exception, they would not necessarily need to meet either the income/disadvantage criteria or the dropout criteria, up to 25% of the total enrollment.

24. Will YouthBuild be considered a required or optional partner in the One-Stops?

Since the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), YouthBuild has been a required partner in the One-Stop Career Center system. (WIA Section 121(b)(1)(B)(xi)), (See also 20 CFR 662.200(b)(1)(iii)). The YouthBuild Transfer Act placed the YouthBuild program under Title I of WIA and adds the requirement that applicants make a good faith effort to coordinate with the One-Stop system. Accordingly, a DOL YouthBuild grantee will be a required One-Stop partner and the program must be included in the local One-Stop delivery system if YouthBuild programs or activities are carried out in the local area. However, partnerships and coordination activities may take various forms across the country.

25. What will determine a good faith effort between the applicant and the One Stop Career Centers?

The SGA will address this in further detail.

26. Question and Answer #26 has been deleted. Please reference Amendment Two of the Solicitation for Grant Applications for additional information. This amendment can be found at www.doleta.gov/sga/sga.cfm under the YouthBuild SGA section.

27. We're in an area with mandatory school attendance until age 18. A student can drop out of high school, but must attend a GED or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) program. Is that considered a "dropout?"

No, they are not considered a drop-out. The youth will count towards the 25% eligibility exception rule.

28. How do you define a certificate?

According to Attachment B of Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 17-05 on the Common Measures, the Department of Labor defines a certificate as follows: "A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on

standards developed or endorsed by employers. Certificates awarded by workforce investment boards are not included in this definition. Work readiness certificates are also not included in this definition. A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of technical or occupational skills by:

- a. A state educational agency or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state.
- b. An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act (20 USC 1002) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of that Act. This includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs.
- c. A professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc. Machining Level I credential) or a product manufacturer or developer (e.g., Microsoft Certified Database Administrator, Certified Novell Engineer, Sun Certified Java Programmer) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- d. A registered apprenticeship program.
- e. A public regulatory agency, upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., FAA aviation mechanic certification, state certified asbestos inspector).
- f. A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons.
- g. Job Corps centers that issue certificates.
- h. Institutions of higher education which are formally controlled, or have been formally sanctioned, or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes.