

# N.J. allots \$6.25 million for youth education, job training in N.J. cities



WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2009 16:21 |



State Attorney General Anne Milgram Wednesday announced the investment of \$6.25 million in state and federal funding in crime prevention programs that will support education and job training in Newark, Camden, Trenton and Paterson.

The funding, awarded through the prevention component of the state's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods, was announced at a construction work-site for the YouthBuild Newark program. YouthBuild is a program that is part school and part job, designed to help youth at-risk of dropping out of high school or those who have already dropped out.

The YouthBuild program in Newark is one of four YouthBuild organizations that will receive a total of \$2,580,000 in state funding over the next three years. Another \$3 million in federal economic recovery aid has been set aside for competitive bidding for three additional non-profit job training programs that will spur the creation of job opportunities for at-risk youth. Those programs will also be supported for three years.

"We are providing the resources necessary to help young people who are living at risk to gangs and violence in their communities, and who want the chance to succeed," Milgram said. "The alternative is to not support these efforts and pay for the costs associated with prison, emergency health care, public assistance, and much more."

"YouthBuild is a proven program with excellent results," Milgram said. "Investing in evidence-based programs is a hallmark of our Prevention Strategy and one that I am pleased to say we are doing here."

The YouthBuild program in Newark will receive a three-year grant award of \$215,000 per year. The other programs receiving the same funding are Isles YouthBuild in Trenton; the Camden Housing Authority's YouthBuild program, and the New Jersey Community Development Corporation's Great Falls YouthBuild program in Paterson.

Robert Clark, director of YouthBuild Newark, said, ""We are truly excited about this funding opportunity that will allow YouthBuild Newark to serve more young people who have decided to change their lives. We are truly hopeful that the population we serve remains a top priority of our state."

The Initiative for Regional and Community Transformation at Rutgers University's Bloustein School was also awarded a three-year contract for \$650,000 to independently evaluate the job training programs.

In the YouthBuild programs, students learn employment skills and help build affordable housing and other public projects within their own communities. Since YouthBuild-Newark started in 2003, it has served more than 500 young people and can point to a recidivism rate of less than 5 percent for students who had previously been arrested and who remained with the program for at least three months.

In the 2008-2009 program, there were 104 students enrolled in the Newark program. Eighty percent graduated, with 71 percent attaining a high school equivalency diploma, 91 percent attaining construction certification, and 80 percent demonstrating gains in literacy and math skills.

The YouthBuild program model began in East Harlem, New York in 1978 to provide education services for youth and teach construction skills while renovating and building homes for low-income families. There are now more than 200 YouthBuild programs in the United States.

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