

YouthBuild Program Design and Performance Standards

YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network

January 2013

Second edition

with revised performance standards (page 29)



The YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network

The YouthBuild USA Affiliated network is made up of YouthBuild programs, students, and alumni who are committed to adhering to the philosophy of the YouthBuild program model, implementing and enhancing its design and program standards, and building a strong YouthBuild movement in partnership with YouthBuild USA and each other.

The Affiliated Network's goals are:

- To create a nationwide system of mutual support and learning for YouthBuild students, graduates, staff, program directors, executive directors, and board members
- To achieve the highest possible outcomes and impact
- To access public and private funding to bring the YouthBuild opportunity to every youth and community that seeks it
- To create opportunities for YouthBuild graduates and directors to build their leadership skills and their positive influence
- To encourage public policies that will improve opportunity for low-income young people and diminish poverty.

The YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network was established with support from, or receives current funding from:

Annie E. Casey Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
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PART I

Introduction

Purposes

This document has five purposes:

1. It presents the basic philosophy, programmatic requirements, and performance objectives to members of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network.
2. It presents briefly and coherently the best practices that experience indicates will produce a successful YouthBuild program and the performance outcomes that can be expected.
3. It provides the basis for members of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network to hold each other accountable for upholding the vision, identity, and success of YouthBuild, and to provide accreditation to members who achieve the program design and performance standards.
4. It defines the standards to be achieved by individual YouthBuild graduates who can obtain a National Honors Graduate Certificate or a Rudy Award for Perfect Attendance from YouthBuild USA.
5. It describes the decision-making structure of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network that both defines these standards and initiates programmatic developments and collaborations among local programs.

Membership in the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network implies a commitment to achieve both the program design and the performance standards included in this document. Requirements for accreditation include the achievement of these standards as demonstrated through both YouthBuild USA's Web-based Student Tracking Application—Quarterly (WebSTA-Q) and a program assessment implemented by YouthBuild USA under the supervision of the membership committee of the Affiliated Network. This document does not attempt to describe the accreditation process, WebSTA-Q, or the precise level of achievement that marks a successful review. All of that information is available in separate documents.

For more information on levels of affiliate membership, and how to join or move up in the Affiliated Network, please request the *YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network: Benefits, Resources, and Responsibilities* booklet from AffNet@YouthBuild.org.

History of this Document

The first version of this document was conceived in 1992 and published in 1994. When creation of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network was proposed by the first 15 directors in 1992, those directors called for a clear summation of the program elements necessary for a program to be called a YouthBuild program. Up until that time a 250-page program manual had been the primary written guide. Dozens of directors, students, YouthBuild USA staff, and YouthBuild USA board members contributed and agreed to the first concise written definition of program design and performance standards.

That document was revised in 1996. By then, a formal decision-making structure was in place for regular review of standards. The Policy Council of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network deliberated on changes recommended by the Young Leaders Council, the National Directors Council, the National Alumni Council, and the staff of YouthBuild USA, and made final recommendations that were accepted by the YouthBuild USA Board of Directors.

These standards were revised again between 1998 and 2000, and between 2003 and 2005 by the same process, and then again in 2007, each time orchestrated by the director of the Affiliated Network and the president of YouthBuild USA. The 2007 version was written in response to the increase in numbers of diploma-granting schools within the YouthBuild network—and growing attention to postsecondary education and career development—to make sure that the standards kept pace with innovations and best practices related to education and career development.

Since the 2007 edition, there have been many new undertakings among affiliates. The practice of green building has spread throughout the Affiliated Network and certifications preparing graduates for green careers are being delivered. Some programs are developing service-oriented career paths in health care, technology, and other fields. Where we are able to confidently establish best practices and standards for these new fields, we have included them in this 2012 version of the *Program Design Standards*. In some areas practitioners are not yet ready to establish such standards. Staff who are shaping these programs are applying the central principles of YouthBuild as reflected in this document.

As we finalize this 2013 version of the *Standards*, the YouthBuild USA Board of Directors, the Affiliated Network Policy Council, staff, and field are beginning to discuss the idea of defining a model of the YouthBuild school that may not include hands-on construction training or the building of affordable housing. There are a few such schools in the field that obtained charter school funding and certification for their YouthBuild programs and then faced such enormous demand for enrollment from students that they expanded beyond their ability to deliver construction training. We need to define their status in the Affiliated Network and the standards that they should aspire to; however, we have more to learn before we can do that. This issue will be addressed in the next version of *Program Design and Performance Standards*.

Acknowledgements

The 2012 version of the *Program Design and Performance Standards* was a joint effort of members of four bodies central to the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network—the National Alumni Council, the Young Leaders Council, the National Directors Council, and the VOICES Student Council—in concert with YouthBuild USA staff. The full membership of these four councils is listed below.

National Alumni Council. Julian Ramirez (president); Jamiel Alexander (vice president), Sharon Reyes-Blunt (secretary), Jamie Turner (treasurer), Ely Flores (communications officer), Calvin Westbrook (sergeant at arms), Michael Springer, Antonio Simpson, Kareema Barr, Michael Donnelly, James Mackey, Sandra Quel, Antonio Ramirez, Nina Saxon, Joniver Spring, Bea Sweet, Wayne Whack, Brandon Cross, Noe Orgaz.

Young Leaders Council. Whitney Hickman (president), Naja Bland (vice president), Briana Thompson, Kirsys Soto, Irvin Barragan, Kevin Robert, Jasmine Wilson, Mario Saunders, Darien Henderson, Kenneth Luckes, Piroth Khourn, Dominique Tipier, Shelton Nathaniel Green, Missi Lou Wever, Jonathan Guillerno, Elizabeth Rae McCoy, Joshua Thomas, Evelyn Valesco, Tyrell Starks, Carlos Pierre Salazar, Richard William Harvey, Trashawna Monique Owensby, Steve Wayne Love, William Lee Byrd, Kawone Latrell Murrille, Nicholas James Williams, Emmanuel McCall.

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National Directors Council. Simran Sidhu (president), Lance Wise (vice president), Gary Taylor (secretary), Suzanne Fitzgerald, Gil Barno, Melinda Giovengo, Mable Starks, Sheilah Goulart, Dwala Ferrell, Julia Tibbs, Lenora Jarvis-Mackey, Greg Mumford, Elizabeth Morgan, Laurel Tustison.

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PART II

Underlying YouthBuild Values and Philosophy

YouthBuild Philosophy

There are close to 1,000 member organizations in the YouthBuild Coalition, which is guided by the following philosophy:

The positive energy and intelligence of young people need to be liberated and enlisted in solving the problems facing our society. Young people in low-income communities want to rebuild their neighborhoods and their lives, and will do so if given the opportunity. The desire to serve, to do meaningful work that is of value to other people, is universal. Community-based organizations need to be given the resources to solve local problems and to mobilize local people, including neighborhood youth. Leadership development is a central element of effective community development and youth service.

YouthBuild Mission Statement

In 1992, the YouthBuild Directors Council, composed of the directors of seven original YouthBuild programs, met with the president of YouthBuild USA and developed the following mission statement for YouthBuild programs. This has been reaffirmed and updated at each revision by the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Policy Council.

The mission of YouthBuild programs is:

- I. To provide a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all socially and economically disadvantaged young adults in which:
 - A. There is a profound respect for the intelligence and decision-making ability of young adults
 - B. Resources are provided to reverse the impact of past experiences that have limited the achievement of their full potential
 - II. YouthBuild programs not only develop the capacity of young adults, but also act as a positive force for change in the larger community by:
 - A. Creating affordable housing, housing for the homeless, and facilities serving various community needs
 - B. Creating access to well-paying, long-term, meaningful jobs for young adults
 - C. Pressing for expanded resources for low-income communities and young people
 - D. Providing and developing visible role models
 - E. Stabilizing and strengthening the economic fabric of local communities through fostering entrepreneurship and individual residential home ownership
 - F. Encouraging participation in electoral democracy through voter registration and getting out the vote.
- C. Young adults are empowered spiritually and intellectually to make decisions and take responsibility for their lives, their families, and their communities
 - D. Young adults learn about and take pride in their individual cultural backgrounds while simultaneously learning to respect and appreciate the many diverse cultures that make up our society
 - E. Leadership development, education, and skills training are combined to prepare young adults to take advantage of existing economic opportunities, create new ones, and further their education
 - F. The importance of community service—compassion for and a genuine desire to help others—is a philosophy fostered in all young adults
 - G. Civic engagement is encouraged in students, staff, and graduates.

PART III

YouthBuild Program Design Standards

Essential Program Qualities

The following program qualities are not easy to measure, but they express the philosophical core and spirit of YouthBuild. To succeed, the program components must be suffused with these qualities, and staff must be trained in their meaning. They are designed to provide experience directly opposite to the previous negative experiences of YouthBuild students. The essential YouthBuild program qualities are:

- Profound respect for the young people’s intelligence
- Power for the young people over their immediate environment
- Protection for the participants, as much as possible, from disaster—or at least the support necessary to cope with it
- Meaningful and important work for both students and staff
- Real, patient caring for the young people’s development
- Teaching of academic, employment, and social skills
- Consistently positive values
- A firm and loving challenge to stop self-destructive behavior and change negative attitudes
- Family-like support and appreciation from peers and adults
- High standards and expectations
- Staff members who have overcome similar obstacles who can serve as inspiring and caring role models
- An understanding of the proud and unique history of their own people, and respect for people of different cultural backgrounds
- Heightened awareness of the present-day world and young people’s important place in it
- A clear and visible path to future opportunity
- Real concern and action to change the conditions that have affected the young people and the people they love
- Fun!

Elements of Program Design: Mandatory, Required, and Recommended

The distillation of 35 years of experience in an expanding network of YouthBuild programs has resulted in the required and recommended program elements in these Program Design Standards. These are the best practices that have been selected through extensive review by practitioners and students.

There are four levels of YouthBuild Affiliated Network membership: planning, provisional, full, and accredited. Once a program is operating, it can move to provisional status. Operating programs must achieve different levels of performance to progress from provisional to full to accredited status.

The “Mandatory” standards are ones that are absolutely required for a program to move to a higher level of affiliation.

The “Required” standards in this document are the essential ones that are highly recommended for local staff to follow and strive toward implementing in their program. Very good programs achieve 80 percent of the required standards. This level of performance is required for a program to become accredited.

“Recommended” elements are just that—recommended but not essential and may be left out as not a priority for financial or other reasons.

The one element that is mandatory for all YouthBuild affiliates reflects the importance of youth leadership development and youth input into program policy:

Every YouthBuild program must have a working policy committee or comparable process by which students receive experience in program governance and participate in significant decisions affecting the program.

This standard is mandatory in the sense that if a program is not able to document that it meets this standard, it will not be able to become either a full or an accredited member of the Affiliated Network.

There is one more element that is mandatory for a program to become an accredited affiliate:

The program must have a written sustainability plan.

Note that there are many very important elements listed as Recommended. The Young Leaders Council has expressed the opinion that most of the recommended items should be required, but has yielded to the awareness that the complexity of YouthBuild and the lack of resources experienced by many affiliates often require that desirable steps are delayed.

Required, recommended, and mandatory program design elements are described in the following categories:

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1. Service to the Community

Required actions

- 1 A** Young people in low-income communities serve their neighborhoods by building or rehabilitating affordable housing for homeless or low-income people, or community or commercial facilities that will enhance the social, economic, or environmental viability of the local community.
- 1 B** Opportunities are provided to reflect on the historical and current social, environmental, and political implications of the particular community needs being addressed and the methods of addressing them. These issues are woven into the academic curriculum to provide relevance to students' learning and critical thinking skill development.
- 1 C** To demonstrate environmental responsibility as a community service, energy-efficient and greenbuilding practices such as those explained in *Shades of Green*, YouthBuild USA's online greenbuilding manual, are followed in construction programs.

Recommended actions

- 1 D** Students are encouraged to consciously develop themselves as role models to encourage other teenagers and younger children to take their lives seriously. Programs arrange opportunities for students to speak in schools, churches, prisons, and on the streets about the value of a positive and productive life.
- 1 E** Programs arrange for extra community service through which students can volunteer in local nonprofit human service or advocacy organizations or can carry out projects independently or with other young people. Programs seek the input of young people in identifying extra community service opportunities that are of interest to the young people and provide them with additional career-development opportunities.
- 1 F** Programs that have already established construction as a career path may add other career paths that include a community service function, such as environmental protection, medical services, child care, computer services, and ventures that are entrepreneurial and clearly contributing to community economic development or community service. These career paths may be included as part of the YouthBuild program.
- 1 G** Programs participate in at least one National Day of Service, inviting outside volunteers and community members to participate in the service and observe the positive and deep impact of the program on the community. Programs involve young people in the planning, coordination, and implementation of the National Day of Service project.
- 1 H** Programs seek AmeriCorps funding to give their members the opportunity to earn an AmeriCorps Education Award for the service they are providing in their communities. When programs receive AmeriCorps funding, the opportunity to earn an AmeriCorps education award is available to all their YouthBuild students.

2. Skills Training

Required actions

- 2 A** The process of construction is coupled with skills training and close on-site supervision by experienced trainers in a staff-to-youth ratio of no less than one trainer to no more than seven students.
- 2 B** Programs develop construction projects that entail gut rehabilitation or new construction, since such projects offer the best opportunities for comprehensive training. Projects involving minor renovations or work on occupied buildings are distinctly less effective for training purposes.
- 2 C** Safety skills and safe practices are taught at the outset and enforced throughout the program. A site safety plan is written, taught, and adhered to by staff, students, and volunteers at all times. Care is taken to provide the same training to students who join at a later date. (See the appendix in the YouthBuild Construction Manual for an example of an acceptable site safety plan.)
- 2 D** The curriculum includes transferable career-readiness skills that are broadly applicable as well as specific skills for known career opportunities.
- 2 E** Site training is complemented by vocational education classes to reinforce skills training—and teach skills used in additional career tracks—in an environment free of production constraints. The training exposes young people to cutting-edge concepts, including the principles and practices of greenbuilding, and the technology that will best prepare them for careers in an evolving field.
- 2 F** Vocational curriculum teaches greenbuilding and energy-efficiency concepts in ways that also strengthen basic education skills.
- 2 G** Substitute activities that can be provided in sometimes unavoidable downtime during the construction process are planned.
- 2 H** Opportunities to obtain driver's education are provided; students are encouraged to obtain driver's licenses to enhance employability.
- 2 I** A plan is developed for nonconstruction work for individual students who become unable to perform construction work for health reasons.
- 2 J** Industry-recognized credentials are made available to students and staff. (Examples of these credentials are those from the National Center for Construction Education and Research [NCCER], Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], Home Builders Institute [HBI], the Building Trade Department of the AFL-CIO, the Building Performance Institute [BPI], First Aid, CPR, EPA, lead abatement, asbestos removal, CNA for Nursing, and A+ for technology.) As proficiency is achieved, or at graduation, certificates of skills mastery are awarded to students. Career counselors ensure that students have included these credentials on résumés and advise students on postsecondary education programs and employment opportunities where students can gain additional credentials. (See YouthBuild USA's *Career Development Curricula Overview* and *Green Curricula Overview* for more details.) For programs in union-friendly areas, links are made with local building trade councils.

Recommended actions

- 2 K** Students' mastery of the locally agreed-upon competencies is tested by the site supervisors in regular cycles related to raises or other incentives, and coordinated with regular cycles in the academic program.
- 2 L** Internships are set up with private electrical, plumbing, engineering, carpentry, and architectural firms, and with other developers and contractors allowing well-performing YouthBuild students to obtain additional experience and training during the program cycle. Orientation is provided for both interns and contractors to ensure actual training is being done and interns are not being used as cheap labor.
- 2 M** When programs have added additional career paths, appropriate skills and competencies will be taught and certifications offered.

3. Education

Required actions: Program design

- 3 A** The program offers an education program that strengthens critical thinking, lifelong learning, skill development (reading, writing, math, and technology) and leads to a GED or a high school diploma, and then to postsecondary education or advanced technical training. In combination with vocational education, leadership development, life-skills training, and counseling, the education program constitutes between 50 to 60 percent of the program's time. Education programming is usually, but not necessarily, delivered in alternating weeks with the job site.
- 3 B** The minimum teacher-to-student ratio is 1 to 28 students (note that this assumes 14 students on the construction site and 14 students in the classroom at any given time). Different ratios will be appropriate for different students at various levels. Tutoring and teacher's assistants are available to supplement classroom instruction.
- 3 C** Instruction is learner-centered and project-based and uses methods such as collaborative learning and peer-to-peer teaching to address specific student needs, learning styles, strengths, and interests.
- 3 D** Programs that enroll students under 18 create developmentally appropriate structures and supports to enable them to succeed in the program. Useful skill-building strategies for this age group include developmental reading, writing, and math courses, and learning-to-learn skills. Older youth who need these supports are able to access them as well.

Required actions: Curriculum

- 3 E** Emphasis is placed on direct instruction and small group instruction that enhances postsecondary and career-preparation skills. Students are exposed to and learn to analyze and synthesize information from a wide range of authors, thinkers, and bodies of knowledge in different disciplines.

- 3 F** The curriculum includes life-skills training that addresses the issues that would prevent students from succeeding if the issues are not handled. These issues are determined locally, but usually include substance abuse, legal problems, AIDS, racism, sexual harassment, intimate relationships, violence, loss of family members, homelessness, gangs, and caring for children and parents. Learning barriers such as lack of concentration and fear of failure might also be addressed.
- 3 G** The curriculum includes leadership skills, concepts, and attitudes; and links to community service.
- 3 H** Given the critical importance of climate change, and crises around the globe in the political, economic, and social spheres, the curriculum includes environmental, political, and economic justice issues as they relate to the communities of the students and the world.

Required actions: Assessment of student progress

- 3 I** The program's intake process incorporates and balances various assessments, including the TABE test, to recognize literacy and numeracy levels at entry into the program. Assessments are enhanced with baseline data on academic credit history, learning styles, future goals, and learning challenges (such as English Language Learners and students with special needs). Note that assessments should be used to inform learning needs, but they should not be used to exclude people because of low scores. We recommend the use of pre-YouthBuild programs or partnerships with literacy fundamental services to help applicants that enter with exceedingly low reading levels.
- 3 J** The program's initial assessment is used to shape individualized learning plans for each student. The plans address each student's college and career readiness and broader postsecondary and career goals. Plans are updated every quarter; active input is included from the student, advisors, and teachers.

- 3 K** Teachers use appropriate tools to assess student learning. Some examples of appropriate tools are student work portfolios, evaluation rubrics, teacher-student conferences, standardized tests, self-assessment, observation, and peer reviews. Teachers collect, discuss, share, and use student assessment data consistently to inform and adjust instruction.
- 3 L** Students are trained on appropriate assessment requirements and standardized tests to prepare them for state exit exams and college and career placement tests such as Accuplacer, Compass, SAT, and ACT.

Required actions: Technology

- 3 M** YouthBuild programs establish specific targeted instruction in technological literacy. Students learn how to type, use current technology applications, use relevant software, use the Web and mobile applications, conduct research, access college and career resources, build résumés, submit school work online, and use e-mail accounts responsibly and effectively.
- 3 N** The program ensures that every student has adequate access to a computer and works toward fully integrating technology into every aspect of a student's education. All faculty and staff are encouraged to become computer literate and use technology in their daily work — for curriculum development and housing plans, for teaching and learning, for use on the construction site, and for assessing student progress.

Required actions: Teacher quality, supervision, and assessment

- 3 O** Teachers do what it takes to ensure that students master the material being studied.
- 3 P** Teachers have regular time built into their schedule for cross-discipline curriculum development, lesson planning, assessment of individual student progress and challenges, and aligning classroom and work-site-based expectations. Planning time includes individual and group meetings as part of the regular salaried work week.

- 3 Q** The program seeks to constantly improve its instructional program through vigilant oversight and the leveraging of external and internal resources and expertise. Where possible, an instructional leader keeps up with and uses best practices to coach, supervise, and evaluate staff members involved in instruction.
- 3 R** Teacher incentives are linked appropriately to student performance and outcomes as well as students' evaluation of teacher performance.
- 3 S** Program staff follow up with all enrollees who did not attain their GED or high school diploma during the full-time program until they do attain it.

Recommended actions

- 3 T** The assessment system has a portfolio and demonstration component. The portfolio is a compilation of student work that demonstrates progress over time, accomplishment of state and local standards, reflections on learning, and skills used towards college and career preparation. It also provides students with a forum to demonstrate mastery.
- 3 U** Schools apply for technology-related funding such as e-rate funding and Tech Soup grants to enhance their educational-technology resources and capacity so that all teachers and students have consistent access to effective and well-maintained print, visual, and audio tools including computers, calculators, LCD projectors, video, communication systems, and the Internet.
- 3 V** Curriculum focuses on postsecondary education and career readiness, rather than “teaching to a test.”
- 3 W** Programs develop a reading library that is culturally significant and reading-level appropriate.

4. Postsecondary Education

YouthBuild programs are committed to the success of all students and work toward providing supports to ensure postsecondary completion, career success, and ongoing learning. Students' postsecondary plans are connected to their life and career goals. Postsecondary readiness skills are provided to all students—whether or not they have decided to attend college—to give them the option in case they decide this is important later.

Required actions

- 4 A** Build strong partnerships with postsecondary institutions where possible and where such postsecondary institutions are available.
- 4 B** The program creates a culture that promotes postsecondary enrollment and prepares students for a range of options such as certification programs and two-year and four-year colleges. At the same time, the program does not devalue the students who do not choose this route.
- 4 C** A significant percentage of the time of one or several staff members is dedicated to assisting students in preparing for college and careers, or staff may involve and supervise graduates, community members, mentors, and other volunteers to support postsecondary and career preparation and success for all students as long as the overall responsibility sits with program staff.
- 4 D** Students are inspired to take college seriously as an option for themselves. A programwide college-preparatory component begins during intake and Mental Toughness. This component forms an integral part of the daily and weekly life of the program and includes such activities as current college enrollees advising students, and in-depth and individualized assistance with the college and financial aid applications, scholarships, and loan processes and options. Sessions are provided, college visits are held, and students are prepared for college placement tests.
- 4 E** Programs create rituals and celebrations related to college-oriented activities. For example, they celebrate a student's acceptance into college or provide a healthy breakfast for students who are taking an entrance or placement test.
- 4 F** Programs research, identify, and partner with organizations that provide resources for the entire postsecondary preparation, application, acceptance, and completion process. Programs help students assess the risks and benefits, and the pros and cons of different kinds of postsecondary institutions and programs.
- 4 G** Programs help students access appropriate grants, loans, and scholarships to maximize financial resources for graduates in postsecondary institutions. The terms and use of all financial aid options are explained clearly to students and graduates. Programs aim to obtain AmeriCorps Segal Education Awards for all students.
- 4 H** Leading up to college entrance, students learn credit-building skills and create multiyear budgets that help them balance their income and expenses. Instruction includes an assessment of how many hours a week they need to work in order to meet their tuition and living needs. Staff emphasize the benefits of grants over loans where available.
- 4 I** The program builds institutional partnerships with postsecondary institutions. For example, staff build relationships with postsecondary education personnel including admissions and financial-aid officers and student services personnel and faculty; they develop co-teaching and faculty-sharing agreements and strong articulation agreements, or agree on joint representation on boards and advisory committees.

Recommended actions

- 4 J** The program creates college-readiness measures that all staff buy into. Examples of these measures are:
 - All graduates read and write at least at a ninth-grade level.
 - All graduates are able to do math at a high enough level to enter college.
 - All graduates understand and use technology and software; including e-mail, Web-based research, and Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
 - Every student applies to a postsecondary institution and completes a financial-aid application before graduation.

- 4 K** Programs follow up with graduates who are not enrolled in postsecondary education to remind them of their postsecondary options and to encourage them to enroll.
- 4 L** Program provide each graduate access to community mentors who provide supports and guidance towards successful completion of postsecondary credentials.
- 4 M** Graduates are encouraged to enroll in college as a group to provide ongoing academic and social support to each other.
- 4 N** Programs support graduates who are in postsecondary education by providing space for graduates to complete their school work, offering regular tutorial support for postsecondary enrollees, and developing systems for tracking and supporting student progress towards completion of postsecondary credentials.
- 4 O** Students have an opportunity to take college courses while still enrolled in YouthBuild (dual-enrollment). Where possible, programs have a PSE bridge program.

5. Career Development

Programs create a career-development component that begins during orientation and Mental Toughness, and is an integral part of the daily and weekly life of the program. This component is connected to students' college, vocational, and life planning. Students are encouraged to define their highest aspirations and understand the pathway necessary to get them there.

Required actions

- 5 A** Career development is treated as a critical function and is well-staffed throughout the program. Directors and board members seek and define partnerships with relevant agencies such as unions, major contractors, and community institutions like universities and hospitals to maximize training opportunities and line up good job openings.
- 5 B** Program staff make a concentrated effort to find construction-related job placements and careers for all graduates who desire them and have performed well. Adequate staff time is dedicated to fulfilling this function. Nonconstruction jobs and careers are also identified and pursued for graduates not interested in construction.
- 5 C** All students gain a thorough understanding of how to build a career track, including the ways postsecondary education—four-year, two-year, certification programs, and apprenticeships—fits into their personal track. Students get support initiating a career pathway plan during the program year and through the graduate resources program.
- 5 D** A series of workshops or retreats prior to graduation are focused on anticipating and preparing students for the obstacles, pitfalls, and complex problems they will face in postsecondary education, training, on the job, and, in general, in life beyond YouthBuild.
- 5 E** Students' progress is tracked after placement; follow-up counseling and support in career exploration is provided for at least 12 months after graduation. Contact with employers is similarly maintained.
- 5 F** The program builds a reputation for producing graduates who make good employees and for providing helpful information and support after placement.

Recommended actions

- 5 G** Students are exposed to the range of job and career options and internships available in their region: in the broad construction-related arena, green construction careers, in the human service arena, in healthcare-related careers, in the nonprofit sector, and in other high demand careers in the community. Staff are aware of and responsive to local labor market data regarding high-demand jobs to inform career exposure and career counseling.
- 5 H** Entrepreneurial initiatives are encouraged.
- 5 I** Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are set up to the extent possible for students and graduates.
- 5 J** Internships within the program itself are funded to enable selected graduates to work as staff assistants in various roles.
- 5 K** The program encourages students to consider as a step in their career ladder national-service placement opportunities, including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, and other AmeriCorps state and national opportunities. Links with other national programs such as Year Up (for finance and IT careers) and Public Allies (for nonprofit leadership experience) are utilized.

6. Personal Counseling and Mentoring

Required actions

- 6 A** High standards for personal responsibility and group participation are set, with input from staff and students.
- 6 B** The program makes clear from the beginning, in selection, orientation, and thereafter, that it is not possible to straddle two worlds, that is, to live a “street life” and a “YouthBuild life” at the same time.
- 6 C** An intensive student orientation, at least one week in length but often lasting two weeks or more, builds what has been called “mental toughness,” with emphasis on goal setting, overcoming obstacles, resisting pitfalls and traps, bonding within the group, understanding oppression and racism, building trust with staff, and preparing for the rigors of the YouthBuild program.
- 6 D** Personal counseling in a steady and ongoing fashion for everyday life issues, as well as for crises, is provided within the program. Each program has no less than one full-time counselor for every 28 youth. This counselor meets regularly with individual students.
- 6 E** Staff ensure from the start that all students develop individual life plans that address postsecondary education, careers, leadership skills, and personal and family responsibility.
- 6 F** The individual’s struggle to choose a positive lifestyle over self-destructive and irresponsible social behavior is actively supported in a variety of ways. Peer group counseling sessions, rap groups, or other modes of developing interpersonal support among the students are an ongoing part of the program, as is training in how to resist negative peer pressure.
- 6 G** Referrals to outside resources are available for students with severe emotional problems, drug or alcohol addiction, or other issues, if good referrals are available in the community.
- 6 H** Counselors pay particular attention to helping students solve pending court problems and complete probation requirements.
- 6 I** Confidentiality guidelines are made clear, and all commitments of confidentiality made by staff are scrupulously kept.
- 6 J** Random or routine drug testing is done as part of a proactive substance-abuse strategy. Students who test positive are provided counseling or treatment, which must be completed along with passing a follow-up drug test, as part of a clear plan for becoming drug-free prior to graduation.
- 6 K** Training in personal-finance management is provided. This training covers budgeting, managing bank accounts, understanding taxes, using credit, building assets, owning a home, filing income taxes, obtaining the Earned Income Tax Credit, and investing.
- 6 L** The program arranges for every student to have a mentor—a staff member, graduate, or volunteer—to guide, support, and assist the student in developing and implementing life plans that address personal leadership development, postsecondary education and career planning and networking, and to encourage each student to become a mentor to others. For more details on how to run a mentoring program, see the *YouthBuild Mentoring Handbook*.
- 6 M** Issues revolving around personal identity; racial and ethnic identity; interpersonal relationships; discrimination based on race, gender, national origin, class background, or sexual orientation; and ways to sort out one’s perceptions about discrimination are addressed through various rap groups, retreats, curriculum elements, and personal counseling.

Recommended actions

- 6 N** Close liaisons are set up with residential substance abuse rehabilitation programs. Students are referred to them when appropriate. If students join a residential treatment program, space will be made available for them in YouthBuild when they complete the treatment program.

- 6 O** Issues related to sexuality, pregnancy and family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, healthy relationships, and intimacy are given special attention. Support groups are available for both men and women.
- 6 P** Issues related to parenting are given special attention and support in finding good child care is provided.
- 6 Q** Special attention is paid to the housing needs of students, especially those who are homeless or living in unworkable situations. If possible, suitable housing is found.
- 6 R** Staff are willing to meet with students one-on-one or by telephone outside of program hours. A policy on home visits and one-on-one contacts outside of program hours is developed at each site by staff and students, taking into account the privacy and confidentiality of students, the usefulness of home visits in strengthening relationships with students and their families, and the occasional need to reach out in a crisis.
- 6 S** Small cash-assistance and savings programs such as individual development accounts (IDAs) are established to the extent feasible to help students achieve their goals.
- 6 T** Regular clinical supervision by a licensed professional, if available in the community, is provided to counseling staff.
- 6 U** Outdoor leadership and experiences in nature are utilized to assist in group and individual counseling, and the teaching of responsibility and leadership development.

7. Leadership Development

The development in our community of ethical young leaders who have the commitment, vision, and skills to improve the conditions for all people is a central goal of YouthBuild. This explicit goal also serves to inspire young people to fulfill their potential and take on major challenges, reinforcing their commitment to education, family responsibility, and career success.

Mandatory action

- 7 A** A YouthBuild program must have a working policy committee or comparable process through which students meet regularly and receive experience in program governance and participate in significant decision making that affects the program.

Required actions

- 7 B** The education program includes a curriculum focused on leadership attitudes and skills.
- 7 C** The program communicates the principle “Good leadership is taking responsibility to make sure things go right for your life, for your family, for the program, for the community, and for the planet,” which unifies personal development with community leadership and environmental responsibility. This leadership poster hangs prominently in the program spaces.
- 7 D** Emphasis is placed on the fact that leadership starts with being a responsible group member who can keep one’s own commitments and support the achievements of the group’s goals and objectives through cooperative work and reliability. Group attention is focused on defining good leadership.
- 7 E** YouthBuild graduates who are enrolled in postsecondary education or are successfully pursuing careers are recognized as role models with leadership skills and are called upon to provide support and guidance to enrolled YouthBuild students.
- 7 F** The process of becoming a positive role model in the community is taken seriously and its implications are discussed.
- 7 G** The elected policy committee, or the comparable ongoing body, should meet regularly, preferably weekly, with the director or program manager, whoever is designated to play that role on an ongoing basis, and at least one staff representative. The committee should participate in governance and decision making affecting the program, such as the selection and evaluation of staff, and the development of program policies. The committee should receive training. The *Policy Committee Handbook* can be used as a guide in developing the committee. Standards for serving on the policy committee are set collectively, including attendance standards. The policy committee is fully informed about sources of funds, the requirements and limitations of those funds, and the budget and expenditures of the YouthBuild program.
- 7 H** Leadership competencies are defined and taught, and a process of evaluation of mastery of these competencies, including self-evaluation, is carried out. (YouthBuild Leadership Competencies are available in the appendix, pages 42–47.)
- 7 I** Young people participate in fundraising, public relations, and advocacy.
- 7 J** YouthBuild graduates, when legally permitted, serve on the board of directors of the sponsoring organization or on a committee of the board dedicated to the YouthBuild program. Training and preparation are provided.
- 7 K** Programs involve local YouthBuild graduates in service-learning opportunities and mentoring relationships to enhance positive program culture.
- 7 L** Young people are involved in leadership roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the program as opportunities arise to build leadership skills not only in governance but also in program implementation. There are leadership objectives, and students are able to take leadership, in every component of the program.
- 7 M** Students are given systematic attention to their own development, especially through an individualized leadership development plan connected to their personal life plans.

7 N Students are encouraged to become informed citizens and to register and to vote in local, state, and federal elections. Staff help those who have lost their voting rights and want to restore them. Social studies classes thoroughly discuss the issue of civic engagement and voting. The use of *Blueprint for Democracy* is highly encouraged. But a student must not be excluded or penalized for choosing not to register.

7 P Programs involve YouthBuild graduates in service-learning opportunities and mentoring relationships to enhance positive program culture.

7 Q An alumni club should be formed and should meet regularly. In addition, a student center should be established at the YouthBuild program, to host meetings and to facilitate alumni meeting and networking with one another.

Recommended actions

7 O Paths to becoming staff in YouthBuild programs are described and provided to the extent possible and appropriate. Such paths might include internships, training, and higher education.

8. Cultural and Recreational Activities

Required actions

- 8 A** Cultural, recreational, and community activities that build group cohesion and morale are a regular component of the program cycle. These activities are organized, supervised, and well-coordinated. A planned program activity takes place on average at least once every month.

Recommended actions

- 8 B** Two-day retreats are taken at least twice in a program cycle.

- 8 C** A recreation and cultural events committee of students and staff work out a rich array of fun things to do outside of program time to build a positive peer group that stretches beyond the confines of the workweek. Outdoor recreational activities are used to inspire environmental awareness and responsibility.

- 8 D** Exchange programs of various kinds are arranged with groups of young people who live and work in different communities or nations, or who come from different cultural and economic backgrounds, including members of local tribes and indigenous peoples. Collaborations are set up with other service programs; conferences are created that bring young people together to exchange views. Exchanges with other YouthBuild programs are organized.

9. Wages, Stipends, and Incentives

Required actions

- 9 A** Young people receive wages, stipends, or living allowances for their on-site work producing housing or other services, as well as stipends to cover food and travel during their academic time. If a YouthBuild program gets a grant that includes funding for stipends, the management should use those funds for stipends only; or else justify to funders why it isn't being used for this purpose. *(A few programs with a large number of students that have become YouthBuild schools but do not have funding for regular stipends for their students, and some programs that have had to survive without DOL funding, have not been able to fulfill this standard. They have survived by using financial incentives for outstanding performance only. Often their students are younger.)*
- 9 B** A system of bonuses, raises, awards, and other recognitions for good performance is systematically and consistently implemented. Effective incentives include bonuses every pay period for perfect attendance, and raises every two to four months for good performance in program and on-site.

- 9 C** Students are fully informed of all financial circumstances dictated by various funding sources and program policies affecting their pay and are warned in advance if there will be a delay for any reason. All policies regarding the docking of pay or the payment of fines are vetted with the youth policy committee and followed with fairness and consistency for all students.

Recommended actions

- 9 D** Stipends, wages, or living allowances for students start at no less than the federal minimum wage for work on the site, plus the cost of food and transportation during the school week.
- 9 E** A reasonable number of paid sick days are provided.
- 9 F** Efforts are made to get payroll-tax waivers from the IRS and state agencies, as well as Earned Income Tax Credits and child support payments for those who are eligible.

10. Length of Program

It is useful to look at YouthBuild as a multiphase, multiyear program.

Required actions

- 10 A** Full-time program participation must be available for at least nine months, but 11 or 12 months is generally considered more desirable, and some programs engage students full-time for as many as 24 months in order to achieve their goals. The intention behind this is to have students graduate with the credentials and skills required to transition to postsecondary education, trade certifications, and meaningful career paths. Within these parameters, students' individual development plans should drive the length of engagement.
- 10 B** Programs begin the full-time program with a week- to monthlong Mental Toughness or equivalent orientation program. It is at this point that staff begin to prepare students for graduation, careers, college, and community leadership. This preparation continues throughout the entire program.
- 10 C** Students must remain in the program a minimum of six months, and must have either earned a GED or high school diploma or be placed in a job or postsecondary institution to be considered a completer. Exceptions to this minimum participation requirement may be made if earlier placement is determined to be in the best interest of an individual student.

- 10 D** A graduate program lasting at least 12 months provides job counseling, continued access to academic opportunities, personal counseling, leadership opportunities, and support groups for former YouthBuild program participants. This program is designed locally and may include outsourcing with partner organizations.

Recommended actions

- 10 E** A local alumni club is set up and students are connected to YouthBuild USA's national alumni association. This club invites graduates to participate in programs for as long as they choose.
- 10 F** A pre-YouthBuild program can help students entering with low literacy rates make the best use of the program and be more likely to finish with a GED or diploma.
- 10 G** To avoid turning people back out onto the streets, a program extension is provided for completers who have not yet found an appropriate job or educational placement.
- 10 H** For students who earn their high school diploma or GED early, the program links them to an accredited college course, a job, an internship, or an apprenticeship while remaining engaged in the YouthBuild program.

11. Program Implementation and Culture

Integration of the essential program qualities throughout the program culture is a powerful determinant of quality and outcomes.

Required actions

- 11 A** The program has defined a set of common program values, and has incorporated them in demonstrable ways. These values are reflected in a daily pledge.
- 11 B** The program's curriculum and classroom experience intentionally integrate service and experiential learning. Deliberate links between the field and classroom are established to maximize student learning. Student time away from the classroom is carefully considered and integrated into academic goals.
- 11 C** The entire program is self-assessed by students, staff, or board at least annually to ensure it meets the standards.
- 11 D** Programs with rolling admissions admit students in groups of no less than seven to facilitate the integration process.
- 11 E** The tone of a YouthBuild program is one of cooperation, mutual assistance, respect, patience, high expectations, and students helping each other. Relationships are personalized: teachers know students' strengths, interests and needs; students are part of a mini-community and have a close and continuous relationship with one or more adults.
- 11 F** Student-centered celebrations, rituals, and routines intentionally contribute to the creation of a strong positive program climate.
- 11 G** Regular feedback systems are set up so all staff and students are aware at all times of their progress. Each stage is recognized, encouraged, and acknowledged in a systematic way throughout the program.
- 11 H** The program facility offers an environment that is physically healthy and promotes a positive program culture. Student work, and art celebrating the program spirit and culture, decorate the walls. Rooms are well lit; value-laden messages such as the YouthBuild pledge are clearly visible.
- 11 I** Students and staff together develop program policies that are consistently applied.
- 11 J** The program embraces a systematic professional development plan for all staff that is results-oriented, is embedded in the day-to-day work of the program, and provides coaching and effective learning strategies.
- 11 K** All staff are well oriented prior to start-up and trained on positive youth-development strategies and basic YouthBuild philosophy. The importance of continuity is reinforced as staff members are asked to make a commitment for at least a complete cycle.
- 11 L** A student handbook is provided. This handbook includes all the information about the program's expectations, practices, rules, and objectives, as well as information on graduation requirements, attendance policies, and program disciplinary policies. The handbook addresses policies related to wages, stipends, and incentives, as well as the impact of wages, stipends, or living allowances on other government-funded benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC or EIC), and housing subsidies.
- 11 M** An agreement between the program and each student governs behavior, expectations, and consequences for violating these agreements, as well as a commitment by the program to the students regarding how they will be respected and engaged, and what opportunities will be available to them.
- 11 N** A process is defined for students and interns who are terminated or have a grievance, in case they want a hearing before an appropriate decision-making body.

- 11 O** Programs work toward making a computer available for every full-time staff person.
- 11 P** Programs create strategies to thoughtfully invite the involvement of parents, guardians, and partners in students' education and life plans.
- 11 Q** The program helps students obtain state-issued identification cards and other paperwork required to access financial aid, including birth certificates and personal and family tax documents. Programs encourage students to complete tax documents the year prior to applying for college.
- 11 R** As part of final enrollment, students have a fit-to-work physical.
- 11 S** Programs regularly track, report, and incentivize attendance and treat it as a real-time indication of student success. Program staff take action if the program's aggregate attendance drops below 80 percent.

12. Management and Governance

Mandatory action

There is one mandatory element in management designed to avoid losing the capacity to run the program:

- 12 A** The program develops a written plan for sustainability that assesses a range of possible public and private funding sources that may be available to sustain the program. The plan is supported by the sponsoring agency.

Required actions

- 12 B** A full-time YouthBuild director or program manager dedicates his or her time to the leadership of the program. Trained staff are dedicated to the functions of education and construction management.
- 12 C** The program's board of directors is fully informed about and committed to the YouthBuild philosophy and mission. If the sponsoring agency is not a freestanding YouthBuild organization, and it has other programs, the board forms a subcommittee focused on the well-being of the YouthBuild program. If the board does not include a significant number of members reflecting the ethnic background of the students, an advisory committee is formed that does.
- 12 D** At least two YouthBuild graduates serve on the board of directors of the sponsoring organization, or on an advisory committee of the board dedicated to the YouthBuild program. Training and preparation is provided.
- 12 E** The executive director of a multiservice sponsoring agency provides full support to the YouthBuild program and delegates sufficient authority to manage the program to the YouthBuild director. The executive director provides full financial reporting to the YouthBuild director.
- 12 F** When YouthBuild is implemented by collaborating organizations, there is a clear locus of control, clear lines of accountability, and centralized records creating a cohesive program with a common philosophy and community of staff and students.
- 12 G** The faculty and staff roughly reflect the ethnic, socioeconomic, or community background of the students.
- 12 H** Staff meetings of the entire YouthBuild staff and appropriate subgroups, including staff of collaborating agencies, are held as needed and on a regular basis.
- 12 I** Financial management meets high standards of planning, accountability, and information for managers.
- Monthly reports showing expenditures against budget, revenue projections, and cash flow projections are provided to management.
 - Fiscal controls are thorough, according to standard practices, preventing theft, mismanagement, or inappropriate use of funds.
 - All required corporate reports are filed, and taxes paid, to maintain charitable status and good standing with the IRS.
 - Financial obligations are paid on a timely basis.
 - An annual independent financial audit is performed according to legal requirements.
- 12 J** The organization sets a code of conduct for the staff and personnel policies are developed and implemented systematically. The policies include conflict-of-interest policies, sexual harassment policies, and drug-free workplace policies.
- 12 K** The code of conduct includes the guideline that no staff or board member may obtain any personal profit or benefit through the labor of the students being carried out on personal property.
- 12 L** To enable staff development and growth, staff training and development is systematically offered, provided, budgeted, and valued.
- 12 M** Annual written evaluations of staff and director are completed and discussed. Comments from students are gathered during the completion of staff and director annual evaluations.
- 12 N** Appropriate insurance is maintained.
- 12 O** Programs assess issues of sustainability and economies of scale to determine optimal program size.

Recommended actions

12 P The board of directors evaluates the program annually, using these program standards as a general guide, inviting input from staff and the policy committee, and sharing the results with the YouthBuild USA program advisor. In the case of YouthBuild programs without boards of directors and operating within public agencies, the executive director of that agency or a YouthBuild community advisory board carries out the evaluation.

12 Q The YouthBuild director designates an instructional leader to guide a cohesive education program. In YouthBuild diploma-granting schools, leadership teams designate administrators to adequately fulfill two core functions: instructional leadership and executive duties. The team ensures that the infrastructure is sufficient to carry out and sustain all school functions.

13. Record Keeping

Required actions

13 A YouthBuild USA affiliates participate in the Web-based Student Tracking Application—Quarterly (WebSTA-Q) of the Affiliated Network, keeping and reporting data in a uniform way covering the following areas:

- Recruitment
- Basic demographic information, including race and ethnicity, age, gender, income levels and educational levels of students
- Attendance
- Program completion
- Average length of stay
- Reasons for termination
- GED and HSD acquisition
- Literacy and numeracy gains according to Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or comparable tests
- Job placement, including wage level and employer
- Industry-recognized certifications earned and other certifications such as driver's license, OSHA, etc.
- Recidivism information
- Registered apprenticeships received
- Postsecondary education placement: number of students placed into postsecondary education, the kind of postsecondary institution students have been placed in, and the number of students retained in their postsecondary placements each quarter (through three quarters post exit from YouthBuild).
- Voter registration

13 B A data collection, monitoring, and assessment infrastructure is built and data review is an executive function. Real-time information on attendance and outcome performance is available for staff and board to review and the information continuously shapes program decisions.

13 C Graduates' college and career placements are tracked for at least 12 months, optimally for 24 months, and support provided as needed.

13 D Individual student academic progress folders and graduation portfolios are kept.

13 E Records are kept of all individual students' progress in mastering leadership skills and fulfilling leadership roles. (See YouthBuild Leadership Competencies in the appendix, pages 42–47.)

13 F Student evaluations of program components are done annually and are used as guides for program improvement.

13 G Simple records of counseling progress are kept. These reflect commitments made by the counselor and the follow-up done, and reflect the life-planning process of the student.

13 H Contact information for each student, including several relatives or close friends, is maintained to facilitate future contact with alumni.

14. Community Leadership

Our vision includes every local YouthBuild becoming a center of advocacy, unity, coalition building, leadership, and struggle for better local conditions in every neighborhood. This only happens if program leadership stays focused on having maximum impact, not just on preserving and enhancing its program internally. For the first year or two, new YouthBuild programs may not have much attention to give to the community beyond the development of a sound YouthBuild program. But if the goal to have maximum impact on improving the conditions affecting the young people is there from the beginning, it will soon lead to the following types of action, which in turn will result in the creation of a reputation as a good collaborator.

Required action

- 14 A** YouthBuild representatives, including students and graduates, participate actively in local coalitions designed to improve policies and access to resources.

Recommended actions

- 14 B** YouthBuild sponsors community youth conferences to explore issues and reach recommendations regarding issues affecting youth and the neighborhood.
- 14 C** YouthBuild convenes other local groups to devise common activities either as collaborations to improve direct services or as advocacy for increased resources or changed policies affecting the neighborhood.

- 14 D** YouthBuild leads and staffs a coalition to achieve changes in policy or flow of resources to benefit the community.
- 14 E** YouthBuild starts an entrepreneurial venture with graduates of the program.
- 14 F** YouthBuild actively supports local economic development and self-sufficiency policies and practices, including those related to environmental sustainability and environmental justice.
- 14 G** YouthBuild engages regularly with elected officials at the federal, state and local levels to keep them informed of YouthBuild's impact on the community, and to enlist their support for community solutions to address the challenges faced by disconnected youth. Beyond working with elected officials, local YouthBuild staff also reach out for faith-based, community, and corporate support for YouthBuild and other neighborhood initiatives that improve conditions for low-income people.
- 14 H** YouthBuild programs reach out to their state service commissions and other local service organizations for collaborative service projects designed to demonstrate the positive and deep impact of service in the community.

15. Collaboration with YouthBuild USA

Required actions

- 15 A** Each local program agrees to adhere to the basic philosophy and mission of YouthBuild, as reflected in the essential program qualities, the directors' mission statement, and these program design and performance standards.
- 15 B** Each local program participates in further definition, refinement, and evaluation of aspects of the program, supporting the effort to get clarity about best practices and best resources for implementation of each program component and quality.
- 15 C** Each local program participates in the leadership opportunities for youth provided by YouthBuild USA.
- 15 D** Each local program participates in the activities of the national YouthBuild Coalition, which works to obtain adequate federal funding, enhance YouthBuild programs' visibility, support youth development, and build unity toward the elimination of poverty and discrimination. Where state YouthBuild coalitions exist, programs also participate in them.
- 15 E** Each local program includes in its organizational documents the fact that it is affiliated with YouthBuild USA and uses the YouthBuild USA service marks and public relations materials according to the affiliation agreements.
- 15 F** Experienced YouthBuild programs participate in providing various forms of training for new YouthBuild programs through on-site visits and workshops.
- 15 G** Cooperative organizational planning to make full use of YouthBuild USA's resources is carefully done. The director and program advisor assess needs for technical assistance and training, develop an annual work plan, and measure progress on a regular basis. When staff training is provided by YouthBuild USA, local YouthBuild programs ensure that staff attend for the entire training, that schedules are not changed at the last minute, that time is devoted to joint planning for staff and youth training to ensure success, and that feedback designed to improve future training is provided.
- 15 H** Programs take responsibility for self-assessment and constant improvement, sharing openly with their program advisor the issues with which they are grappling, and working with the program advisor to meet program and performance standards.
- 15 I** Programs work to move their affiliation status up from provisional to full and then to accredited as soon as they think they can qualify.
- 15 J** Programs routinely obtain permission from their students to share their contact information with YouthBuild USA so they can be informed of national alumni activities and opportunities, and then share it with YouthBuild USA upon graduation. Programs ensure that all students have e-mail addresses.

Additional Information about Best Practices

The handbooks and resources listed in this section are available in the YouthBuild USA Knowledge Bank, with links provided below. Please note that you must be logged in to the YouthBuild USA website in order to open these links and access any Knowledge Bank content. Register for a free user name and password at youthbuild.org/user/register and log in to YouthBuild USA's website (www.YouthBuild.org) to access the "Knowledge Bank." Only this way can you access the full Bank of resources we make available to YouthBuild affiliates and friends.

All of these materials are important resources for implementing all program components. We recommend reading the basic *Program Manual*, as well as each of the five handbooks describing the core components (construction, education, counseling, leadership development, and graduate opportunities) before starting a YouthBuild program. We also recommend having the staff who are responsible for implementing these components read them. Beyond the core handbooks, YouthBuild USA has prepared many supplementary materials, some of which are listed below; the rest can be found online in the Knowledge Bank.

These handbooks were developed because in the early years of YouthBuild, before handbooks were available, new programs frequently failed. Programs needed a careful description of best practices. Use of these handbooks has proven to be related to success.

Basic Handbooks

YouthBuild Program Manual

<https://YouthBuild.org/knowledge-bank/youthbuild-program-manual>

Approved by US Department of Labor, 2011

Construction Training at a Youthbuild Program

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/construction-training-youthbuild-program>

Approved by US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000

Leadership Development at a Youthbuild Program

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/leadership-development-youthbuild-program>

Approved by US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000

Education at a Youthbuild Program

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/education-youthbuild-program>

Approved by US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000. DOL's version will be released in early 2013.

Counseling and Case Management at a YouthBuild Program

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/counseling-and-case-management-youthbuild-program>

Approved by US Department of Labor, 2011

Pathways to Long-Term Success for YouthBuild Students Program Manual

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/opportunities-graduates-youthbuild-program-0>

Approved by US Department of Labor, 2011

Important supplementary handbooks

YouthBuild Policy Committee Handbook

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/youthbuild-policy-committee-handbook>

YouthBuild USA, 1995

Leadership Development Handbook

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/leadership-development-handbook>

YouthBuild USA, 2000

Mental Toughness Training Manual

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/mental-toughness-training-manual>

YouthBuild Boston, 1995

Shades of Green: A Green Building Guide for YouthBuild Affiliates

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/shades-green>

Approved by US Department of Labor, 2011

Curricula

Blueprint for Democracy: A Curriculum on Civic Engagement

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/blueprint-democracy>

YouthBuild USA, 2011

Working Hands, Working Minds

Curriculum guides for integrating construction and academics. *YouthBuild USA, 2001*

Unit 1: Teamwork and Leadership

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/working-hands-working-minds-unit-1-teamwork-and-leadership>

Unit 2: Health and Safety

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/working-hands-working-minds-unit-2-health-and-safety>

Unit 3: Tools and Technology

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/working-hands-working-minds-unit-3-tools-trades-and-technology>

Unit 4: Construction Related Math and Measurement

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/working-hands-working-minds-unit-4-construction-related-math-and-measurement>

Unit 5: Housing and Community

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/working-hands-working-minds-unit-5-housing-and-community>

Building Your Money Skills: Taking Charge of Your Future

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/building-your-money-skills-taking-charge-your-future>

YouthBuild USA

Career Development Curricula Review

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/sample-job-readiness-curriculum>

Sample job-readiness curriculum. *YouthBuild USA, 2009*

Career Development Curricula: Samples and Resources

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/career-development-curricula-samples-and-resources>

YouthBuild USA, 2011

Guide to Green Curricula

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/guide-green-curricula>

YouthBuild USA, 2010

Green Building Education Modules

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/green-building-education-modules>

US Department of Labor, 2009

Other Resources

Leadership Development, Workplace & Post-Secondary Readiness Competencies

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/leadership-development-workplace-post-secondary-readiness-competencies>

YouthBuild USA, 2012; also in Appendix of this document

Guide to Expanding Opportunities in Trade Unions

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/guide-expanding-opportunities-trade-unions>

YouthBuild USA, 2005

YouthBuild sample documents and forms (job descriptions, sample evaluation forms, worksheets, contracts, etc.)

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/sample-documents-and-forms>

Note: Our collection of sample documents and forms resides in its own section of the Knowledge Bank, rather than in one handbook or document. This link will bring you to the Sample Documents and Forms home page, where the documents are organized by copy-right year. Use the subcategories listed on the right side of the page to browse through the collection, or the search field to find specific items.

Career and Postsecondary Development Roadmap

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/career-and-postsecondary-development-roadmap>

YouthBuild USA, 2011

Labor Market Research

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/labor-market-research>

YouthBuild USA, 2011

Strategies for working with Gang-Exposed Youth

<https://youthbuild.org/knowledge-bank/strategies-working-gang-exposed-youth>

YouthBuild USA, 2011

Brand items such as posters, mugs, helmet decals, t-shirts and banners are also available from YouthBuild USA.

PART IV

YouthBuild Program Performance Standards

revised October 2014

Levels of performance

YouthBuild programs are complex. High standards are reached step by step, and usually not in every area at once. But experience has shown that whatever the director and the staff decide to achieve is usually what they do achieve. Where they put their attention, things happen. To a certain extent it is true that the higher the standards, the higher the performance.

On each performance measure, the standards shown here have been arrived at through experience. They will change with additional experience. In some areas we do not yet have objective measures that are being consistently reported, so standards have not yet been set. Accurate reporting will come first.

High performing

“High performing” represents the average range that the strongest programs have been able to produce, with the best programs sustaining this performance on an ongoing, steady basis.

Very good

“Very good” represents the average range that strong programs have been able to produce.

Good

“Good” represents the level that has been widely achieved by sound programs and has been set as a standard for accreditation. This level has risen over time, as more programs have demonstrated good outcomes.

Needing attention

“Needing attention” represents the achievement levels that programs have suffered when they were having difficulties but were still in good faith attempting to fulfill the mission of YouthBuild and had reasonable hope of doing so. Corrective action plans are required at this level.

Unacceptable

“Unacceptable” levels are those levels that are clearly indicative of failure in this component, and that have been associated with eventual failure of past programs.

It is understood that performance levels are affected by the demographics of the students in the program. Research on YouthBuild programs by Professor Ron Ferguson of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government has shown direct correspondence between outcomes and two unrelated sets of factors: program quality and characteristics of the students accepted. Programs serving a distinctly different population can expect to achieve somewhat different ranges of outcomes. However, we have often enough seen outstanding staff effort achieve high outcomes with seemingly less-likely-to-succeed students that we think program quality has more impact than demographics in determining outcomes.

While it is important to have clear performance standards, it is even more important to not allow the existence of these standards to distort the program by influencing staff to exclude youth who have more obvious challenges, to avoid experimentation, or to avoid honest reporting. The YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network encourages programs to select students who are most likely to make good use of the expensive opportunities presented and who have the potential to become community leaders. But it does not discourage programs from trying to reach youth who have failed or been turned off in other systems.

YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Performance Standards Summary revised October 2014

Long-term student performance measures* (count toward affiliation level)	High Performing	Good	Needing Attention	Unacceptable
TIER ONE				
Placement of enrollees	56–100%	55%	35–54%	Below 35%
Retention in placement	66–100%	65%	47–64%	Below 47%
Educational achievement (GED/high school diploma)	51–100%	50%	30–49%	Below 30%
Educational achievement (Literacy or numeracy advancement)	76–100%	75%	50–74%	Below 50%

Program performance benchmarks* (do not count toward affiliation level)	High Performing	Good	Needing Attention	Unacceptable
TIER TWO				
Average monthly attendance for all enrolled participants	81–100%	80%	70–79%	Below 70%
Completion of enrollees	76–100%	75%	55–74%	Below 55%
Wage at placement	At least 24% above state minimum wage	0–24% above state minimum wage	n/a	n/a
Industry-recognized certifications	76–100%	75%	50–74%	Below 50%
Recidivism	0–14%	15%	16–25%	Above 25%
Leadership development, voter registration	81–100% of those eligible	80%	70–79%	Below 70%

*See pages 31–35 for descriptions of these standards.

SUMMARY OF POLICY COUNCIL DECISION ON NEW BENCHMARK AND STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATION OCTOBER 2014

1. Instead of having 10 primary outcome measures of equal weight, there will now be two tiers of measures:
 - TIER ONE — Long-term student performance measures:** Education (the GED/HSD and literacy/numeracy advancement), placement, and retention in placement.
 - TIER TWO — Program performance benchmarks:** Completion, attendance, recidivism, industry-recognized certificates, wage, and voter registration.
2. To move to full affiliation, a Provisional Affiliate must have the following:
 - Either GED/HSD OR literacy/numeracy advancement must be in “good” or better
 - Of the two other long-term student performance measures (placement, and retention in placement), one must be in “good” or better, and only one may be in “needing attention.”

Only the indicators in the long-term student performance measures would determine a site’s Affiliated Network membership level.

NOTE: In general it was agreed that there should be a “leadership development” measure in the long-term student performance measures group, but we agreed that deciding on what this should be, or how it should be measured, would take a longer discussion at a future policy council meeting. So for now, voter registration remains the only leadership-development measurement.

TIER ONE YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Performance Standards

Job or School Placement

Job or school placement is measured for all enrollees. This measure may be taken at exit, or at any time through the end of the first follow-up quarter.

High performing	56–100 percent of enrollees get jobs or go on to full- or part-time education
Good	55 percent of enrollees
Needing attention	35–54 percent of enrollees
Unacceptable	Less than 35 percent of enrollees

Retention in Job or School Placement

A graduate is counted as having retained a job or school placement if he or she keeps a placement for at least two quarters after the quarter in which placement occurs. Movement from placement to placement within those two quarters still counts as retaining placement. However, there must be a placement in each of the required two quarters; “skipping” a quarter but then finding another placement doesn’t constitute retaining placement. Programs are encouraged to also continue collecting placement data for the third and fourth quarter after exit.

High performing	66–100 percent of enrollees placed retain job or school placement for two quarters after placement
Good	65 percent
Needing attention	47–64 percent
Unacceptable	Less than 47 percent

Educational (GED or Diploma) Achievement, and Literacy and Numeracy Gains

Students enter the program with widely different academic levels. Under the DOL YouthBuild statute up to 25 percent may already have their diplomas. On the other hand, some students may enter with reading or math scores well below sixth grade; many apply with scores below fourth-grade level.

We do not want programs to use the outcome standards to determine which students a program is willing to accept based on their incoming academic scores. Therefore, in considering advancement in the Affiliated Network and assessing the outcome levels of an affiliate, we will consider EITHER reaching the Good level of affiliation of the GED or Diploma Achievement, OR the Good level of literacy and numeracy gains as an indication of meeting the Good affiliation standard for education.

We will, however, track and report them separately so we can report on them separately. They have relevance for funding, public policy, and assessing program quality.

GED or Diploma Achievement:

High performing	51–100 percent (i.e., at least 71 percent of students get either a GED or high school diploma)
Good	50 percent
Needing attention	30–49 percent
Unacceptable	Below 30 percent

Contrary to general expectations, students entering at a low (below seventh-grade) reading level achieve GEDs at roughly the same average rate (35.5 percent) as those entering at an above-seventh grade level (about 37 percent). It appears that outcomes relate as much to the quality of teaching as to the incoming grade levels.

Literacy or Numeracy Advancement:

High performing	76–100 percent advance two or more grade levels
Good	75 percent
Needing attention	50–74 percent
Unacceptable	Below 50 percent

TIER TWO YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Performance Standards

Attendance

Average monthly attendance for all enrolled students

High performing	81–100 percent are present or at planned off-site appointments
Good	80 percent
Needing attention	70–79 percent
Unacceptable	Below 70 percent

These are averages achieved for the full program cycle, including all enrolled students in all program components.

Two types of attendance records are kept:

1. Actual attendance in terms of who is present at the program, or at planned off-site appointments
2. Adjusted attendance, including excused absences.

The above performance standards are for actual attendance. The YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network has decided that in counting actual attendance, absences for sickness and family emergencies count as “absent” even when they are excused as a result of doctors’ notices or documented need. Absences for events that are part of a student’s leadership development plan may be counted as “present” (i.e., court dates, driver’s ed classes, setting up child care for the semester, attendance at leadership conferences). When a site applies for full affiliation or accreditation, actual—not adjusted—attendance is examined.

Note: The National Rudy Awards for Perfect Attendance and the National Honors Awards are also based on actual attendance.

Completion

Some employment-training programs use the average length of stay as the indicator of retention. YouthBuild USA has put primary emphasis on the percentage of students who complete the entire program after having been enrolled. However, completion also includes those who obtain their GED or high school diploma early in the cycle (or already have it) and then choose to be placed prior to the end of the program cycle. If a student completes a prison term for a crime committed prior to YouthBuild and returns to complete YouthBuild afterward, he or she is included.

While early placement is acceptable for calculating completion even if GED or HSD has not been earned, we recommend that placement usually not be done prior to achievement of the GED or HSD because of the long-range importance of that credential.

A student is counted as enrolled after one month, including the orientation and Mental Toughness, regardless of the length of orientation. This practice was adopted from other employment training systems in order to make YouthBuild comparable to them. Using this approach, the current standards are as follows:

High performing	76–100 percent of enrollees remain for the entire program cycle or are appropriately placed during the program cycle
Good	75 percent
Needing attention	55–74 percent
Unacceptable	Below 55 percent

In some cases, retaining a student in the program through completion is an enormous achievement even with lower attendance. The average attendance, completion, and placement rates are expected to interact positively so that there is not a pattern of retaining numerous students on the roll books who are actually not present or not placed.

TIER TWO YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Performance Standards, continued

Wages at Job Placement

Wage standards are calculated by averaging the wages of all enrollees who are placed in a job or paying program placement. Wage standards are set against the state minimum wage to allow for the significant differences between different states' minimum wages. However, because working full-time at a minimum-wage job in most states still produces a poverty-level income, graduate follow-up, career placements, and college education are strongly recommended.

This measurement is calculated only from the students placed only in jobs, not from the students placed in jobs and school. If there are multiple job placements with different wages, we will consider the highest wage of all placements reported within the exit quarter or the quarter after.

High performing	At least 24 percent above the state minimum wage
Good	0–24 percent above the state minimum wage
Needing attention	Not applicable: below minimum wage is impossible
Unacceptable	Not applicable: below minimum wage is impossible

See pages 40–41 for a chart of state minimum wages in 2012 and the proposed 2013 wage performance standards for each state.

Industry-Recognized and Other Certifications

Many programs offer the Building Trades Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MCCC) or the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) or the Home Building Institute (HBI) curriculums and their industry-recognized certifications. In addition, YouthBuild USA accepts certifications for occupational safety, first aid, hazardous materials, and driver's licenses, although these are not recognized by US Department of Labor.

With the federal government's recent emphasis on industry-recognized certifications, the Affiliated Network has adopted a new required action that calls for offering such certifications, and has set the performance standards listed here.

High performing	76–100 percent of students achieve at least one recognized certificate
Good	75 percent
Needing attention	50–74 percent
Unacceptable	Below 50 percent

Recidivism

We define excellence in recidivism prevention as having no incidents of repeat offense as of the exit quarter.

High performing	0–14 percent
Good	15 percent
Needing attention	16–25 percent
Unacceptable	Above 25 percent

TIER TWO YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Performance Standards, continued

Leadership Development

High performing	81–100 percent of students eligible are registered to vote
Good	80 percent
Needing attention	70–79 percent
Unacceptable	Less than 70 percent

Leadership is cultivated in a young person in a variety of ways, both during and after their time at a YouthBuild program. As a result, there are multiple means of measuring the practice of leadership development at a YouthBuild program. The current standard here is the percent of youth who are eligible to vote who are registered to vote. Please understand that this standard was designed to measure the extent to which a program teaches and emphasizes the importance of each student's responsibility to be civically involved including the act of voting, rather than simply requiring that each student register to vote.

However, this is a very narrow measure of leadership development. Therefore, in the effort to create a comprehensive measure, a set of leadership competencies has been developed (see pages 42 to 47) and, as of 2012, is being piloted with a number of YouthBuild programs in several areas of the country. Programs are encouraged to work with coaches, advisors, and each other to use these leadership competencies, and provide feedback to YouthBuild USA on the competencies. Feedback may be sent to affnet@youthbuild.org. We anticipate that the next edition of these Standards will incorporate some percentage achievement of these or revised leadership competencies.

Until the pilot stage of the leadership competencies has concluded, the performance standard will continue to use voter registration as the sole measure of leadership development of YouthBuild students. However, programs that do use the leadership competencies mentioned above will be given some credit for doing so. This credit will feed into the assessment for full and accredited status.

Individual Leadership: Personal Responsibility and Group Membership

Personal responsibility and leadership are hard to measure. The performance standards now include one easily measurable leadership development measure: voter registration, and another easily measurable element of responsibility: recidivism. Other than this measure, goals would be as follows.

Students would:

- Have 90 percent attendance, without lateness
- Fulfill their school and program objectives
- Take care of their children
- Stay out of legal trouble
- Resolve past legal troubles
- Give up their addictions
- Improve their family relationships
- Learn how to resolve conflicts peaceably
- Express their opinions fully and respectfully
- Learn how to negotiate on their own behalf
- Keep their promises

Additional goals could include ensuring that if students join a committee or any task force, they would attend reliably and follow through on all commitments.

Thus far these goals have not been measured because tracking them for each student would place an enormous burden on each program. However, the outcome measures related to attendance, retention, job placement, and educational achievement indirectly measure personal responsibility and group membership; high standards generally cannot be reached in those areas unless personal growth is occurring. The new Leadership Development Competencies address many of these (see pages 42–47).

TIER TWO YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Performance Standards, continued

Community Leadership Development

The goal for community leadership development is that a significant number of students are moved to participate in committees that are taking collective responsibility for the program and benefiting people other than themselves (although of course including themselves). Community leadership development can also mean that they take on individual leadership roles designed to improve the functioning of the program or improve the community or benefit people who will come behind them.

While the first step of leadership is taking responsibility to make things go right for oneself, eventually leadership must include making things go right for other people as well. Learning to subordinate one's own interests to the interests of others and becoming the chief servant of one's constituency requires a struggle against the dominant societal values of

selfishness and cynicism. Exercising leadership also includes influencing people with power to use their power to benefit other people. Learning to do this requires a struggle against deeply ingrained and widespread feelings of powerlessness.

As mentioned above in the definition of the Leadership Development performance standard, a list of leadership skills and competencies, which the Affiliated Network Policy Council has agreed constitutes skills that all students should learn, has been developed. The young leaders who reviewed these program standards recommend that YouthBuild affiliates use these leadership competencies and develop a system of self-evaluation against these skills. Programs are encouraged to do this at their own initiative, but, as resources allow, YouthBuild USA will train and support affiliates to use the competencies in their programs, and revise them until they can be incorporated as an official performance standard.

In Summary

Standards affect behavior. Knowing what has been achieved by others affects aspirations. Accountability for results affects consistency of effort.

YouthBuild USA will help provide direction and inspiration about what is possible, insight regarding how to achieve it, and accountability for seeing to it that we do all in our power to use the resources we have gathered to make a real difference. We will bring people together to share their methods of achieving the highest levels of success.

PART V

Honors Graduates

National Honors Awards

In April 1998, the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Policy Council accepted the recommendation of the Directors Association and other councils and implemented voluntary honors graduation standards. Students who fulfill the following requirements are considered Honors YouthBuild Graduates and are entitled to receive Honors Graduate certificates from YouthBuild USA. Graduates must:

- Remain in the program for a minimum of six months (this may include students who have been deliberately placed in an appropriate job or school after six months, but before the program cycle is over)
- Have an average overall attendance record of 90 percent or an overall attendance of 80 to 85 percent with 95 percent attendance for the last three months
- Attain a GED or diploma (or already have one)
- Pass a drug test and remain drug-free for at least one month before graduation
- Meet the skills competencies developed by their individual program
- Complete AmeriCorps service hours (if their program is an AmeriCorps program).

If programs request these certifications for identified students, the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network will supply them.

The Rudy Award for Perfect Attendance

The Rudy Award was created in 1991 by YouthBuild USA to honor Rudy Griffith, a YouthBuild Boston graduate who had perfect attendance. From 1991 on, the award has been given annually to YouthBuild trainees who met the qualification of perfect attendance at their own programs.

To qualify for the award, a trainee must have a perfect attendance record and must have completed an affiliated YouthBuild program or been deliberately placed in an appropriate job or school after six months, but before the program cycle is over. Perfect attendance means that the student had only absences from the classroom that were preplanned with the staff, and that were part of his or her educational or leadership development plan. No absences for being sick, caring for sick dependents, or other unplanned absences are allowed.

Rudy Award winners are given a perfect attendance certificate honoring their accomplishments, and a cash award when feasible. In addition, their names will be added to the Rudy Award roster on the YouthBuild USA website so that they can share their success with their friends and family.

Local programs should submit names of National Honors or Rudy Award candidates to the YouthBuild USA Director of the Affiliated Network.

PART VI

The Process for Changing the YouthBuild Model or Requirements

The YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Policy Council will review the program standards every five years or as needed. It will consider proposals from local programs or from the National Directors Council, Young Leaders Council, YouthBuild National Alumni Council, state YouthBuild coalitions, and YouthBuild USA staff or board of directors regarding any type of change in basic definition, the required and recommended components and actions, qualities, program or performance standards, or explicit philosophy guiding YouthBuild programs. In some cases it will be clear that the proposal should be simply accepted or rejected; in some cases thorough discussion in the councils will be needed; in others the resolution of the question will require further testing, observation of results, and a later report back to the Policy Council. In some cases funding will be needed to do the exploration. If the Policy Council recommends that funds be provided, YouthBuild USA will endeavor to raise the funds.

The YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Policy Council will include the following members:

- The YouthBuild USA president, who will chair the council
- The chief program officer of YouthBuild USA plus three other staff with different roles, to be appointed by the president
- Five directors from affiliated YouthBuild sites elected by the National Directors Council. One director shall be the president of the National Directors Association.
- Three young people elected by the Young Leaders Council. One shall be the president of the Young Leaders Council. They must be current students or graduates of YouthBuild programs, and either in good standing at their programs, currently employed, or in school.
- Two YouthBuild program alumni elected by the National Alumni Council. One shall be the president of the YouthBuild National Alumni Council
- Two representatives from VOICES, the Postsecondary Education Initiative's student advisory council.

The YouthBuild USA Board of Directors has delegated the decision making regarding standards to the Policy Council of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network. It has the right to overrule the council if it perceives a compelling reason, but has never done so.

PART VII

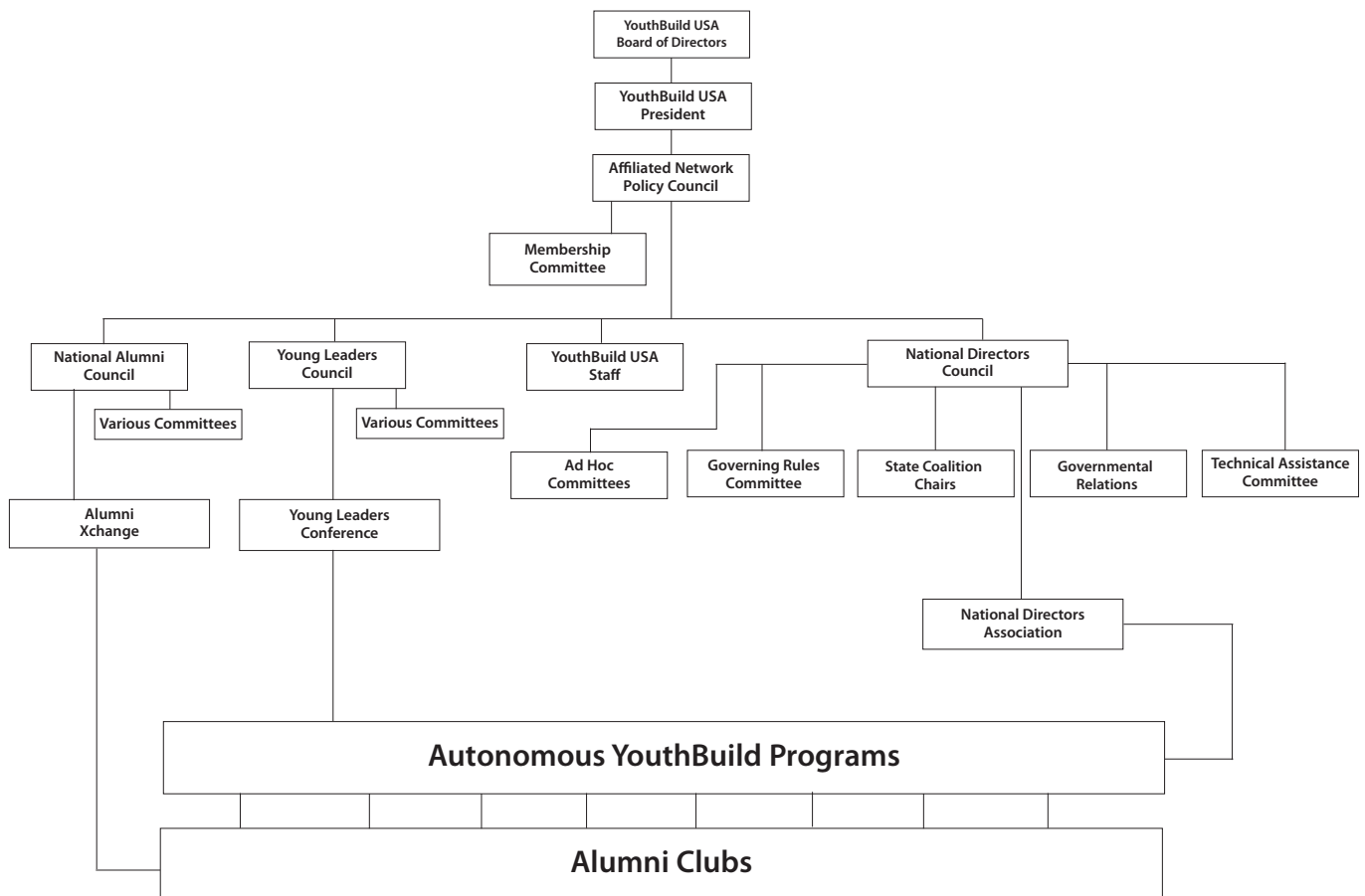
Working Definitions of Important Terms Related to These Standards

Enrollee	A student who has completed the first month of the full-time program, including the orientation and Mental Toughness program
Completer	A student who stays until the end of the full YouthBuild program
Early completer	A student who stays less than the full YouthBuild program cycle, but stays at least six months, and is placed in an appropriate job, a postsecondary educational placement, the military, or a residential treatment program
Exceptional early completer	A student who stays less than six months in a YouthBuild program because there is a compelling reason to place him or her in an appropriate job, a postsecondary educational placement, the military, or a residential treatment program
Appropriate placement	A placement that is better than what the student would have gotten without the YouthBuild program, in a field that is chosen by the student and that represents a career trajectory with possibility of advancement.
Graduate	“Graduate” is defined by the local program, not by these standards, except in the case of an Honors YouthBuild Graduate (see page 36).
Termination	Someone who is counted as “terminated” is terminated by the program after she or he has completed the first month of the full-time program, including orientation and Mental Toughness, and been formally enrolled. If the student is terminated during that first month, he or she is taken from the rolls and not counted as an enrollee for that cycle.

PART VIII

Appendices

YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network Organizational Chart



State Minimum Wages and New Wage Performance Standards, 2012–2013

STATE	State minimum wage, 2012	State minimum wage, 2013	Needing Attention or Unacceptable Not possible to be less than minimum wage	Satisfactory 0–24% above 2013 state minimum wage	Very good 25–50% above state minimum wage	Excellent At least 51% above minimum wage	(FYI) 80% above minimum wage
AL	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
AK	\$7.75	\$7.75	N/A	\$7.75– 9.61	\$9.61–11.63	Above \$11.63	\$11.63
AR	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
AZ	\$7.65	\$7.80	N/A	\$7.80– 9.67	\$9.67–11.70	Above \$11.70	\$12.60
CA	\$8.00	\$8.00	N/A	\$8.00– 9.92	\$9.92–12.00	Above \$12.00	\$14.40
CO	\$7.64	\$7.78	N/A	\$7.64– 9.47	\$9.47–11.67	Above \$11.67	\$14.00
CT	\$8.25	\$8.25	N/A	\$8.25–10.22	\$10.23–12.38	Above \$12.38	\$14.85
DE	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
DC	\$8.25	\$8.25	N/A	\$8.25–10.22	\$10.23–12.38	Above \$12.38	\$14.85
FL	\$7.67	\$7.79	N/A	\$7.79– 9.66	\$9.66–11.69	Above \$11.69	\$14.02
GA	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
HI	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
ID	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
IA	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
IL	\$8.25	\$8.25	N/A	\$8.25–10.22	\$10.23–12.38	Above \$12.38	\$14.85
IN	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
KS	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
KY	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
MD	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
ME	\$7.50	\$7.50	N/A	\$7.50– 9.30	\$9.31–11.25	Above \$11.25	\$13.50
MA	\$8.00	\$8.00	N/A	\$8.00– 9.92	\$9.92–12.00	Above \$12.00	\$14.40
MI	\$7.40	\$7.40	N/A	\$7.49– 9.18	\$9.19–11.10	Above \$11.10	\$13.32
MO	\$7.25	\$7.35	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
MN	\$7.65	\$7.80	N/A	\$7.80– 9.67	\$9.68–11.70	Above \$11.70	\$14.04
MS	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
MT	\$7.65	\$7.80	N/A	\$7.80– 9.67	\$9.68–11.70	Above \$11.70	\$11.70

State Minimum Wages and New Wage Performance Standards, 2012–2013, continued

STATE	State minimum wage, 2012	State minimum wage, 2013	Needing Attention or Unacceptable Not possible to be less than minimum wage	Satisfactory 0–24% above 2013 state minimum wage	Very good 25–50% above state minimum wage	Excellent At least 51% above minimum wage	(FYI) 80% above minimum wage
NE	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
NV	\$8.25	TBD	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
NH	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
NJ	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
NM	\$7.50	\$7.50	N/A	\$7.50– 9.30	\$9.31–11.25	Above \$11.25	\$13.50
NY	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
NC	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
ND	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
OH	\$7.70	\$7.85	N/A	\$7.85– 9.73	\$9.74–11.78	Above \$11.78	\$14.13
OK	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
OR	\$8.80	\$8.95	N/A	\$8.85–10.91	\$10.92–13.43	Above \$13.43	\$16.11
PA	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
PR	\$6.55	\$6.55	N/A	\$6.55– 8.12	\$8.13– 9.83	Above \$9.83	\$11.79
SC	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
SD	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
TN	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
TX	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
UT	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
VA	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
VI	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
VT	\$8.46	\$8.60	N/A	\$8.61–10.66	\$10.67–12.90	Above \$12.90	\$15.48
WA	\$9.04	\$9.19	N/A	\$9.19–11.40	\$11.41–13.79	Above \$13.79	\$16.54
WI	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
WV	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05
WY	\$7.25	\$7.25	N/A	\$7.25– 8.99	\$9.00–10.88	Above \$10.88	\$13.05

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies

Leadership development represents an essential element of YouthBuild programming and the YouthBuild movement. In the YouthBuild context, leadership means young people take responsibility to make sure things go right for themselves, their families and their communities. Leadership development is also key to helping YouthBuild students work toward their career goals and learning and succeed in career and postsecondary placements.

Many of the same competencies necessary for students to become leaders in their families, programs and communities are also the kinds of foundational skills sought by employers and needed to succeed in higher education. When planning leadership development activities and measuring leadership development among program participants, YouthBuild programs should be mindful of the intersections between leadership development, higher education, and workplace competencies.

The following table contains some suggested leadership competencies for YouthBuild programs to use as starting places for developing their own lists tailored to their program context. The competencies are in three categories:

- Personal leadership skills and knowledge
- Small-group leadership skills and knowledge
- Community leadership skills and knowledge.

We have highlighted competencies that are of particular relevance to career preparation and success in college.

Each competency has an example benchmark by which a program could determine if a participant is working toward attainment of the competency. Benchmarks need to be customized to each program, so these are simply illustrative. In addition, as is evident from the sample benchmarks, activities across the program should provide opportunities for participants to work toward competency attainment. For example, some of the sample benchmarks are the results of classroom writing activities; some would be achieved in consultation with the counselor or career developer, and some can be achieved on the construction work site. In this document, we highlight ways in which these activities might be directly linked to career development and preparation for college.

Lastly, we suggest that a program set standards for completion, for example: “To graduate, a student must satisfactorily attain 80 percent of these leadership competencies. The student is then awarded a certificate, which can be added to his or her résumé or portfolio.”

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies, continued

Personal Leadership Skills and Knowledge	
Basic competencies	Sample benchmarks
<p>1. Schedule Keeps and uses a weekly schedule and calendar.</p>	<p>General Leadership Spot checks of calendar and weekly schedule show up-to-date program activities and appointments.</p> <p>Career Ready Maintains a calendar with work site, internship and job placement schedules.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Maintains an up-to-date calendar for short- and long-term scheduling for all classroom assignments.</p>
<p>2. E-mail Has and uses an e-mail account, Facebook page, or other social media networking platform.</p>	<p>General Leadership Consistently replies to weekly e-mails from program director.</p> <p>Career Ready Writes professional e-mails, and uses e-mail for job applications when appropriate. (Professional user name should be part of basic competency.)</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Can complete, save, discuss, and submit coursework electronically.</p>
<p>3. Goal setting Sets and makes progress towards personal development goals. Understands value of long-term goals and deferred gratification. Can use self-evaluation and feedback from others to evaluate progress toward goals.</p>	<p>General Leadership Individual development plan lists goals and records regular self-assessment of progress toward goals, with modifications as needed. Demonstrates ability to ask for feedback about goals.</p> <p>Career Ready Individual development plan includes career and education plans with clear and achievable goals.</p>
<p>4. Emotional control Handles own anger, frustration, disappointments, and reactions to personal or societal disrespect and mistreatment in a constructive way.</p>	<p>General Leadership Instances of improvement in managing anger or disappointment constructively are recognized by staff or fellow students and are recorded in case notes.</p> <p>Career Ready Instances are noted in which the student communicates effectively and in a productive manner about frustrations on the work site and in the classroom.</p>
<p>5. Financial literacy Has basic financial literacy skills: pays bills, saves money, makes and uses a personal budget.</p>	<p>General Leadership Budget and biweekly reconciliations are turned in.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Creates a budget for financing postsecondary education expenses, considering financial aid and living expenses. Keeps this budget up-to-date as plans for postsecondary education progress.</p>

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies, continued

Personal Leadership Skills and Knowledge	
Basic competencies	Sample benchmarks
<p>6. Note taking Takes useful notes in class, in meetings, and on the work site.</p>	<p>General Leadership Written work site safety tips, based on notes taken on work site, potentially to be used for program poster.</p> <p>Career Ready Written notes about career paths from career presentations, job shadowing, and informational interviews are kept in a journal or used in group discussions and presentations.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Takes well-organized notes which capture key learning concepts and demonstrate understanding of content.</p>
<p>7. Researching Can find information through researching.</p>	<p>General Leadership Researches topics of interest using a variety of sources such as the Internet and the library. Is able to evaluate those sources.</p> <p>Career Ready Uses information found through research to prepare presentation on a career pathway that matches the student's interests and local labor-market demand.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Can distinguish between the validity of various research sources and use legitimate resources to construct a research paper.</p>
<p>8. Personal values Can articulate how own personal values and beliefs affect his or her decision.</p>	<p>General Leadership Writes essay about how a personal value has affected his or her life choices.</p> <p>Career Ready Journal entry describing how personal values and beliefs might influence the student's career choice.</p>
<p>9. Support network. Seeks and takes advantage of a positive support network and has someone to turn to during times of need.</p>	<p>General Leadership Develops a mentor; creates a strong circle of friends; associates with positive people.</p>
<p>10. Community resources. Can identify and secure community resources and supports to help meet their own needs.</p>	<p>General Leadership Creates contact list of important community resources, any self-reports of using these resources are recorded in case notes.</p> <p>Career Ready Can identify community resources for finding a job and developing career skills (such as Career OneStop and the nearest community college).</p> <p>Postsecondary ready Proactively approaches instructors, professors, and counselors for additional understanding and support.</p>

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies, continued

Small Group Leadership Skills and Knowledge	
Basic competencies	Sample benchmarks
<p>11. Define leadership Can define the functions, skills, attitudes, and qualities of good leaders.</p>	<p>General Leadership Writes essay, short story, or poem that describes the functions, skills, attitudes, and qualities of a good leader.</p> <p>Career Ready Writes essay, short story, or poem that describes how the qualities that make someone a good leader apply in a variety of situations, including the workplace.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Completes research paper on the role of a leader in the students' community or a historical leader who impacted the young persons' life experience.</p>
<p>12. Listening Listens well to others in class, in meetings, and on the work site.</p>	<p>General Leadership Participates effectively in class discussions, listening respectfully to the opinions of others.</p> <p>Career Ready On the work site and during group projects, is able to take on different roles as part of the team—being a listener when necessary. Exhibits tact and diplomacy, showing sensitivity to the thoughts of others.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Can actively participate in and lead group academic projects.</p>
<p>13. Public speaking Can prepare for and give a presentation in front of a group.</p>	<p>General Leadership Delivers a written presentation about an issue in the community that is important to the student.</p> <p>Career Ready Practices speaking to community leaders at city hall meetings, developing professional communication and presentation skills. Presentation on a career track and videotape of presentation.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Presents projects from academic portfolio to peers, educators, community, and work-force partners.</p>
<p>14. Group process Can explain and participate in a variety of group process methods such as brainstorming, small group sharing, equal time go-arounds, and appreciations.</p>	<p>General Leadership Is observed facilitating a brainstorming session, or participates in appreciating peers; demonstrates use of other group processes.</p>

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies, continued

Small Group Leadership Skills and Knowledge

Basic competencies	Sample benchmarks
<p>15. Small group meetings Can lead an effective small group discussion, or follow an agenda, or reach a decision.</p>	<p>General Leadership Leads an effective small group discussion about an in-class assignment. Observed facilitating a meeting agenda or making a decision.</p> <p>Career Ready Works as a team to develop a set of priorities for improving relationships on the work site, helping to identify team goals, resolve conflicts, and reach consensus.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Leads an effective small-group discussion about strategies for succeeding in postsecondary education (possibly a discussion to include alumni), making sure that everyone's opinions are heard and taken into consideration.</p>

Community Leadership Skills And Knowledge

Basic competencies	Sample Benchmarks
<p>16. Knowledge of government Can explain the basics of how local, state, and national governments work.</p>	<p>General Leadership Creates poster with explanations; presents to elementary school students.</p> <p>Career Ready Able to clearly explain complex systems.</p>
<p>17. Voting If eligible, is registered to vote and knows how to vote.</p>	<p>General Leadership Copy of completed voter registration form; votes in program election using simulated voting system.</p>
<p>18. Using media to raise public concern Can write a letter to the editor or local official to bring attention to a concern, or can post a blog or launch a Facebook campaign.</p>	<p>General Leadership Completes letter to the editor.</p> <p>Career Ready Is able to write a clear, coherent, persuasive document and communicate ideas, opinions, and concerns clearly and coherently.</p>
<p>19. Research issues Can research and advocate for issues important to him or her.</p>	<p>General Leadership Writes proposal for a way to improve the program.</p> <p>Career and Postsecondary Ready Writes proposal for way to improve the work site or his or her roles at the work site. Is able to identify problems, consider alternatives and determine possible solutions. Effectively locates, gathers, and organizes relevant information.</p>

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies, continued

Community Leadership Skills And Knowledge	
Basic competencies	Sample Benchmarks
<p>20. Service Can identify opportunities to serve the community.</p>	<p>General Leadership Identifies potential projects, and organizes and executes a realistic plan, evaluating the plan as it progresses, making adaptations as necessary.</p> <p>Postsecondary Ready Participates in and leads service-learning projects with the efficacy to select projects with community value and connections to classroom learning goals</p>
<p>21. Cultural competence Demonstrates respect for cultural differences among peers and in the community.</p> <p>Understands and effectively communicates terms of oppression (such as racism, sexism, adultism).</p>	<p>General Leadership is observed by staff as having a basic understanding of oppression; has journal entry describing personal experience of oppression; has a working vocabulary of the different dimension of diversity; demonstrates knowledge through writings, role plays, and conversations.</p> <p>Career Ready Is able to discuss and acknowledge cultural differences respectfully. Writes a journal entry about how cultural differences could affect working relationships and how best to address issues as they arise.</p>
<p>22. Community mapping Can map assets and key influential organizations, people and forces in the community.</p>	<p>General Leadership Creates poster map of community.</p> <p>Career Ready Locates and interviews career development centers, OneStop center,</p>
<p>23. Organizing events Can plan, organize and implement a program activity or event.</p>	<p>General Leadership Writes plan for program event and writes post-program evaluation.</p> <p>Career and Postsecondary Ready Plans and implements a career and postsecondary development event—for example, a pizza party with alumni who are currently working towards postsecondary education credentials.</p>

