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Troubled Youth Given Second Chance To Find Work

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CINCINNATI -- High school dropouts usually get the cold shoulder when they apply for a job. But now, some youth can finish their school and get the job they want.

Stimulus money will be used to bring a new program to Cincinnati that prefers to take on youth who are struggling to find their way.

When is the last time you've heard of a program that is searching specifically for applicants who have been arrested, homeless, or lived in foster care or on welfare?

Those are the only applicants that can apply for Youthbuild.

It's a program that aims to help young men and women get back on their feet.

"We actually prefer candidates who are high school dropouts as odd as that may sound. It's designed to help those who have already kind of veered off the path to bring them back on the path," said Mason Gray,

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Action Agency spokesman.

"If you're a high school dropout or had a brush with the law. It's a program for you," he said.

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency or CAA received a grant for just about \$972,000 to run the Youthbuild program over the next three years.

To be eligible, you must be between 16 and 24 years old, a Hamilton County resident, high school dropout and unemployed.

CAA staff member Brian Barnes will be teaching some of the construction classes.

He's overseeing another CAA construction training program.

Barnes says Youthbuild will not only build homes in communities, but build students' self-esteem.

"The big impact is things like our project. What we're doing here. Things that we do for Habitat For Humanity. Those types of things that we do with them, students can go back later on, point at it and say 'I did this.' It's a pride point for them. They've done something for their neighborhood. They've done something for their community," Barnes said, from a CAA construction site in Mt. Auburn.

Students will spend between six months to two years in the full-time program.

Participants will receive a \$400 monthly stipend.

"There will be two years of teaching in the classroom, on location, and then there is a third year for the program in which we will do follow-up with the students to make sure that they've been employed and that they're still on the right path," said Gray.

There are 120 slots available.

If you are interested in learning more, CAA is hosting a Youthbuild orientation Saturday, Sept. 19, at its headquarters at 1740 Langdon Farm Road, in Bond Hill from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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