



**JESUIT VOLUNTEER CORPS
NORTHWEST**



Mentor Handbook and Resource Guide



Thank You for committing to mentor a Jesuit Volunteer (JV) for this year!

This guide will introduce you to the JVC Northwest Mentor Program and explain how a Former Jesuit Volunteer (FJV) or a JV EnCorps Members (JVE) mentor might serve as additional support for Jesuit Volunteers. We are looking forward to you sharing your passions, skills and experiences to make a difference in the life of a JV.

As a mentor, you are joining a team of people that work with JVs, which includes staff, Program Coordinators (PCs); volunteer In-Locale Coordinators (ILCs); Support People, and local FJVs and friends. Each of these roles is unique in their support of the JVs, ideally providing holistic support during the volunteer year (more information below).

In this guide, you'll find the history of the mentor program, its goals and objectives, suggested discussion questions, a JV Program calendar, and other helpful notes. Please read carefully as some aspects of our current JV program may have changed since you were a Jesuit Volunteer. In addition, [our website \(www.jvcnorthwest.org\)](http://www.jvcnorthwest.org) has many resources such as our current mission statement, history, current JV locales and placements, stories of service, and much more!

We look forward to supporting you in developing meaningful relationships with our current volunteers as they prepare to be “ruined for life” by their JV year. Our staff is here to support you as well. If you have any questions while reviewing this guide or at any point during the mentor experience, please reach out.

Your Staff Contact	
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Why Mentoring?

The JV year is full of transition and change. Many of our volunteers move to the Northwest, often leaving a strong support system that they developed in the collegiate environments or home communities. Both current JVs and FJVs have expressed interest in making connections with the larger community of volunteers. FJVs serve as great sources of strength and inspiration for our current JVs as they navigate this challenging year of service. Conversely, current JVs help re-connect FJVs back to the mission of “service that does justice.” JVC Northwest recognizes that these connections have been happening for decades in an informal capacity through our strong network of FJVs across the country. We are grateful the capacity to develop a formal mentor program. In addition to general support, we offer intentional mentoring in the follow areas:



- The JV population is becoming more diverse with increased numbers of individuals entering the program who identify as Black/Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA2S+, or living with a disability (whether visible or invisible). Our mentoring program is an intentional step for Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) Northwest to act on the goals of equity and inclusion for this more diverse population.
- Research has shown that COVID-19 has impacted the mental and emotional resiliency of young adults. Because of this, we ask mentors to indicate whether they can assist mentees by providing extra support managing mental health stressors.
- With increased awareness about the role of clergy in issues like the erasure of Indigenous culture, abuse, and exclusion of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, holding a Catholic identity or growing up with Catholic influence can be complex. Should the need arise, we ask our mentors to indicate whether they are comfortable supporting a JV in navigating their spiritual journey.

It is our hope that FJV Mentors will assist the JVs in their transition to the JV experience; provide support during the year, and aid with vocational discernment as the current JV prepares for life after their service year.

The JV Year

The JV Support System












PCs are JVC Northwest staff members who serve as the primary contact and support for JVs during their service year. Four PCs support our 15 JV communities. They invite the JVs to explore the values of JVC Northwest, supervise the health and well-being of the JVs, navigate relationships with service and partner agencies, and help them have a successful year.

In-Locale Coordinators (ILCs) are Former JVs who have volunteered to serve as a “senior” support person in a JV community. The ILC assists in post-Orientation travel logistics and orienting of JV/AmeriCorps members to their locale through Local Orientation. They provide additional support throughout the year in the form of one-on-one gatherings, community meals, and sometimes hosting community or spirituality nights. The ILC also serves as a liaison between Support People and the JVC Northwest staff.

Each locale has one or more community members that provide support to the JVs during their service year known as Support People. When possible, Support People are FJVs, but in some locales they are local community members that are well acquainted with JVC Northwest.

The JV Calendar

Event	Time of Year	Focus
 <p>Orientation</p>	<p>Beginning of August</p>	<p>Weeklong gathering that orients new volunteers to JVC Northwest. JVs meet their community mates and our staff in person. Orientation for all JVs takes place at Camp Arrah Wanna in Molalla, OR. (Southeast of Portland).</p>
 <p>Fall Area Visit</p>	<p>Late September- Late October</p>	<p>PCs visit each of their communities during the fall to help JVs adjust to their locale, check in with Site Supervisors, and facilitate community development.</p>
 <p>Fall BIPOC Retreat</p>	<p>Late September- Late October</p>	<p>BIPOC JVs throughout all of our retreat regions are invited to converge for a weekend retreat.</p>
 <p>Fall Regional Retreat</p>	<p>Late October- Early November</p>	<p>JVs participate in a retreat weekend with 4-8 other locales from the region. The focus of the fall retreat is “People with and for Others”</p>
 <p>Winter Area Visit</p>	<p>January-early February</p>	<p>PCs visit their locales in January for the second area visit. During this visit, PCs continue to support JVs, seek new placement agencies and support people in each locale.</p>
 <p>Winter Retreat</p>	<p>February - March</p>	<p>JVs stay in their communities for this retreat and self-design it with the help of PCs and ILCs. This retreat allows the JVs to acquaint themselves with their unique locales more deeply. The focus is “Magis.”</p>
 <p>Spring Regional Retreat</p>	<p>Late April</p>	<p>JVs participate in a retreat weekend with 4-8 other locales from the region. The focus of the winter retreat is “Contemplatives in Action”</p>
 <p>Spring BIPOC Retreat</p>	<p>Date TBD</p>	<p>BIPOC JVs throughout all of our retreat regions are invited to converge for a weekend retreat.</p>

 Dis-Orientation	June-July	JVC Northwest provides resources for JVs, as a community, to create their own closing ritual to end their time in their locale. This can include personal retreats, prayers, potlucks, etc. to celebrate the end of the JV year.
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Developing a Successful Mentor Relationship

Mentoring is a great relationship for vocational discernment and support, particularly during the JV experience. Below are some ideas to help establish a successful mentor relationship:

Reflect on Your Personal Mentor Experience

Reflect on who has mentored you in the past. Even if you have never had a mentor, consider who has given you inspiration, guidance, and help in your career/life. These could be friends, peers at work, clergy or other spiritual guides, supervisors, colleagues, etc. Consider:

- How did these mentors/role models influence your development and growth?
- What did you like about these relationships? What was a challenge?
- What did your mentor do (or not do) to make you feel heard and supported?

Successful Tips for Mentor/Mentee Conversations

- Use Active Listening Skills: lean in; make eye contact; focus on body language and nonverbal cues (if in person or video); nod your head or affirm verbally. Ask follow up questions such as “What was that like for you?” and “Tell me more.”
- Be aware of cultural differences / norms in communication like eye contact and body language. If unsure, ask the mentee.
- Attempt to mirror the emotional tone of the JV.
- Be comfortable with silence – the JV maybe needing to compose their response, digest your comment or frame their follow up question.
- Ask open-ended questions; try to avoid questions that elicit a “yes” or “no” response.
- Paraphrase—restate in your own words—what you think was said. When paraphrasing is accurate, your Mentee will feel understood. If it is off the mark, it invites them to clarify and reminds you to listen more closely.
- Try to understand the world from the JV’s perspective. Put aside preconceived ideas, and refrain from passing judgment or offering solutions, help mentees to work towards their own resolutions.

Mentoring is:	
A professional relationship	...not necessarily a friendship.
A tool for discerning a next step in the JV’s career path	...not the mentor getting the JV a job
A sharing of ideas, experiences and tools. As a recent college graduate, the JV may have new tools / techniques to share with the mentor.	...not the mentor having all the answers

Where the mentor listens first, provides space, asks clarifying questions then provides commentary to help the JV discern a path	...not the mentor diving straight to “here is the answer.”
Where the mentor can connect the JV to appropriate contacts in a community, work, or larger industry that could be an aide to the JV to discern their life after the year of service.	...not a job placement service for the JV

Mentor/Mentee Meetings & Connections

- Ideally, mentors and mentees will connect monthly, or if that isn’t possible, about 4-6 times during the program year.
- Refer to the JV Service Year timeline to see what is going on in the JV Communities. This can be great jumping off points for conversations.
- Allocate about one (1) hour for the first meetings to become acquainted, but times may vary based on schedules and personalities.
- Many mentor/mentee relationships will be virtual over online platforms (Zoom, Google Hangouts) or via phone. If you would like access to a Zoom account, please let JVC Northwest know!
- Where matches live in the same locale, we invite mentor/mentee pairs to meet in person, if possible.

Creating Successful Conversations

As a mentor, you may be discussing topics of JV community/community mates, JV AmeriCorps placement (position, supervisor, clients, etc.), JVC Northwest policies and procedures, etc. These are natural areas where the JV may have challenges. One of the reasons JVC Northwest has initiated a mentor program is to have an outlet for the JV to discuss and discern a path to resolution. Ultimately, the JV will need to address the issues with their community mates, the community, supervisor / PC. Your role is to help them constructively meet the challenge and enhance their personal toolkit to deal with these issues.

- A potential trap that you need to avoid is becoming part of a triangle where you are between the JV and site supervisors, the local support network, or the PC.
 - The Mentor’s role should be one of coaching the JV on their problem-solving skills and how utilize them to constructively address and resolve the situation.
 - As part of the conversation, it may be beneficial to do a role-play to help the JV be confident in addressing the issues.
 - Be sure to encourage the JV to raise issues with the appropriate persons.
- The mentor represents JVC Northwest in their interactions with JV/AmeriCorps members and must make that role clear to them.
- You should consider what boundaries you want to establish on sharing of your personal social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. LinkedIn may be appropriate for most situations to show how you connect professionally
- Initially, it may be helpful to ask about neutral facts instead of feelings and impressions, and ask about things they want to talk about (i.e.-hobbies, college experience, etc.).



Questions to Consider Asking the JV

Community

- What was your expectation of living in community? How does reality differ from your expectation?
- How do you see the experience of living in community affecting your career / life?
- What gifts do you think you bring to your community?

Simple Living

- What were your expectations going into your year of service regarding simple living?
- How is the reality of living simply in community different from your expectations?
- What changes have you made in your life to live more simply?
- What connections have you made between simple living and social/ecological justice?
- How do you see this value affecting your future career discernment?

Social and Ecological Justice

- What was your expectation of how your year of service would reflect social / ecological justice? How is it different from your expectation?
- How do you see this value affecting your future career discernment?
- Do you ever feel overwhelmed by attempting to live this value? How do you cope with that?
- What aspects of your life do you feel will be changed based on the social & ecological justice values you have learned / practiced?

Spirituality/Reflection

- What is most fulfilling and most difficult about your own prayer life/spiritual practices?
- Are you participating in a parish or other faith community? If so, how is that affecting your journey?
- What faith questions are you struggling with, if any? What outside resources (books, articles, spiritual directors, etc.) would you find helpful?
- What are your personal hopes/goals for community sharing and their own spiritual growth, and how can you turn those into reality?

JV Service Placement

- What is life-giving about your service placement? What is a challenge?
- When you chose this service placement, how did it align with your future career / school plans?
Follow up questions:
 - Why did you choose something different from your future career / school plans?
 - What new skills / education / experience do you need to make a career of your service placement?
- How is your placement affecting your future career / school plans?

Career Discernment

- What thought have you given to your career after this year of service with JVC Northwest? *Perhaps relate to your own discernment process.*
- What kind of support can I offer you to discern the next steps?
- Let them know JVC Northwest has discernment resources

- What are your thoughts on an additional year of service? Why or why not?
- Are you considering graduate school after your year of service?

Trouble Shooting & Things of Note

Access to Internet & Wi-Fi

In summer 2019, JVC Northwest amended our standing policy regarding internet in JV homes. JV houses are now permitted to have Wi-Fi; however, JV communities are invited to discern their relationship with technology as part of their service year. This would make a great topic to explore with your JV mentee. Most JV communities elect to allocate resources towards internet in their home while some communities do not. In addition, most of our JV homes no longer have a landline (except for our more remote locales).

Drugs and Alcohol

Beginning in 2019, all communities are now asked to partake in a dry discernment month at the start of the service year. The program invites all JV communities to use the first month of their experience to examine and reflect upon their personal relationship with alcohol and the role it will play in community life. Some communities choose to stay dry longer than one month. The historically dry communities (on Indigenous reservations) will remain dry for the entire service year. Some states where JVC Northwest has locales (AK, OR, & WA) have made recreational marijuana use legal. Even if the state has legalized marijuana use, the use of marijuana by JVs is not permitted and all our placement agencies are alcohol-and-drug-free workplaces; a positive random drug test could result in the dismissal of a JV.

JVC vs. JVC Northwest

In 2006, JVC Northwest discerned to remain independent and locally based to better serve local and regional communities in the Northwest. The East, Midwest, South, and Southwest regions of Jesuit Volunteer Corps, along with Jesuit Volunteers International, decided to form one centralized structure based in Baltimore, Maryland. We continue to collaborate with Jesuit Volunteer Corps, united in the shared foundational values of Jesuit Volunteers. JVC Northwest is committed to providing well-supported volunteers to address the most urgent needs in the Northwest. Mentors should use “JVC Northwest” when speaking about our organization rather than “JVC.”

Partner Agency Relationships

Partner Agencies and our relationships with site supervisors are a critical part of our mission to work with those who find themselves on the margins of society and fragile ecosystems in the Northwest. It is through agencies that the JV AmeriCorps members experience the struggle of those people living on the margins economically, physically, or socially. Your role as a mentor is to be an objective third party in working with the JV on their problem-solving tools that may arise at their service placement. As a mentor, you can help by discussing challenging work situations. *Refrain from offering advice about how their role could be change at the organization or how they could shift their service.* Agencies and position descriptions for each JV go through a rigorous review process with our staff members. The PC is the appropriate person for the JV to resolve issues / questions about their placement.

Confidentiality

It is important that the mentee knows and understands that what they share in confidence with their mentor will be held in confidence. With that in mind, mentors should avoid becoming a secondary path for



the JV AmeriCorps member to raise issues that they should address directly with their Program Coordinator, ILC, Site Supervisor, JV Program Manager, AmeriCorps Program Manager or community member(s).

Whenever possible, the Mentor should seek to stay out of “triangle” situations by encouraging JV AmeriCorps members to speak directly with the person with whom they are having difficulties. For example, when a JV AmeriCorps member expresses a concern about a community member, the mentor could use this opportunity as a prompt to discuss ways of dealing with difficult people in a direct and constructive manner. This may include offering to role-play the conversation as a way of coaching the mentee to speak up.

In all situations, the immediate health and well-being of the JV AmeriCorps member supersedes all commitments to confidentiality. For example, if a mentee seems to be abusing drugs or alcohol; a mentee feels uncomfortable or unsafe because of their race, disability, or sexual/gender identity; or a mentee is in danger of harming themselves or others; please let JVC Northwest know immediately.

AmeriCorps

JVC Northwest became an AmeriCorps National Direct Grantee through receipt of Federal Funding through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) in the year 2010. This has allowed JVC Northwest to expand into new locales and increase the number of placements and scope of services to those on the margins of society. As a result, roughly 98% of the JV placements are AmeriCorps. JVs are required to wear gear with the AmeriCorps logo or a button during their service hours at their placements. At the end of their service year in an AmeriCorps placement, the JV earns an education award to use toward student loans or to further their education while also becoming part of the “AmeriCorps Alums” Network, which provides a plethora of professional resources and opportunities.

Benefits

- The partner agencies’ cost to host a Jesuit Volunteer (JV) is cut in half, depending on the locale
- The JV Applicant pool has increased in number given the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award provided to JV AmeriCorps members
- The JV Applicant pool has become more diverse, as we directly are able to recruit through the AmeriCorps website
- Partner Agencies benefit from capacity-building projects which are undertaken by JV AmeriCorps members to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of services

As with any federal funding, there are limitations of what can occur during service hours. As a general note, any activities that are direct advocacy, organizing (demonstration or boycotts), fundraising, religious instruction or any partisan political activities are strictly prohibited during service hours. A complete list of prohibited activities can be found [here](#), which we ask you to review and if questions arise, please direct them to the AmeriCorps Grants Manager.

Please note, individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, but it must be on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds and individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

Thank you

Over the past few years, our Mentor Program has become an important part of the JV experience. Not only does it provide extra support to our volunteers with marginalized identities, but data also suggests that FJV mentorship may have a positive impact on JV retention; the more JVs receive one-on-one mentorship, the more likely they are to finish out the year strong. We thank you for supporting our Jesuit Volunteers and the JVC Northwest program at large.

We would love to hear about your experience! If you have any memorable moments during your mentorship, please let us know.

