

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL

SECTION 10

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SECTION 10. YOUTH RECRUITMENT

A. NO EJECT, NO REJECT MODEL

Fair Futures has a “no reject, no eject” model. The Fair Futures program is voluntary and serves any young person who is interested, as long as they meet the age/funding requirements.¹ **Fair Futures funding in Buffalo/Erie is currently for young people in preventive or aftercare services, ages 14-21. Should that young person enter/return to foster care, they will be able to keep their Coach. In time, Coaches will begin serving young people ages 14-21 who are actively in foster care.**



There are no screening mechanisms or requirements to participate, and young people cannot get ejected from the program based on engagement or performance. This is a very intentional component of the model. If there were requirements (such as academic criteria or mandatory minimum engagements), the program could inadvertently screen out the youth who are most in need of support and/or not be able to assist youth during times of crisis.

Once the Fair Futures program is fully funded, the young person is eligible to receive supports until they reach the age of 26. The young person can decide whether and to what extent to engage, whether it be through long-term coaching or receiving targeted services. Making services voluntary is empowering and allows the young person to be in control, which often results in greater willingness to engage.

The young person can also leave the program and return at any time, and young people who decide to leave the program for any reason are welcomed back.

B. RECRUITING PRIORITY POPULATIONS

FOSTER CARE STUDENTS IN THE 6TH GRADE SERVE AS A KEY PIPELINE TO THE COACHING PROGRAM

A best practice is for all 6th grade students to be invited to a Fair Futures Orientation in the summer before 7th grade. While students do not have to participate in Fair Futures, the Orientation helps encourage enrollment prior to 7th grade. The Orientation should include staff, young people, food, and relationship-building activities. This will help facilitate connection to the program and allow staff to meet with young people.

OTHER PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Until there is full funding, it is up to agencies to determine what populations should be served. In addition to the upcoming cohort of 7th graders, providers may also wish to focus on other critical populations who might benefit from coaching, including:

- Young people without a strong adult connection in their life
- Students repeating the 9th or 10th grade, or at risk of not being promoted
- Youth disconnected from school/work and without a high school degree/GED
- Seniors in high school seeking assistance with post-secondary enrollment
- Older youth aging out
- Young people who are pregnant/parenting and in need of support or at risk of being involved in the justice system

OPT-OUT METHOD

Once a program reaches scale, a best practice to ensure maximum participation in the coaching program is the “opt-out” approach. In this approach, a young person is automatically assigned a coach and has to opt-out of coaching.

¹ However, services may be discontinued if the young person threatens a staff member or is violent.