A close up of a clock

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***Career Association Guidelines***

The Career Association is a student-led organization for career-minded students who are interested in preparing themselves to enter the workforce and are enrolled in Jobs for America's Graduates.

Each student enrolled in Kentucky’s JAG program is automatically a member of the Career Association.

Three levels exist in the Career Association – national, state, and local chapter. The local chapter is the JAG KY program at your school.

JAG believes that programs with successful Career Association chapters will experience a lower school dropout rate and higher retention rate. The Kentucky Career Association (KCA) chapter is a support system that most members need and want.

The activities of the KCA are integral to the instructional program and should be perceived as co-curricular. Since all Career Association activities are offered to develop, practice, and refine skills necessary for personal, academic and career success, chapter activities enhance classroom learning and are considered co-curricular.

Local KCA chapters provide activities to help members develop the confidence and competencies needed to stay in school through graduation and achieve a successful transition from school to the workplace.

The chapter advisor, the JAG KY Specialist, is held accountable for implementing the Career Association and using it effectively to achieve five (5) fundamental yet powerful goals. JAG suggests each goal area have a committee with a Vice President or Chairperson leading that committee.

The five goal areas are:

**1. Leadership Development**

**2. Career Development  
3. Social Awareness  
4. Civic Awareness**

**5. Community Service**

***Goals of the Career Association***

**GOAL #1: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Lee Iacocca, formerly with the Chrysler Corporation, produced a series of commercials based on the theme that Chrysler must "lead, follow, or get out of the way."

KCA members will be provided opportunities to:

• **Lead** ⎯ Members will be provided opportunities to seek elected office, serve as committee chairpersons, or accept responsibility as project leaders. The chapter advisor will provide training to help members develop the competencies necessary to be effective leaders. Eventually, members will help each other to develop, practice, and refine their leadership skills.

• **Follow** ⎯ There are times when chapter members must demonstrate followership skills. Without dedicated, disciplined, and well-trained followers, Career Associations may not be able to achieve the wanted results. In some projects, members will take leadership roles, while in others, followership roles will be preferred. Followership training is also available for members.

• **Get Out of the Way** ⎯ There are times when leaders must empower others to design and implement a plan to achieve desired results. In such cases, leaders must get out of the way and give a chapter team the responsibility to achieve intended outcomes. Chapter officers must sometimes get out of the way of those who have been empowered to achieve an objective. Chapter advisors must also step aside and allow members the opportunity to take a course of action that makes sense to the team.

The value of developing leadership qualities is best illustrated in the workplace where managers **(leaders)** create an environment in which employees **(followers)** are expected to achieve certain outcomes **(results)**. The chapter should be thought of as a **workplace team**.

As a member of an employer's team, members (employees) are expected to take either a leadership role or a followership role, depending upon the project. Employers are anxious to find employees who are capable of fulfilling leadership and followership roles when deemed necessary.

**GOAL #2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Through Career Development activities, members come in contact with employers to explore careers and better understand needed employability skills on the job.

Chapters should encourage employer involvement as:

• Guest speakers at chapter meetings  
• Hosts for occupational field trips  
• Mentors for members entering competitive events

• Judges at local and state competitions  
• Sponsors to send delegates to state competitions

Career Association members will be provided opportunities to meet and work closely with employers. These same employers are likely to offer employment opportunities to students with whom they work because they are impressed with their commitment level and competency.

**GOAL #3: SOCIAL AWARENESS**

Too many students are graduating without the ability to communicate effectively with others in a group setting (work or social) either as a leader or a follower. The types of social awareness activities that occur as part of the CA will depend on the needs of the student population, varying from chapter to chapter.

Social activities are successful when they help members learn the following:

* How to select the proper dress for various occasions
* Event organization and coordination
* The value of deadlines and a sense of urgency
* How to interact with special guests (adults)
* How to communicate with others (youth)
* Proper social etiquette

The ultimate outcome of a social activity is not "fun" alone. Social activities provide Career Association members with opportunities to mature and feel comfortable in group settings. Students who do not work well in groups are those most likely to leave school before graduation or to have difficulty in securing and keeping jobs. Career Association activities will provide considerable opportunities for the development, practice, and refinement of skills that will ensure success in group settings.

For many Career Association chapters, the first social event of the year is the JAG KY Officer Initiation and Installation Ceremony (I&I).

**GOAL #4: CIVIC AWARENESS**

Civic Awareness activities allow members to better connect and understand how their community works. In addition, citizenship skills are built within the members.

Activities that chapters often undertake to achieve this goal include:  
• Touring the local courthouse or government center  
• Meeting with the Mayor and/or other government officials

• Observing a panel of city employees from various departments

**GOAL #5: COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Through involvement in community service projects, members are provided opportunities to develop their understanding of the importance of giving back to the community in which they live. Helping others is a confidence builder for many students, which can be transferred to the workplace where employees help customers and other employees. Giving back to others is sometimes the first step for people to begin helping themselves.

Local and state affiliates of the JAG National Network are expected to provide students with opportunities to contribute at least ten (10) hours of personal time toward community service projects.

***Levels of Involvement***

Members can be as involved in the CA as they like and as their schedules permit. Each level of involvement, however, offers greater opportunities to develop and refine skills that can be applied at school or in the workplace. Chapters are expected to provide involvement opportunities for all members. All students enrolled in the JAG program are automatically members.

**CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT**

There are numerous opportunities for chapter involvement, including:

* KCA Member
* KCA Officer
* KCA Committee Member
* Project/Team Leader
* National Recognition Program Participant
* Local, State or National Competitive Events
* Speaker at a Local Function (i.e., Kiwanis, Rotary, Historical Society)
* JAG KY Chapter Recruiter
* Local Fundraising Project Leader
* Community Service Project
* Project-Based Learning Activity
* I&I Ceremony Involvement (i.e., planning or decorating committee)
* Other Leadership and Followership Opportunities
* JAG KY Years of Participation Recognition

**STATE INVOLVEMENT**

In some states, the following opportunities for involvement are possible:

• Leadership Development Conference (LDC)  
• Career Development Conference (CDC)  
• National Student Leadership Academy State Delegate (NSLA)

• State Officer Candidate or Elected Officer  
• Voting Delegate to State Delegate Assembly

• State Competitive Event Participant/Winner

• CDC Event Monitor  
• Statewide Fundraising Project Leader  
• Leadership Training Workshop Participant

**NATIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

At the national level, the following opportunities for involvement are possible:

* National Student Leadership Academy Delegate (NSLA) in Washington, D.C.
* NSLA Competitive Events Participant
* JAG National Event Speaker
* JAG National Level 4 Completion and Recognition
* JAG National Chairman’s Award Nomination and Recognition (By Specialist)

***Why Participate?***

Students should be strongly encouraged to be active in the Career Association. There is ample evidence that active KCA participation provides numerous benefits to members. Organizational characteristics, which are most often listed as evidence of the value-added benefits of Career Association membership, include:

* The Career Association is a student-led organization.
* The Career Association provides opportunities for personal and career development.
* The Career Association nurtures a healthy competitive spirit through participation in the JAG National Competitive Events Program.
* The Career Association develops the total person – as both a leader and a follower.
* The Career Association actively involves members in school, community, state, and national activities, whereby providing members with the opportunity to travel, meet new people, and share ideas.

In completing an application to pursue further education or find a job, the Career Association accomplishments will be most impressive to those responsible for selecting the right applicant from among many high school graduates. The Career Association provides members an opportunity to be associated with a value-added and nationally affiliated organization.

***Managing the Partnership***

A Career Association chapter cannot be successful without the support and involvement of a number of "partners" or "stakeholders." Stakeholders are those persons who have an interest in the outcomes of the JAG program.

**1. IDENTIFYING PARTNERS (STAKEHOLDERS)**

In establishing a successful Career Association chapter, it is extremely important for the chapter to identify the partners with whom the chapter needs to seek support and communicate.

* + **Student Members** are the stakeholders of greatest importance, since all activities revolve around the needs of those who are involved in the Career Association (current JAG students). A positive image of the program and Career Association is essential if students are to be recruited and retained through high school graduation.
  + **Parents** are crucial stakeholders because their support and involvement are needed if the ultimate outcome of the program is achieved—graduation and a quality job, further education, or both.
  + **School Staff and Administration** are key stakeholders in the Career Association. It is through this partnership that chapter activities are approved and supported.
  + **Employers** are very concerned about the Career Association because they desire a qualified work force to help them serve their internal and external customers.
  + **Community-Based Organizations.** Churches, civic groups, trade associations, and the Workforce Development System represent a large number of stakeholders who are vitally concerned about the quality of life and the well-being of people of all ages in their community.

**2. RELATING MEMBERSHIP NEEDS TO STAKEHOLDER NEEDS**

Once stakeholders (partners) have been identified, it is essential that a relationship be developed so they will recognize the benefit in being involved in JAG KY or they will withdraw their support–financial and otherwise.

For example, an employer partnership obviously provides a benefit to the Career Association member in the form of a quality entry-level job with advancement opportunities. However, the employer must also see the real benefits of having access to a source of motivated and competent employees who are learning to work effectively as a team.

3. **CONNECTING TO STAKEHOLDERS** After determining the value of each stakeholder to the program and the value of the program to each stakeholder, it is important to determine the key elements of a strategy that would strengthen the relationship. The obvious benefits to "partners" are not always sufficient to establish the linkage. There must be an understood and recognized "win-win" strategy that will be followed to strengthen the relationship through ownership, involvement, and commitment.

**4. INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS** Once the linkage has been established between the "partners," it is important that attention be given to maintaining and strengthening the relationship or the partnership will die. Do not take a partnership for granted—strengthen the relationship continuously. Communicate through newsletters, email, or similar updates. Thank stakeholders in writing and publicly, if possible, for their support and involvement.

***Membership Categories***

**ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP**

Any participant enrolled in Jobs for America's Graduates is an active member. Active members are eligible to hold chapter, regional, or state offices as well as to participate in local, state, and national activities.

**ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP**

Former active members who have completed an accredited JAG program and are in good standing with their former programs are alumni members.

**CAREER ASSOCIATION CREED**

*I believe I have the right to establish high personal and career goals and to develop those skills necessary to achieve my goals. I believe I must choose a career appropriate to my interests, abilities and aptitudes.*

*I believe the success of the free enterprise system depends on the cooperation of business, education, labor, government, community and the youth of this nation.*

*I believe each individual has the responsibility to develop an appreciation for productive work and a respect for all careers.  
I believe individuals should have the opportunity to develop their full potential and recognize their value to society.  
I believe my success is earned through my efforts at school and at work.  
I believe the growth of my abilities and experiences gained through the Career Association will assure my future career success.*

**TAGLINE**

*The official tagline of the Career Association is:*

***“Preparing Today for a Career Tomorrow”***

**MOTTO**

*The official motto of the Career Association is:*

***“From Classrooms to Careers”***