Junior State of America

The largest student-run organization in the U.S.
MISSION

The Junior State of America (JSA) strengthens American democracy by educating and preparing high school students for life-long involvement and responsible leadership in a democratic society.

FOUNDED IN 1934 BY YOUNG PEOPLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

JSA’s leadership and civic education programs engages high school students civically and politically, through debate, leadership development, and community activism. In the 1970s, JSA was instrumental in advocating for lowering the voting age to 18. Students who participate in JSA build core leadership skills.
What We Do

LEADERSHIP

As the nation’s largest student-run organization, JSA participants acquire and practice important 21st-century skills in project management, consensus building and critical thinking. Students take up leadership roles at their schools, in their individual states, and also on a national level. They learn how to work well with others, manage large groups, and organize multi-day events.

CIVIC EDUCATION

JSA students learn how government works and how they can effect change. Founded on the premise that an informed citizenry is an empowered community, JSA challenges students to be the people by actively engaging in their communities, states, and the world to make it a better place.

ACTIVISM

JSA students volunteer for campaigns, coordinate voter registration drives, and organize forums with elected officials to increase engagement and involvement of their peers. Students gain the tools to be more involved with social and political issues, promote change through voting, and learn model citizenship.

STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN JSA:

- Develop informed, educated opinions on important social, economic, and political issues.
- Gain new perspectives on issues by engaging in productive conversation and debate with their peers.
- Build consensus in diverse groups.
- Learn to engage productively despite differences.
Our Programs

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Based at high schools all over the nation, JSA Chapters inspire civic engagement and political awareness.

“Without JSA, I would not have discovered my passion for politics and youth empowerment as well as befriend some of the most dedicated and inspiring individuals.”

All across the United States, there are 400 student-led JSA chapters that annually engage more than 10,000 participants. JSA participants learn about political issues facing their community, acquire public speaking skills through debate, and increase their understanding of how government works through simulations and mock forums and interacting with community and elected leaders.

JSA student leaders—with the support of educators who serve as Teacher Advisors—design, plan, and execute initiatives that build skills in leadership, communication, and time management.

Three times a year, JSA Chapters come together as regions to host weekend-long conventions. These conventions give students the opportunity to learn about relevant issues and exchange viewpoints in an open environment where opinions may be scrutinized and challenged, but are welcomed and appreciated.

70% of JSA members joined JSA to discuss politics and to grow as a leader

80% of JSA members become more politically active after joining

75% of JSA members are more likely to register to vote when turning 18

*JSA 2017 Student Survey
PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

JSA offers rich pre-college, academic programs for high school students at elite universities during the summer.

SUMMER SCHOOLS
At prestigious universities all over the nation JSA prepares high school students for success through enriching, immersive college experiences. During three or four-week long residential programs, students are enrolled in rigorous college-level courses taught by university professors.

In addition to class, students participate in debate practicums, leadership development, and an engaging speakers program.

Summer Schools are located at:
Georgetown University Princeton University Stanford University Capital Normal University, China

"This experience has definitely changed my life in many different ways. I have gained more confidence and insight about the world and I will definitely come out of the program a different, and better, person than I was when I went in."

SUMMER INSTITUTES
In a few action-packed days, students investigate public policy in an interactive learning environment. They meet and question elected officials, policy makers, business leaders, journalists, lobbyists and others. Students engage in meaningful discussion with both notable speakers and other students in these three- to five-day long programs.

Summer Institutes are located at:
Princeton University University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, Davis

SPEAKERS PROGRAM
JSA’s Speakers Programs gets Summer School participants up close and personal with today’s leading politicians, policy experts, journalists, and other political opinion leaders.

Past speakers have included:
- President Barack Obama
- President George H.W. Bush
- Senator Corey Booker
- Senator John McCain
- Secretary Madeleine Albright
- Sarah Huckabee Sanders
- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Katie Couric
- Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy
- Governor John Kasich
- Secretary Condoleezza Rice

REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION INSTITUTES
In presidential election years, JSA host week-long programs at the Republican and Democrat National Conventions. Students get a close up view of the American political party process.

“JSA Summer School was honestly one of the best experiences of my life – making friends, hearing from influential speakers, debating in an environment that inspired original thought, seeing the city in a new way; altogether a unique and perfect 3 weeks, unlike any other program I’ve ever participated in.”
Civic Education

VOTER ENGAGEMENT

JSA Chapters host various projects to encourage participation in the electoral process. From voter registration drives to debate watch parties and candidate forums, JSA members are involved in educating their communities about local and national issues.

Our Fight Apathy Campaign raises awareness about political issues. JSA chapters distribute stickers that read “I believe in…” at their respective schools. Individuals are asked to finish the sentence, and the stickers spark discussion throughout the day. The Fight Apathy campaign promotes the Junior State of America’s mission to encourage civil dialogue and prepare high school students for political involvement.

TOWN HALLS

From in-person meetings to virtual gatherings, JSA creates opportunities for young people to discuss the issues of the day. From immigration to burgeoning social justice movements like #neveragain to the president’s annual State of the Union, JSA’s Town Halls bring together all sides for a respectful and civil dialogue.

OTHER ACTIVISM EFFORTS

JSA students participate in other civic engagement efforts

- Door-to-door canvassing for candidates and ballot measures
- Phone banking for campaigns
- Political education for middle and high school students
- Mock elections
- Candidate forums
- City Council or Board of Education meetings
Impact and Community

Individuals who participate in JSA report a positive impact on their academics, civic behavior and public expression.

ACADEMICS

67%

improved their knowledge of other cultures

76%

improved their skills in writing research papers

80%

improved their knowledge of domestic affairs

CIVIC BEHAVIOR

96%

vote on a regular basis

93%

volunteer for a charity

87%

attend or speak at a public meeting

EXPRESSION

87%

improved public speaking before a group

78%

improved ability to work on complex issues and problems

72%

strengthened skills in consensus building

81%

better understand other points of view

More than 500,000 students have participated in JSA creating an extensive alumni network who play an integral role in establishing and counseling JSA chapters, speaking at JSA events, and providing financial support to the Junior State of America Foundation.

NOTABLE ALUMNI INCLUDE:

• Carol Hallett,
  Counselor to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Former President and CEO of the Air Transport Association of America

• Charles Schwab,
  Founder & Chairman, Charles Schwab Corporation

• Edwin Meese III,
  Former U.S. Attorney General, Reagan Administration

• Eric Garcetti,
  Mayor Los Angeles, California

• Lenny Mendonca,
  Senior Partner Emeritus, McKinsey & Company

• Leon Panetta,
  Former Secretary of Defense and Former CIA Director, Obama Administration

• Michael Edelstein,
  President, NBCUniversal International Studios

• Michael McCurry,
  Former Press Secretary, Clinton Administration

• Norman Mineta,
  Former U.S. Secretary of Commerce (Clinton Administration), Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation (Bush Administration)

• Zoe Lofgren,
  Member of Congress, House of Representatives

• Mark Takano,
  Member of Congress, House of Representatives

• Tom Brady,
  Quarterback, New England Patriots
GET INVOLVED

Become a part of the JSA community

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Help start a JSA chapter in your state

Volunteer as a speaker at convention

DONATE

Donate to help a student attend a JSA convention or summer program

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JuniorStateofAmerica

OUR LOCATIONS

HEADQUARTERS
70 Washington St • Suite 320
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