



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
- Develop public speaking, critical thinking, presentation skills and confidence.

During regular 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, from October through early May. The total monthly commitment during that time is 3 – 4 hours a month.

Mentors are paired with high school sophomores and remain with them through their junior year. We know that sometimes circumstances change, and we do our best to accommodate those changes. The majority of mentors stay with their students for the full two years.

When and where will I meet with my Mentee?

Mentors are asked to attend all pre-scheduled meetings as shared above. 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.* The dates for 2-023-24 are as follows:

1. Fall/Winter Dates
 - November 27th and 28th – Debate Case Review for 10th and 11th grade
 - January 17th and January 18th – Debate Coaching
 - January 26th – Constitutional Law Debate (time TBD but it will be an evening event)
2. Winter/Spring Dates
 - March 4th and 5th – Debate Case Review
 - April 24th and 25th – Debate Coaching
 - May 4th Constitutional Law Debate – Time TBD

All events, unless otherwise noted, take place at our learning space at 12 Lombardy St. In Newark from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm. We know it is often a challenge to get to our office by 4 pm, so please let us know if you need to arrive later and we can make sure your mentee knows!

Mentors are allowed to meet with their Mentees at other times throughout the year but are not required to.

If you are unable to make one of the hosted coaching events listed above, you can reschedule with NJ LEEP staff to meet with your student at the NJ LEEP office. You are also able to meet with your student virtually without NJ LEEP supervision. If you need to meet with your mentee onsite, please communicate this to NJ LEEP staff at least 48 hours in advance to ensure adequate supervision.

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
- 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.

Will I get materials and training?

Yes! NJ LEEP staff manage 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?

Mentors will be paired with students in late September.

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: