



# **NYS YOUTHBUILD COALITION**

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*Bonnie Landi, Chair  
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## **NYS Workforce Development Budget Hearing Testimony – 3/1/2023 By Bonnie Landi, Chair NYS YouthBuild Coalition**

### **2023-2024 Budget YouthBuild - The Solution for NYS Youth Workforce Training**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information about the value of YouthBuild Workforce Training programs in NYS.

On behalf of the thousands of vulnerable youth we serve, thank you for the 2022-23 budget support we received in the amount of \$10 million in the ESD Pay for Performance Workforce Strategies funding, and \$2.5 million in LAO's appropriated by the Legislature to fund YB program wrap around services such as, addressing mental health and substance use issues, addressing community gun violence, housing insecurity, food insecurity, job coaching, resume writing, self-care/proper hygiene, and leadership development, all of which have been determined as integral to the astounding outcomes YouthBuild programs achieve. **We are requesting the same level of budget support in the 2023-24 state budget.**

Recently, YB participated in an OCFS **Workforce Development Demonstration Project (WDDP)**; the outcomes from that project clearly indicates the effectiveness of the comprehensive training provided. Those outcomes were:

- a) Programs exceeded the number of required enrollments by 6%, serving more than what was expected
- b) **Placement** rate in a job or a post-secondary education program after completion **100%**
- c) HSE & Industry Recognized **Credentials** Earned, **99%**
- d) Youth With Prior Justice System Involvement, **No re-arrests – Recidivism 0%**

In addition to the effective outcomes of the YB programs that were part of the OCFS WDDP project, all NYS YB programs consistently produce outstanding outcomes in their education/workforce training program.

Young people in a YB program receive national industry recognized credentials in the various industries they are trained for. Those industries include housing construction, hospitality/culinary, nursing assistant, advanced manufacturing, and information technology. All of these industries are included in the NYS YouthBuild Act A-4260 and S-2370, which if passed by the Legislature would codify YB in law and provide the support needed to continue the workforce training provided by YB programs to the most vulnerable young people in NYS.

As a point of information, YouthBuild began right here in NYS in East Harlem in 1978. In 1992 it was replicated by the federal government and expanded across the nation into 44 states, and today there are over 225 YouthBuild programs nationwide. Currently there are 17 programs in NYS located from Long Island to Buffalo. Additionally, we have requests from Hudson, Monticello, Syracuse and Yonkers who are seeking to start a YouthBuild program in their communities.

As you are aware, the aftermath of Covid has exacerbated the inequities facing young people, especially young people of color. One of the most troubling issues facing them is Community Gun Violence. YB programs across the state have already begun to take the necessary steps to address that issue and its adverse effects on our youth.

The highly successful YouthBuild program model and our efficacy rates, indicate YB has the ability to address the very issues community leaders, and you as state policy makers, are grappling with. However, program resources are limited, we need the willingness of the state to continue to invest in our efforts. Again, we are requesting the same level of funding that NYS YouthBuild received in the 2022-23 budget.

We must stop the cycle of trying to reinvent the wheel by investing in new youth programs that may not work or that may not be successful, especially when there is an already proven successful program that works - YouthBuild.

We can make progress together to implement ideas that work for the youth of NYS. We are here, Invest in YouthBuild, let us be part of the solution!

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Landi, Chair  
NYS YouthBuild Coalition