

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL

SECTION 22

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SECTION 22. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A. OVERVIEW

One of the goals of the Fair Futures program is to help young people do **early career exploration and gain progressive career development experiences in line with their interests, strengths, and academic plans/goals** so that they can eventually navigate onto a living wage career path.

Career development experiences also help young people:

- Build their resumes;
- Envision a potential pathway for themselves;
- Improve self-esteem;
- Gain soft skills that help them succeed in other areas of their life;
- Figure out what they like, what they don't, what they are good at;
- Develop a broad network of positive adult and peer supports.
- Reconnect/re-engage in an academic setting.

It is critical for young people to begin the process of **career exploration** early on (ideally in the 9th grade), as most young people are unaware of the career opportunities open to them. Career exploration is important to do as an ongoing activity (at least once/year), as young people's skills, interests, and credentials evolve.

It is important to keep in mind that some foster youth can face a number of social-emotional challenges that can impede their ability to manage the demands/expectations of the workplace. For some young people, achieving "job readiness" will take time, experimentation, and multiple attempts. **If a young person experiences a setback, it can and should be used as a learning opportunity.** Losing a job or not completing a program is a natural part of the process, and best to learn these lessons while they are young and have the support of Fair Futures! While we never want to set a young person up for failure, an unsuccessful attempt in many ways can be a good learning experience, as long as **the Coach is there to help support them, reflect on the experience, and connect them to the next opportunity.**

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT GOAL-SETTING

At a minimum, every actively coached young person should complete the "[Conduct Career Exploration](#)" and "[Conduct Career Preparation and Planning](#)" Goals each year, along with at least one [Career Development Experience](#).

Upon program enrollment, the Coach should select the "[Conduct Career Exploration](#)" and "[Conduct Career Preparation & Planning](#)" Goals. Ideally within the first 90 days after enrollment, the Coach should work with the young person to complete these goals. See [Appendix E_Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#) for all Goals & Steps.

CONDUCT CAREER EXPLORATION GOAL

This Goal includes doing at least one career exploration activity, either with the Coach or the Career Development Specialist. This activity can help identify potential career pathways for young people and ensure that their academic goals are aligned with these pathways.

Potential Steps/activities include:

- Complete Career Assessment with Coach or Career Specialist
Vetted career assessment tools include: Hats and Ladders and Career Cruiser
(See [Appendix H1_Career Exploration Tools – Hats and Ladders & Career Cruising](#))
- Complete Career Interest Assessment (YA WORC, etc.)
The young person should work with the Career Development Specialist to complete a career assessment. The results of the assessment will help the Coach and Career Development Specialist set goals that are in line with the young person's longer-term pathway, recognizing that this may shift over time.
- Discuss career pathways with Career Development Specialist
- Participate in an informational interview in a career of interest
- Attend networking event
- Participate in a job shadowing experience in a career of interest
- Prepare for and attend a Career Fair/event

CONDUCT CAREER PREPARATION AND PLANNING GOAL

Required Steps include:

- Create or refine/update resume with the Coach or Career Development Specialist to accurately and professionally reflect the young person's experiences to date.
Resumes should include a summary section upfront, an extracurricular/leadership/community service activity section, and any scholarships or awards. Sample resume formats can be found in [Appendix H2_Building a Resume Guidelines](#).
- Discuss career development goals for the year, and potential activities/opportunities in line with these goals.
The young person and Coach should select at least 1 Career Development Experience/Activity for that year, based on that young person's academic situation, interests, strengths, skills, and goals. This conversation does not need to happen while developing the resume, but it is a natural juncture to discuss career goals, if the young person is ready.

All of the above steps and activities can also aid in the trust-building process. The young person will see that the Coach is taking an interest in his/her future and well-being (during this period, the Coach is also visiting the young person's school, which serves the same purpose).



Upon completing these activities, the above Steps can be checked off in the Online Platform.

1+ CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE EACH YEAR.

All young people 9th grade – age 26 should have at least one career development experiences/Goals in line with their interests and goals/plans, if possible. Young people should complete as many career development goals as their school/college schedules, overall well-being, and life situations allow.

The five major categories of career development experiences are outlined in detail in below, and can be reviewed on the [Career Development Roadmap](#) in [Appendix E_Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#).

C. CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES BASED ON A YOUNG PERSON'S SITUATION

Coaches and Career Development Specialists should help young people select at least one experience each year, based on their academic situation/goals, interests, strengths, and needs.

There are five major categories of career development experiences. These can be viewed on the [Career Development Roadmap](#) in [Appendix E_Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#).

CATEGORY 1. AGENCY-BASED JOB READINESS & SUPPORTED WORK EXPERIENCES

Some agencies have on-site programs that provide job readiness trainings and/or that support young people in succeeding in agency-based internships. These goal categories include:

[Participate in agency-based job readiness program \(e.g.; YA WORC\)](#) – this could be a career development goal/experience for the year for young people in need of career preparation support (particularly those with limited/no work experience) and/or for young people who have a full academic schedule.

[Participate in agency-based internship \(e.g., Mentored Internship Program\)](#) – this could be a career development goal/experience for the year for young people who have limited/no work experience (*with the exception of previous participation in the Summer Youth Employment Program*), and/or young people who are:

- Disconnected from school/work
- Not enrolled in an academic setting full-time and have the need for a paid position
- Enrolled full-time in college and have the capacity to take on part-time work

CATEGORY 2. EXTERNAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES & PATHWAYS

These goals include:

["Participate in summer internship program \(e.g.; SYEP\)"](#) is a career development goal for any young person – including those who are disconnected, in high school, or in college – and who would like to earn money and/or have a career development experience over the summer.

- Ideally, the internship should be in a field that the young person is interested in.
- In NYC, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) employs thousands of youth ages 14-24, and there are priority slots for foster youth.
- There is also an SYEP program called "Ladders for Leaders" that offers more leadership opportunities.

See [Appendix H1_Career Exploration Tools – Hats and Ladders & Career Cruiser](#) for more information.

["Participate in an extracurricular, youth development/leadership program, or community service experience"](#) is a career development goal for any young person, regardless of academic status. Research shows that these types of experiences can help young people not only build their resumes and the critical soft skills needed for the world of work, but also the self-esteem, sense of purpose/belonging, and broader network of positive peer and adult supports they need to succeed in work and life.

- For young people who are disconnected, this type of program could be the motivating factor for re-engaging in school.
- For youth in high school or college, it is a great way to build their resumes with leadership experiences (and obtain college scholarships). It can also be the "foot in the door" for a paid position down the road.
- Joining the Fair Futures Youth Board counts as this type of career development experience!

NYC has hundreds of free youth development, extracurricular, and community service programs.

["Enroll in external workforce program \(e.g., The Door, Co-Op Tech\)"](#) is a career development goal for any young person who:

- **Is disconnected without a high school degree/equivalency and wants to enroll in an HSE program** that also offers other pathways such as internships, job readiness and employer-recognized training, part-time or full-time jobs, and credentials and certifications. Good examples of these programs include the DYCD's Train & Earn, Learn & Earn, and Advance & Earn programs.
- **Is enrolled in a YABC or evening school program and wants to earn another source of income during the day**, but is in need of job readiness training and/or is having difficulty finding a job and needs a program to assist them;
- **Has a high school degree/HSE and is not on a college bound pathway**, but not yet prepared for an accredited vocational program or apprenticeship.

Co-Op Tech (The School of Cooperative Education) is an option for any young person who is enrolled in high school/HSE program, has a high school degree/HSE and wants to gain hands-on training in the trades and earn certificate(s), or has a disability and is enrolled in a District 75 school. See [Appendix H5_CoOp Tech Application](#).

NYC has many free youth workforce programs. Use the [Career Development Directory](#) to search for programs based on age, geography, requirements, etc.

“[Obtain \(and Complete\) an external internship](#)” could be a career development goal for a young person in high school, college, or a vocational program who is able to balance their academic schedule with an internship. An internship is also a useful stepping-stone for a young person who is attempting to obtain a part- or full-time job. The internship should ideally be in an area or organization of interest to the young person.

“[Apply to ACCES-VR](#)” is a career development goal for any young person who has a disability and could benefit from vocational rehabilitation services and/or jobs integrated within their communities. Students with IEPs who are on a college track can also receive supports from ACCES-VR. See [Appendix H4_ACCES-VR Information](#).

CATEGORY 3. ACCREDITED VOCATIONAL, SECTOR-BASED TRAINING, OR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

This goal, “[Participate in an accredited vocational, sector-based training, or apprenticeship program](#)” is for young people who have a high school degree/HSE and have determined with their Coach and Specialist, through assessment tools, career exploration, etc., that pursuing a trades or skills-based career is the best fit for them.



The **Career Development Specialist** should help the young person assess which program(s) they are eligible for, as many have grade-level or other skill-based requirements.

In cases where the young person is not yet eligible to enroll, the Coach and Career Development Specialist should work with the young person to gain the skills/experiences required. This can be done by enrolling in youth workforce/bridge programs. (Review [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21K](#))

Refer to the [Career Development Directory](#) to search for programs in line with the young person’s interests and qualifications.

CATEGORY 4. CIVIL SERVICE

This includes the goal, “[Pass Civil Service Exam](#)”.

It should be noted that many entry-level civil service positions require either college or a few years of experience in lieu of college. If a young person is interested in a particular position, the Coach and/or Specialist should help them read the qualification requirements very carefully and ensure they have those credentials before taking the exam.

It is also important to keep in mind that certain exams are only offered every few years, can be extremely competitive (e.g., hundreds or thousands of applications for a handful of positions), and take a year or more to be graded/certify the individual. If a young person wants to take an exam, the young person should have other career development experiences throughout this period of time.

This includes the goals of “[Obtaining Part-time/Seasonal Job](#)” “[Obtaining Full-time Job](#)”, and “[Obtaining Living Wage Job](#)”. This category can apply to any young person at any juncture. However, it is the Coach’s role to help them determine if a job is the most appropriate goal.

If a young person does not yet have a HS degree/HSE, a full-time job should only be the goal if absolutely necessary (due to their financial situation).

A better option would be for the young person to enroll in a transfer high school, YABC program, or HSE program with a paid internship or to obtain a part-time job while working toward their degree. If the young person is absolutely opposed to school, then sometimes working a full-time, low-wage job can be a good way for them to realize that it may not be what they want for the rest of their lives.

If a young person has a HS degree/HSE and is not yet interested in college or a vocational program, working full-time can be a good goal to earn an income while they explore their post-secondary goals and options. If the young person needs assistance finding that full-time job, the Coach or Career Development Specialist can connect them to one of the youth workforce programs above (thus, the goal would be “Enroll in a job readiness/youth workforce development program” not “Obtain full-time job”).

Another option is to encourage the young person to get a part-time job while doing a youth leadership activity/community service or other unpaid experience part-time that is more in line with their career goals/interests. The Coach should continue to support the young person to develop a post-secondary goal that is appropriate for them.

If a young person is enrolled in high school or college and can balance the academic needs with a part-time job, the Coach can help them obtain one in a similar fashion to the above. A paid internship that is in line with their career interests is also a great resume-building experience that could potentially lead to a full-time job after college. Work-study is also a great way to earn money while staying focused on coursework.

If a young person has completed their post-secondary goals, then obtaining a living-wage job should be the goal.

D. USING THE ONLINE PLATFORM

The following actions are taken in the Online Platform:

- Coach and young person select career development goals in the Online Platform, based on young person’s interest, experience, strengths, and academic situation/goals.
- Steps are checked off as they are completed. Coaches can choose to enter a brief note, if needed or relevant, in the “Notes” section. Steps can always be created, too!
- The above bullet is repeated until the Goal is completed.
- At which point, the Goal status should be marked as “Completed” or “Not Completed”
- A new Goal(s) and Step(s) are selected and the process above is repeated.



Should a young person’s goal change at any point, then the goal is changed in the Online Platform.

The Coach will click “Goal Changed” and will be prompted by the Online Platform to select a reason why the Goal Changed.

The Coach should select one of the following reasons:

- “Could not complete due to attendance or performance”
- “Did not complete due to fit or continued interest”
- “Did not complete due to other opportunity/positive change in plans”
- “Did not complete due to other personal/health/family issues”
- “Other”

This will allow the Online Platform to track whether the goals were too ambitious, another opportunity came along, or a young person’s life situation changed.

THREE EXAMPLE "GOAL CHANGED" SCENARIOS:

SCENARIO 1:

If a young person's goal changes from "Complete external workforce program" to another goal, it could be because that young person decided to enroll in college mid-way through the program because they were inspired by one of their peers.

The Coach then would check off "**Did not complete due to other opportunity**".

Next, the Coach would either select the academic goal "**Conduct college exploration/ exposure**" or "**Apply to college(s)**" and would also select another career development goal.

SCENARIO 2:

If a young person's goal changes from "Complete external workforce program" to another goal, it could be because the young person was not regularly attending the program and was kicked out.

In that case, the Coach should mark off "**Could not complete due to attendance or performance**" and help the young person select another goal.

SCENARIO 3:

If a young person's goal changes from "Complete external workforce program" to another goal, it could be because the young person was hospitalized.

In this case, the Coach should mark off "**Did not complete due to other personal/ health/ family issues**" and help the young person select another goal (once they are no longer hospitalized and ready to resume working with their Coach).

E. ROLE OF THE COACH IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Coach and Career Development Specialist both play a role in helping the young person make goals and progress towards career development goals.

THE COACH'S ROLE, IN TERMS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES:

- Assist all young people in obtaining working papers (if needed) and developing/ refining their resume within 90 days of program enrollment (the Career Development Specialist could also do this);
- Assist with career exploration and refers to the Career Development Specialist when more input/knowledge is required;
- Discuss the young person's career development interests, strengths, and experiences, and help them select a career development experience for the year (this could also be done in conjunction with the Career Development Specialist);
- Refer young people to on-site opportunities to gain experiences in a supportive environment, including the job readiness program (e.g., Career Club, also known as YA WORC) and/or internship program (e.g., Mentored Internship Program);
- Assist high school students with exploring career development activities, based on their interests, goals, job readiness, etc.;
- Refer young people to the Career Development Specialist to help them apply to external programs (or for assistance with identifying the best-fit program);
- Visit any external programs with young people to assist with the enrollment and/or exploration process (the Career Development Specialist could also do this);
- Refer all young people enrolled in college to the Career Development Specialist to help them develop a career plan, and follows up accordingly;
- Provide weekly persistence coaching to young people enrolled in any on-site or external program, including checking in with them before and after their first day, and building a relationship with the primary person at the program to discuss attendance/performance.

F. ROLE OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST



- Oversee any on-site job readiness program(s) (e.g., YA WORC), including enrollment and scheduling of program cycles
- Oversee any on-site internship programs (e.g., Mentored Internship Program)
- Meet with young people to help them apply to external programs (after speaking with their Coach)
- Meet with young people who are not on a college-bound track (or who have left college) to explore other pathways/programs and create a career plan that is in line with their track
- Meet with young people who are enrolled in college to create a career plan
- Build relationships with external programs and employers to serve as pipeline
- Check in with employers after the 3-month, 6-year, and 1-year mark to verify persistence

G. ON-SITE CAREER READINESS & INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

A number of agencies offer on-site career readiness programs (YA WORC) and on-site internship programs (e.g. the Mentored Internship Program). The Career Development Specialist(s) could oversee both on-site programs.

YA WORC (YOUNG ADULT WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR REWARDING CAREERS)

Developed by the Columbia Workforce Center, YA WORC is a developmentally appropriate, evidence-informed, career readiness preparation program for young people ages 13 – 24 who face challenging life circumstances.

Schedule/structure: 16-session curriculum.

Training: The Career Development Specialist is trained by the Columbia Workforce Center and leads the sessions.

Target Population: Completing YA WORC could be a career development goal for young people who have a full academic schedule and/or for young people in need of career preparation support (including those in high school and those with limited/no work experience).

Persistence: Coaches follow up with young people to reflect on their experiences in the program and provide ongoing support around persistence.

MENTORED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In this program, developed by the Pinkerton Foundation, young people are assigned a Mentor (an agency employee) who both supervises the young person's work and helps them to learn workplace norms.

Schedule/structure: It is a 12 week, 20 hours a week, paid internship program (\$15/hour). There is also a monthly learning community with other agencies that have a YA WORC program, which is facilitated by the Workforce Professional Training Institute and Youth Development Institute.

Target Population: Completing the Mentored Internship Program could be a career development goal for young people who have limited/no work experience (with the exception of previous participation in the Summer Youth Employment Program), and/or who are: disconnected from school/work; not enrolled in an academic setting full-time and have the need for a paid position; enrolled full-time in college and have the capacity to take on 20 hours per week of work.

Enrollment: After a young person is referred, the Career Development Specialist(s) sets up a 1:1 meeting with the young person to fill out paperwork, discuss the type of internship the young person is interested in, and the need for professional clothing.

Forms to be filled out include: a W4 form, I9 form, an HRA form, and an intake assessment.

Orientation: The orientation provides an overview of the program and what professionalism at the workplace entails. It also serves as a meet and greet where Mentors meet with Interns.

Persistence: The Career Development Specialist should check in on the participants and Mentors at each site on a biweekly basis, even if there are no concerns.

If there are any performance concerns, the Mentor will set up a meeting with the Career Development Specialist and the young person to discuss. Coaches also follow up with young people to reflect on their experiences in the program and provide ongoing support around persistence.