

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL

SECTION 9

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Important tips and best practices for implementing a successful, sustainable Fair Futures program.

CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS: PHASE 1

BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL, SUSTAINABLE COACHING PROGRAM & CULTURE

IDENTIFY A CHAMPION WITHIN THE SENIOR RANKS OF YOUR AGENCY; IDEALLY, THE FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM SHOULD BE HOUSED WITHIN THEIR BRANCH.

- All coaching, education, career development, and housing services for youth should be highly collaborative within the Fair Futures team and with all those serving coached youth including MAAP and Close to Home program teams.**

While your agency may be delivering the Fair Futures model in different geographies and settings (e.g., foster care and juvenile justice, with youth at various locations), it is important to have a cohesive program model with streamlined communication and a shared culture. There should ideally be a dedicated director overseeing the work across multiple sites that helps convene teams periodically.

HIRE THE RIGHT STAFF. STAFF SHOULD USE A STRENGTH-BASED, TRAUMA-INFORMED, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LENS.

- Have a young person help screen/interview staff, particularly the Coaches.
- Use the [Fair Futures Staff Screening & Hiring Toolkit](#) for best practice interview questions/tips.

CREATE SHARED PROGRAM LANGUAGE TO USE WITH YOUTH - DO THIS AS A TEAM, AND SHARE IT WITH ALL AGENCY STAFF.

It is very important for all Fair Futures staff to be using the same language to describe the program and its goals – both with young people and with adults (parents, Case Planners, other staff in MAAP and Close to Home, etc.). That way, there will be no confusion as to what your program does and does not do. Staff need to be able to clearly describe to young people how the program can benefit them, including both emotional benefits as well as specific services, and emphasize that the program is all about THEM. The language should be “real” and resonate with young people. It is also important for staff to be able to describe what their role is within the broader program.

Technical assistance is available to take your team through this important exercise. Including all critical parties is important. After developing language, share this language in a workshop/peer group with young people to introduce the program and develop a name, if you haven't already. Also have a senior leader distribute the language agency-wide so that all staff know what the program does (and does not do).

CREATE A PROGRAM NAME - IDEALLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

For staff and youth to feel connected to a program, it has to have a name that resonates with them. Agencies do not have to call the program “Fair Futures;” they can develop a name and branding that is meaningful to their stakeholders and reflective of that agency's culture/community. To do so, a best practice is to convene key stakeholders, including young people, to develop/vote on a program name - this should help build team spirit and buy-in!

□ **DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES AND ROLE CLARITY.**

Implementation success also happens when all involved have the opportunity to provide input. Also, when multiple staff are working with the same youth, the youth will be most likely to succeed when staff are collaborating, sending the same message, and clear on who is doing what.

- Select a leadership champion to facilitate the implementation process. Have that champion arrange a launch meeting with executive leadership, new Fair Futures staff, any other existing education/youth development staff, quality management/ improvement staff, and ideally some young people currently served in existing youth programs. The purpose of the meeting is for staff to come together to learn about the Fair Futures program, ask questions, express concerns, and get clarity regarding roles and implementation.
- Have department or program heads meet to discuss areas of collaboration and possible challenges that may arise. Develop a plan for when programs are working with the same child (e.g. foster care, juvenile justice, mental health, Health Homes) are in different parts of the agency. Ensure senior leaders of these branches agree on role definitions and protocols for collaboration and crisis response.
- Refer to role descriptions in the [Fair Futures Staff Screening & Hiring Toolkit](#) for more information on various roles and responsibilities.

□ **SCHEDULE REGULAR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSIONS WITH FAIR FUTURES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS.**

These sessions are tailored to your staff needs and help build team cohesion. Best practice approaches are shared across agencies.

TIP! THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS TAKES TIME... TRUST THE PROCESS, AND STICK WITH IT!