

SECTION 21H & 21I

H. PERSISTING IN COLLEGE

The Coach plays a critical role in helping young people persist in college, from enrollment through graduation. See [Appendix G16. College Persistence Checklist](#).

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER

Once a student is enrolled in college and applied to all forms of funding, the Goal becomes: "[Prepare for and Complete College Semester with 2.0+.](#)"

To complete this goal, the Coach should follow the **Required Steps** to ensure that the student:

- Ensure that the student has applied to College Choice and submitted all necessary documentation.
- Ensure student has food, transportation, and basic minimum living expenses before stipends/financial aid comes in
- Check in with young person before AND after first day of the semester to debrief on experience
- Ensure student has a plan to purchase books
- Check student's financial aid balance after the first week of school to ensure there is nothing owed and no holds; *follow up with Bursar/Financial Aid office if needed*
- Ensure student understands how to use college systems (e.g., Blackboard, CUNYFirst, etc.)
- Ensure student's address is correct in the college system
- Ensure student understands consequences of class attendance policies, which can be found in the syllabus
- Walk through all syllabi with student and put assignment due dates in calendar (*time management is a critical skill for success*)
- Check in with young person before "withdrawal" period is over
 - If they need to withdraw from any classes, see Advisor.
If failing a class is inevitable, it is usually better to receive a "W" than to get a failing grade, which can more significantly affect financial aid, scholarships, etc. **Whenever possible, students should wait until after 60% of the semester has passed before withdrawing in order to avoid having to return Pell Grants.**
See [Appendix G17. How to Properly Withdraw from College Classes](#)
- Check in with young person during mid-terms (*a highly stressful time*)
- Provide emotional support to student; check-in on them weekly
- Check in with young person during finals (*another stressful juncture*)

**All of these Required Steps are based on best practices and align with critical junctures where young people tend to become discouraged/overwhelmed and drop-out.*

Potential Steps to help students persist and/or improve their GPA include:

- Attend any orientation
- If student is enrolled in an Opportunity Program, ensure student attends any mandatory summer programs
- Assist student with accessing mental health supports and/or peer group supports to emotionally prepare for college
- Visit college to get familiar with campus
- Apply to ASAP program if in CUNY (and if not already enrolled in Opportunity Program)
- Create study plan
- Connect young person to tutoring (most colleges have a tutoring center and some agencies have college tutors)
- If a student wants to withdraw from classes or drop out completely: discuss pros/cons, financial implications, and meet with an advisor. See [Appendix G17. How to Properly Withdraw from College Classes](#)
- Check in with college counselor (or ACS Coach/Tutor) as needed
- Connect youth with campus Disability Services office
- Enroll in work-study
- Celebrate finishing with 2.0 or higher GPA

Any student who had an IEP or 504 Plan in high school should be referred to the campus Disability Office.

Students can receive additional time to take tests or other needed supports, which can make a big difference in academic performance. As students can feel self-conscious entering the office and discussing their disabilities, the Coach or College Specialist should offer to accompany the student.

At CUNY, in partnership with ACCES-VR, there is a program called **CUNY LEADS Plus** designed to serve students who need extra support, including with paid internships. LEADS Plus is located on five campuses: Bronx Community College, College of Staten Island, Guttman Community College, Kingsborough Community College, and Queensborough Community College. See [Appendix G9 CUNY Support and Opportunity Programs](#) for more information.

AFTER EACH SEMESTER

if the student wants to continue in college the Goal becomes "[Re-enroll in another semester of college](#)".

Required Steps include:

- Ensure that the student re-applies for College Choice funding and submits all required documentation.
- Ensure student's grades are submitted to all scholarship providers and/or ETV upon completion of last semester (so that they continue to receive funding)
- Check student account to ensure there is no outstanding balance and no holds on the student account
- Apply to classes
- Submit class schedule to scholarship provider and/or ETV

ONCE RE-ENROLLED

The academic goal becomes: "[Prepare for and Complete College Semester with 2.0+](#)" until the student graduates.

See all associated steps in [Appendix E Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#)

EACH SEMESTER

Coaches should select the Goal "[Reapply to all sources of financial aid](#)" and check with the College Specialist to ensure that all financial aid (FAFSA & NYS TAP), ETV, and scholarships are reapplied to.

See [Appendix G16 College Persistence Checklist](#)

I. RECAP: ROLE OF THE COLLEGE SPECIALIST VS. COACH

To summarize, the Coach and College Specialist both play an important role in helping young people plan/prepare for, apply/pay for, and persist in college.





THE ROLE OF THE COACH IS TO:

- Provide exposure to college and post-secondary pathways, starting in 9th grade, and throughout high school;
- Meet with the student's guidance counselor to discuss post-secondary pathways, and ensure that students are enrolled in the correct coursework to graduate high school on time;
- Refer young people to the College Specialist in the 9th grade (if the student is engaged in school); for young people who come into foster care when they are older, they should be referred to the Specialist if the Coach thinks that college could be a potential pathway and/or once they express an interest in college;
- Refer all young people who are not on a college-bound track to the Career Development Specialist to explore vocational and other post-secondary pathways/ programs and develop a career plan;
- Communicate with the student's parent(s) about their post-secondary plans;
- Visit potential colleges with the young person, and/or sign them up for college tours;
- Ensure the student takes the PSAT and SAT, if they are interested in applying to a 4-year college, and receives tutoring
- Ensure that the student work with the College Specialist to apply to colleges and all forms of financial aid, opportunity programs, and scholarships that are available;
- Assist with the college selection process, if needed;
- Ensure students are prepared for the first semester, including
 - Support the student and College Specialist with submitting documents for College Choice
 - Having all books and supplies (including a laptop through New Yorkers for Children's Back to School Package program and, if dorming, dorm supplies);
 - Developing a plan and structure for organizing their documents and college coursework;
 - Checking their email regularly for information from the school;
 - Registering for classes;
 - Attending orientation or any mandated summer programming
- Provide persistence coaching to help ensure students remain enrolled in good standing, are connected to the supports they need, and reapply to college and financial aid/funding each year. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21H](#).
- Help dorming-away students waive their campus health insurance by transitioning their Medicaid to a provider recognized by the campus.



THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGE SPECIALIST IS TO:

- Meet with young people interested in college to have an exploratory and informational session, after they are referred by their Coach, and discuss what that roadmap/timeline would look like for them at their particular high school;
- Monitor PSAT/SAT scores of those students who do take them, and meet with them to discuss/refine college options;
- Organize college tours;
- Help young people apply to colleges in line with their goals, and assist with essays/personal statements, where needed;
- Ensure that each student applies to any Opportunity Programs available to them;
- Review any college applications or financial aid forms filled out by the student's school/guidance counselor
- Sit down with students and help them apply to FAFSA, TAP, ETV, and all applicable scholarships. Review scholarship essays and help with obtaining letters of reference as needed;
- Ensure students are signed up for any entrance interviews/exams;
- Work with students to apply to and submit the paperwork needed for College Choice;
- Reach out to students each semester to ensure they have a course schedule that will move them toward on-time graduation and assist with enrollment, if needed;
- Help young people re-apply to all forms of financial aid and scholarships each year;
- Assist students with transferring colleges, if needed. See [Appendix G18 Transferring Colleges Guide](#).

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