

JA Company Program® After School 2023-2024 Student FAQs

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What is JA Company Program?

JA Company Program is a program for local high school students, grades 9-12. In this program, students are organized into “companies”, and undergo every step in the process of creating and running a business. With the help of corporate mentors, the students create a product or service, raise capital, advertise and sell their product, and liquidate at the end of the program. Students are elected into leadership roles and organized into appropriate departments/functions. This is an excellent way for high school students to get “real-world” experience in running a business, while being mentored by seasoned professionals! This program meets as an after-school program with volunteer mentors who guide students through the program.

As a student participant, will I be starting my own company by myself?

Sort of. While you will start your own business, you will be joining a group of students who will work together to brainstorm, plan, launch, and run a single start-up company with all students in the group as members of the company.

Is the 2023-2024 JA Company Program an in-person or virtual program? How will the program meet?

The 2023-2024 JA Company Program will take place **In-Person**. This means that to participate in this program, students will have to attend a 2-hour weekly meeting at their host site on the chosen day of the week. Students are responsible for their own transportation. There may be some virtual elements to

the program, like optional activities like guest speakers or meetings that are moved to virtual due to inclement weather.

Each host site will meet on the chosen day of the week each week from 5pm-7pm.

What is a "host site"?

Top local businesses have agreed to become host sites. This means that they host the assigned student cohort at their office for the weekly meeting. Each host site's business also provides a team of volunteer mentors to run the program, and program financial support. In 2023-2024, the host sites will be at Accenture, Essential Utilities/Aqua PA, Lincoln Investment, Pfizer, Resolution Life, RSM, and SAP.

When will the 2023-2024 JA Company Program Occur?

JA Company Program will start the week of November 6th, meeting weekly through March. On Monday, November 6, 2023 at 6pm we will have a virtual Kickoff Event for all students and their parents/guardians in the program on Zoom, and their host site will have their first meeting in-person on their meeting day of that week. The Program does not meet on the week of Thanksgiving (week of 11/20) and during Winter Break (weeks of 12/18 and 12/25).

What is the Time Commitment for JA Company Program?

Meetings will take place from 5pm-7pm on either Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings, based on what host site students sign up for. Students are also responsible for finding their own transportation to and from the meetings. The program is scheduled to kickoff the week of November 6th and run through March.

JA Company Program is similar to a sports team, theater production, or band/orchestra in that to be successful, students will need to both work/participate in meetings as a group and individually on their own time. To accomplish student company tasks and the student's own development goals, students will also have to complete assignments on their own time along with attendance and participation at weekly meetings. Such assignments may include research and brainstorming or executing company tasks such as selling or promoting the company product/service. Students also may schedule and attend small group video calls with their department or leadership team on non-meeting days.

How will I communicate with fellow company members and mentors?

Students will work with their fellow students and mentors to find the best way for their company to communicate. This will typically involve some combination of emails, phone calls/texts, video calls, and utilizing the JA provided Microsoft Teams. Good and effective communication is vital for all aspects of JA Company Program.

Participants are expected to be professional and respectful when communicating at all times, both in and out of meetings. Communications that are offensive, derogatory, inappropriate, bullying, discriminatory, disrespectful, etc. will not be tolerated and are grounds for dismissal from the JA Company Program. (These are examples only and are not intended to be a comprehensive list)

Should a student feel uncomfortable with any communications received from another student or volunteer mentor, they should immediately contact JA Staff Member Stuart Younger.

What are the technology requirements?

As the program will primarily meet in-person, there are no specific requirements for students to provide their own computer or tablet. However, students bringing their own device may prove useful for the program.

Students are required to have an email address that can send and receive emails from external domains. JA strongly prefers non-school emails. This email address will be used by JA and your mentors for communication about JA Company Program. Students should frequently check this email, as they would for any employer.

Is attendance required?

In short, **yes!** While we understand that emergencies and conflicts do occur, weekly student attendance is a vital part of JA Company Program After-School

Volunteer mentors will be donating their time and energy to mentor students and students will need to rely upon one another to achieve company goals. If a student cannot commit to participating in all of JA Company Program, including attending meetings for the entire program, JA does not recommend JA Company Program for them.

If a student is unable to attend a meeting, they should let their mentors (not JA) know with as much notice as is appropriate. Each host site will go over their site's specific attendance policy during the first meeting. Mentors are instructed to attempt to contact the student and/or emergency contact a student is absent without notice to ensure the student's safety.

Is there a dress code?

In order to promote a business-like atmosphere, students will be expected to dress in Business Casual attire for any company meetings/video chats. Students should keep in mind that in-person meetings will take place in places of business, and that their dress and conduct reflect on themselves and JA Company Program as whole.

As general guidance, some examples of appropriate Business Casual attire include collared shirts such as polo shirts or button downs with pants or a skirt. Inappropriate attire includes t-shirts, tank tops, shorts, pajamas, gym/workout attire or ripped/holey clothing. Each host site may adjust the dress code, especially for special occasions where students might be expected to dress up for an event with executives/special guests or dress down for a hands-on work day.

Who will the mentors be for JA Company Program?

Mentors will be volunteers who are adult professionals from local businesses. These are people who give up their evening free time in order to network, guide, and mentor program participants. These volunteer mentors will have clearances in accordance with local school district, JA, and PA Department

of Human Services policies. The volunteer mentors will be following JA's Volunteer Conduct Standards and Digital Media Policy and abide by JA guidelines for working virtually with youth.

How many students will be assigned to each JA Company Program Host Site?

We anticipate having a cohort of roughly 15-25 students in each of our host sites this school year. We anticipate having 7 host sites in 2023-2024.

Who is eligible to participate in JA Company Program?

Any student who will be in grades 9-12 who lives in Philadelphia, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, or Northampton counties in Pennsylvania in Fall 2023 is eligible to participate in JA Company Program. Students must also commit to attending programs meetings and completing all forms.

How can I sign up for JA Company Program?

[Fill out this application here!](#) The application is due October 16, 2023. As a part of the application, students will complete a one-page personal inventory. Due to the increased popularity of JA Company Program, JA anticipates receiving more applications than we have available spots. Therefore, it is highly likely we will not be able to place all applicants in JA Company Program this year.

How will I choose what host site I prefer to attend?

When filling out the application, students will pick a host site to directly sign up for. This is not a guarantee you will be assigned to this site. JA will stop allowing signups to a particular host site when a host site has already received a high number of signups. Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from each site, so students should pick a host site that they can get themselves to and meets on a day the student is generally free. If we will be unable to place you at the site you signed up for, we will communicate with you about your options.

How will I know if I have been accepted to JA Company Program?

After the application closes on October 16, 2023, JA will process applications and make application decisions and placements. You will hear soon after that via email.

I have more questions about JA Company Program. Who do I contact?

If you have any questions, please contact Stuart Younger!

Stuart Younger
Special Projects and Strategy Associate
(Primary JA Company Program After-School Contact)
stuart.younger@ja.org