



Attorney Mentor Program FAQs

What will I do as an Attorney Mentor?

Mentors are paired with NJ LEEP high school sophomores and juniors to help them through our Constitutional Law & Debate Program. Mentors build a relationship with their Mentee, serve as a positive role model, and help them prepare for two debate competitions a year.

Mentors help their Mentee:

- Understand case law and supplementary reading material
- Develop their arguments
- Write and edit their briefs
- Develop and refine their oral argument and practice answering questions

During monthly meetings, students and Mentors will review debate-related worksheets to help them prepare for the debate. In-person meetings at NJ LEEP will also include time to get to know one another better and to meet and work with other students and Mentors.

What is the time commitment?

Mentors commit to serve for one academic year, June-May. During the school year, Mentors and Mentees meet approximately once a month during pre-scheduled times hosted by NJ LEEP for a total of 6 meetings from October-May.

The total time commitment is approximately 3-4 hours per month.

Our hope is that Mentors are paired with high school sophomores and remain with them through their junior year (two years). We understand that circumstances change, so we only ask for a commitment of one year at a time. Most Mentors participate for the full two years.

The Mentor program formally ends in spring of junior year.

When and where will I meet with my Mentee?

Mentors are asked to attend 6 Mentor/Mentee meetings during the school year that are pre-scheduled and hosted by NJ LEEP:

- 4 in-person meetings at NJ LEEP's offices in Newark
 - o Likely weekdays, 4-6pm in October, November, February, and March
- 2 virtual meetings
 - o Likely weekdays, 4-5pm in December and April
- Dates and times for meetings and debates will be communicated in September for the year.

Mentors are asked to attend all pre-scheduled meetings. If a Mentor cannot make a pre-scheduled meeting, they can schedule a separate session with their Mentee. *To ensure students receive the*

debate prep support they need, students will be grouped with other students and Mentors if their Mentor is unable to attend a session.

Mentors are also asked to attend the two debate competitions held on Friday evenings in Newark in early December and mid-April.

Mentors are allowed to meet with their Mentees at other times throughout the year, but are not required to. **During the first year of working together, all meetings must be supervised.** This is defined as either at NJ LEEP (if in-person) or virtual (phone, Zoom, etc.).

What are your Covid Protocols?

We will continue to update our policies and communicate changes to Mentors. Our current policies are:

- All Attorney Mentors must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.
- All volunteers who work with students in person, and all NJ LEEP staff, are required to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.
- At this time, we do not require students to be vaccinated.
- Students and adults must wear a properly fitting mask – covering the nose and mouth – when in the NJ LEEP office or other NJ LEEP programming space.

What are your Student Safety Policies?

To ensure we put student safety at the forefront of our work, we have a robust Student Safety Policy as it relates to our Attorney Mentor Program. These policies include:

- Mentors are required to complete a background check. NJ LEEP will facilitate and pay for the background check.
- Mentors are required to attend our Mentor Orientation where they will be trained on our policies.
- During the first year of working together, Mentors may only have supervised meetings with their Mentee.
 - o This is defined as either at NJ LEEP (if in-person) or virtual (phone, Zoom, etc.).
 - o Mentors are not allowed to meet with their Mentee in-person outside of NJ LEEP (unless there is an NJ LEEP event where NJ LEEP staff are present).
- Texting and emailing for debate and non-debate related check-ins are allowed.
- After a year of working together as a pair, students and their families are given the option of in-person Mentor meetings outside of NJ LEEP (unsupervised meetings). NJ LEEP will work with Mentors if their Mentee opts into this to provide additional guidance and training.

Can I meet with my Mentee in-person?

Yes. 4 of the 6 Mentor/Mentee meetings hosted by NJ LEEP during the school-year will be in-person.

During the first year of working together, Mentors are only allowed to have supervised meetings with their Mentees. This is defined as either at NJ LEEP (if in-person) or virtual (phone, Zoom, etc.).

Mentors are not allowed to meet with their Mentee in-person outside of NJ LEEP (unless there is an NJ LEEP event where NJ LEEP staff are present).

After a year of working together, students are given the option of in-person Mentor meetings outside of NJ LEEP. NJ LEEP will work with Mentors if their Mentee opts into this to provide additional guidance and training.

Will I get materials and training?

Yes! An NJ LEEP staff member manages the Mentor/Mentee relationship, providing guidance, support, and regular communication to Mentors throughout the year.

Mentors attend a 2-hour virtual orientation where we review all of our student safety policies, requirements of the Mentor program, and overall structure and expectations.

Materials provided to Mentors for the debate program include a debate manual, Mentor handbook, memos for each debate issue with deadlines and event dates, bench memos, oral argument worksheets, brief worksheets, and more.

When will I be paired with a student?

Most Mentors are paired with students in July during the first week of NJ LEEP's summer program. From time to time, we do pair Mentors and Mentees during the school year if we have a new student or if a Mentor cannot complete the debate year.

How will I build a relationship with my new Mentee?

Mentors and Mentees meet approximately once a month from October – May. Mentors are also allowed to meet with their Mentees virtually at other times throughout the year, but are not required to. Each structured meeting includes debate-related work as well as time to get to know each other and build a relationship.

Mentors often build strong relationships with their Mentees, and many mentoring relationships continue through college and beyond.

Can I Mentor in partnership with another Attorney?

Yes! You can co-Mentor with another Attorney.

Is there a way to work with NJ LEEP students before committing to becoming a Mentor?

Yes! We have many volunteer opportunities where you can work with our students. Our upcoming events are listed on our website at <https://njleep.org/communityevents>. Volunteers receive all necessary materials and guidance in advance. All events are currently virtual.

How can I learn more about becoming an Attorney Mentor?

Visit our website for more details: <https://njleep.org/lawrelated>

Join an NJ LEEP Attorney Mentor information call. Email Claire at cdragon@njleep.org to learn about upcoming call dates.

Watch Mentor and Mentee testimonials:

- [Maurice, Associate at Arnold & Porter and Mentor to Leina](#)
- [Erin, Associate Counsel at Vanguard and Mentor to Remi](#)
- [Ramon, Mentee to Steve, and Janic, Mentee to Tom](#); video is from their speeches to their Mentors at our Fall Harvest event in 2020, giving them Mentor Recognition Awards: