

2012

# Student Handbook



YouthBuild Providence  
Enter to Learn  Depart to Serve

8/1/2012

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**The Mission of YouthBuild Providence is to provide young people with opportunities for positive life choices and experiences, and to help them become mentally and morally empowered to accept responsibility for themselves, their families and their communities.**

**ENTER TO LEARN *∞* DEPART TO SERVE**





# Letter from the Director

Dear YouthBuild Providence Community,

It has been my sincere pleasure and honor to serve as the Director of this outstanding program and community.

At YouthBuild Providence, we care about each student that we engage and those that are not fortunate enough to be accepted into the program but seek the assistance from my talented educators, counselors, youth workers and administrators. What we do at YouthBuild goes beyond academics and workforce development, WE CHANGE LIVES.

We at YouthBuild Providence guide ourselves by our 5 Principles: respect, commitment, discipline, stewardship and excellence. This shows in everything that we do. These principles are how we operated as a program and are the values that we teach our students.

After 15 years of meeting the needs of Providence's high school dropouts with innovative alternative education and workforce development services, YouthBuild is now positioned to launch the first multiple pathways educational initiative in the City of Providence. This change presents the most significant and expansive shift in our program's history. In making this transition, YouthBuild will play a critical role in helping the Providence Public School District tackle one of the largest social issues facing Rhode Island's capital city – the high school dropout rate.

This will prove to be a challenging year for both students and staff but TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE GREATNESS. In addition, I am confident that though our collaboration with other programs and agencies through-out the Providence metro area, we can and will make our SCHOOL an even better place for our students to learn and grow as individuals.

We can change the world together!



## **YouthBuild Providence Philosophy**

**As a community**, we are engaged in a united struggle to overcome the social, political, economic, educational and spiritual inequities that threaten to destroy us as people.

**We recognize**, that as young people, we are one of the greatest resources available to the survival of our community.

**Therefore**, we stand ready and willing and hereby pledge our commitment:

**To rebuild** and improve the quality of life in our community through collective work, responsibility, and cooperative economics.

**To educate**, elevate, and raise the consciousness of ourselves and others along the way.

**To develop** our potential as leaders and positive role models so we can proactively pursue justice, equality, and peace for all.

**All this we do with appreciation**, love, dignity, respect, and faith that the collective will of the community is the greatest force conceivable.



## **Our Pledge**

“I hereby commit to uphold the philosophy of YouthBuild Providence, to take responsibility for myself, my family, and my community, and to make the principles of respect, commitment, discipline, stewardship, and excellence my own.”

## **YouthBuild and the Surrounding Community**

### **Our Community Image**

YouthBuild Providence is community based, which means that we are part of the Providence/Olneyville community. Because we are a part of a community, it means that we all must think about how the Program will look to its neighbors. Dress, language, and how you represent yourself are all important. Please be sure you are representing yourself and your fellow students as positive, focused adults.

### **Mission of YouthBuild**

YouthBuild Providence is an alternative education and workforce-development program that helps youth gain the literacy and job-readiness skills needed to make a successful transition into the workforce or post-secondary education.

The program is open to young adults (ages 16-24) who are unemployed or have been unsuccessful in traditional educational environments because of low literacy levels, poverty, or involvement with the criminal justice system. Our program helps young adults gain the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to overcome their obstacles and pursue a life of self-sufficiency.

All YouthBuild students complete a rigorous academic and job-readiness curriculum. They earn their GEDs or high school diplomas, gain important life skills for succeeding in the workforce, and develop marketable construction skills through working on affordable housing projects in Providence. Upon graduating, students enroll in post-secondary education and/or enter the workforce. Many of our graduates move into the construction industry through union apprenticeship programs.

YouthBuild Providence is a member of YouthBuild USA, a national organization that supports the 200+ YouthBuild programs with technical assistance, staff development, and advocacy. We are also one of 125 programs that have earned an affiliate designation, which means that our program adheres to rigorous program design and performance standards.

## Meet the YouthBuild Providence Staff



Name

Title

### **Administrative Staff**

Anthony Hubbard

Program Director

Robert Nyahkoon

Associate Director

Rosa Goncalves

Office Manager/Assistant to Director

Elijah Stephenson

AmeriCorps: Service Learning Coordinator

Raisa Cuevas

AmeriCorps: Volunteer Coordinator

### **Support Service**

Ariana Alicea

VISTA: Resource Coordinator

Joanne Debrah

Career Counselor/Post-Secondary Education Coordinator

Damita Delves

Support Services Associate

Justin Gilliam

Social Work Intern

### **Construction Staff**

Chen Chhork

Construction Manager

Cesar Ramirez

Construction Educator

### **Education Staff**

Michael Deragon

Instructor (English/Social Studies)

Shannon Dolan

Education Director

Daniel Smith

Instructor (Math/Science)

# Program Expectations and Responsibilities

## Purpose:

YouthBuild Providence, as with any workplace, has established common expectations and responsibilities for all to follow. Our sense of community is dependent upon each individual understanding and committing to the norms established. It is vital to your success that you understand, participate in and hold yourself accountable to the Program's expectations.

## Expectations:

Because YouthBuild Providence bases its expectations of conduct on work place standards, you can expect that much of what follows to be common expectations in work places across America today. Many of the standards in the Code of Conduct have also been established by the YouthBuild USA as requirements of all YouthBuild programs, including YouthBuild Providence.

## Student Code of Conduct

Every student has the right to participate in the YouthBuild Providence program without being subject to violence, drug abuse, or other negative behaviors. That is why YouthBuild Providence uses a Student Conduct System which clearly defines boundaries, and what the consequences of your decisions will be. We recognize positive, productive behavior, as well as intervene and assist when there is inappropriate behavior.

Staff is required to report negative behavior to the Program Director (PD), who oversees the entire Student Conduct System. The PD processes the reports, imposes sanctions, and when necessary, schedules an intervention meeting.

YouthBuild Providence defines its Student Conduct System in three levels: Level III, Level II, and Zero-Tolerance. Level II offenses require an automatic intervention with the PD. If you are found guilty, the likely consequence is separation from the program.

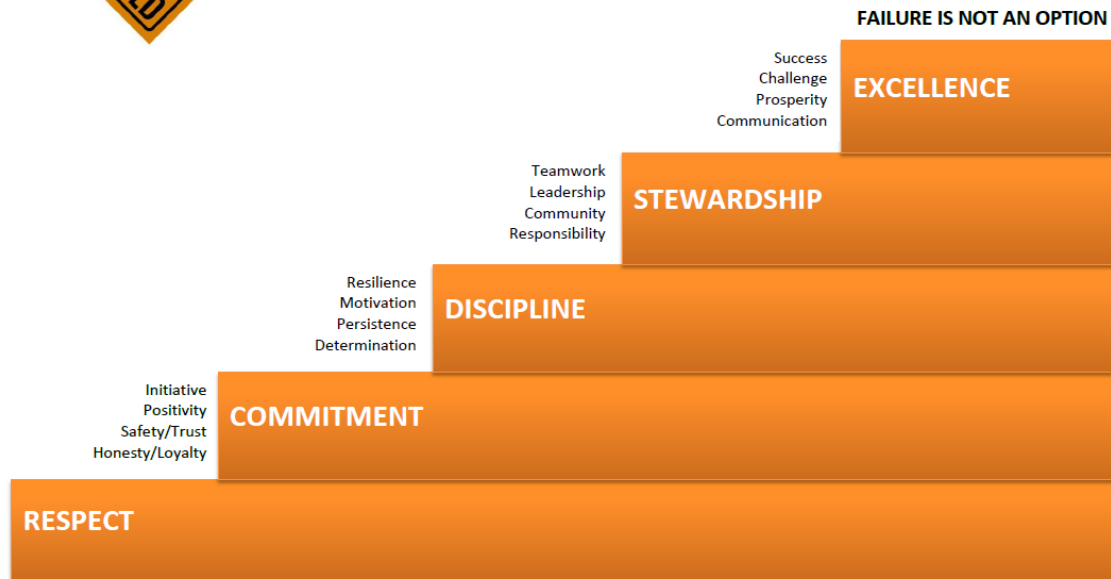
The following is established code of conduct:



# The 5 Guiding Principles of YouthBuild



## YouthBuild Providence 5 Principles



## YOUTHBUILD PROVIDENCE

**YouthBuild Policies and Procedures were established with the 5 guiding principles in mind. Students are encouraged to monitor each other's' conduct and behave as if YouthBuild were their "job".**

### Section 1. Be On Time

- 1.1 **Late Arrival** – Students must arrive prior to formation, which begins at 7:30 am every day. Any student arriving after formation begins will be counted as late. Any student arriving to YouthBuild after 8:00 AM will be considered absent.

### Section 2. Be Present

- 2.1 **Absence** – Students must not be absent. Absence is classified in two different manners:
- Excused
  - Unexcused

- 2.2 **Excused Absence** – For an absence to be considered excused, a student must notify the program staff prior to the date of absence and provide documentation of the absence’s legitimacy the next day of attendance. In general, a student’s absence will only be excused for health emergencies, legal obligations or bereavement.
- 2.3 **Unexcused Absence** – If the above policy in section 2.2 is not followed, the absence will be considered unexcused and subject to further disciplinary actions as set forth by the policies and procedures of YouthBuild.
- 2.4 **Unauthorized departure-** If a student leaves during programmatic hours without permission, the departure is considered unauthorized and a severe offense. Thus, the student is subject to an administrative intervention prior to being reinstated into the program. If this behavior occurs more than once, the student will be dismissed from YouthBuild.

### **Section 3. Behavior**

- 3.1 **Communicate effectively** –In order to minimize distractions, academic dishonesty, and theft the cell phone usage policy has been modified for the 2010-2011 school year. Cell phone use is prohibited during class instruction and while performing assigned tasks on the work site. Use is interpreted as using any cell phone function or feature, not just the sending or receiving of calls. This includes the use in hallways, restrooms, offices or any other place owned and operated by YouthBuild Providence. Cell phones must be on silent or turned off and kept out of sight. Cell phone use is permitted during lunch and breaks.

*Students bring these devices to school at their own risk. YouthBuild Providence, and its’ staff are **NOT** responsible for any damaged, missing, or stolen cell phones. If a student has a cell phone and it is damaged or stolen, YouthBuild Providence will not utilize program time to investigate the incident nor will it take any financial responsibility for the cell phone or cell phone charges.*

- 3.2 **Dress professionally** – Students will wear the YouthBuild issued uniform on a daily basis unless they are serving on the Construction site or performing service learning activities.

# YouthBuild Providence Uniform Policy



All YouthBuild students must report to morning formation.

Academic students must wear tan or black khakis or the equivalent (no jeans) and a YouthBuild issued shirt. The YouthBuild Logo must be visible at all times. With the exception of outerwear, no additional shirt may be covering the logo. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Construction students must have the construction overalls or “work gear,”\* boots, and safety glasses.

Any student not in uniform will have in-house suspension.

\*work gear is defined as any garments that protect the students from the elements, that they don’t mind getting messy.

Additionally, no headwear of any kind will be permitted, with the exception of hard hats and hats for warmth. Students scheduled for the jobsite will be required to wear YouthBuild issued work boots and safety garments as issued by the construction department. All appropriate attire will be on prior to Formation.

- 3.3 **Be Sober** – Drug and Alcohol use is not acceptable for students of YouthBuild Providence. Students may be subject to drug and alcohol tests at any given time. SEE ATTACHED SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY
- 3.4 **Be Safe and Respect the Community** – No student will be permitted to possess contraband materials at YouthBuild Providence. Contraband materials include, but are not limited to:
- Drugs or Alcohol
  - Drug Paraphernalia
  - Weapons of any kind
  - Pornography

3.5 **Be about your business** – Students are expected to positively contribute to the learning environment at all times. Derogatory comments, physical or emotional intimidation or altercations will not be accepted.

**Depending on the conduct, the student may need an Intervention, with a Contract or Dismissal to follow.**

**Rights versus Responsibilities:**

Every student participating in the YouthBuild Providence program has certain rights, and with these rights come certain responsibilities:

<i><b>You Have The Right To:</b></i>	<i><b>You Have A Responsibility To:</b></i>
<b>An education</b>	<b>Help maintain a Learning Community that allows others to obtain an education.</b>
<b>Be safe and secure</b>	<b>Help maintain a safe environment; to be sure that your actions do not endanger the health and safety of others</b>
<b>Be treated with respect</b>	<b>Treat others with respect</b>
<b>Express your feelings and opinions</b>	<b>Allow others to express their feelings and opinions without interrupting or criticizing; Express yourself so people will listen.</b>
<b>Ask for and receive help</b>	<b>Respect and support other students when they ask for help. Help others feel comfortable about asking questions.</b>
<b>Be heard</b>	<b>Be sure that your actions do not keep others from being heard</b>
<b>Make your own decisions and set your own goals</b>	<b>Investigate all options before deciding and be willing to live with the consequences of your decision</b>

**Right to Privacy:**

You are entitled to privacy in accordance with federal, state, and local laws, and with respect to these policies: No information, other than general information about you, will be released to anyone without your signed consent. If you are a student under the age of 18, the signed consent of your parent or legal guardian is required.

**Equal Employment Opportunity:**

No student shall be discriminated against because of race, color, age, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. You have the right to be treated equally, with no discrimination of any kind, with respect to housing, training, working assignments, eating arrangements, or other Program activities.

During program cycle, the Career Developer will meet with you and explain the Programs' EO and Sexual Harassment policies, and will explain in detail the process for filing a complaint.

If you feel you have been discriminated against due to any of the characteristics listed above, contact the Career Developer, who is trained to handle your complaint and help you resolve the situation or file a complaint.

You also have the right to file your complaint in writing (within 180 days of the alleged violation) directly with the Directorate of Civil Rights if you have not received resolution from Program. The address is:

Directorate of Civil Rights  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room N4123  
Washington, DC 20210

**Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual harassment of any form is not tolerated at YouthBuild Providence. Any report of sexual harassment should be made to the Program Director, who will investigate your complaint, and take the steps necessary to prevent continued harassment. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual harassment can be words, pictures, looks, or actions. It is unwanted, uncomfortable, and suggestive attention to a person's sexuality which humiliates, belittles, embarrasses, degrades, manipulates, or threatens that person, or which pressures them to engage in sexual activity. Both men and women can be sexually harassed. Sexual harassment includes touching, questions, jokes, stories, and interference which would make a reasonable person feel uneasy.

**Filing a Sexual Harassment Complaint**

1. Report your complaint to the Director of Student Support Services (DSS) as soon as the incident occurs, or as soon as the pattern of offensive or harassing behavior is established.
2. The DSS will help you determine whether or not your complaint should be put in writing, and will assist you in doing so.
3. Once a written complaint is received by the DSS, an investigation will be done by the DSS on behalf of the Program. The DSS will attempt to resolve the complaint within

14 days. The DSS, on behalf of the Program, will issue a written determination of the complaint and the investigation.

4. If it is determined that sexual harassment has occurred, swift and decisive action will be taken.
5. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the initial determination by the DSS, the determination may be progressively appealed to the DSS, and finally to the Program Director. The complaint and the determination will be reviewed at each stage.
6. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the initial complaint procedure, or the determination made by the Program Director, the complainant may appeal to the Directorate of Civil Rights. The address is:

Directorate of Civil Rights (DCR)  
200 Constitution Ave, NW  
Room N4123  
Washington, DC 20210

#### **Occupational Health and Safety:**

Safety and accident prevention are the responsibility of all staff and students. It is up to all of us at YouthBuild Providence to ensure safety and occupational health for all. The goal is to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

All hazardous conditions and/or safety problems should be reported immediately to the Program Director. Staff and students have the right to report any hazardous conditions.

#### **ADA Statement: *Americans with Disabilities Act***

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities whenever possible.

#### **Fire Prevention**

To be fully prepared in the event of a fire emergency, remember the following:

- Know where all exits are in all buildings you use.
- Familiarize yourself with where the nearest fire extinguishers are located.
- Know where the nearest fire alarm pull stations are located.
- Respond to every fire alarm as if it is the real thing. Fire alarm drills are not announced.
- Smoking is not allowed in the building. Smoke only in designated smoking areas.
- Never hang anything from smoke detectors or sprinkler heads.

**Note:** False reporting or pulling of a fire alarm is a felony. It is also an automatic dismissal offense, and will also result in your paying any fees that are the result of the fire department reporting to the incident!

#### **Transportation Safety**

Whenever Program transportation is provided, it is mandatory that you follow these guidelines for your safety as well as the safety of others:

- Listen to and follow all instructions given by the driver.
- When loading onto vans, stay on the sidewalk away from the travel lane, and wait for the van to come to a complete stop before approaching.
- Do not crowd in front of or rush approaching vehicles. When boarding a van, please do not push and shove.

## Benefits of YouthBuild Participation:

### **Driver's Education:**

The Driver's Education program through Mt Pleasant HS will provide classroom and on-the-road instruction for students to obtain a Rhode Island driver's permit and /or license.

### **Student Assistance Program**

The Student Assistance Program is designed as a supportive service available to you if you are experiences issues surrounding the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol. For those of you who may have tested positive upon entry into our program, there are mandatory expectations that our Case Manager will share with you. If you ever would like the support services of in this area please contact your Case Manager or Counselor for more details.

### **Program Smoking Policy**

The Wellness Program provides smoke cessation programs for those of you who want to quit smoking. Smoking has been proven hazardous to one's health and we encourage all to make use of the assistance offered to help them quit. Designated smoking areas can be found outside around the Program. Smoking is only permitted in those areas. Smoking is prohibited in all buildings.

**Rhode Island State Law:** It is illegal for those under eighteen years of age to use or purchase tobacco, or tobacco related products.

### **Life Management:**

If you feel that, you have a problem and would like to talk to someone about it, ask to speak with your Case Manager.

The following are some reasons you may want to consult with your Case Manager:

- Assistance in problem solving an issue you are facing
- Problems adjusting to YouthBuild
- Leave procedure information
- Personal problems at home



- Family emergencies

Case Managers/Support Services and staff meet at least monthly with their students to discuss their adjustment, goals, assist in any problem solving needed, as well as make referrals to other staff.

### **Hardships**

Any student facing a financial hardship that would prohibit them from successfully participating in the program can apply for financial assistance. Financial assistance can take the form of a stipend advance or “gift” from the program. However, all requests are subject to fund availability and student’s status within the program. Please see your case manager for the required forms.

### **Progress Reports (PR’s):**

The Progress Report is a tool that ensures that you are benefiting from the program. You will attend a PR review within 10 days after a semester and approximately every 30 days thereafter. At the meeting, evaluation material from your Instructors, Director of Support Services, Program Director, and Case Manager (Life and Career) will be reviewed, concerns will be discussed, and goals will be set. You will review and update your ILP with each Performance Evaluation. The opportunity also exists to review and update any major changes to your plan when you meet monthly with Counselor.



### **Leaves/Duty Statuses:**

There are times when life circumstances require you to be excused from your responsibilities to the Program. The first person to contact if you have a need to leave YouthBuild is your Case Manager. If you have any questions or concerns around Leaves, please see your Case Manager for assistance and clarification.

Below is a brief description of the type of duty status available:

### **Leave Without Pay:**

There are specific times when you may be excused from your responsibilities at YouthBuild. Only under the following circumstances may you be excused:

- Family compassion or hardship (verified)
- Court appearance as a defendant
- Elective medical/dental appointments

You will not be paid for your time off. Please see your Case Manager for further assistance.

### **Emergency Leaves:**

This type of leave also allows you to be paid while gone (max 1 stipend period). These leaves must be verified through a third party. Please see your Case Manager for further assistance. However, finally approval for paid leave must be obtain by Program Director.

- Death in your immediate family
- Life threatening illness or injury

*Immediate family is defined as parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling, child, or last surviving relative, or someone acting in lieu of your parent.*

### **Spring/Winter Break:**

YouthBuild Providence has created two Breaks per year. The Winter Break generally begins with the holiday season, during the third week of December through the New Year holiday. The Spring Break generally begins the last week of March through the first week of April

### **Student Voting:**

If you are 18 or older, you may register to vote in Rhode Island at the time of election.

### **Incentive System**

YouthBuild Providence has an incentive system which encourages and rewards student progress and responsible decision-making. Likewise, it has incorporated a program for those individuals who have shown they may need more structured expectations by the choices they have made.

Please ask the Student Support Services Team for specifics within each Phase.

### **Incentive System**

**Certificates of Completion:** Completion certificates will be awarded as the end of each unit.

**Perfect Attendance:** The Program will recognize each student who is present every day during the unit and the student will receive a one-time cash bonus.

**Credit Completion:** Students who earn credits toward their diplomas will receive recognition during the program cycle and will receive a one-time cash bonus at the end of the program cycle.

**GED Recognition:** Students who pass their GED tests will receive recognition during the program cycle and will receive a one-time cash bonus at the end of the program cycle.

**Student of the Unit Award:** Outstanding student performers will be honored at the end of each unit and will receive a unit raise. A quarterly Appreciation Day will allow further recognition of student leaders, with items such as jackets and shirts, as well as outings.

### **Student Council**

The purpose of the Student Council shall be: To *foster* a spirit of cooperation among students and staff, To *promote* and encourage activities for the best interest of the

program, To *develop* good citizens and leaders through experience in government, To *provide* a means for student expression, and To *encourage* student involvement.

See Student Council bylaws for more information.

### **Leadership Program**

**Leadership I:** All students participate in the first part of the Leadership Program. It is here that you learn about Government, voting rights and registration, Program leadership roles, and other leadership discussions.

**Leadership II:** This part consists of classes for those students who choose to assume leadership positions on the Program Student Council. Classes provide further information for being an effective student leader.

**Student Leaders:** Students who have an acceptable behavior record, and have completed Leadership II may apply to be Student Leaders within the student council. Students who successfully perform their duties will be eligible for special dinners, field trips, and other special activities.

### **Student Emergency Loan Fund**

The Student Council oversees funds acquired by student fines, and other fund-raising activities. The proceeds raised will fund student activities and emergency loans for students. To receive a loan, you must be in the program for at least 30 days.

*Loans are dependent on the amount of funds available.*



### **Graduation**

YouthBuild Providence holds graduation ceremonies in June of each year. You will have the opportunity to wear a cap and gown, and stand tall in front of the Program students, staff, and your guests.

It is our goal for all Program Graduates to leave YouthBuild with a solid, long term plan, enabling them to achieve long term success.

*To be a graduate, you must have:*

- Completion of Mental Toughness
- Attendance above 85%
- Successful completion of Construction and Academic curriculum
- Earn a high school credential or obtain a GED
- Obtain Service learning hours
- Successful Professional portfolio evaluation

### **Transitional Services**

Transitional Services are determined by your commitment to the program, the manner in which you are separated, and what level of completion status you have gained.

**Program Graduate**

As a Program Graduate, you are entitled to transitional services for life. After you leave the program, your Career Counselor will periodically contact you with information, and will continue to offer support and services.





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