

SECTION 21A, 21B, & 21C

A. OVERVIEW

An important goal of the Fair Futures program is to help young people explore and consider post-secondary settings, and if interested, connect to, persist in, and complete college or a vocational program. A post-secondary credential can help young people navigate onto a living wage career path that offers opportunities for growth and fulfillment. Many career paths that meet this standard require a college degree and/or other post-secondary credential(s), combined with career development experiences.

There are some specific careers where a high school degree may suffice; however, those opportunities are limited and often extremely competitive (e.g., becoming a firefighter, an MTA motorman, etc.). Even with these positions, having some sort of post-secondary degree/credential can ultimately help the young person advance, increase their earning power, and/or have more career mobility.

Coaches and Specialists should expose young people to various post-secondary options as early as possible, including college and accredited vocational programs, and help them start to plan and prepare. This exposure and planning should begin by or before 9th grade, ideally. College and career assessment tools can help youth to determine what post-secondary path may be best for them.

TIP! See [Career Exploration Tools](#) for more information.

B. POST-SECONDARY EXPLORATION AND EXPOSURE

Every year, Coaches should help **all young people with the “Conduct Post-Secondary Exploration/Exposure” Goal** (unless they are already enrolled in a post-secondary setting). You may ask - why all young people? In particular, why would Coaches help young people who don't want to go to college (or who may not even want to finish high school) with post-secondary exploration?

The role of a Coach is to help young people be **aware of and informed about all their options and all the opportunities available** to them. If the Coach explains all their options and the young person is not interested, Coaches can still close out that Goal in Care4 and get credit for simply “planting the seed”! That exploratory experience could be what motivates the young person to re-engage in high school and/or visualize a pathway for themselves. Or, perhaps they remember years later what their Coach told them and decide to enroll in a free vocational program.

It is also important to expose young people to various post-secondary opportunities, as they may not have close adults in their life who have a post-secondary degree/credential. Some young people may also have misperceptions that they will get into debt by attending college or vocational training and would rather have a job as they need money. While this can be true (depending on the college/program and the student's circumstances), NYC has many free vocational training programs, and some even have paid internships! **That means a young person can earn a paycheck while gaining skills and a credential in an area that could lead to higher future earning potential.** The role of a Coach is to make sure they know that so they can make an informed decision. If the young person still prefers a job, then the Coach will help them find one.

Similarly, most young people in MAAP and CTH (depending on their family income) can attend a CUNY school for little-to-no cost. Depending on their family's income situation, they may also get thousands of dollars in financial aid reimbursements. Young people in CTH are considered “active in foster care” and are eligible for the [ACS College Choice Program](#) (as long as they apply while in CTH or aftercare; refer to [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21F](#) for more information about the [ACS College Choice Program](#)). This program would allow them to get \$60/day, free dorming or housing up to \$2,500 per month, and the equivalent of approximately \$25,000 per year, which is more than a full-time, minimum wage job after taxes! It is the role of a Coach to ensure the young person knows about this program, if eligible, and all their options.

IMPORTANT FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN CONDUCTING POST-SECONDARY EXPLORATION:

Students with disabilities who are in an Alternate Assessment program and tracked toward a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) rather than a Local Diploma, Regents Diploma, or High School Equivalency will not be eligible to enroll in college, some trade schools, or the military.

The first step in long-range planning for these students should always be to verify that the alternate assessment designation is appropriate (i.e. that the student has a severe intellectual or developmental disability that will prevent them from graduating from high school). Sometimes students are erroneously categorized as Alternate Assessment (due to outdated evaluations or evaluations conducted after a profound trauma) when in fact they have the potential to complete a high school course of study. If there is any doubt at all that a student should be on alternate assessment, then updated psychoeducational evaluations, and, if necessary, independent evaluations, should be sought for these students.

For these students who are appropriately designated for Alternate Assessment, the Coach can still conduct Post-Secondary Exploration/Exposure by helping them explore vocational programs they are eligible for. They can also help with the Career Development Goal “[Apply to ACCES-VR](#)”.

Students attending online correspondence high schools such as Penn Foster, Keystone Credit Recovery, or K12 cannot receive credit for these programs from any school district in New York State.

This means that they will not receive a valid high school diploma, cannot be admitted to most colleges, and will not be able to access financial aid in college. It does not matter if the school claims to be nationally or regionally “accredited” – [New York State law bans the acceptance of these programs for credit toward a diploma](#).

It is vital that students considering enrollment in online correspondence high schools be counseled toward diploma-granting options such as the high school equivalency exam (GED/HSE) or options through NYC DOE, such as the newly launched online [School Without Walls](#).

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

After graduation, some young people may need more time to develop their academic skills or take a “gap year” before enrolling in a post-secondary setting. Taking a gap year or gap semester between high school and college, as long as it is a productive one that allows that young person to develop skills/experiences in line with their longer-term goals, is a pathway that may work well for some young people.

Young people could engage in a Career Development Experience (e.g., a workforce program) to earn money, build their skills, and/or earn a credential. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 22](#) for pathways/options and refer to the [Career Development Directory](#).

Young people with a high school degree/equivalency who are not yet enrolled in any post-secondary setting should also Conduct Post-Secondary Exploration/Exposure. Even if they are not yet ready to enroll (and want to work, for example), post-secondary exposure/exploration is important for all the reasons above.

C. ROLE OF A COACH



The Coach's role in helping young people explore their post-secondary goals will depend on where they are. Coaches should also involve birth and/or foster parents in the post-secondary planning process to ensure the young person is being supported.

AT A HIGH LEVEL, THE ROLE OF THE COACH BASED ON A YOUNG PERSON'S SITUATION

For young people who are not enrolled in high school and not interested in school/college in general:

- **The role of a Coach is to meet them where they are *and* always help them understand their options and opportunities.** Even if they are not interested, the Coach should inform them of the various pathways available to them, what they can look like, and discuss the pros/cons.

For young people in high school or an HSE program who are interested in college:

- Coaches work with the student and their guidance counselor (or HSE/GED program staff) to ensure they are on-track for high school graduation and have a plan in place for college.
- If your program has one, the student should also meet with a College/Education Specialist to identify best-fit colleges, complete admissions, and financial aid applications, apply to support and opportunity programs, reapply each semester, and renew all forms of financial aid each year.

For young people in a high school/HSE program who are interested in a vocational/other post-secondary pathway:

- Coaches work with the student and their guidance counselor (or GED program staff) to ensure they are on-track for graduation and exploring post-secondary pathways.
- For youth who are not yet ready to enroll in a vocational program upon graduation, there are workforce bridge programs that help prepare youth to gain skills/credentials and take the next step toward their goals.
- The Coach will connect these students to the Career & Education Specialist to discuss best-fit programs and other options (See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21J](#), [Section 22](#), and [One Degree](#)).

For young people with a high school degree/equivalency but who are NOT interested in a post-secondary setting:

- The Coach will help them explore college or vocational pathways and connect them to the appropriate Specialist. If a young person is not yet prepared for the rigors of a post-secondary program, the Coach and Career & Education Specialist can assist the young person in identifying a work experience or a program that can help them earn money while gaining the skills they need to prepare for a post-secondary setting.

For young people already enrolled in college or vocational training:

- The Coach helps the young person persist by following up during critical junctures, connecting them to resources as needed, providing emotional support, and ensuring they meet with the Career & Education Specialist to renew their financial aid and funding each semester. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21H](#).

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