

Junior Achievement of New Jersey's Women's Future Leadership Academy

Volunteer Mentor Guide

Thank you for volunteering as a mentor for Junior Achievement of New Jersey's Women's Future Leadership Academy! Your time and talents are so appreciated. Please take a moment to review this document to prepare you for the session.

What is the Women's Future Leadership Academy? The WFLA is a weekly virtual series open to all NJ high school students at no cost. Information is sent directly to school administrators and educators, and students register themselves for as many of the sessions as they like. Topics are designed to build confidence and employability skills and align to NJ academic standards for career readiness.

Who attends? A typical weekly session will have 5-20 volunteer mentors and speakers from JANJ's partnering organizations and NJ businesses, and 20-100 high school girls from urban, suburban, and rural high schools across the state.

What are the volunteer requirements? All volunteers must complete and submit JA's [volunteer registration form](#) prior to their assigned session. Convenient volunteer orientation and information for your session will be provided to you.

How do I join? Register for your preferred session here: <https://www.janjacademy.org/volunteers>. Enter the required information and add the event to your calendar if you like. You'll join the session as you would for any zoom meeting. We recommend having your camera on and your background and appearance professional. Not only are you representing your company, organization, and industry, but you are setting an example of how to communicate in a virtual setting!

What is the session format? The sessions begin with an introduction from JA staff, followed by a speaker or panel of speakers addressing the given topic. Then, students and volunteers are placed in small group virtual breakout rooms for a conversation or simple activity aligned to the speaker's remarks. The breakout sessions last approximately 15 minutes. When the breakout sessions are over, all participants will be automatically returned to the main room for closing remarks.

What is my role as a mentor? As a mentor, you will serve as a resource and role model while you facilitate a discussion based on the session topic. JA will provide you with a detailed mentor guide for your particular session along with talking points and instructions. We recommend you print this out or have it handy during the session. Each breakout room will have 2-4 volunteers and 4-10 students. As soon as the breakout sessions begin, volunteer mentors must take the lead. Briefly introduce yourself and ask any other mentors in your breakout room to do the same. Ask the students to introduce themselves by sharing their name and school. Then, follow the mentor guide.

Tips for engaging students in a virtual setting: Student feedback we received last year was extremely positive, and the students truly appreciate the opportunity to learn from you. However, conversations in a virtual setting, especially with a group of people who don't know each other, isn't as easy as a face-to-face conversation. Ask questions and pause to give students enough time to answer. You can encourage students to use the chat box or the animated reactions emojis (clap, thumbs-up, smile) at the bottom of their screen. Please keep in mind that students have varied access to technology, and they are not required to turn their cameras on. Remember, even if your room seems quiet, your presence is extremely valuable, and you are making a difference!

Questions? Email Christy Biedron, Director of Education cbiedron@ja.org or call/text 609-903-6875