

# WELCOME TO THE NEXT STEPS PROJECT

## Coach Handbook

“Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”

—PAOLO FREIRE

“Pick battles big enough to matter, small enough to win.”

—JONATHAN KOZOL

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# About Friends of the Children

*Friends of the Children* was founded in 1993 to support young, vulnerable Portland youth in leveraging their own strength, resilience, and community assets to break the cycle of generational poverty for themselves.

We do so by providing Portland's most vulnerable youth with a caring and supportive adult (trained, professional mentors called *Friends* or simply "mentors") for the 12½ years from kindergarten through high school graduation.

**MISSION:** "To provide our most vulnerable children a nurturing and sustained relationship with a professional mentor who teaches positive values and has attainable expectations for each child to become a healthy, productive member of the community."

## How It Works

*Friends of the Children—Portland* identifies and develops partnerships with the highest-need, low-income schools in the Portland metropolitan area. We send mentors to observe kindergarten students in these schools for an extended period to identify those youth who are struggling with multiple adversities but lacking support factors (such as stable housing or bureaucratically savvy advocates).

If those youth and their families decide to get involved with FOTC, the organization makes a 12½ year commitment to them: as long as that youth remains within a 30-mile radius of our office in NE Portland, they will be paired with a professional mentor through their graduation from high school, to support and care for them as they grow and develop.

*Adapted from <http://friendspdx.org/>.*

# About Next Steps

Please take a moment to briefly review the brief history and mission of this project, in order to achieve further clarity about your role as a volunteer Coach.

## What It Is

*Next Steps* was developed as part of Friends of the Children’s Successful Futures Initiative to “improve how FOTC helps all youth graduate from high school with the skills to continue their education or gain meaningful employment.”

It’s not easy to leap from high school into adult life, and the difficulties and stressors of that transition multiply for youth dealing with systemic racism, classism, poverty, and other forms of oppression and disadvantage.

*Next Steps* intends to be a bridge connecting youth to their successful futures, by supporting and guiding them through the necessary steps to determine and achieve their career path. It provides extra support, expertise, and practice for youth who are overcoming institutional barriers to access postsecondary education/training and, ultimately, gainful employment.

*Next Steps* should give youth an opportunity to practice self-advocacy, develop a positive relationship with a near-peer role model, and develop relevant career skills in a safe context that is free from microaggressions and institutional discrimination.

### **A Side Note**

By participating in *Next Steps*, youth are also qualifying to earn scholarship contributions up to \$4,000 over the course of a year through a program called IDA, or Individual Development Accounts.

You as the coach will not be responsible for helping youth manage and access these scholarship funds, so if you receive any questions about IDA, feel free to simply pass them along to the Next Steps Coordinator.

For more information on the Oregon IDA Initiative, check it out online: <http://www.oregonidainitiative.org/>

## Who's In Charge

Contact the Next Steps Coordinator anytime at (971) 340-1426.

## Why We Need You

So, why would youth who already have full-time mentors need a Next Steps Coach as well?

Think of your role sort of like a math tutor: you can provide extra support in a very specific domain, developing skills and completing assignments that will support their growth in that area.

Youth don't typically get to spend enough time with their mentors to develop a detailed game plan for their transition out of high school, and certainly not to take all the action steps that they need to make that plan a reality—things like exploring different educational plans in detail, submitting the FAFSA, applying for fee waivers to their preferred institutions, and so on. Not only can you support and guide a youth through this process, you also are a model to them for what it means to be a successful student.

If you still want to read more about your role, read below for the full volunteer Next Steps Coach position description.

# Volunteer Next Steps Coach

## Essential Responsibilities and Activities:

- Meet with assigned youth an hour weekly, facilitating activities and conversation that will help youth discover their skills/strengths, learning preferences, areas of interest, and other relevant life factors.
- Build a productive, attentive, and compassionate relationship with youth.
- Guide youth through investigating potential/appropriate postsecondary programs (relevant colleges, apprenticeships, internships, vocational schools, etc.) for pursuing that career.
- Help mentee determine and articulate a “game plan” for their postsecondary life, and guide them through the initial action steps to set this plan in motion (e.g. help them submit a FAFSA, write a résumé, etc.).

## Required Qualifications

- Must commit to meeting with youth for up to 6 hours every month throughout Winter and Spring term.
- Must attend 2-hour preliminary training.
- Must consent to a criminal background check and agree to abide by conduct/confidentiality guidelines.
- Must be willing and able to work with students from diverse backgrounds.

## Volunteer Benefits:

- Exclusive access to optional personal/professional development seminars throughout year.
- Experience, references, and contacts in the non-profit / education field.
- Possibility of receiving Federal Work-Study (FWS) funds or elective credit through Cooperative Education Internship program.
- Fulfill Community-Based Learning course component or Community Service requirement (if applicable).
- Opportunity to be a positive force and resource in a young person’s life!

## Time Commitment

Building a healthy and safe relationship with the youth is essential to providing useful guidance; therefore, coaches should be prepared to spend an hour each week with their youth match (Wednesdays from 4:30-5:30pm). You may even need to plan on having time to prepare activities or materials beforehand.

There will not be Next Steps Meetings when Portland Community College, Portland State University, and Portland Public Schools are closed for holiday or in finals week. Fortunately, the schedules of all three match up very closely.

**For a specific & updated schedule of meetings, visit <http://nextstepsproject.weebly.com/calendar>.**

## Location

FOTC is located in the Boise-Eliot neighborhood of Northeast Portland on:

**44 NE Morris Street  
Portland, OR 97212**

There is a parking lot behind our building at 65 NE Stanton St.

All meetings will take place at this office, unless your youth has a special situation (in which case they will be returning a Guardian Release Form and meeting with you off-site in a public place, like a school or library).

**Coaches *MAY NOT* at any time be alone with youth, trade home addresses with youth, or transport youth in their personal vehicles.**

## Communication, Privacy, & Confidentiality

**Any/all personal information that you learn about a youth, including name and any individual circumstances, are to be kept confidential.**

We also ask that volunteers do not connect with youth via social media or outside of the auspices of Next Steps. If a youth requests to be your friend on social media or spend time together outside of Next Steps, deny their request and follow up with a conversation about why; it's perfectly okay to "blame it on the rules" and explain that although you'd like to connect with them elsewhere, it simply isn't legal until they graduate from the program. We **must** obey privacy laws, but of course we don't want to hurt anyone's feelings!

## Paperwork

Each coach needs to complete and return the following forms:

- Confidentiality Agreement (read & sign)
- Volunteer Manual (read & keep for future reference)
- Volunteer Acknowledgement page (read & sign)
- Fingerprinting (conducted by coordinator)

## Reporting Rules to Take Note Of

If you have a grievance to report, inform the coordinator.

If an emergency situation develops while you are volunteering, deal with the situation as safety dictates (e.g. dial 911 immediately) but inform the coordinator as soon as possible

If you learn of a situation in which a child is in danger, report the situation to the coordinator.

*[If the youth asks you not to tell, explain to them that although they have your full confidence, you cannot sit back and let them get hurt. Please don't feel like a "snitch": the safety and well-being of every youth comes first, and all reported information will be treated with utter confidentiality and discretion. It will not be used to hurt the youth. Reporting is required only to keep youth safe, not to break their trust. FOTC employees are mandatory reporters.]*

Feel free to discuss any concerns about reporting with the coordinator ☺

## Supervision and Support

This handbook is not your only resource! Reach out to the Next Steps Coordinator at any time to brainstorm, to talk through concerns or frustrations, or for any other reason.

There will also be opportunities to debrief one-on-one with the coordinator, and to discuss progress with the other coaches as a group.

If you have a concern that you don't feel comfortable bringing to the Next Steps Coordinator, feel free to reach out anytime to their supervisor:

**Louis Cohen**  
Education Program Manager  
*Friends of the Children—Portland*  
lcohen@friendsofthechildren.org  
Direct: 971.340.1438

If appropriate, you may also simply choose to communicate with the mentor, a.k.a. *Friend*, of the youth with whom you work.



# A Note Before Beginning: Silence is Golden

Do you ever find that the youth you work with will answer an open-ended question with “I don’t know,” a one-word response, or not answer at all?

This can feel frustrating and awkward, but remember that it’s okay to sit silently and wait for elaboration — even though it feels uncomfortable. Think of it as creating space for the youth to speak.

It’s a difficult situation when you find yourself speaking more than the youth does, especially when you are trying to figure out *their* personal interests, values, and tendencies. It is also easy to slip into asking the youth yes-or-no questions, so that you can get more participation out of them, but try resisting this impulse.

**If you give yourself permission to remain silent, chances are good that the youth will step up to fill it... allowing both of you to discuss and interpret valuable information!**

Remember that the goal is to create a space where youth are able—and expected—to advocate for themselves. The best teachers are those who ask a good question... and then step back, allowing their students to think it through, thereby actively engaging in the learning process.

# Resources: Getting to Know Myself

“If you want to build a ship, do not begin by drumming up men to gather wood or distributing tasks of labor. Rather, awaken their longing for the vast immensity of the sea.

«Quand tu veux construire un bateau, ne commence pas par rassembler du bois, couper des planches et distribuer du travail, mais reveille au sein des hommes le desir de la mer grande et large.»

—ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

## Introduction

Youth who aren't sure of their career plans or interests—and even those who are—can usually benefit from some introspection and guided reflection on what their personal worldview, style, and natural talents are.

Some different assessments are compiled below to give feedback on preferred learning style and general personality traits.

These can support a couple things: first, they can help strategize current academic behaviors. Let's say, for example, that a student learns that they have a strong preference for learning through musical & auditory input, but are not as inclined toward visual learning. That student would probably have a much easier time learning vocabulary for their Spanish class if they ditched the flash cards, and chose instead to focus on rhythm and pronunciation.

Second, these tools can tell youth about their personal style for navigating challenges and work. This can help guide youth toward certain career paths, or steer them away from others; if someone takes the *True Colors* test, for example, and finds that they are 95% “orange” (spontaneous and loving to buck authority) but only 5% gold (loves discipline and respectful to authority figures), they probably want to seriously consider how joining the army is going to mesh with their personality style.

If a youth uses one of these tools and feels that the result doesn't describe them well, that's fine! Discuss why and how that is, and what implications it might have for planning life beyond high school. The goal is to promote self-knowledge and self-understanding for youth, not to tell them who they are.

Hard copies and links are provided below, but you can also access these online by visiting the Google Drive folder at: <http://tinyurl.com/getting-started-resources>.

### **A Note on Using These Tools**

Students in public schools are pushed to sink hours upon hours of time and mental energy into high-stakes standardized “aptitude” testing that are usually damaging to self-esteem, academically or otherwise, and often subtly motivated by white supremacist ideas.

*Communicate to youth that these assessments are NOT exams. There are no right or wrong answers to the various survey questions. There is no better or worse result. The outcome is not comprehensive or final; youth may disagree with the assessment's interpretation of them, and that's fine.*

The fact that each youth is intelligent and capable is a foregone conclusion; it is not under question or review by these tools. They are simply intended to provoke thought and self-reflection about what sorts of activities and approaches will be enjoyable and fulfilling to youth in their studies, careers, and lives beyond high school.

## Online-Only Personality Profiling Tools

### What's Your Learning Style?

This tool will help you figure out how your brain prefers to learn; it will tell you with percentages how much you favor learning through sound, vision, and movement. It also helps you interpret the results and consider study strategies. Take it online at <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml>.

### Myers-Briggs Personality Type

This is an online assessment that is sort of long, but entertaining and well-formatted. It will tell you which of the 16 Myers-Briggs Personality Types fits you best, and gives an extensive profile of what that might say about your interests and interactions. Available online at <http://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>.

### Purpose Pattern


This assessment talks about why we do the work we do—it classifies “how people find purpose and fulfillment in their work based upon who they serve, how they serve them, and why they serve them.”

It is a little different from the other resources provided here, because this assessment is more about how we think about and make meaning from the world. It is also more abstract... here is an example of results:

“ My **imperative** is to shape societies and communities to help them overcome societal barriers engaging them and bringing them together. ”

Customize your statement

### Purpose Pattern



WHO	WHY	HOW
<i>you impact</i>	<i>you do what you do</i>	<i>you achieve impact</i>
Society	Harmony	Community

*As you can see, the descriptions are very abstract and theoretical. Any youth using this tool should take it after, or in conjunction with, some of the other resources in this folder. If you take this assessment first or on its own, the applications to potential career choices will probably feel very fuzzy and unclear.*

Read more about “Purpose Patterns” at <https://www.imperative.com/articles#!articles/166-769-purpose-pattern>.

## The Keirsey Temperament Sorter

This tool can tell you about your personality type: your habits and tendencies in communication & behavior, how you tend to relate to other people, and what kinds of activities you might enjoy trying.

- **Online** | Visit <http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx>. Use this one in conjunction with the paper version or with your Myers-Briggs type to get a more specific description (no need to pay \$\$\$ for the longer profile when you can just find out your 4-letter acronym for free and read more about it here!).
- **Offline** | Below.

Directions: This is admittedly not the most exciting or colorful activity: the questionnaire, followed by a scoring sheet, will reveal your [Myers-Briggs personality type](#). MB type is NOT, of course, a comprehensive description of a person, but it can be useful to get people thinking about their personal/cognitive proclivities and how that pertains to career compatibility (e.g. “It’s very true that I’m introverted and a rational thinker; I think I’d prefer an analytical job, maybe in statistics, where I can work alone. Maybe I should get out of customer service.”

After completing the survey (70 this-or-that questions) and tallying up their answers for results on the score sheet, they’ll end up with one of 16 acronyms that represents their “type”. There’s quite a bit of information out there on decoding/interpreting these; although there is a brief description of each acronym at the end, it is also advisable to use search engines to gather more information.

You can also take a similar survey online, which will score and interpret the results for you automatically. Visit <http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx>.

If the student feels that this personality profile describes them well, it can be a “key” or starting-point for them to start thinking about their intrinsic skills, values, and interests. Would they prefer a job that is analytic? Social? Artistic? What kind of work environment might make them feel most comfortable and fulfilled? Help them work through questions like these that could spark insights about the right career path(s).

1. At a party do you
  - a. interact with many, including strangers
  - b. interact with a few people you know well
2. Are you more
  - a. observant
  - b. introspective
3. Is it worse to
  - a. have your head in the clouds
  - b. be in a rut
4. With people you are usually more
  - a. firm
  - b. gentle
5. Are you more persuaded by
  - a. facts
  - b. feelings
6. Do you prefer to work
  - a. on a schedule with a deadlines
  - b. whenever you are inspired to work
7. Do you tend to choose
  - a. quickly and spontaneously
  - b. slowly and carefully
8. At parties do you
  - a. stay late, with increasing energy
  - b. leave early, with decreasing energy
9. Are you more attracted to
  - a. sensible/practical people
  - b. imaginative people
10. Are you more interested in
  - a. what is actual
  - b. what is possible
11. In making decisions, do you go by
  - a. information
  - b. desires
12. In sizing up others is your inclination to be somewhat
  - a. objective and impersonal
  - b. friendly and personal
13. Are you more
  - a. punctual
  - b. leisurely
14. Are you more satisfied having
  - a. a finished product
  - b. a work in progress
15. At a gathering, do you
  - a. interact with many, even strangers
  - b. interact with a few close friends
16. In doing ordinary things are you more likely to
  - a. do it the usual way
  - b. do it your own way
17. Writers should
  - a. "say what they mean and mean what they say"
  - b. express things with symbols, riddles, analogies, and poetry
18. Which appeals to you more
  - a. consistency of thought
  - b. harmonious human relationships
19. In disappointing someone, would you be more:
  - a. frank and straightforward
  - b. warm and considerate
20. Do you want things
  - a. settled and decided
  - b. unsettled and undecided
21. Would you say you are more
  - a. serious and determined
  - b. easy-going
22. When calling or approaching someone, do you
  - a. rarely think about what you will say
  - b. rehearse what you'll say
23. Facts
  - a. speak for themselves
  - b. illustrate principles
24. Visionaries and thinkers are
  - a. somewhat annoying
  - b. rather fascinating
25. In a heated discussion, do you
  - a. argue to the end
  - b. try to find common ground
26. Is it better to be
  - a. fair
  - b. merciless
27. Should people let things happen
  - a. by careful selection and choice
  - b. randomly and by chance

28. Do you feel more comfortable
- before a decision
  - after a decision
29. When you are around people, do you usually
- initiate the conversation
  - wait to be approached
30. Common sense is
- usually reliable
  - often mistaken
31. Children often do not
- make themselves useful enough
  - use their imaginations and fantasy enough
32. When in charge of others, are you more
- firm and unbending
  - forgiving and lenient
33. Are you more often
- cool-headed
  - warm-hearted
34. Which is more admirable:
- being organized and methodical
  - being able to adapt and adjust quickly
35. In most situations are you
- deliberate
  - spontaneous
36. Do you see yourself as
- outgoing
  - private
37. Are you more frequently
- a practical sort of person
  - a fanciful sort of person
38. Are you more likely to
- see how others are useful
  - see how others see
39. Which is a better compliment:
- "That person is very logical"
  - "That person is gentle and caring"
40. Which controls you more:
- Your head
  - Your heart
41. When finishing up something, do you prefer to
- Tie up all the loose ends
  - Move on to something else
42. Do you prefer to work
- To deadlines
  - Just whenever
43. Are you
- A talkative person
  - Someone who doesn't miss much
44. What is more valuable to you?
- Accurate facts and details
  - The big idea
45. Do you more often see and think about
- What is real right now
  - What is possible
46. Is it worse to be
- A softy
  - Hard-nosed
47. In tough times, you are sometimes
- Too unsympathetic
  - Too sympathetic
48. Do you tend to choose
- Rather slowly and carefully
  - Rather quickly and impulsively
49. Are you more comfortable
- After the decision is made
  - Before the decision is made
50. At school/work do you tend to
- Talk and socialize a lot
  - Keep more to yourself
51. Are you more likely to trust your
- Past experiences
  - Current feelings
52. Do you feel more
- Practical than creative
  - Creative than practical
53. Do you see yourself as a:
- Tough-minded person
  - Soft-hearted person
54. Do you tend to be more
- Fair-minded
  - Sympathetic
55. Do you usually
- Plan carefully
  - Go with the flow & improvise
56. Would you say you are more
- Serious and determined
  - Easy-going

57. Are you more of
- A good conversationalist
  - A good listener
58. Which do you value more in yourself?
- Your strong sense of reality
  - Your vivid imagination
59. Are you drawn more to
- fundamentals
  - overtones and nuance
60. What is a bigger problem?
- When people are too passionate
  - When people are too rational
61. Are you persuaded more by
- Convincing evidence
  - A touching appeal
62. Which do you like more:
- When your day is structured and scheduled
  - When your day is unstructured and unscheduled
63. Are you more
- Organized than playful
  - Playful than organized
64. Are you inclined to be
- Easy to approach
  - Reserved
65. In stories (films, books, TV, storytelling), do you prefer
- Action and adventure (think *Divergent*, *Fast and Furious*, or *The Maze Runner*)
  - Fantasy and heroism (think *Thor*, *Harry Potter*, or *The Hunger Games*)
66. Is it harder for you to
- Identify with and “get” other people
  - Put other people to use/to work
67. Which do you wish for yourself?
- Clarity of reason
  - Strength of compassion
68. Do you see yourself as basically:
- Thick-skinned
  - Thin-skinned
69. Do you prefer:
- Planned events
  - Unplanned events

70. You do tend to be more:
- Deliberate
  - Spontaneous

### Scoring Instructions

- These instructions are confusing to explain with words, but easier to figure out by looking at the sheet & example on the following page. Try skipping #s 2–6 and simply checking out the scoring sheet on the next page to see how it works, instead. If you’re still confused after that, come back to these step-by-step instructions for clarification.
- For each question number, put a check in column a if you answered a for that question, or put a check in column b if you answered b for that question.
- See the pair of boxes underneath every pair of columns? Add how many checks are in each column and write that number in the corresponding box at the bottom.
- Bring down the totals from the first column pair (1 □□ 2) into the bottom box, as indicated by the arrow.
- For the last three column pairs, bring down the first number for each box below the second, as indicated by the arrows, and add the pairs of numbers together. Enter that total in the boxes below the answer grid, so that each box has only one number.

Now you have 4 pairs of numbers. In each pair, circle the bigger number of the two. If the two numbers of any pair are equal, then circle neither, but put a big “X” below them and circle



### Scoring Form (Example)

a		b		a		b		a		b		a		b		a		b								
1	✓			2	✓			3	✓			4		✓		5		✓		6		✓		7		✓
8	✓			9	✓			10	✓			11	✓			12		✓		13	✓			14	✓	
15	✓			16	✓			17	✓			18	✓			19		✓		20	✓			21	✓	
22		✓		23	✓			24		✓		25		✓		26	✓			27		✓		28		✓
29	✓			30	✓			31	✓			32		✓		33		✓		34	✓			35	✓	
36	✓			37	✓			38	✓			39		✓		40		✓		41	✓			42	✓	
43		✓		44		✓		45		✓		46		✓		47	✓			48		✓		49		✓
50	✓			51	✓			52	✓			53	✓			54		✓		55	✓			56	✓	
57	✓			58	✓			59	✓			60		✓		61		✓		62	✓			63	✓	
64	✓			65	✓			66	✓			67	✓			68		✓		69	✓			70	✓	

1	2	3	4
8	2	9	1
8	2	8	2
9	1	9	1
4	6	4	6
2	8	2	8
7	3	7	3
7	3	7	3

1	2	3	4
8	2	17	3
8	2	17	3
6	14	6	14
6	14	6	14
14	6	14	6
14	6	14	6

E	I	S	N
ⓔ	ⓔ	ⓔ	ⓔ
ⓔ	ⓔ	ⓔ	ⓔ
ⓔ	ⓔ	ⓔ	ⓔ

### Scoring Form (For You)

a		b		a		b		a		b		a		b		a		b									
1				2				3				4				5				6				7			
8				9				10				11				12				13				14			
15				16				17				18				19				20				21			
22				23				24				25				26				27				28			
29				30				31				32				33				34				35			
36				37				38				39				40				41				42			
43				44				45				46				47				48				49			
50				51				52				53				54				55				56			
57				58				59				60				61				62				63			
64				65				66				67				68				69				70			

1	2	3	4

1	2	3	4

E	I	S	N

## Multiple Interests

This tool was originally developed to tell people about how they prefer to learn, but it is more helpful in telling people what they love to do. It will help you determine “what makes you tick” in the world, and what kinds of work will bring out your natural talents to keep you feeling successful and fulfilled.

- **Online** | This one is best to take on paper. If you can't do a paper copy, take it online at [http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources\\_ftp/client\\_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple\\_int/questions/questions.cfm](http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/questions/questions.cfm) or at <http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment>.
- **Offline** | This one is best to take on paper. Ask the Next Steps coordinator for a hard copy or download a copy from <http://tinyurl.com/multiple-interests-tool> and print it out single-sided. It is also at the end of this section.

## True Colors

This is a lot of fun; it has 4 different categories of work-styles. Find out which one you fit! Ask the Next Steps Coordinator for a hard copy or download and print from <http://tinyurl.com/true-colors-tool>.

# Resources: Thinking About My Future

If the youth you work with is totally unsure about what they want to do after high school, here are some tips and ideas for how to proceed.

## Postsecondary Options

First thing's first: introduce the youth to all the different options that they could pursue after high school, and what each of these means.

- Apprenticeships
- Occupational/career school
- Vocational-technical school
- Community college
- 4-year Oregon public college or university
- 4-year Oregon private college or university
- 4-year out-of-state public college or university
- 4-year out-of-state private college or university

Although many long-term plans can be pursued at several of these different kinds of institutions, the expense or time commitment will vary widely—and often in surprising ways. (For example, there's no reason to discount private 4-year colleges based on the sticker price: if the youth gets a full ride, it could potentially be *cheaper* than PCC.)

The wealth of options may seem overwhelming, but remind the youth that this is why you're there: to help them navigate all the possibilities, and find the perfect one for them.

## Activity Tips & Ideas

### 1) Question

Taking time to ask youth open-ended questions about their priorities, values, dreams, and proclivities is a great way for both of you to gain insight and reflect about what career paths might be fulfilling.

Although it's important to tread lightly here—of course you never want a youth to feel interrogated or uncomfortable—it can be a great way to start reflecting on the “big picture.”

For example, if you ask “Who do you admire most in the world?” and they answer “My big sister,” try and figure out together what it is about Sis that really impresses them. Because she has her own car? Maybe the youth values independence. Because she eats healthy from her garden? Maybe the youth values self-sufficiency. You could even make a list of “Life Models” together: role models with attributes that the youth wants to incorporate into their own future. Then you could start discussing what sort of education or careers will help lead there, or how these elements could best be incorporated into the youth’s future.

*Some fun “big-picture questions” are:*

- *What do you absolutely love in life?*

This doesn’t have to mean a hobby—although activities that make the youth happy/ fulfilled/ enthusiastic make great answers, “family” would also be a very important priority to know about!

- *What would you do if there were no limits?*

Sure its cliché, but there’s no doubt that envisioning this can help reveal further goals. After buying a mansion and sports team, paying off family’s debts/medical bills, and traveling the world... what would they do with their time?

It’s fun, and sometimes even inspiring, to think without limits!

A variation of this is, “What would you do with your time, if money wasn’t an issue?”

This question could involve reflection on how deep wishes could be realized: maybe becoming an NBA star isn’t the most reliable career path, but they could consider applying to staff the YMCA where playing/teaching basketball is part of the job.

- *What are your proudest moments?*

Try to identify *why* and *how* the youth succeeded, or *what* their accomplishment was. Search together for the strengths or skills implied by this.

- *What would you stand for, if there was nobody to judge or hurt you?*

This may sound corny, but if your youth is open to discussing it, this could reveal some of their most deeply held values. Very important to have that in mind, when choosing a career path!!

## 2) Take a Test Drive

Questions invariably multiply the more you think about a topic, and discussing this stuff could potentially leave a youth feeling overwhelmed. Try not to let pressure ramp up too fast: If the youth mentions that becoming a dentist could be cool, don’t jump into researching how many years and how many dollars it’ll take to become certified! Think “baby steps” and try some less intimidating, more accessible, and hands-on ways to learn about career paths.

**EXAMPLE:** Consider helping them find a dental office to shadow for a couple days, so that they can get a feel for the context. Make sure they feel comfortable doing this; if they're never shadowed before, give them some pointers! ([Here's a helpful list](#) from San Diego State University.)

**EXAMPLE:** You already know that a great way to “get your toes wet” in a career is by volunteering! If the youth is too busy to commit to something regular, maybe there's a one-day service opportunity ([Hands On Greater Portland](#) is an awesome resource) that could help them get a taste of that field without making an intimidating or time-consuming commitment.

# Career-Bound Youth

What if the youth you work with already knows what job they want to enter after high school? Your role then will be not only to support their entry to that position, but to help them understand the implications for that choice: Are there opportunities for advancement in that field? Does that job have sufficient benefits and pay to cover their costs of living? Will that job enable them to achieve personal goals like starting and supporting a family?

Furthermore, you could really be helpful to a youth by helping ensure success within their career. Sharing your skills concerning resumés, cover letters, and good interview strategies can help a high school graduate obtain their job—but connecting them with resources and mentorship in that field can help their success and retention within it.

## Researching Criteria & Prerequisites

If the youth has already determined what career they want to enter, you should both spend time figuring out what they will need to gain employment:

- What are the prerequisite skills/skill sets? Does the youth have these? How can they [further] develop them?
- What kind of education will be necessary? What diplomas or certifications are required, where can they be obtained, how much will they cost, and how long will they take? Is this realistic and attainable?
- Will they need work experience before entering this field as a full-time employee? Is their resumé currently adequate for employment?
- Is the entry-level salary sufficient to support the youth? Have they made a feasible budget? Will they be able to afford the necessities for success in their job (transportation, appropriate clothing, etc.)?
- There are many such questions to consider, depending on the job chosen, that may not have occurred to the youth and/or that the youth may not be able to research.

## Planning for Success & Advancement

Once the youth has decided to be committed to that field, it's time to start making a plan for success—a document or agenda that will support the youth even after your time together ends.

There are all kinds of different templates available online for making a “career action plan” (see <http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/files/attachments/Career-Development-Action-Plan.pdf>, for example. None of them are particularly innovative, but they have some good structure and. Try googling “career action plan” or “career advancement roadmap” together, and have them make their own worksheet by selecting the most relevant elements from each hit.

Another option is to ditch templates entirely: take a more tactile approach by creating a collage or painting of yourselves in 10 years, and then discuss how to get there. The main goal is for the youth to know what tools/skills they'll need to have, and what moves they'll need to make, to ensure their success & security.

**One of the most important things to do together is writing a calendar or timeline that the youth can rely on even after your time together.**

For example, a 12<sup>th</sup>-grader interested in becoming an Emergency Medical Responder could write this plan:

<p>December 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass all Fall Semester high school classes</li> <li>• Get more shifts during Winter Break &amp; save all earnings for EMT certification tuition next year</li> </ul>	<p>interview; job-shadow them or ask for mentorship/tips</p>
<p>January 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll for an IDA; submit my FAFSA; apply to OSAC; start researching EMT-specific scholarship opportunities</li> <li>• Get First-Aid/CPR/AED certified</li> <li>• Contact Portland Fire Department for volunteer or internship opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>May 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate HS, yay!!!</li> <li>• Apply to relevant summer job for gaining EMT experience</li> </ul>
<p>February 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check with HS Academic Counselor that I'm on track to graduate</li> <li>• Start volunteering weekly for 1 hour with Portland Fire Department</li> <li>• Finish FAFSA &amp; apply to EMT-specific scholarship opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>June 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start summer job</li> <li>• Update LinkedIn</li> </ul> <p>July 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review FAFSA results &amp; other scholarship income; budget for EMT certification. Make sure all tuition is covered, and also costs of living</li> <li>• Register for full-time EMT course load</li> <li>• Find a part-time job with flexible hours as temporary "backup" so I can make a living in case I don't find EMT work right away</li> </ul>
<p>March 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start researching summer employment opportunities that yield relevant experience or contacts (e.g. emergency hotline operator? Outdoor camp nurse position? Lifeguard at local community or college pool)</li> <li>• Continue volunteering with Portland Fire Department</li> </ul>	<p>August 2014-June 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get intermediate EMT certificate</li> <li>• Continue working part-time and volunteering at Portland Fire Department (switch roles to intern if possible) + networking</li> </ul>
<p>April 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check again with HS counselor that I am on track to graduate</li> <li>• Find an experienced EMT @ Portland Fire Department &amp; ask to do informational</li> </ul>	<p>January 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for EMT position with Portland Fire Department.</li> <li>• Enroll part-time in EMT Paramedic certification program and complete courses as new work schedule allows</li> <li>• Start working on FAFSA for new year</li> </ul> <p>Etc.</p>

An important element of this will be considering the future of the field; websites like <http://oregoncis.uoregon.edu/Portal.aspx> can help you predict the job markets and salaries of various occupations 5, 10, and 15 years down the road.

## Testing the Waters

The next important step in preparing for a career will be trying it out. There are several ways to get some experience in the field without having to make a big, intimidating, high-stakes commitment: volunteering, job-shadowing, and internships are some common options.

Or, if the youth has internet access, encourage them to explore Mac's List (<http://www.macslist.org/>), a Portland-based employment website which posts openings state-wide (and often out-of-state in the wider Pacific Northwest) for jobs, internships, and volunteer positions. You can search by industry, by keywords, by city, and results always include contacts/instructions to apply.

Even if a youth doesn't find employment this way, you could always have them print out desirable positions and practice writing cover letters, etc.

A great activity here would be to create a LinkedIn account at <https://www.linkedin.com/nhome/>. Discuss various aspects of professionalism with youth and help them understand and navigate the website independently.

Remember that it's becoming standard practice for employers to Google applicants. Youth want the first hit on any search for their name to be a positive and professional presentation of self!

LinkedIn can be a less intimidating context for networking. Youth who are shy or inexperienced about "schmoozing" with professionals can practice online, where stereotype threat and the pressure of being on-the-spot are less poignant.

Speaking of "schmooze," remember how valuable your own personal networks might be to youth... Are you affiliated with any institutions of higher education like PCC or PSU? You probably know of students, staff, or faculty who are in relevant fields to the youth you work with!



# Community College-Bound Youth

The first order of business for a community college-bound student is to determine what they're going for. If your youth finishes high school and starts at a community college without a clear direction and game plan, it's going to be very difficult for them to succeed & move on; furthermore, they'll be vulnerable to potentially "wasting" time and money early on, in courses that might not be transferable or relevant to their ultimate pursuits.

In a nutshell, we don't just want to help youth get *into* college: we want to help them get out, too!

## Game Plan: Associate's Degree or Certificate

If the youth is planning to enroll and achieve a 2-year degree (like Associate's of Arts or Associate's of Science) or certification (like the intermediate EMT training course in the example from page 24), they should be able to find a list of "Comprehensive Requirements" detailing every class, and every credit, they will need to take to obtain that degree. This can be obtained either departmentally or through the registrar (Registration/Admissions Office).

## Game Plan: Transfer

If the youth is starting their education at a 2-year institution and then transferring to a 4-year university, you should put them through pretty much the same process that students applying directly to a 4-year school go through, sans the applications.

Youth should still research and "shop around" for universities, considering their personal needs ("Which schools are driving distance from my family and offer health care?"), academic needs ("Which schools have significant support for students with learning disabilities?"), and career needs ("Which schools have a strong and reputable pre-med program?").

Even though the youth has a few academic terms to figure out which 4-year they'll attend & work on their application, it's important to have a firm idea of where they're considering even before registering for classes. The requirements for transfer students are often rigorous and vary *widely*, so if the youth can realize early that they want to attend a [public, Oregon school](#)—even if they're not sure yet which one—they can start fulfilling the [transfer requirements](#) right away and [think strategically](#) during their time in 2-year college.

One of the most valuable things you can do for a student to ease their transition into higher education, is to connect them with these resources before your time together ends.

If you can find the time to create a personal connection, rather than just telling the youth about these support programs, it will be invaluable. For example, a high school senior who is Latina and planning to attend PCC Rock Creek could really benefit from meeting in-person with the [Oregon Leadership Institute](#) (OLI) coordinator.

[This google document](#)

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14ulOhuVjXOfIqr9BNaQPk5t7Fy18PiDwYzml4DV3RDY/edit?usp=sharing>) was compiled in June 2014, to list all the programs and resources offered by PCC to local high schoolers and incoming/current PCC students facing adversity. All of these programs are designed to boost retention and support diploma/degree attainment, though their target audiences vary.

## BEWARE: A Note on For-Profit Education

For-profit educational institutions are notorious for stretching or bending the truth in advertising; for example, [Corinthian Colleges was recently sued](#) for its predatory practices and misleading claims about job placement rates. Help the youth schedule interviews with college representatives and ask hard questions; it's not always easy for a teenager to advocate for themselves in the face of slick recruiters and big institutions!

# University-Bound Youth

Please refer to the ASPIRE handbook provided at the training if your youth is planning to attend or transfer to a 4-year university. If you did not receive an e-copy or hard copy of the ASPIRE handbook, contact the coordinator.

## Planning Ahead: Make & Keep a Calendar

ASPIRE's handbook includes an excellent calendar for postsecondary planning, which includes monthly deadlines and actions organized by whether the student is a junior or senior.

This is a great starting point and guide for you in your work, but it's also crucial to share this with your youth!! You can probably remember how much stuff you had going on in high school, and a lot of these kids are trying to balance a job, caring for siblings, and other responsibilities on top of all that... this can make anticipating and meeting deadlines on your own feel almost impossible, especially when the college application process seems like a total mystery!

One of the best, and most empowering, remedies for that is to **BREAK IT DOWN**. Take this ASPIRE calendar as a starting point, and find "baby steps" that the youth can take every month to attain these goals. Need to fill out the FAFSA? Write down every single thing that needs to happen for completion, starting with "filing taxes." Then write down everyone who can support the youth through each of these steps, and when. Include this on the calendar, with goal dates and reminders!