

The Center For **FAIRFUTURES** ➤

CUNY SUPPORT & OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

The **City University of New York (CUNY)** offers a range of support and opportunity programs for students both its 2-year and 4-year colleges.

In addition, within its support and opportunity programs, CUNY also has additional resources built in for students in care and with [conviction histories](#). This guide will describe the support and opportunity programs available to students across CUNY, including SEEK/CD, ASAP, and Start. It will also cover the additional programming options open to students in care, including the FYCSI program.

The information contained below will be particularly important for students who are first entering the CUNY system. With few exceptions, **students need to decide at the beginning of their time at CUNY which support or opportunity program (ASAP, ACE, or SEEK/CD) they would like to affiliate with**, and there are limited chances to change programs after picking one. Students can join the FYCSI program at any time, however.

THE MAJOR PROGRAM OFFERINGS, IN BRIEF

SEEK AND COLLEGE DISCOVERY ARE CUNY'S OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS*

In **SEEK** and **College Discovery (CD)**, students receive one-on-one personal, academic and career counseling, financial assistance in the form of extra semesters of **New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)**, textbook stipends, and student activity fee waivers. Students also receive extra academic support, including pre-freshman summer classes that prepare students for college courses, professional tutoring, and consolidated course schedules.

In order to be eligible for SEEK/CD, students must:

- ☐ Demonstrate financial need on the FAFSA (students currently/formerly in care almost always qualify)
- ☐ Have a GPA/SAT score that would typically make them inadmissible at the college or place them meaningfully below the college average
- ☐ Commit to attending a summer program before their first semester
- ☐ Be first-time college students or previously enrolled in SEEK/CD

*New York State's Opportunity Programs are described in greater depth in [Appendix G8](#) of the *Fair Futures Program Manual*.

ASAP

ASAP is a program that focuses on helping students graduate from CUNY community colleges as soon as possible (in 3 years or less) through a combination of advisement, tutoring, early registration, block scheduling, free MetroCards, book vouchers, and other resources.

Students in ASAP have a 3-year graduation rate of 53%, which is more than double that of their peers who are not in a support program - students not in ASAP graduate in three years 25% of the time.

While ASAP is only available at 2-year colleges, a similar program called ACE is now available at several four-year colleges at CUNY, including John Jay and Lehman College. A full list of campuses offering the ACE program can be found [here](#).

In order to be eligible for ASAP, students must:

- ☐ Complete the FAFSA
- ☐ Have no more than two developmental course needs
- ☐ Commit to enrolling full-time at a participating CUNY school in an ASAP-eligible major (most majors other than Allied Health fields)
- ☐ Be first-time freshmen OR
Have no more than 15 credits and a minimum 2.0 GPA at the time of program enrollment

ASAP and ACE offer enhanced benefits to students.

CUNY START AND MATH START

CUNY Start is a program specifically for students who have developmental needs and would need to take co-requisite classes at the beginning of college. CUNY Start allows students to fulfill these requirements without having to use financial aid (the program instead requires students to pay a minimal fee for textbooks, but for students in care, this fee is waived). Because CUNY has replaced its zero-credit remedial courses with credit-bearing co-requisite courses, CUNY Start is not as highly recommended for students with developmental course needs as it once was, particularly in light of their strict attendance policies. **Since CUNY Start takes a full semester, it requires students to delay their enrollment in credit-bearing classes.**

Once students complete CUNY Start, they can move on to either ASAP or College Discovery, though the Start program maintains a closer partnership with ASAP.

In order to be eligible for CUNY Start, students must:

- ☐ Enroll in CUNY Start at a participating college
- ☐ Have at least one remedial need
- ☐ Commit to attending all CUNY Start classes (the attendance policy is strict)

CUNY Start's sister program, Math Start, is an eight week program that helps students develop their foundational math skills and place out of the corresponding co-requisite course. **Math Start remains highly recommended** for students looking to build skills and enter college at a higher math level, **particularly because it can be taken in the summer before college**, which means participating students don't have to delay their first semester of college to take it. More information on Math Start can be found [here](#).

THERE ARE TWO GROUPS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE INELIGIBLE TO BE PART OF ANY CUNY SUPPORT PROGRAM:

Students who elect to attend a 4-year college to which they are academically admissible, and which doesn't have an ACE program:

- Example: a student who is accepted through the regular admissions process at Brooklyn College would be ineligible for SEEK due to the lack of an academic need, and Brooklyn College does not have ACE or ASAP.

Students who transfer to CUNY:

- After completing 15 or more credits at another college - OR - with a GPA of below 2.0
- SEEK/CD will only take first-time freshmen

CUNY Start and ASAP require students to have fewer than 15 credits and a GPA of 2.0 or above on any courses they have attempted. In addition, because Allied Health majors are not eligible for ASAP, any Allied Health major who transfers from another school would not be eligible for a support program. **Students who are not part of a support program through their college can still participate in CUNY's FYCSI program for students currently/formerly in foster care (see below). This program is open to any CUNY student who was in foster care at age 13 or older - this includes youth currently in Close to Home or Close to Home aftercare.**

APPLYING FOR SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Students should apply for CUNY support and opportunity programs through the regular CUNY application, by answering "yes" to the questions about whether they are interested in SEEK/CD and ASAP.

Once they are admitted to CUNY, they will then receive information via email about how to enroll in any support programs for which they are eligible. Students should not try to choose their preferred support program on the application - they should express interest in both and then decide after receiving their admissions decisions.

Students should check their email carefully for outreach from support programs, and should follow up with the program office at the college of their choice if they do not hear back from the support program they expressed interest in by the time they receive their acceptance from the college.

All support programs require students to attend information sessions in order to enroll, so students should not assume that they are automatically enrolled in a support program if they do not hear back!

CHOOSING A SUPPORT PROGRAM

In some cases, students entering college will need to choose which support program they would like to affiliate with.

CUNY START VS. STARTING WITH CREDIT BEARING CLASSES

First, eligible students should decide whether they want to be part of **CUNY Start**.

CUNY Start is only for students who are identified as needing developmental classes.

It is only available at CUNY's community colleges, plus CSI, Medgar Evers, and City Tech. Information about CUNY Start program offerings can be found [here](#). A list of participating campuses can be found [here](#).

Students who have *no developmental needs* should skip to the next section ([SEEK/CD vs. ASAP or ACE](#)).

Students may want to consider joining CUNY Start if they have two or more remedial needs, particularly if they want to be in ASAP.

CUNY Start offers outstanding preparation for credit-bearing college classes, and allows students to get developmental courses out of the way without using financial aid. However, now that CUNY offers credit-bearing co-requisite courses instead of zero-credit remedial courses for students with developmental needs, it's less important than it used to be to do CUNY Start.

Note students with a math developmental need can take Math Start over the summer prior to their first semester in college and then enter credit bearing classes in the Fall.

SEEK/CD VS. ASAP OR ACE

If a student attends a college that offers associate degrees, or they attend John Jay or Lehman College, they will need to decide whether to enroll in **SEEK/College Discovery (CD)** or **ASAP/ACE**.

Students cannot enroll in both.

For community college students, **ASAP** boasts CUNY's strongest three-year graduation rates for Associate Degree students. It is an outstanding program that has garnered nationwide recognition and should probably be the default choice for any student attending a CUNY community college.

However, there are some reasons that a student might elect **SEEK/CD** over **ASAP/ACE**:

- **Students in ASAP who transfer to a four-year college cannot transfer into SEEK, EOP, or HEOP programs** at their new, four-year colleges, but students in SEEK/CD can. Students who are planning to attend a NYC college before transferring to a SUNY or private college in New York should consider SEEK/CD.
- **ASAP does not accept allied health majors, but SEEK/CD does.**
- **ASAP does not accept students with three developmental needs** (ASAP only accepts students with two remedial needs on a campus-by-campus basis). **College Discovery (CD)** does **accept students with three developmental needs** (students can take CUNY Start to resolve these developmental needs and qualify into ASAP).

FYCSI PROGRAM

Students who are in any support program, or no support program at all, can be part of CUNY's SEEK/CD and START/ASAP both include foster care programs that offer additional funding and resources to students in care. Note that some youth currently in Close to Home NSP or in NSP aftercare may also be eligible for these supports.

Students hoping to join **CUNY Start** or **ASAP's** foster care initiatives should contact fci@cuny.edu or reach out to Lutful Khan: lutful.khan@cuny.edu or (917) 471-2359.

Students hoping to join **SEEK** or **College Discovery (CD)** should contact Shirley de Pena to make sure they are part of **Youth Matter**: shirley.depena@cuny.edu or (646) 664-8786.

COLLEGE-SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH JUSTICE EXPERIENCE:

JOHN JAY'S INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE & OPPORTUNITY'S COLLEGE INITIATIVE

[John Jay's Institute for Justice & Opportunity's College Initiative](#) supports people with conviction histories in applying to any CUNY institution and provides ongoing supports including mentorship during college.

BMCC'S PROJECT IMPACT

[BMCC's Project Impact Program](#) links BMCCBMCC students who have been impacted directly or indirectly by the criminal legal system with a mentor who helps students navigate the challenges of secondary education and facilitate access to supports, including academic tutoring and a whole host of other services. Both prospective and current BMCC students are welcome to enroll in Project Impact.

BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S FUTURE NOW

The [Future Now](#) program provides free HSE and vocational training classes, student counseling and career exploration, along with college preparation and enrollment services to students ages 17 to 24.

COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP

While not a CUNY-specific program, the [College and Community Fellowship](#) supports women with criminal justice involvement with college applications and persistence and beyond.

OTHER PROGRAMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

COLLEGIATE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ENTRY PROGRAM (CSTEP)

CSTEP is a program for students who: **come from minority/underrepresented backgrounds, attend CUNY as full-time students**, and are **enrolled in a science, technology, engineering, or math related major** (which includes fields like Chemistry, Psychology, Computer Science, Nursing, Public Health, and Accounting, among many more). Students in CSTEP receive additional advisement and mentoring support as well as career preparation and help applying to graduate school in the field of their choice.

Students enroll in CSTEP after admission to the college, and the best way to connect with CSTEP is to look up the college's CSTEP page online and contact the program directly.

GUTTMAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Students who are interested in attending a rigorous 2-year college, and particularly those interested in doing **CUNY ASAP**, should also consider **Guttman Community College**. Guttman is perhaps the highest-performing community college in New York State, and has the highest 3-year graduation rate of any of the CUNY community colleges at 46%. It is a small, supportive school that includes many of the same perks as CUNY ASAP as part of its regular academic program. Because of this, **Guttman does not offer Start, ASAP, or College Discovery (CD)**. It also currently offers just five majors: Business Administration, Human Services, Liberal Arts, Information Technology, and Urban Studies.

Students interested in Guttman should make sure to apply before the admissions deadline and check their emails for follow-ups from the Guttman admissions department, since all prospective Guttman students must interview as part of the admissions process.