



THE NEW

JA Company Program

The new *JA Company Program*[®] brings entrepreneurship to life by empowering young people to create and manage their own entrepreneurial ventures. Through volunteers from the business community who serve as mentors, the redeveloped program delivers a multi-dimensional experience that infuses online learning, digital tools, contemporary teaching methodology, and current entrepreneurial trends.

The new *JA Company Program* is markedly different than its kit-based predecessor and better aligns with the current entrepreneurial landscape. Concepts that teach and reinforce an understanding of how to incubate and nurture a successful enterprise are infused with the key skills required by young people in the 21st century workplace. Learning opportunities enhance innovative thinking, decision making, adaptability, and competitiveness, while encouraging students to gain self-awareness and self-confidence and to embrace the value of life-long learning.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will it be delivered?

The new *JA Company Program* is delivered using the blended-learning model. This model combines the current JA volunteer-led experience with digital collaboration and elements that lead to increased student engagement. The program is accessed through an online Learning Management System (LMS) that coordinates and provides structure for students, educators, and volunteers to access the digital content and resources. Volunteers play a key role in the program. Using technology, volunteers are able to connect with students in both traditional and digital classrooms across geographic boundaries.

How will it be rolled out to the JA Areas?

Junior Achievement USA has adopted a well-researched and proven structure for the design of our blended product called “The Lean Startup”. This engages JA Areas earlier in the process and enables a structure for input in the formative stages of the program. To best prepare each JA Area for a strong, successful first launch, the JA Online Launch Process must be completed. The JA Online Launch Process consists of the following:

1. Completion of the JA Area Readiness Checklist
2. Online launch training – Training on the LMS, student enrollment, and volunteer training
3. Ongoing support from JA USA

The timeline for the JA Online Launch Process and new *JA Company Program* is as follows:

July 2014 – *JA Company Program* unveiled at the JA National Leadership Conference and the JA Online Learning Launch Process will be initiated.

July 2014 - All JA Areas that would like to launch the new blended approach in the 2014-2015 school year may sign up for the JA Online Launch Process.

September 2014 - JA Area Incubator sites that have already begun the JA Online Learning Launch Process will be the first group of JA Areas to use *JA Company Program with students during the fall semester*.

January 2015 – JA Areas that have completed JA Online Learning Launch Process can begin using the new *JA Company Program*.

Spring 2015 – JA Online Learning Launch Process begins for JA Areas who desire to wait until the fall of 2015 to begin use of the new *JA Company Program*.

What are the Program Implementation Standards?

The new *JA Company Program* is available for both in-school and after-school environments and may be completed in one-semester or throughout an entire school year. There are a total of 13 Modules on Demand (MODs), or program meetings. Each MOD takes about two hours to complete. Each student participant receives a minimum of 26 instructional contact hours with the option for adding additional instructional contact hours. JA volunteers are required to deliver 13 instructional contact hours and the remaining hours may be completed by a classroom teacher.

How is the new program similar to the kit-based version?

The core learning of this legacy program remains the centerpiece of the new program with updated access, delivery methods and content. *JA Company Program* continues to be a hands-on experience that teaches students how to start an actual business. Students conceptualize, capitalize, and manage their own venture from start to finish. The JA volunteer continues to be a vital component to the program, as is the opportunity for participating students to compete at the annual Junior Achievement USA National Student Leadership Summit.

How is the new program different than the kit-based version?

The new *JA Company Program* is different from the former kit-based program in that it is more reflective of present-time trends and aligns with the current entrepreneurial landscape. Students have an introduction to several digital tools used by small business owners, such as e-commerce, crowdfunding, a Shark Tank component, built-in e-tools, such as a spreadsheet for financial record keeping and online presentation tools. For those students who want to create their own startup after leaving JA, Meeting 13 includes a “Personal Action Plan,” which helps them to create their path forward. One of the most exciting additions is that of the “e-portfolio” tool. This tool allows students to save work samples and projects digitally and have the ability to access them after they leave the program to show future prospective employers or others who are interested in their learning. The use of the LMS ensures that the new program may be revised and updated as needed and in a timely manner. Lastly, the digital nature of the LMS allows for real-time assessments to be completed and collected for those students who log into the tool.

How much will the program cost?

For the 2014-2015 school year, the cost will be the same as the kit-based program, as it is our launch year.

What are the technical requirements for the program and the LMS?

The new *JA Company Program* is accessed through a Web browser on any computer, tablet, or smartphone with Internet access. JA USA recommends that participating classrooms and program sites have one computer for every 3-6 students. It is also recommended that the program facilitator connect their computer to a projector or large screen for the entire group to view. JA students, volunteers, and teachers will have 24-hour access to all materials. In keeping with our blended-model delivery, downloadable documents are also available to print through the LMS where technology is not available. A technology checklist will be provided to JA Areas in advance of the program launch. The traditional kit will be available for use during the 2014-2015 school year. Beginning in 2015-2016, the *JA Company Program* will be accessed only through the LMS.

How does the new program impact current JA Area volunteer recruitment, training and monitoring strategies?

This new product allows the JA Area to recruit from a potential new segment of tech savvy and entrepreneurial volunteers. Non-traditional volunteer engagement opportunities include in-classroom or virtual subject matter experts or judges for local *JA Company Program* competitions. JA Areas continue to conduct volunteer and teacher trainings, as with other JA programs. JA USA will provide additional online training resources that may be accessed by the JA Area and their volunteers, teachers, and students. The process for class registration and reporting will be finalized and shared with JA areas during the Learning Launch. The LMS allows the JA Area to view data related to user attendance and usage.

What is the recommended staffing?

The staffing model is directly related to the scope of the program offered in each JA Area and is similar to the current staffing model utilizing program staff to oversee the program. Each JA Area will need to identify at least one associate as the point of contact for that area to receive updates, training opportunities, attend calls (voluntarily) and serve as a local manager for the program implementation. The skills of this associate include being able to access the LMS, navigate through the course and understand the different components (all of this is included in the training). Generally, the best associate is one who feels comfortable online. The LMS will be accessed by going to the website and entering the provided username and password. The number of program managers will vary with the number of JA companies in use.

How will the banking and financial component work?

As in years past, the volunteer and the local JA Area staff member must work together to set up a bank account for *JA Company Program*. Students manage all revenue and expenses for their startup. Upon completion of the program, students decide how to manage company profits. JA companies must follow state-mandated laws regarding sales tax and collect it on all goods sold. JA companies are responsible for reporting and providing the JA Area with a check covering the sales tax collected. JA Areas are required to report this information to the state as part of their financial audits.

Participants will now have exposure to many financial tools, such as e-commerce, crowdfunding, and mobile credit card processing that may be tied to their bank accounts with the proper structure. Before giving students access to these new elements, JA Areas must decide which ones to provide their students. Financial liquidation continues to be a requirement to ensure students can pursue future ventures separate from JA.

Questions? Contact Andy Schenck, Curator of Entrepreneurship Experiences, at andy.schenck@ja.org.