

DREAM F.O.R.W.A.R.D. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Below are answers to some of the questions we hear most often from parents, students, and partners.

What is Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D.?

Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. (Fostering Opportunities through Real-World Application, Research and Discovery) is the flagship STEAM-focused youth initiative of Embouldin To Dream, Inc. Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. is a unique opportunity designed to expose students to new possibilities, develop future-ready skills, and help them grow in confidence and purpose. The program is designed to help students dream beyond their current circumstances through exposure, hands-on learning, leadership development, mentorship, emerging technology, financial literacy, wellness, and real-world experiences.

Who is Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. for?

Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. is for students who are curious, motivated, and open to growth. Whether a student already has a clear vision for their future or is still discovering their interests, the program is designed to provide exposure, encouragement, and opportunities that help young people dream bigger and move forward with confidence.

What does STEAM mean?

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. combines STEAM learning with leadership development, personal growth, financial literacy, and community engagement.

What makes Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. different from a traditional summer camp?

Students participate in a structured cohort experience designed to build confidence, expose participants to future opportunities, strengthen practical skills, and encourage long-term growth through experiential learning, mentorship, career exploration, leadership development, and real-world application.

Why was Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. created?

The program was created to expand exposure, opportunity, and access for young people while helping them see what is possible for their future.

Why are participants called 'Dreamers'?

We believe every young person deserves the opportunity to dream boldly about their future. Being a Dreamer means embracing curiosity, growth, purpose, and the belief that where you start does not determine where you can go.

Who is eligible to participate?

The program is designed for rising 9th grade students. Students from across the Greater Hampton Roads region are welcome to apply, with Portsmouth students strongly encouraged to apply.

Does my child need to be an honor roll student?

No. We look for students who demonstrate curiosity, potential, commitment, and a willingness to engage in the experience.

Does Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. focus only on students interested in STEM careers?

No. The program is designed to expand exposure, curiosity, confidence, and possibilities across a variety of interests and career pathways.

What if my child does not know what career they want?

Many students are still exploring their interests. The program helps participants discover possibilities, connect with professionals, and learn about opportunities they may not have previously considered.

How are students selected?

Applications are reviewed thoughtfully to identify students who demonstrate interest, commitment, and alignment with the program experience. Selected applicants *may* be invited to participate in an interview as part of the review process.

Is Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. only a two-week summer program?

No. The Summer Immersion serves as the starting point of the Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. experience, which includes continued opportunities throughout the school year and student's high school career.

Why does the program continue beyond the summer?

Meaningful growth takes time. The program is designed to help students build confidence, skills, relationships, and exposure over multiple years.

What is a cohort?

A cohort is a group of students who learn and grow together over time, building relationships and shared experiences.

What types of topics will students explore?

Topics may include STEAM, artificial intelligence, financial literacy, leadership development, wellness, career exploration, communication skills, and community impact.

Will students spend all day in a classroom?

No. The experience incorporates hands-on activities, projects, guest speakers, simulations, discussions, and real-world exploration.

What if my child is shy or not naturally outgoing?

That's okay. The program is designed to provide a supportive environment that encourages students to build confidence and discover their strengths.

What do students gain from participating?

Students will participate in STEAM experiences, gain confidence, leadership skills, career and college exposure, financial literacy knowledge, professional connections, stronger communication skills, and greater awareness of future opportunities.

What does success look like for a Dreamer?

Success means growing in confidence, exploring possibilities, developing skills, setting goals, and taking meaningful steps toward the future.

Is the program free?

Yes. There is no cost for students selected to participate.

When does the 2026 Summer Immersion take place?

July 13-24, 2026, Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Where will programming occur?

The Summer 2026 pilot cohort will primarily meet at the Portsmouth Public Library, with some experiences occurring at partner locations.

Is lunch provided?

Yes. Lunch will be provided during the Summer Immersion.

Will transportation be provided?

At this time, families should plan to provide transportation for participants.

What should students bring each day?

Accepted participants will receive a detailed list before programming begins.

What happens if a student misses a day?

Consistent attendance is strongly encouraged because many experiences build upon one another.

Is parent or guardian involvement required?

Parents and guardians play an important role in student success, and we encourage ongoing communication and engagement. Volunteer opportunities are also available.

How will parents receive updates?

Families will receive regular communication regarding announcements, schedules, expectations, and key events. We currently utilize email and GroupMe as our primary modes of communication.

Can parents attend any portion of the program?

Yes. Certain events and celebrations may include opportunities for family participation.

Are safety procedures in place?

Yes. Student safety is a priority, and the program maintains policies and procedures designed to support a safe environment.

Are mentors and volunteers screened?

Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. utilizes screening processes and safeguards consistent with youth-serving programming.

Who supervises students during the program?

Students are supervised by authorized program staff, volunteers, facilitators, and approved partners.

Will students receive certificates or recognition?

Participants who successfully complete program expectations may receive recognition celebrating their participation and accomplishments.

Is this a one-time program?

No. Dream F.O.R.W.A.R.D. is designed with a long-term vision focused on growth, exposure, leadership development, and opportunity for the duration of the student's high school career.

How can community members or organizations support the program?

Support is welcomed through partnerships, sponsorships, mentorship, volunteering, in-kind contributions, and community engagement. Visit our Support Us page at www.embouldintodream.org/support-us

I still have questions. How can I contact someone?

Please visit the Contact page on the Embouldin To Dream website or reach out directly for additional information at contact@embouldintodream.org