

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.**

As such, via the Goals & Steps framework, we encourage **young people who are coached to: 1) conduct career exploration each year with the Coach and/or Specialist; and 2) ideally engage in at least one career development experience each year, if possible.** Career development experiences can include an internship, extracurricular, job training, employment, etc. 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. Coaches should be mindful, however, that sometimes young people are not yet ready to engage in a career development experience for many reasons.

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 Hats and Ladders 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 each year so important (ideally that are in line with their interests and academic situation)? 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 youth with experience in foster care and/or juvenile justice systems 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.**

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT GOAL-SETTING

Each year, Coaches should work with young people on 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 the Career Development Specialist. 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:

- Complete Career Assessment with Coach or Career Specialist
Vetted career assessment tools include: Hats and Ladders and Career Cruiser (See [Appendix H1 Links to Career Exploration Tools](#)).
- Complete Career Interest Assessment (YA WORC, etc.)
- The young person should work with the Education & Career Specialist to complete a career assessment. The results of the assessment will help the Coach and Education & Career Specialist 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 Education & Career Specialist
- 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 Education & Career Specialist 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 Specialist 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

Ideally 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 five 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 Development Specialists 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.

CATEGORY 1. AGENCY-BASED JOB READINESS & SUPPORTED WORK EXPERIENCES

Some agencies have on-site programs that provide job readiness training and/or that support young people in succeeding in agency-based internships. These goal categories include:

[Participate in agency-based job readiness program \(e.g.: YA WORC\)](#) – this could be a career development goal/experience for young people in need of career preparation support (particularly those with limited/no work experience) and/or for young people who have a full academic schedule.

[Participate in agency-based internship \(e.g., Mentored Internship Program\)](#) – this could be a career development goal/experience for the year for young people who have limited/no work experience (*with the exception of previous participation in the Summer Youth Employment Program*), and/or young people who are:

- Disconnected from school/work
- Not enrolled in an academic setting full-time and have the need for a paid position
- Enrolled full-time in college and have the capacity to take on part-time work

CATEGORY 2. EXTERNAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES & PATHWAYS

These goals include:

[“Participate in summer internship program \(e.g.: SYEP\)”](#) is a career development goal for any young person – including 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.

In NYC, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) employs thousands of youth ages 14-24, and there are priority slots for foster youth. There is also an SYEP program called “Ladders for Leaders” that offers more leadership opportunities.

[“Participate in an extracurricular, youth development/leadership program, or community service experience”](#) is a career development goal for any young person, regardless of academic status. Research shows that these types of experiences 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.

NYC has hundreds of free youth development, extracurricular, and community service programs.

Use [One Degree](#) to search for programs in line with the young person's interests and qualifications.

"[Enroll in external workforce program](#)" is a career development goal for any young person 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.

Good examples of these programs include the [DYCD's Train & Earn, Learn & Earn, and Advance & Earn](#) programs. Co-Op Tech (The School of Cooperative Education) is another option for any young person who is enrolled in high school/HSE program and wants to gain hands-on training in the trades and earn certificate(s). Use [One Degree](#) to search for programs based on age, geography, requirements, etc.

- **Is enrolled in a YABC or evening school program and wants to earn another source of income during the day**, but 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.

NYC has many free youth workforce programs. Use [One Degree](#) to search for programs based on age, geography, requirements, etc. that are in line with the young person's interests and qualifications.

"[Obtain \(and Complete\) an external internship](#)" could be a career development goal for a young person in high school, college, or a vocational program who is able to balance their academic schedule with an internship.

- 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.

Use [One Degree](#) to search for programs in line with the young person's interests and qualifications.

"[Apply to ACCES-VR](#)" is a career development goal for any young person who has a disability and could benefit from vocational rehabilitation services and/or jobs integrated within their communities. Students with IEPs who are on a college track can also receive supports from ACCES-VR. Review the Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) fact sheet "[Applying to ACCES-VR](#)".

CATEGORY 3. ACCREDITED VOCATIONAL, SECTOR-BASED TRAINING, OR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

This goal, "[Participate in an accredited vocational, sector-based training, or apprenticeship program](#)" is for young people who have a high school degree/GED and have determined with their Coach and Specialist, through assessment tools, career exploration, etc., that pursuing a trades or skills-based career is the best fit for them.



The **Career Development Specialist** should help the young person assess which program(s) they are eligible for, as many have grade-level or other skill-based requirements.

In cases where the young person is not yet eligible to enroll, the Coach and Education & Career Specialist should work with the young person to gain the skills/experiences required. This can be done by enrolling in youth workforce/bridge programs. (Review [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21K](#))

Use [One Degree](#) to search for programs in line with the young person's interests and qualifications.

CATEGORY 4. CIVIL SERVICE

This includes the goal, "[Pass 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 Specialist 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 (e.g., hundreds or thousands of applications for a handful of positions), 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.

This includes the goals of "[Obtaining Part-time/Seasonal Job](#)" "[Obtaining Full-time Job](#)", and "[Obtaining Living Wage Job](#)". This category can apply to any young person at any juncture. However, 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 a transfer high school, YABC program, 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 Education & Career Specialist can connect them to one of the youth workforce programs above (thus, the goal would be "Enroll in a job readiness/youth workforce development program" not "Obtain full-time Job").

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 "Complete external workforce program" 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 "Complete external workforce program" 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 "Complete external workforce program" 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 Education & Career Specialist 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 (the Specialist could also do this);
- Assist with career exploration and refers to the Specialist when more input/knowledge is required;
- 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 Specialist);
- Refer young people to on-site opportunities to gain experiences in a supportive environment, including the job readiness program (e.g., Career Club, also known as YA WORC) or other onsite opportunities;
- Assist high school students with exploring career development activities, based on their interests, goals, job readiness, etc.;
- Refer young people to the Specialist to help them apply to external 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 (the Specialist could also do this);
- Refer all young people enrolled in college to the Education & Career Specialist 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.

F. ROLE OF THE EDUCATION & CAREER SPECIALIST



- ❑ They typically oversee any on-site job readiness program(s) (e.g., YA WORC), including enrollment and scheduling of program cycles
- ❑ Meet with young people to help them find and apply to best-fit career development opportunities (in partnership with the Coach)
- ❑ 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
- ❑ Educate young people about when and how to discuss their involvement in justice systems, if relevant. Review the Legal Action Center (LAC) presentation: "[Getting Ready: Applying for a Job with a Criminal Record](#)"
- ❑ Be aware of how involvement in criminal justice systems impacts various career pathways. Review "[Getting the Record Straight: A Guide to Navigating Background Checks](#)" from The John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity
- ❑ Build relationships with external programs and employers to serve as pipeline
- ❑ Note, the Specialist has many education-related responsibilities in addition to the above career-related activities

G. ON-SITE CAREER READINESS & INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

A number of agencies offer on-site career readiness programs (YA WORC) and on-site internship programs. The Specialist(s) could oversee any on-site programs.

YA WORC (YOUNG ADULT WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR REWARDING CAREERS)

Developed by the Columbia Workforce Center, YA WORC is a developmentally appropriate, evidence-informed, career readiness preparation program for young people ages 13 – 24 who face challenging life circumstances.

Schedule/structure: 16-session curriculum.

Training: The Career Development Specialist is trained by the Columbia Workforce Center and leads the sessions.

Target Population: Completing YA WORC could be a career development goal for young people who have a full academic schedule and/or for young people in need of career preparation support (including those in high school and those with limited/no work experience).

Persistence: Coaches follow up with young people to reflect on their experiences in the program and provide ongoing support around persistence.