



## All About YouthBuild

The Department of Labor's YouthBuild program aligns with the Department of Labor's goals of preparing workers for good jobs and assuring the attainment of the skills and knowledge that ensure workers succeed in a knowledge-based economy. YouthBuild specifically targets at-risk youth that are current or former high school dropouts with the greatest challenges to finding good jobs.



Students at Lewis & Clark  
Community College YouthBuild



Houston YouthBuild



Anibal Torres of AYE YouthBuild  
Program

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) passed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The Department of Labor's YouthBuild program supports these efforts through significant education, occupational skills training, and leadership development to youth ages 16-24. YouthBuild provides services to more than 6,000 youth annually. This is accomplished by re-engaging them in innovative alternative education programs that provide individualized and project-based instruction as they work towards earning either a high school diploma or state-recognized equivalent and industry-recognized credentials in construction or other in-demand industries.

WIOA emphasizes work-based learning and services for employers. YouthBuild programs make explicit links between what is being done at the work site and what is being taught in the classroom through project-based and contextualized learning. The Act particularly has a focus on out-of-school youth, a priority population of the YouthBuild program. WIOA puts a greater emphasis on collaboration across youth-serving programs. This aspect of the Act provides an opportunity for YouthBuild grantees to advance partnerships with other workforce training organizations serving youth. These collaborative partnerships will ensure a network of opportunities for at-risk youth and create a multiplier effect of successful outcomes for youth, employers, and the broader workforce system.

## **Integrating Education and Skills Training with Community Commitment**

YouthBuild participants have increased the supply of permanent affordable housing for homeless individuals and low-income families in their communities. Building and renovating housing for low-income and homeless families also provides a sense of purpose and transformation for youth participants while it teaches important soft skills, such as team work, personal accountability, and problem solving. The work site experience, coupled with earning an industry-recognized certificate, increases opportunities for post-program employment. YouthBuild addresses the challenges faced by unemployed, high school dropouts by providing them with an opportunity to gain both the education and occupational skills that will prepare them for good jobs with good wages. In addition, many of these youth, buoyed by their academic success in the YouthBuild program, continue on to post-secondary education.

## **Construction Plus**

Previously-funded grantees have the opportunity to participate in the Construction Plus component of the YouthBuild grant. This component integrates the training and work experience of construction fields with other in-demand industries. These occupations include health care, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and other occupations that are high-growth fields locally with strong career pathways and industry-recognized credentials. The Construction Plus component provides access to broader training opportunities to align youth interests and aptitudes with employer needs.

## **Registered Apprenticeship Connection**

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is a key workforce preparation strategy to provide youth with successful outcomes for education, training and ultimately, unsubsidized employment. Several provisions in WIOA strengthen linkages between RA and other workforce strategies for youth, particularly out-of-school youth. Pre-apprenticeship activities and work-based learning are among the youth program elements cited to support the attainment of positive outcomes for in-school youth. YouthBuild can offer work experience and skills training in coordination with pre-apprenticeship and RA programs. Youth that participate in YouthBuild programs that link to a RA program have the ability to earn higher wages.

To further support the connection to Registered Apprenticeship, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) are collaborating to bring graduates of DOL's YouthBuild program together with HUD-funded contractors to: 1) strengthen local apprenticeship opportunities for at risk young people trained in the construction trades; 2) promote self-sufficiency for residents of public housing; and 3) connect contractors working on HUD-funded projects to RA programs. This partnership further provides YouthBuild participants and graduates the ability to be identified as a priority category for employment and training opportunities for all HUD-funded development projects.

**For more information on the YouthBuild program, please contact:**

**Toni Wilson-King**

**202-693-2922**

**wilson.toni@dol.gov**

**Mark Smith**

**202-693-3747**

**smith.mark.w@dol.gov**

**For additional information on the YouthBuild program and a complete list of DOL YouthBuild grantees, please visit: [www.doleta.gov/youth\\_services/YouthBuild.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/YouthBuild.cfm)**