

## SECTION 21A, 21B, & 21C

### A. OVERVIEW

An important goal of the Fair Futures program is for young people to navigate onto a living wage career path that offers opportunities for growth and fulfillment. Many career paths that meet this standard require a college degree and/or other post-secondary credential(s), combined with career development experiences.

There are some specific careers where a high school degree may suffice; however, those opportunities are limited and can be extremely competitive (e.g., becoming a firefighter, certain union apprenticeships, etc.). Even with these positions, having some sort of post-secondary degree/credential can ultimately help the young person advance, increase their earning power, and/or have more career mobility.

**Therefore, Coaches and Specialists should expose young people to various post-secondary options as early as possible, including college and accredited vocational programs, and help them start to plan and prepare.**

This exposure and planning should begin in the 9th grade, ideally. College and career assessment tools can help youth to determine what post-secondary path may be best for them.

**TIP!** See [Career Exploration Tools](#) for more information.

### B. POST-SECONDARY GOAL-SETTING

Unless a young person is already enrolled in a post-secondary setting, **all young people should have at least 1+ post-secondary exposure/planning goal each year.**

**This includes young people who are disconnected and without a high school degree.** For these young people, the goal could simply be exploration. For example, the Coach could take them to a college campus or vocational program. That exploratory experience could be what motivates the young person to re-engage in high school and/or visualize a pathway for themselves!

See [Appendix E: Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#) to determine which post-secondary goal would apply to the young person based on their situation.

For those not ready to apply to a post-secondary setting, an exposure/exploration goal should be selected: [“Conduct Post-Secondary Exploration and Exposure.”](#)

#### **IMPORTANT FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN SETTING POST-SECONDARY GOALS:**

**Students enrolled in a high school or GED program should engage in the [“Conduct Post-Secondary Exploration and Exposure”](#) Goal, even if they do not express a strong interest in college.**

This is because for many young people, college was never on their radar (and/or they may not know any adults who attended college), so it may take some time for them to believe that it is a viable pathway.

To complete this goal, the Coach could take the student to visit a local college during one of their coaching sessions together, or work together to make a list of colleges that have majors matching up with the student’s interests.

**For students who express an interest in the trades or a vocational setting:**

The Goal [“Conduct Post-Secondary Exploration and Exposure”](#) should be selected.

See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21J](#).

The College Exploration Goal could also be selected, too, however; many advanced careers in the trades require a college degree (e.g., Construction Project Managers typically need a Bachelor’s degree in Construction Project Management or a related field).

For these students’ Career Development Goal, the Coach could help them explore classes and internships so they can earn a credential(s) while enrolled in high school. Refer to [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 22](#) for other pathways into the trades during and after high school.

**Students with disabilities who are in an Alternate Assessment program and tracked toward a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) rather than a Local Diploma, Regents Diploma, or High School Equivalency** will not be eligible to enroll in college, some trade schools, or the military. The first step in long-range planning for these students should always be to verify that the alternate assessment designation is appropriate (i.e. that the student has a severe intellectual or developmental disability that will prevent them from graduating from high school). Sometimes students are erroneously categorized as Alternate Assessment (due to outdated evaluations or evaluations conducted after a profound trauma) when in fact they have the potential to complete a high school course of study. If there is any doubt at all that a student should be on alternate assessment, then updated psychoeducational evaluations, and, if necessary, independent evaluations, should be sought for these students. For these students who are appropriately designated for Alternate Assessment, the Post-Secondary Goal should be [“Conduct Post-Secondary Exploration and Exposure”](#) and the Career Development Goal should be [“Apply to ACCES-VR”](#).

**After graduation, some young people may need more time to develop their academic skills in a remedial setting or take a “gap year” before enrolling in a post-secondary setting.**

Taking a gap year or gap semester between high school and college, as long as it is a productive one that allows that young person to develop skills/experiences in line with their longer-term goals, is a pathway that may work well for some young people. Young people could engage in a Career Development Experience (e.g., a workforce program) to earn money, build their skills, and/or earn a credential while brushing up on remedials. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 22](#) for pathways/options and refer to **Buffalo Futures Online** (*coming soon*).

Young people with a high school degree/equivalency who are not yet enrolled in any post-secondary setting should also have at least one exploration/exposure goal. Even if they are not yet ready to enroll (and want to work, for example), post-secondary exposure/exploration is important.

If they need to earn money, there are ways for them to get a paycheck while working on earning a post-secondary credential:

- The young person could attend college full-time (and likely receive significant funding - see [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21F](#)) and also get paid \$15/hour to do work/study
- The young person could attend college part-time and have a part-time job or paid internship
- The young person could enroll in a workforce development program that offers sector-based training in their area of interest along with a paid internship (and work part-time, if needed/possible)

### **C. ROLE OF A COACH IN HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH POST-SECONDARY GOALS**

The Coach's role in helping young people explore their post-secondary goals will depend on where they are. Coaches should also involve birth and/or foster parents in the post-secondary planning process to ensure the young person is being supported.

#### **AT A HIGH LEVEL, THE ROLE OF THE COACH BASED ON A YOUNG PERSON'S SITUATION**

**For young people in high school/GED program and interested in college:**

- Coaches work with the student and their guidance counselor (or GED program staff) to ensure they are on-track for high school graduation and have a plan in place for college.
- The student will also meet with the coach to identify best-fit colleges, complete admissions and financial aid applications, apply to support and opportunity programs, reapply each semester, and renew all forms of financial aid each year.
- Coaches are encouraged to collaborate with parents/foster parents, Say Yes staff, high school guidance counselors, and college support program staff to support the student through this process.

**For young people in high school/GED program and interested in a vocational/other post-secondary pathway:**

- Coaches work with the student and their guidance counselor (or GED program staff) to ensure they are on-track for graduation and exploring post-secondary pathways.
- For youth who are not yet ready to enroll in a vocational program upon graduation, there are workforce bridge programs that help prepare youth to gain skills/credentials and take the next step toward their goals.
- The Coach will connect these students to the Career Coach to discuss best-fit programs and other options. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21J](#), [Section 22](#), [Appendix H9: Workforce Training Programs](#), and Buffalo Futures Online (*coming soon!*).

**For young people already enrolled in college:**

- The Coach helps the young person persist by following up during critical junctures, connecting them to resources on and off campus, providing emotional support, and ensuring they meet with the College Specialist to renew their financial aid and funding each semester.

**For young people with a high school degree/GED but not enrolled in a post-secondary setting:**

- The Coach will help them explore college or vocational pathways and connect them to the appropriate Specialist. If a young person is not yet prepared for the rigors of a post-secondary program, the Coach and Career Coach can assist the young person in identifying a work experience or a program that can help them earn money while gaining the skills they need to prepare for a post-secondary setting.

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