



GENERAL INFORMATION, TERMS, AND REQUIREMENTS 2025

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WHAT IS A JUNIOR APPRENTICE?

A Junior Apprentice (JA) is a young individual, age 12-18, with a passion for history and a commitment to community service. JAs meet regularly to learn about regional history and traditional crafts and skills associated with Early American life. JAs also volunteer for special events and festivals and assist with projects at Exchange Place. JAs maturely and enthusiastically represent Exchange Place to the public.

JAs are **active learners** who enjoy exploring history through hands-on activities and honing their skills over time. They are **curious** and **open-minded** and enjoy digging deep into history by examining primary sources and artifacts. They have a **helpful, positive attitude** and enjoy **mentoring** each other and **engaging with the public** about what they are doing.

ADMISSION/FEES

The number of JAs is intentionally kept small to ensure quality instruction, and the program may not be open every year for new members. Likewise, all applicants cannot be guaranteed a spot in the program. Once the application process is open, an aspiring JA must complete a formal written application to be considered for the program. Once accepted, new JAs will officially be admitted into the program after completing orientation and may remain in the program until they graduate from high school as long as they continue to meet the terms of the program. After graduation, JA alumni are encouraged to stay involved in the program and continue to volunteer at Exchange Place.

There is a **\$100 entrance fee** per JA for the program, which covers the cost of resource materials, costume “wear and tear,” a tin cup, and a JA t-shirt and hoodie (additional t-shirts are \$10 each; hoodies are \$20 each). Siblings may join for \$50 each as long as they are willing to share resource materials. Yearly “dues” are met by volunteering, helping with fundraising, and participating on a regular basis in JA activities. Occasionally, there will be additional fees for special workshops or field trips.

Exchange Place is a non-profit, 501c3 organization and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, class, sexuality, or religious affiliation.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

On occasion, a student under the age of 12 will be accepted into the program if he/she is particularly mature, has an older sibling in the program, and/or has a parent who is willing to accompany him/her at meetings. Students with special needs are also welcome to apply to the program as long as they can be accompanied by an adult at all JA meetings. In some cases, younger siblings may be allowed to join in JA activities without officially being a JA as long as they are supervised by a parent or other adult.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Being a JA is a serious commitment. As knowledge of Exchange Place history and comfort with heritage skills is a “building-block” process, regular attendance and participation is critical. The number of JAs is intentionally kept small to ensure quality instruction, so it is important that all members “pull their weight.”

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is vital to the success of the JA program. While JA parents are not always required to attend meetings and workshops (except for the three annual meetings), they are always encouraged to participate and support their children. Parents are expected to help supervise stations at festivals.

MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS

JAs meet about once a month, usually on Saturdays or weekday afternoons, for workshops and project workdays. Activities may include learning about Exchange Place or local history; instruction in traditional skills such as open-hearth cooking, sewing, and blacksmithing; working in the garden and tending the animals; and preparing for festivals. Some workshops will have participation limits, while others will be open to all JAs. Completion of some workshops, like Open-Hearth Cooking 101 and Blacksmithing 101, are required before a JA can help at these stations during festivals.

In addition to special interest workshops, there are three annual “business” meetings that occur before each major festival (see more under “Festivals/Events”). These meetings are mandatory for JAs and at least one parent. Dates for all meetings/workshops will be set as early as possible to assure good attendance. In most cases, meetings will occur at Exchange Place, but occasional off-site field trips may also be scheduled.

COMMUNICATION

Very important! I send regular “JA Updates” over email with information about upcoming events/workshops and/or interesting historical facts. Please read these emails and respond promptly when necessary.

SAFETY/LIABILITY

Many heritage crafts and skills require the use of potentially dangerous tools such as sharp objects and fire. Safety precautions will always be taken, and sometimes parents will be asked to accompany their children to help supervise. All volunteers are required to sign a waiver that releases Exchange Place from any liability resulting from injury.

FESTIVALS/EVENTS

JAs and parents are expected to volunteer for regularly scheduled festivals at Exchange Place. These events are as follows:

- Spring Garden Fair (the last weekend in April, Saturday and Sunday)
- Fall Folk Arts Festival (the last weekend of September, Saturday and Sunday)
- Christmas in the Country (the first Saturday in December)

JAs cover several stations for festivals: kitchen (cooking), Cook's Cabin (cooking or crafts), historic kitchen garden, woodshed (chopping firewood and kindling), forge (blacksmithing); barn (animals); and schoolhouse (Christmas crafting during Christmas in the Country). For Christmas in the Country (and sometimes for other festivals as well), there is also a craft booth where we sell items made by the JAs to raise funds for the program.

For most festivals, there is a morning shift and an afternoon shift (4 shifts total for 2-day festivals and 2 shifts total for 1-day festivals). Both JAs and parents should try to work at least two shifts for 2-day festivals and one shift for 1-day festivals. JAs will receive a guide with more information about volunteering at festivals.

There is always a mandatory informational meeting/workday for JAs and parents before each major festival. This meeting typically occurs the Saturday before Spring Garden Fair and Fall Folk Arts Festival and the Thursday before Christmas in the Country.

WEEDING DUTY, ETC

As part of their yearly "dues," JA families are required to help with weeding and maintenance in the historic kitchen garden during the spring, summer, and early fall months. Families usually sign up for 2-3 weeks and work for about an hour each week. JAs will receive a guide with more information about their responsibilities in the garden. There may be other tasks such as building maintenance and chopping firewood that JAs can help with behind the scenes.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Upon entering the program, JAs will receive a notebook with information about Exchange Place, regional history, and heritage skills and crafts, as well as the book *Pioneer Sampler* by Barbara Greenwood. It is important that all JA-related materials be kept together. JAs will also receive a t-shirt and hoodie with the JA logo on it and a tin cup that they can use at festivals.

PERIOD CLOTHING

Accurate clothing is an important part of historical interpretation. Each JA will check out a period costume to wear at festivals and events. JAs are required to wear a costume when doing demonstrations such as open-hearth cooking and blacksmithing. At some stations, a JA t-shirt or hoodie may be worn instead. JAs will receive a guide with information about period clothing and how to care for it.

FUNDRAISING

The JA program is primarily funded through donations, grants, sponsorships, and craft booth sales. JAs are expected to take an active role in raising funds for the program by participating in fund drives and making items to sell at festivals.

SENIOR PRESENTATIONS

Before graduating from the program, senior JAs are expected to give a presentation or workshop on a heritage skill or historical topic that interests them. This is a way for them to formally share their knowledge with the rest of the group. Seniors should communicate with the JA coordinator when planning and scheduling their presentation/workshops.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

JAs are encouraged to establish “special-interest” groups within the program, with the coordinator’s approval. For example, Emily Myers (grad. 2022) founded the Junior Apprentice Old-Time Band, which performs at Exchange Place festivals.