

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL

SECTION 10

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SECTION 10. YOUTH RECRUITMENT

A. NO EJECT, NO REJECT MODEL

Fair Futures has a “no reject, no eject” model. The Fair Futures program is voluntary and serves any young person who is interested, as long as they are in the 6th grade or younger than 27 years old, and experienced foster care at some point at some during/after the 6th grade.¹ **In Year 1, however, Fair Futures funding is only for youth in foster care, ages 11-21.**

At full scale, young people continue to be eligible to receive Fair Futures coaching and services after they achieve permanency.



There are no screening mechanisms or requirements to participate, and young people cannot get ejected from the program based on engagement or performance. This is a very intentional component of the model. If there were requirements (such as academic criteria or mandatory minimum engagements), the program could inadvertently screen out the youth who are most in need of support and/or not be able to assist youth during times of crisis.

Once the Fair Futures program is fully funded, the young person is eligible to receive supports until he/she reaches the age of 26. The young person can decide whether and to what extent to engage, whether it be through long-term coaching or receiving targeted services. Making services voluntary is empowering and allows the young person to be in control, which often results in greater willingness to engage. (See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 16](#))

The young person can also leave the program and return at any time, and young people who decide to leave the program for any reason are welcomed back.

B. RECRUITING PRIORITY POPULATIONS

FOSTER CARE STUDENTS IN THE 8TH GRADE SERVE AS A KEY PIPELINE TO THE COACHING PROGRAM

Approximately **50% of foster youth fail the ninth grade** in NYC and could benefit from a Coach upon entering this grade.

Throughout the course of the year, 8th graders should ideally hear about the benefits of Fair Futures coaching from the Middle School Education Specialist and their tutor (if they have one). Another best practice is for all 8th grade students to be invited to a Fair Futures Orientation in the summer before 9th grade. While students do not have to participate in Fair Futures, the Orientation helps encourage enrollment prior to 9th grade. The Orientation should include staff, young people, food, and relationship-building activities. This will help facilitate connection to the program and allow staff to meet with young people.

OTHER PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Until there is full funding, it is up to agencies to determine what populations should be served. In addition to the upcoming cohort of 9th graders, providers may also wish to focus on other critical populations who might benefit from coaching, including:

- Young people without a strong adult connection in their life
- Students repeating the 9th or 10th grade, or at risk of not being promoted
- Youth disconnected from school/work and without a high school degree/equivalency
- Seniors in high school seeking assistance with post-secondary enrollment
- Older youth aging out
- Young people who are pregnant/parenting and in need of support or at risk of being involved in the justice system

OPT-OUT METHOD

Once a program reaches scale, a best practice to ensure maximum participation in the coaching program is the “opt-out” approach. In this approach, a young person is automatically assigned a coach upon entry to 9th grade (or upon entry to foster care) and has to opt-out of coaching.

¹ However, services may be discontinued if the young person threatens a staff member or is violent.

WHERE TO RECRUIT?

A prime recruiting ground is at agencies existing **Preparing Youth for Adulthood** (PYA) meetings, where youth come to receive their monthly stipends. As discussed in [Section 9](#) and [Section 25](#) of the Fair Futures Program Manual, these PYA meetings can be turned into peer groups.

Agencies launching new programs should hold a launch meeting where the Fair Futures program is presented to young people, using the youth-appropriate language (see [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 9](#)), ideally by a credible messenger or the Fair Futures Youth Coordinator. During this meeting, youth can brainstorm program names and vote on one; this will help with buy-in and engagement in coaching.

There are many other ways to recruit young people. Case Planners and foster parents may refer youth and staff can reach out to these youth to describe the benefits of the program (using youth language!) and gauge interest before assigning a Coach. However, credible messengers serve as the best recruits. It is a best practice to have a young person engage other young people into the program.

C. RECRUITING USING THE ONLINE PLATFORM



As discussed in [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 5](#), academic information for all middle school students in foster care will be entered into the Online Platform. This information will provide the future Coach with valuable information regarding their academic background.



Coach Supervisors are encouraged to monitor the list of upcoming 9th graders in the Online Platform and begin the Intake & Enrollment process with each one ([See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 11](#)).



If a young person comes into foster care at a later age, they should have a Youth Profile page created in the Online Platform with key demographic information. ([See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 13](#))



After that happens, their name will show up in the “Alerts” section under of the Online Platform. Once this happens, the Outreach Coordinator (or whatever staff/youth does outreach) will reach out to the young person to try to engage them in coaching.

If the young person is interested in coaching, then the appropriate Supervisor is notified, and the Intake & Enrollment process begins. ([See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 11](#)).

If they are not interested, the young person will remain on the “To Engage” list in the Online Platform. Someone should be reaching out regularly to these young people (a best practice is 2-3x per month) to remind them that the program is there for them, and what the benefits are, using appropriate youth language. A best practice is to use a credible messenger or staff member who is very engaging. ([See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 16](#)).