

SECTION 21J & 21K

J. EXPLORING A “GAP YEAR” OR DELAYING COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Some youth may not be prepared to attend college immediately after graduating high school, and/or may want to take time to build skills through academic remediation and/or a career development experience (e.g., work, an internship, a workforce/training program, a meaningful volunteer experience(s), etc.).

In other cases, a young person might graduate over the winter or at the end of the summer and may not want to rush into college weeks after their high school graduation. If the time is spent productively, taking a semester or a year between high school and college can provide young people with time to mature, build skills and confidence, and be better prepared for post-secondary success. Pathways and programs that help young people build their skills/credentials before enrolling in college or an accredited vocational program:

CUNY Start: a semester-long program for students with developmental needs in reading, writing, and/or math; it is free and does not use any of the student’s financial aid. Note that CUNY Start, as well as Math Start, below, have very stringent attendance policies that students must adhere to in order to remain in the program. (See [Appendix G9_CUNY Support and Opportunity Programs](#))

Math Start: an intensive 8 to 12-week program for students with developmental needs in Math that would normally require them to start in corequisite courses. Unlike CUNY Start, it can be taken over the summer before college, or at other “off-cycle” times that do not align with the start of CUNY’s Fall/Spring semester. This program could also be helpful for youth interested in vocational programs that require a higher math level, which is not uncommon. (See [Appendix G9_CUNY Support and Opportunity Programs](#)).

Workforce development bridge programs: some of which offer job readiness, sector-based training, remedial coursework, college coursework in a specific area (often leading to a certification), internships, and/or job placement support.

- **[The Young Adult Sectoral Employment Project \(YASEP\):](#)** a sector-based training program that allow youth to build skills, earn certificates/credentials (sometimes college credits), and have a paid internship. To be eligible for these programs, students sometimes need to pass a TABE exam at a certain grade level. Learn more: yasepnetwork.org

Youth workforce programs: For students who are not eligible for bridge programs, there are a variety of workforce development programs that have flexible and multiple pathways for young people, including job readiness, employment placement, certificate programs, college remedial and access programming, etc.

Example: [The DYCD’s Train & Earn and Learn & Earn](#) programs or CUNY’s “Working the Gap” program (see detail ahead of 2023’s program year [here](#)).

Refer to [Appendix H7 Progressive Career Development Programs for NYC Youth](#) for a diagram of some effective programs.

Once a program type is selected, go to the [Fair Futures Career Development Directory](#) to explore specific programs based on the young person’s interests, geographic preferences, etc.

K. EXPLORING VOCATIONAL & OTHER PATHWAYS

Some young people may be interested in another post-secondary pathway, such as the trades or another vocational, sector-based training program. The Coach should work with the young person and the Specialists to explore options. Using assessment tools can help youth to determine what post-secondary path is best for them.

For simplicity purposes, all vocational, workforce training, and direct-employment pathways fall under Fair Futures “Career Development” umbrella. [See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 22.](#)

Youth should be aware that **vocational programs can be just as challenging and time-consuming as college (as sometimes there is this misperception!)**. For example, many accredited vocational programs in the trades require advanced skills/credentials just to apply. Union jobs in particular take several years of on-the-job experience (and/or a long apprenticeship) before one can apply and these exams are extremely competitive in themselves.

Young people should never be discouraged from embarking on a pathway in the trades, but they should exhibit a strong interest in the industry, as the credentials and experiences they earn will be mostly limited to that broader industry.

PROGRAMS TO EXPLORE (BOTH DURING HIGH SCHOOL AND AFTER GRADUATION) IF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS OR DIRECT EMPLOYMENT:

The School of Cooperative Technical Education (Coop Tech): a half-day vocational program that offers students hands-on training in a variety of trade areas. Coop Tech serves students who are 17 to 21 years of age; students are either in high school, an HSE program, or high school graduates. Coop Tech offers classes in all five boroughs and students are given the opportunity to take part in a Work Based Learning Program which provides job readiness skills, knowledge of basic safety and OSHA procedures, CPR, and real world of work exposure. Upon recommendation from program faculty, each student can be matched with one of Coop Tech's intern partnership sites.

See [Appendix H5 CoOp Tech Application](#) and visit www.co-optech.org for eligibility information.

There are a number of youth workforce training programs in NYC.

Some of these also offer on-site HSE/GED programs, internships, assistance with obtaining and maintaining jobs, and sector-based trainings that offer credentials and certifications. Search the [Fair Futures Career Development Directory](#) to explore specific programs based on sector, industry, eligibility requirements, certificates earned, etc.

Examples include:

- **The DYCD's Train & Earn, Learn & Earn, and Advance & Earn programs.**
See <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/jobs-internships.page> for a description of these programs and a list of providers by borough. These will also be included on the [Fair Futures Career Development Directory](#).
- **Youth Build:** Offers HSE programming and 9 months of training/certifications in the trades to young people ages 17-24. Learn more: www.youthbuild.org
- **Job Corps:** Offers HSE preparation and career technical skills training in 10 high-growth sectors. Some sites offer residential placement where students can reside on campus. Learn more: www.jobcorps.gov
- **Young Adult Sectoral Based Employment Programs (YASEP):** These are sector-specific bridge programs where non-profit providers partner with at least one employer and industry skills training entity. Programs often include several weeks of remediation and soft-skills training to prepare young people for the longer skill-based training (and often a hands-on, paid internship) that leads to a certificate(s), credential(s), and/or college credits. Upon completion, job placement and retention support are offered. See www.yasepnetwork.org.

There are other adult **vocational/sector-based training programs** (which youth over age 18 can participate in) that offer free, sector-based, employer-recognized trainings in the trades/construction, IT, culinary, hospitality, healthcare, transportation, and other fields. Search the [Fair Futures Career Development Directory](#) to explore specific programs based on sector, industry, eligibility requirements, certificates earned, etc.

- **NYC's Small Business Services** offers [training programs](#) for in-demand occupations across sectors at different locations throughout the city

College certificate programs offer young people with a high school degree/HSE/GED an opportunity to take courses and earn certificates and/or college credits in a specific area that can help them improve their employment credentials in that field. (It can also provide exposure to a college setting.) Most of the CUNY schools offer these certificate programs – see their websites to search by sector/program.

Union Jobs and Apprenticeships: Union-affiliated career pathways are a time-tested opportunity for youth with a strong interest in the trades or considering an alternative pathway to college. Union careers offer sustainable wages and viable career-tracks that offer skill development, leadership opportunities, and upward mobility. Many jobs in New York City's economy have union affiliation and apprenticeship training programs leading to entry-level and middle-skills jobs. There are approximately 100 apprenticeship programs in NYC, and over 90% are in the trades. Most apprenticeship programs are 1-6 years and can be competitive.

- **The NYS Department of Labor** has general information on union apprenticeships [here](#)
- **Currently available union apprenticeships** are listed here:
labor.ny.gov/pressreleases/apprenticeshiparchive.shtm
(Note: this is a statewide list broken down by district, so you have to scroll down to New York City)
- **Technology apprenticeships in NYC:** p2atrades.org
- **One pre-apprenticeship program in the trades in NYC is called Building Works.**
It's a 17-week program that offers free training and technical coursework to prepare candidates for an apprenticeship in the Carpenters Union. It requires a high school degree/HSE and participants have to test at a certain math and reading level.

Civil Service: There are also career opportunities in city government for young people with at least a high school degree/equivalent. Young people must pass a competitive civil service exam before they can be hired to become permanent employees. These exams assess a candidate's qualifications for a particular Civil Service job title. The exams can be very competitive, and many require college credits and/or experience in that area – they are often not entry-level jobs. ACS provides a test prep guide – see [Appendix H6 ACS Civil Service Test Prep Guide](#).

ACCES-VR: Students with IEPs and certain disabilities could enroll in ACCES-VR, which provides vocational rehabilitation services and should have opportunities to work in jobs integrated within their communities.

See [Appendix H4 ACCES-VR Information](#) to learn more.

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