



Position: Los Caminos Middle School Education Specialist
Agency/organization: Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Reports To: Director of Fair Futures
Date Available: Immediately
Date Posting: July 6, 2022
Deadline to Apply Externally: Until filled

To apply: Submit a resume and cover letter with qualifications address to David Martinez, Interim Supervisor via Email at dmartinez@hispanicfamilyservicesny.org

About Fair Futures & Coalition for Hispanic Family Services

Fair Futures is a **youth-led advocacy movement** and **coalition of 100+ organizations** advocating for all young people in New York City's foster care system to have access to the individualized supports they need to achieve their potential from 6th grade through age 26. **Fair Futures is also a comprehensive model** that includes a middle school program that prepares students for success in high school and a coaching program where young people ages 14+ are matched with a full-time, professionally trained Coach. The overall goals of the Fair Futures program are to help young people:

- Build trusting relationships and a network of positive adult and peer supports;
- Prepare for and graduate from high school;
- Connect to and persist in post-secondary settings;
- Engage in career exploration and career development experiences in line with their interests to help them eventually navigate onto a living wage career pathway;
- Access and maintain stable, affordable housing if they are exiting foster care and gain independent living and life skills.

In NYC, the Fair Futures model has implemented at all 26 foster care agencies, including Coalition for Hispanic Family Services. The name of CHFS' Fair Futures program is Los Caminos. CHFS is a community-based, family-focused organization of color providing an array of services to children and families in North Brooklyn and Western Queens. For over 30 years CHFS has worked with vulnerable populations that include children in foster care, seriously emotionally disturbed children, as well as youth and families at risk of abuse and neglect. CHFS supports the strengthening of families in communities through the provision of family support, youth development and school-based programs. The provision of accessible, high-quality family support, youth development, child welfare, health and mental health services to these vulnerable populations is central to our holistic approach of strengthening families in a culturally competent manner.

Middle School Education Specialist Position Summary:

The Middle School Education Specialist works with middle school students (including elementary students, if there are not sufficient middle school students at the agency). The Specialist provides educational advocacy, conducts academic performance monitoring, and makes referrals to quality tutoring and extracurricular activities.

The Middle School Education Specialist also provides individualized assistance with the high school selection processes to all 8th grade students and their families (and to all 5th grade students with the middle school process, when possible). The Specialist will ensure that the list of high schools the student is submitting are quality, best-fit schools.

*We respectfully ask a minimum **1-2 year** commitment to this role, given the importance of young people having consistent and caring adults in their lives.*

Middle School Education Specialist Responsibilities:

WORK WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY AND ENSURING STUDENTS ARE RECEIVING THE SUPPORTS/SERVICES THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.

- Build and maintain collaborative relationships with schools; provide advocacy on behalf of students;
- Work with Case Planner, foster parent, birth parent/caregiver and tutor to address educational concerns;
- Request that the school make referrals for IEP evaluations and behavioral/academic supports within the school;
- Negotiate with DOE staff to ensure the implementation of recommended and appropriate educational services;
- Negotiate with ACCESS VR counselors for appropriate services;
- Ensure school stability if a student is relocating homes, in consultation with the Case Planner and parent.

MONITOR THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ALL STUDENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

The Specialist will be able use the Online Platform to record progress and create automated reports.

- Collect, review, and track NYC DOE monthly data on attendance, grades, promotion status, school enrollment, tutoring history, transcripts, etc.;
- Use data to identify struggling students;
- Work with Case Planners and parents to ensure improved attendance, and/or provide additional academic supports.

PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED ASSISTANCE WITH THE HIGH SCHOOL SELECTION PROCESS TO 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

- The Specialist will ensure that the list of schools the student is submitting are quality, best-fit schools, and will record this list of schools (it will eventually be tracked in the Online Platform).
- It is the responsibility of the Specialist to try to guide the process as much as possible. This includes establishing trust, explaining why the process is so important, and providing information/guidance when a selection may not be appropriate.

- When possible, the Specialist should provide individualized assistance to all 5th grade students with the middle school selection process as well.

REFER ALL STUDENTS TO IN-HOME, QUALITY TUTORING;

- Follow up regularly with Tutor Coaches regarding the students' performance, needs, and any concerns.

CONNECT STUDENTS TO AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS INCLUDE:

COORDINATING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:

- **Parents:** It is the responsibility of the Specialist to outreach to parents for discussion about issues such as special education services, attendance concerns, behavioral issues in school, and school transfers.
- **Foster Parents:** It is important for the Specialist to include foster parents in educational planning because they will often interact with school staff on a regular basis.
- **The School:** The Specialist will collaborate with the school to explore options for students to improve and benefit from services offered such as afterschool tutoring, special education services, and other supports. The Specialist should also schedule school visits for students in order to meet with the student and counselor together.
- **External Providers:** The Specialist will work with community resources including tutoring programs, mental health services, and afterschool programs. Collaborating with these stakeholders allow for students to receive assistance and services on a broad spectrum that can foster continued success educationally as well as emotionally.
- **Case Planners:** The Specialist should coordinate with Case Planners on the student's academic progress and follow up on any needs/concerns. The Specialist should provide a monthly report to the students' Case Planners that includes progress notes and key academic data. Case Planners should also be consulted about school transfers and any other significant educational advocacy activity.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES:

SHORT-TERM AND LONGER-TERM ADVOCACY: The Specialist offers both long-term individualized interventions for students with complex or ongoing educational needs and targeted short-term supports to ensure that every student has access to a particular service or opportunity.

SUSPENSION ADVOCACY: The Specialist should secure representation for the student who is receiving the suspension.

ADVOCACY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

- **Response to Intervention:** The Specialist advocates for students to receive the most appropriate services available.
- **Individual Education Program (IEP) Referral Process:** The Specialist can request a referral from the school for students to receive a special education evaluation if it is believed that the student may benefit from additional services in school.
- **Effective Advocacy for IEP Meetings:** Specialists can assist in developing an IEP that focuses on the best interest of the student as well as ensure that students are receiving the services they need to be successful.

Benefits of being a Middle School Education Specialist & Supports Provided:

Benefits include:

- Participate in a movement that is changing the landscape of child welfare
- Make an immediate impact in the lives of young people by helping them carve out a pathway to success in life as they define it
- Join a community of mission-drive, passionate individuals

Supports you will receive:

From day one, you will join our *Fair Futures Training & Learning Academy*. You will learn:

- The latest techniques in youth engagement
- How to navigate the educational, career, and housing systems and resources in NYC
- How to use the Fair Futures goals and steps tracking platform

You will also receive ongoing support to help you become a fully empowered and knowledgeable professional. This includes:

- 1:1 professional development and empowerment coaching
- 1:1 technical assistance
- Access to an array of voluntary professional development supports
- Membership to our Learning Communities, where you can share best practices, problem-solve with peers, and network with the other foster care agencies.

QUALIFICATIONS

As helping young people enroll and persist in post-secondary settings is one of the goals of the Fair Futures model, it is important for the Middle School Specialist to have a **post-secondary credential**. The Middle School Specialist role is **not an entry-level role**; **experience working with young people** in a professional setting is required. Candidates should have either:

- A Master's Degree in social work, education, youth development or related field and at least two years of education-related experience;

OR

- A Bachelor's degree and at least 5 years of education-related experience in an instructional, administrative, or advocacy-related position;

To be effective in their role, the Middle School Specialist should ideally be tenacious, independent, proactive, and can follow detailed procedures. The Middle School Specialist should also be able to navigate complex educational issues, be resourceful, and work independently; be able to organize their time and prioritize responsibilities in order to plan and carry out all duties; and be able to effectively collaborate in team settings and build relationships with external partners.

Experience working with students and families in foster care is strongly preferred. Bilingual in Spanish is preferred.

RELATIONAL SKILLS:

- Ability to work from a strength-based, trauma-informed, youth development lens;
- A love for working with young people;
- Ability to relate to young people, engage them in conversation, and provide support and encouragement;
- Ability to form collaborative, working relationships with parents/families, school and agency staff
- Consistent and reliable;
- Ability to think outside the box and employ creative approaches;
- Values and promotes diversity;
- Carries a belief that change is possible;
- Able to maintain healthy boundaries;
- Able to remain calm during moments of tension and stress.

TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:

- Strong written and verbal communication skills;
- Strong time-management, organizational skills, and attention to detail;
- Ability to troubleshoot, advocate, and navigate obstacles where there is not always a clear-cut pathway;
- Open to learning how to use and interpret data to inform decision-making;
- Ability to collaborate in team settings and build relationships with external partners;
- Ability to use trauma-informed techniques;
- Knowledgeable about youth resources and services;
- Ability to facilitate peer groups;
- Flexible and can work independently.

SCHEDULE

35 hours per week (Monday - Friday from 9am-5pm, including one evening per week and occasional evenings and weekends, depending on need of youth and/or program.)

COMPENSATION

\$48,000 to \$55,000 based on experience and qualifications.

Good benefits package, ample vacation and sick days.

To apply for this position please send your cover letter and resume to
dmartinez@hispanicfamilyservicesny.org.

Applicants will not be considered without a cover letter.

Coalition for Hispanic Family Services is an
Equal Opportunity Employer committed to diversity in the workplace and leadership opportunities
for people of color.