

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 292 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, FARNESE, STOUT, MUSTO, O'PAKE, WONDERLING
AND FERLO, FEBRUARY 20, 2009

REFERRED TO LABOR AND INDUSTRY, FEBRUARY 20, 2009

AN ACT

1 Authorizing the Department of Labor and Industry to establish
2 the Youth Empowerment Services Program; establishing the
3 Youth Empowerment Account; and making an appropriation.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 CHAPTER 1

7 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

8 Section 101. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Youth
10 Empowerment Services Act.

11 Section 102. Statement of purpose.

12 It is the purpose of the program under this act to create a
13 framework whereby work-related experiences and opportunities are
14 used to bring relevance to classroom experience, support
15 successful postsecondary transitions into college and careers,
16 reduce violence, enhance self-respect and respect for others,
17 encourage self-sufficiency and productivity and develop valuable
18 employment skills for youth.

1 Section 103. Definitions.

2 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
3 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
4 context clearly indicates otherwise:

5 "Internship." A paid or unpaid workplace program during the
6 academic year or summer months providing an opportunity to
7 combine practical work experience with educational experience.

8 "Local workforce investment area." Areas designated by the
9 Governor in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998
10 (Public Law 105-220, 112 Stat. 936).

11 "Twenty-first century skills." Those skills deemed by
12 employers to be required for successful employment in 21st
13 century workplaces, including core academic skills, global
14 awareness, financial and entrepreneurial literacy and civic
15 awareness, learning and thinking skills and information and
16 communications technology skills.

17 "Work-based learning." An experience-based educational
18 strategy for program participants designed to enhance the
19 traditional goals of education, including academic achievement,
20 career development and social responsibility.

21 "Workforce investment board." A board established by the
22 Governor of Pennsylvania in accordance with the Workforce
23 Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220, 112 Stat. 936).

24 "Youth council." A subgroup within each local workforce
25 investment board as defined by the Workforce Investment Act of
26 1998 (Public Law 105-220, 112 Stat. 936), including
27 representatives of local agencies with a special interest in or
28 expertise in youth policy.

29 "Youth Empowerment Services Program" or "program." The
30 program established under section 301.

1 "Youth participant." A person who participates in the Youth
2 Empowerment Services Program who is between 14 and 21 years of
3 age and a member of a household at 235% or less of the Federal
4 poverty level.

5 CHAPTER 3

6 YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

7 Section 301. Authorization.

8 (a) General rule.--Notwithstanding any law to the contrary,
9 the Department of Labor and Industry, in cooperation with the
10 Department of Education, is hereby authorized to establish the
11 Youth Empowerment Services Program to create public-private
12 partnerships linking eligible youth participants with economic
13 and learning opportunities in workplaces within this
14 Commonwealth's local workforce investment areas. The program may
15 include, subject to appropriation, the award of matching grants
16 to local youth councils that demonstrate private sector support
17 for internships and related workplace experiences.

18 (b) Administration.--Workforce investment boards and their
19 youth councils shall administer grant funds and support efforts
20 by employers to develop and implement internships and related
21 workplace experiences. Funding for the program may be used to
22 support activities including, but not limited to:

23 (1) Connecting schools, students and employers to
24 provide high-quality workplace experiences that enhance
25 academic and occupational skills.

26 (2) Paying student wages.

27 (3) Supporting summer and year-round internships and
28 employment opportunities.

29 (4) Providing opportunities for career preparation in
30 this Commonwealth's high-priority occupations.

1 (5) Developing programs to support academic,
2 occupational and workforce preparation for out-of-school
3 youth, youth at risk of dropping out of school and other at-
4 risk youth, including court-involved youth and youth who are
5 in or aging out of foster care.

6 (6) Addressing and removing barriers to student
7 participation in the program.

8 (7) Evaluating postprogram outcomes to assess
9 effectiveness and to promote continuous improvement.

10 (8) Promoting acquisition of 21st century skills, life
11 skills, connections to caring adults and postsecondary
12 transitions into college and careers.

13 Section 302. Eligibility.

14 (a) Recipients.--A local youth council, through its
15 workforce investment board, is eligible to receive funds under
16 the program if it meets the requirements under subsection (b).

17 (b) Detailed plan.--To be eligible to receive matching
18 funds, each workforce investment board and youth council must
19 submit a detailed plan demonstrating the following:

20 (1) A strong working relationship with private sector
21 employers in the local workforce area, particularly with
22 regard to the development and effective implementation of
23 high-quality internships for youth 14 to 21 years of age.

24 (2) Matching funds from private sector employers
25 required under section 303(c).

26 (3) The ability to support and oversee internships and
27 workplace experiences.

28 (4) The ability to build on and integrate other youth
29 workforce development programs currently operating in the
30 local workforce investment area.

1 (5) The ability to meet the accountability measures
2 under subsection (c).

3 (6) An explanation of how the program will support and
4 promote the work of the local youth council and workforce
5 investment board.

6 (c) Accountability measures.--A workforce investment board
7 and youth council receiving the funds under this act shall be
8 held to specific accountability measures for program
9 participants, including, but not limited to:

10 (1) Increased work readiness, as evidenced by improved
11 scores on recognized assessments of workplace skills.

12 (2) Increased graduation rates.

13 (3) Increased transition to appropriate postsecondary
14 education employment, apprenticeships or other high-quality
15 job training programs.

16 (4) Reductions in incidence of youth violence and
17 involvement in the juvenile justice system.

18 (5) Measures of student, parent and employer
19 satisfaction.

20 (d) Employer duties.--A participating employer shall provide
21 an internship that includes mentoring and work-based learning. A
22 participating employer shall also work closely with schools and
23 community partners supporting participating students.

24 Section 303. Allocations.

25 (a) General rule.--Ninety percent of the funds available
26 under this act shall be available to local workforce investment
27 boards and youth councils to match employer contributions for
28 youth internships.

29 (b) Formula.--Funds shall be allocated to local workforce
30 investment boards and youth councils consistent with the formula

1 contained in the youth provisions of the Workforce Investment
2 Act of 1998 (Public-Law 105-220, 112 Stat. 936). In the event
3 that local workforce investment boards and youth councils have
4 insufficient matching funds to leverage all of the available
5 allocation, the remaining funds shall be made available to those
6 workforce investment boards and youth councils demonstrating the
7 ability to provide the required matching funds.

8 (c) Matching funds.--A participating employer shall provide
9 at least 50% of the wages and other costs associated with an
10 internship.

11 CHAPTER 5

12 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

13 Section 501. Appropriation.

14 The sum of \$100,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
15 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Department of Labor and
16 Industry for the fiscal year July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010, to
17 carry out the provisions of this act.

18 Section 502. Youth Empowerment Account.

19 There is established in the General Fund a special account to
20 be known as the Youth Empowerment Account. Funds in the account
21 shall be subject to an annual appropriation and shall be
22 administered as provided by this act. This account shall be
23 administered by the Department of Labor and Industry.

24 Section 503. Prohibitions and restrictions.

25 A workforce investment board and youth council may use no
26 more than 10% of grant funds for administrative costs.

27 Section 504. Effective date.

28 This act shall take effect in 60 days.