

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL

SECTION 22

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SECTION 22. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A. OVERVIEW

One of the goals of the Fair Futures program is to help young people do **early career exploration and gain progressive career development experiences in line with their interests, strengths, and academic plans/goals** so that they can eventually navigate onto a living wage career path.

As such, via the Goals & Steps framework, we encourage **all young people who are coached to: 1) conduct career exploration each year; and 2) engage in at least one career development experience each year.** Career development experiences can include an internship, extracurricular, job training, employment, etc. These two Goals apply to all young people, regardless of their age or academic situation. That said, the type of career exploration they do and the type of career experience they engage in should always be tailored to their interests, academic situation, and developmental stage.

Why is it critical for young people to begin the process of **career exploration** early on? Most young people are unaware of the career opportunities out there and what skills and credentials are required. Career exploration is important to do as an ongoing activity (at least once/year), as young people's skills, interests, and credentials evolve.

Conducting career exploration with young people who have not yet developed many interests is important, as it can help them start to build their sense of self. With these young people, doing career interest assessments such as [MyNextMove](#) can be helpful. When young people do know what they are interested in, conducting career exploration activities such as job shadowing or holding an informational interview can help them learn more about that particular career pathway, what it entails, what skills/credentials are required, and what the day-to-day is like.

Why is engaging in career development experiences (ideally that are in line with their interests and academic situation) each year so important?

These experiences help young people:

- Build their resumes;
- Envision a potential pathway for themselves;
- Improve self-esteem and confidence;
- Gain soft skills that help them succeed in other areas of their life;
- Figure out what they like, what they don't, what they are good at;
- Develop a broad network of positive adult and peer supports;
- Reconnect/re-engage in an academic setting.

It is important to keep in mind that some foster youth can face a number of social-emotional challenges that can impede their ability to manage the demands/expectations of the workplace. For some young people, achieving "job readiness" will take time, experimentation, and multiple attempts. **If a young person experiences a setback, it can and should be used as a learning opportunity.** Losing a job or not completing a program is a natural part of the process, and best to learn these lessons while they are young and have the support of Fair Futures! While we never want to set a young person up for failure, an unsuccessful attempt in many ways can be a good learning experience, as long as **the Coach is there to help support them, reflect on the experience, and connect them to the next opportunity.**

BUFFALO FUTURES' HUB ("THE HUB")

Based on collective efforts of Erie County-area workforce and youth development nonprofits, a new initiative called Buffalo Futures will be available to youth in Fall 2022.

Buffalo Futures' Hub ("The Hub") will be a physical location open to all 16-24 year olds interested in meeting with Buffalo Futures coaches who will provide career development supports on site or at other locations convenient for youth. The Buffalo Futures also has an online portal component, through which youth and professionals can explore and navigate between career pathways, requirements, and specific training programs.

See [Appendix H11_Buffalo Futures Hub](#) for more information.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT GOAL-SETTING

At a minimum, every actively coached young person should complete the “[Conduct Career Exploration & Preparation](#)” Goal each year. Ideally, they also complete the “[Engage in a Career Development Experience](#)” Goal for the reasons outlined above.

Upon program enrollment, the Coach should select both Goals in the Online Platform and work with the young person on these goals throughout the course of the year

CONDUCT CAREER EXPLORATION & PREPARATION GOAL

This Goal includes doing at least one career exploration activity each year, either with the Coach or a Career Coach at The Hub. This activity can help identify potential career pathways for young people and ensure that their academic goals are aligned with these pathways.

Potential Steps/activities include:

- The young person should work with the Career Coach at The Hub to complete a career assessment such as [MyNextMove](#). The results of the assessment will help the Coach and Hub Career Coach set goals that are in line with the young person’s longer-term pathway, recognizing that this may shift over time.
- Discuss and explore career pathways with Career Coach at The Hub
- Participate in an informational interview in a career of interest
- Attend networking event
- Participate in a job shadowing experience in a career of interest
- Prepare for and attend a Career Fair/event

This goal also includes these two **Required Steps**:

- Create or refine/update resume with the Coach or Career Coach at The Hub to accurately and professionally reflect the young person’s experiences to date. Resumes should include a summary section upfront, an extracurricular/leadership/community service activity section, and any scholarships or awards.
- Discuss career development goals for the year, and select at least 1 Career Development Experience/Activity that is in line with the young person’s academic situation, interests, strengths, skills, and goals. The Coach or Career Coach at The Hub can then help the young person apply once they are ready.

All of the above steps and activities can also aid in the trust-building process. The young person will see that the Coach is taking an interest in his/her future and well-being.



Upon completing these activities, the above Steps can be checked off in the Online Platform.

1+ CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE GOAL

All young people should have at least one career development experience in line with their interests and goals/plans, if possible. Young people should complete as many career development goals as their school/college schedules, overall well-being, and life situations allow.

The major categories of career development experiences are outlined in detail in below, and can be reviewed on the [Career Development Roadmap](#).

C. CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES BASED ON A YOUNG PERSON'S SITUATION

Coaches and/or Career Coaches at The Hub should help young people select at least one experience each year, based on their academic situation/goals, interests, strengths, and needs.

There are five major categories of career development experiences. These can be viewed on the [Career Development Roadmap](#) and below. Some examples of progressive career development experiences can be viewed [here](#).

SAY YES BUFFALO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Say YES Buffalo offers a range of onsite career development opportunities for students.

Two of these include the [Modern Youth Apprenticeship Program](#) and the [Say YES Buffalo internship program](#).

EXTERNAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES & PATHWAYS

Summer internship programs are great career development experiences for those who are disconnected, in high school, or in college and who would like to earn money and/or have a career development experience over the summer.

- Ideally, the internship should be in a field that the young person is interested in.
- Examples include:
 - Erie County's [Summer Youth Employment Program \(SYEP\)](#) employs youth ages 14-20, and youth in foster care are encouraged to apply.
 - [Northland Training Center's Summer Youth Academy](#) provides paid summer training towards OSHA certification and supports the college application process. See [Appendix H12 Northland Training Center](#) for more information.

Youth can also participate in an extracurricular, youth development/leadership program, or community service experiences, which research shows can help young people not only build their resumes and the critical soft skills needed for the world of work, but also the self-esteem, sense of purpose/belonging, and broader network of positive peer and adult supports they need to succeed in work and life.

- For young people who are disconnected, this type of program could be the motivating factor for re-engaging in school.
- For youth in high school or college, it is a great way to build their resumes with leadership experiences (and obtain college scholarships). It can also be the "foot in the door" for a paid position down the road.
- One example is [The Foundry](#) which offers exposure to STEAM fields and makerspace programs to youth.
- There are also Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses at most Erie County schools, which provide great exposure and training opportunities to youth in high school.

Youth can also consider enrolling in a workforce program. These are best for a youth who:

- **Is disconnected without a high school degree/equivalency and wants to enroll in a GED program** that also offers other pathways such as internships, job readiness and employer-recognized training, part-time or full-time jobs, and credentials and certifications such as [UpSkill](#) (a.k.a. the Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division), which provides GED preparation and training in various industries. See [Appendix H10 UpSkill](#) for more information.
- **Is enrolled in an alternative school or GED preparation program** and is in need of job readiness training and/or is having difficulty finding a job and needs a program to assist them;
- **Has a high school degree/GED and is not on a college bound pathway**, but not yet prepared for an accredited vocational program or apprenticeship.
- Buffalo Futures online or its physical Hub are also great resources for coaches to explore with youth.

See [Appendix H9 Workforce Training Programs](#) for additional examples of workforce training.

For a young person in high school, college, or a vocational program, an internship is another great option those able to balance their schedules. An internship is also a useful stepping-stone for a young person who is attempting to obtain a part- or full-time job. The internship should ideally be in an area or organization of interest to the young person.

ACCREDITED VOCATIONAL, SECTOR-BASED TRAINING, OR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Young people who have a high school degree/GED might determine with their Coach and Career Coach at the Hub, through assessment tools, career exploration, etc., that pursuing a trades or skills-based career is the best fit for them. In this case, youth might consider an accredited vocational, sector-based training, or apprenticeship program.



The Career Coach at The Hub should help the young person assess which program(s) they are eligible for, as many have grade-level or other skill-based requirements, and can help the young person prioritize which program(s) are the best fit based on interest area, structure (some programs require significant time commitment), quality of program (job placement/retention outcomes vary by program) and/or benefits (some pay stipends while others don't).

See [Appendix H9 Workforce Training Programs](#) for additional examples of workforce training.

CIVIL SERVICE

Youth might consider taking a Civil Service Exam.

It should be noted that many entry-level civil service positions require either college or a few years of experience in lieu of college. If a young person is interested in a particular position, the Coach and/or Career Coach at The Hub should help them read the qualification requirements very carefully and ensure they have those credentials before taking the exam.

It is also important to keep in mind that certain exams are only offered every few years, can be extremely competitive, and take a year or more to be graded/certify the individual. If a young person wants to take an exam, the young person should have other career development experiences throughout this period of time.

EMPLOYMENT

YOUTH MAY ALSO OBTAIN PART-TIME, SEASONAL, OR FULL-TIME WORK.

It is the Coach's role to help them determine if a job is the most appropriate goal.

If a young person does not yet have a High School degree/GED, a full-time job should only be the goal if absolutely necessary (due to their financial situation).

A better option would be for the young person to enroll in an alternative high school or GED program with a paid internship, or to obtain a part-time job while working toward their degree. If the young person is absolutely opposed to school, then sometimes working a full-time, low-wage job can be a good way for them to realize that it may not be what they want for the rest of their lives.

If a young person has a High School degree/GED and is not yet interested in college or a vocational program, working full-time can be a good goal to earn an income while they explore their post-secondary goals and options. If the young person needs assistance finding that full-time job, the Coach or Career Coach at The Hub can connect them to one of the youth workforce programs above (thus, the goal would be "[Conduct Career Exploration and Planning](#)" and "[Engage in Career Development Experience](#)").

Another option is to encourage the young person to get a part-time job while doing a youth leadership activity/community service or other unpaid experience part-time that is more in line with their career goals/interests. The Coach should continue to support the young person to develop a post-secondary goal that is appropriate for them.

If a young person is enrolled in high school or college and can balance the academic needs with a part-time job, the Coach can help them obtain one in a similar fashion to the above. A paid internship that is in line with their career interests is also a great resume-building experience that could potentially lead to a full-time job after college. Work-study is also a great way to earn money while staying focused on coursework.

If a young person has completed their post-secondary goals, then obtaining a living-wage job should be the goal.

D. USING THE ONLINE PLATFORM

The following actions are taken in the Online Platform:

- Coach adds Career Goals to the Online Platform.
- Steps are checked off as they are completed. Coaches can choose to enter a brief note, if needed or relevant, in the "Notes" section. Steps can always be created, too!
- The above bullet is repeated until the Goal is completed. At which point, the Goal status should be marked as "Completed" or "Not Completed"
- A new Goal(s) and Step(s) are selected and the process above is repeated.



Should a young person's goal change at any point, then the goal should still be closed out in the platform and marked as "Did Not Complete." The Coach should select one of the following reasons:

- "Could not complete due to attendance or performance"
- "Did not complete due to fit or continued interest"
- "Did not complete due to other opportunity/positive change in plans"
- "Did not complete due to other personal/health/family issues"
- "Other"

THREE EXAMPLE "GOAL CHANGED" SCENARIOS:

SCENARIO 1:

If a young person's goal changes from "Engage in Career Development Experience" to another goal, it could be because that young person decided to enroll in college mid-way through the program because they were inspired by one of their peers.

The Coach then would check off "**Did not complete due to other opportunity**".

Next, the Coach would either select the academic goal "**Conduct college exploration/ exposure**" or "**Apply to college(s)**" and would also select another career development goal.

SCENARIO 2:

If a young person's goal changes from "Engage in Career Development Experience" to another goal, it could be because the young person was not regularly attending the program and was kicked out.

In that case, the Coach should mark off "**Could not complete due to attendance or performance**" and help the young person select another goal.

SCENARIO 3:

If a young person's goal changes from "Engage in Career Development Experience" to another goal, it could be because the young person was hospitalized.

In this case, the Coach should mark off "**Did not complete due to other personal/ health/ family issues**" and help the young person select another goal (once they are no longer hospitalized and ready to resume working with their Coach.)

E. ROLE OF THE COACH IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Coach and Career Coach at The Hub both play a role in helping the young person make goals and progress towards career development goals.

THE COACH'S ROLE, IN TERMS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES:

- Assist all young people in obtaining working papers (if needed) and developing/ refining their resume within 90 days of program enrollment, ideally;
- Assist with career exploration on a general level and connect young person to the Career Coach at The Hub for a deeper career assessment using the online tool;
- Discuss the young person's career development interests, strengths, and experiences, and help them select a career development experience for the year (this could also be done in conjunction with the Career Coach at The Hub);
- Refer young people not interested in college to the Career Coach at The Hub to help them identify best-fit workforce/training programs (or for assistance with identifying the best-fit program);
- Visit any external programs with young people to assist with the enrollment and/or exploration process;
- Refer all young people enrolled in college to the Career Coach at The Hub to help them develop a career plan, and follows up accordingly;
- Provide weekly persistence coaching to young people enrolled in any on-site or external program, including checking in with them before and after their first day, and building a relationship with the primary person at the program to discuss attendance/performance.

Broadly speaking, the Say Yes Coach should support the young person in engaging with the training program (i.e., by attending orientations, meeting with program staff, and/or applying to the program), and the coach should support the young person's persistence in that program.

F. ROLE OF THE CAREER COACH AT THE HUB



- Conduct rigorous career exploration based on the young person's situation and interests
- Meet with young people to help them identify training programs
- Meet with young people who are not on a college-bound track (or who have left college) to explore other pathways/ programs and create a career plan that is in line with their track
- Meet with young people who are enrolled in college to create a career plan