

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 **Currently, public funding for foster youth supports those ages 11-26. Public funding for the juvenile justice pilot, on the other hand, is currently for youth in 8th grade through age 21 (for MAAP) or 23 (for Close to Home).** However, private funding can be used to serve older young people, and there is potential for additional public funding in future years to extend the age range.



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.

Coaching is also voluntary, which allows the young person to be in control and often results in a 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 are welcomed back (as long as there is an open spot; if not, a waiting list should be created).

B. RECRUITING PRIORITY POPULATIONS

FOR THE FOSTER CARE MODEL, FOSTER CARE STUDENTS IN THE 8TH GRADE SERVE AS A KEY PIPELINE TO THE COACHING PROGRAM

Approximately **50% of foster youth fail the ninth grade** in NYC and could benefit from a Coach upon entering this grade.

Throughout the course of the year, 8th graders should ideally hear about the benefits of Fair Futures coaching from the Middle School Education Specialist and their tutor (if they have one). Another best practice is for all 8th grade students to be invited to a Fair Futures Orientation in the summer before 9th grade. While students do not have to participate in Fair Futures, the Orientation helps encourage enrollment prior to 9th 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.

FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE MODEL, MAAP AND CLOSE TO HOME PROGRAMS SERVE AS KEY PIPELINES TO THE COACHING PROGRAM

Youth in these programs are at risk of involvement (or continued involvement) in the juvenile justice system, and it's likely they have experienced trauma, witnessed violence, and/or experienced a complex educational trajectory. Youth in these programs receive support from MAAP Mentors for approximately 6 months and Close to Home staff for approximately 7-12 months. However, Coaches can work with young people after these programs are over and the young person returns to the community, as long as a young person is interested in coaching.

MAAP and CTH agencies are encouraged to determine when a Coach should be introduced to a young person. While some programs think “the sooner the better,” others see value in introducing a coach towards the end of the MAAP or Close to Home participation. We look forward to learning from your experiences with either option and using those experiences to shape our recommendations going forward.

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

OTHER PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Until there is full funding to serve all youth, it is up to provider agencies to determine what populations should be served. In addition to the above considerations, 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/equivalency
- Seniors in high school seeking assistance with post-secondary enrollment
- Older youth aging out of foster care
- Young people who are pregnant/parenting and in need of support

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 upon entry (i.e., MAAP or Close to Home) and has to opt-out of coaching.

WHERE TO RECRUIT?

Agencies launching new programs should hold a launch meeting where the Fair Futures program is presented to young people, using the youth-appropriate language (see [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 9](#)), ideally by a credible messenger or the Fair Futures Youth Coordinator. During this meeting, youth can brainstorm program names and vote on one; this will help with buy-in and engagement in coaching.

Credible messengers serve as the best recruits. It is a best practice to have a young person engage other young people into the program.