



Future 5 Budget Request

Future 5 is requesting \$50,000 in general operating support to help us expand our programming to more under-resourced high school and college students in Stamford.

Mission and Programs

Mission:

Future 5 connects motivated, under-resourced students in Stamford to the people and resources they need to achieve their educational, career, and life goals.

Our ultimate goal is to provide our members with access to the people, skills, resources, experiences and information essential to a successful transition to post-secondary education, careers and beyond.

One in five of Connecticut's young people were either disconnected from education or employment, or "at risk" of failing to graduate high school, leaving them unemployable or employed at a wage level "substantially below the wage level needed for economic independence" according to the 2022 published study commissioned by Dalio Education. In Stamford, 34% of students fall into this category.

At Future 5, we ask the question: What happens to these young people at risk of being disconnected and not pursuing higher education? What chance do they have to build a sustainable life with only minimum wage opportunities?

At Future 5, we address this gap by taking a holistic approach to addressing the opportunity gap. The membership experience incorporates academic improvement and rigorous college prep support but we also go deeper into character development, community involvement, interpersonal skills and career counseling.

Program Description:

- **Here2There** - Our initial membership workshop that focuses on goal setting and self-awareness. Every student finishes this program with a Game Plan that lays out short-and long-term goals, and steps to move toward their goals. Potential members must complete Here2There prior to being able to participate in any other programming at Future 5. This workshop is run 2 or 3 times a year.

- **College Prep** - Support for our members in the complex college application process - from college selection to the Common Application, personal essay, campus visits, financial aid and scholarships. Each Future 5 senior is offered a one-on-one college coach to help navigate the process from beginning to end with individualized attention.
- **College Success** – Continuing support for our members who are college students. With dedicated staff and volunteers, this program addresses the unique and additional challenges faced by Pell eligible and first-generation college students in degree completion and early career success. We work closely with our students to help select classes, select a major, seek financial aid, and ensure that they stay on track to successfully earn a degree. Additionally, we support our students with continued soft skill development, career exploration and in securing internships and post graduate jobs.
- **Workforce Development** - Career readiness and exploration programming. This includes: Next Track programming for students who choose not to attend college, Career Discovery and Exploration events, the Future 5 Career Advisory Network, and our 8-week Job Prep workshop.
- **General Membership** - Core to our membership are the myriad opportunities we provide our members every day:
 - o Community Service – students participate in service activities with more than 20 community partners in Stamford;
 - o Academic support – homework help sessions, one-on-one academic tutoring, SAT prep;
 - o Leadership Skills through our Student Ambassadors program;
 - o Most importantly, we offer our members a safe, supportive community, where they are known, nurtured and cared about.
- **Alum 5** – Operates as a young professional's network for our growing group of college graduates, providing early career support workshops, networking and financial coaching.

Operational Accomplishments

It is Future 5's 15th Anniversary! Over the past 15 years, 99% of Future 5 active high school members have graduated and landed with a plan; the vast majority have attended college, trade school or joined the military.

2023-2024 Highlights:

During the 2023-2024 programming year, Future 5 served 443 students.

- **205** High School students
- **162** College students
- **76** Alum

Demographically, our student membership is:

- **92%** Free/Reduced
- **90%** First gen
- **97%** BIPOC

Our high school student achievements:

- **98%** High school graduation rate
- **98% of** HS grads “landed with a plan” – college, trade school or military
- **171** students completed **1680** hours of community service with over **25** community partners
- **71** students received **371** hours of academic support including SAT Prep
- **109** active volunteers contributed **4918** hours of service and support
- **64% of our graduating seniors will be attending college with 0 debt**

College Success achievements:

- **37** College Grads
 - **46%** graduated in 4 years
 - **36%** graduated in 5 years
 - ** For comparison, only 22% of students from low-income communities earn a postsecondary degree (bachelor’s and/or associate) in 6 years compared to 67% of their peers from high-income areas.
- **100% College matriculation for the class of 2024**
- **100%** Year 1 to Year 2 persistence
- **83%** of College Prep participants chose to stay with Future 5 and opted in to College Success

Operational Challenges

Operational capacity has been an ongoing challenge for Future 5. As word about our program has spread over the years, more and more students are seeking membership. Several years ago, we made the decision to cap high school membership to 200 students in order to maintain our “secret sauce” of in-depth knowledge of each student and their individual goals and needs. This necessitated the creation of a waitlist – sometimes as high as 160 students.

Future 5 has started in 2025 making great strides towards addressing this challenge. On January 6th, Future 5 officially moved into our new space at 4 Landmark Square. This move was a central part of our newly adopted strategic plan and addresses several of our operational goals:

- Serving even more students in Stamford by adding 25 students per year (13% increase)
- 50% additional space will allow more opportunities for concurrent programming and events.
- Strengthening student opportunities with one-on-one academic support, and college/trade school access coaching.
- Integrated staff offices to strengthen member support
- A new College & Workforce Development Center dedicated to ensuring college students and Future 5 alumni land with a plan at a sustainable income level

With a larger home for Future 5, an increase in the number of students served, and the anticipation of additional staff support to serve more under-resourced students, your support is needed. Funding from the City of Stamford will help Future 5 to support more under-resourced students in Stamford to access and persist through post-secondary pathways and mitigate the opportunity gap that exists in Connecticut and lower Fairfield County.