

JA Board Buddies

In 2022, a board task team was formed to improve the new board member onboarding process, and to elevate ongoing engagement among existing board members. One new element that came from this group was the creation of the JA Board Buddies mentoring program to ensure new members feel welcome, connected to their fellow members, and invested in the mission of the organization.

Objectives:

- Help new board members connect and assimilate quickly
- Provide new board members an additional point of contact, in addition to JA staff, in case they have questions or would like some guidance
- Give existing board members additional engagement and leadership opportunities

How existing board members can volunteer to be a JA Board Buddy?

- Indicate your interest to your primary staff contact to get your name added to a list of JA Board Buddy volunteers. As new board members are nominated, JA staff will approach volunteers regarding potential matches. You will have the opportunity to decline if the fit and timing are not optimal.

Recommendations for existing board members:

- Reach out to your buddy following the introduction from JA staff. Ideally, you will connect and have a quick conversation prior to the new member's first official board meeting.
- If you are able to attend your buddy's first official board meeting, greet them and make introductions to other board members.
- Sit next to each other at board meetings. This proximity will allow you to quietly provide additional background information, translate terms and acronyms, and help them navigate through the board materials.
- Follow-up with your buddy between meetings. Providing the opportunity to debrief after meetings is especially important for new board members who may be looking for some additional information, a bit of context, or the perspective that an experienced board member can bring. This is especially important if they miss a meeting.
- Consider inviting your buddy to volunteer, attend a JA event, or attend a JA Board social event with you. New board members may need assistance engaging in varied ways to achieve their annual points goal.