of Arizona

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts – Economic Security and Mobility**

Junior Achievement is committed to promoting a more equitable and just tomorrow. Our shared future depends on how prepared today’s kids – from all backgrounds – are to navigate the realities they will face as adults. Lasting, institutional change is only possible if the people most likely to benefit are prepared with the information and skills necessary to navigate a changing landscape.

We are committed to reaching a diverse student population, supported by diverse volunteers and partners – we want the JA family to reflect the beauty and dimension of our own community. This includes diversity in areas such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender/gender identity, economic background, education, language, physical and mental ability and more. Our community will be strengthened by a robust, shared commitment to support all AZ students.

DEI efforts have been a strategic priority for JA for the last several years. Recent events have reinforced this priority and allowed us to fast-track many initiatives to reach the most under-resourced and underserved student groups in our state, with particular emphasis on addressing the vast disparities between families of color compared to white families in the areas of education, income, opportunity, access to resources, funding, intergenerational wealth, and numerous others.

We know that education – specifically around financial literacy and career-readiness – is an equalizer in the world of opportunity**. Junior Achievement’s proven approach gives today’s kids that power in the form of financial capability, career and work readiness, and entrepreneurship. These skills will not only improve their lives but will bolster their families, their communities, and our nation.**

At JA, we seek to do our part to narrow the income gaps and provide a pathway for students to overcome these inequities in hopes of a brighter and more just future for all. Through our programs, students are equipped to face generational issues, break the cycles of poverty and foster economic mobility & security for their future families.

**Each year, we are empowering tens of thousands of students from primarily low-income, disadvantaged, and under-resourced communities to lift up and be confident in pursuing the future they deserve.**

**Diversity in students, volunteers and partners**

Our DEI efforts currently prioritize reaching the largest and most under-resourced and underserved student groups. **We are proud to say that 63% of our students are from ethnic minority backgrounds and 65% are from low-income households.** **In the last decades alone, Junior Achievement has reached hundreds of thousands of Latinx, Black and American Indian students in Arizona.** Those students have been prepared to manage their money and succeed in their careers so that they can provide for their families and shape our community for the long-term.

We are committed to continuing to grow that impact in the immediate and long-term future. We are actively seeking ways to reach students who need our education the most (detailed below). We want to empower the futures of all AZ students, and specifically those whose involvement with JA will change the trajectory of their future families

Additionally, 35% of JA’s thousands of volunteers are from ethnically/culturally diverse backgrounds. We are committed to growing that diversity so that students can see themselves in volunteers and imagine their own future success.

Our programs are made possible by contributions from generous individuals and businesses in community. We are actively seeking partners who have a shared vision to see a more equitable future for all AZ students. We have prioritized partnerships that propel that vision so that a brighter tomorrow might come just a bit sooner for our kids.

**Impact**

Junior Achievement’s approach is demonstrated to give students the tools they need to increase their chances of achieving economic security and entrepreneurial success:

* 45% of Junior Achievement alumni say JA influenced the way they manage money, based on a [2020 JA Alumni survey](https://jausa.ja.org/dA/f1ab52cb56/criticalIssuePdfDocument/Ipsos%20JA%20Alumni%20Report.pdf) by Ipsos
* The survey reported 85% of alumni say Junior Achievement played an important role in fostering a belief they could achieve their goals
* 60% of Black alumni, 45% of Hispanic alumni, and 49% of white alumni say Junior Achievement gave them confidence in new situations, according to the Ipsos survey
* The survey demonstrated 60% of Hispanic alumni, 52% of Black alumni, and 51% of white alumni have started one or more businesses during their careers
* According to the same survey, 45% of JA Alumni businesses employ more than 20 people, compared to 12% of U.S. small businesses (U.S. Census Bureau)
* 90% of JA Alumni reported being confident in managing money in a 2016 JA Alumni survey
* The 2016 survey also shows a statistically significant shift in those reporting an increase in their standard of living between childhood and adulthood, a strong indicator of economic mobility

**Current Strategic Efforts**

* Programmatic
	+ Commitment to further diversifying our student reach
		- Prioritizing schools with high populations of students that are under-resourced, and/or are minority
		- Partnering with other nonprofit organizations and government groups to reach vulnerable youth populations – specifically focused on foster care and juvenile detention centers
		- Piloting a career-readiness and entrepreneurship program, specifically enrolling two cohorts of minority youth in Arizona
	+ Increasing access to JA programs
		- Developing free, online Spanish content
		- Creating more virtual programming for students in rural areas to have equal opportunity to receive JA
	+ Commitment to further diversifying volunteer demographics
* Organizational Culture/Operations
	+ Focusing our hiring outreach in under-resourced communities, including posting job boards on minority orientated pages
	+ Commitment to diversifying our board of directors to better represent the Arizona population and the students served by JA
	+ Commitment to obtaining more bids and working with minority owned and operated vendors
	+ Created and maintaining an open employee forum discussion group for continuous learning
	+ Created a local employee committee to spearhead internal DEI education
	+ Leading a group of JA Area Presidents across the country in a JA Presidents DEI Task Force
	+ Commit HR partner to a national committee to drive and influence companywide policies