



J-LEAP (Japanese Language Education Assistant Program) 2016 – 2018

Goal of the program:

J-LEAP was created out of a November 2010 dialogue between former Prime Minister Naoto Kan and President Barack Obama. They shared the view that further enhancement of mutual understanding among wide range of people between Japan and the U.S. is necessary for deepening the Japan-U.S. Alliance. J-LEAP serves that goal by creating opportunities through teaching assistantships to nurture a new generation of qualified teachers of Japanese language. These young teaching assistants not only serve as native speakers in the U.S. classroom, but also add young adult voices in the school and the community to further strengthen the exchange between Japan and the U.S. By participating, host sites will develop even stronger programs and classes as well as promote international exchange between the United States and Japan.

Outcomes of J-LEAP

At the end of the second year of J-LEAP, lead teachers will be able to create and deliver Standards-Based Unit/Lesson Plans using backward design, teach in the target language, and effectively assess students' performance.

At the end of the second year of J-LEAP, assistant teachers will be able to team-teach by utilizing the knowledge and skills acquired during this experience and return to Japan to share their understanding of the American educational system and life in the United States.

Program Administrators:

J-LEAP is made possible through a partnership between The Japan Foundation (JF) and The Laurasian Institution (TLI). JF provides full funding of this program and TLI sponsors the visa for the teaching assistants in the Program. These two institutions jointly administer J-LEAP.

Eligibility and Qualifications: Assistant Teachers (ATs)

The ATs participating in J-LEAP all possess the following qualifications:

- (1) Are native Japanese language speakers
- (2) Hold a Bachelor's degree (or higher) in Japanese language education as a major or minor or Japanese-language teaching competency certification; or have completed a 420-hour professional development program for teachers of Japanese language
- (3) Have proven expertise in Japanese language education and have been interviewed on their pedagogy and experience
- (4) Licensed to drive in Japan and/or the U.S.

Note: These ATs do not hold the appropriate state certifications and endorsements to teach their own classes in the U.S. Therefore, J-LEAP expects ATs to teach together with the Lead Teacher

Eligibility and Qualifications: Host Sites and Lead Teachers (LTs)

Any K-12 site offering Japanese language education or local K-12 educational agencies is eligible to apply. K-12 Japanese language programs that are vibrant, have the support of the site, district administration and community, and have Japanese language teachers who are committed to improving their teaching skills will be given priority. J-LEAP is also looking for teachers who are interested in nurturing a new group of teachers as well as demonstrate leadership in their field.

Furthermore, the LT must be flexible when working with the AT, be willing to participate in various professional development activities and have a strong desire to improve his or her teaching.

JF and TLI will review and select the host sites.

Benefits of this Program

- (1) The host site's Japanese language teacher can strengthen the Japanese language program by co-teaching with the AT, up to two years
- (2) The AT's compensation is **fully** covered by JF; therefore, participation in the program is a cost-effective way to provide additional support to a Japanese language and culture program
- (3) A \$1,000 grant will be provided to the host sites to enable the purchase of teaching materials and support activities
- (4) Bringing an AT into the classroom gives students the opportunity to hear and learn authentic Japanese language from a different Japanese speaker, to interact with a native Japanese speaker (or a different native speaker), and to be exposed to authentic communication between the Japanese language teacher and AT
- (5) The community gains an AT who can also serve as a cultural promoter, engaging in cultural events and activities in the area
- (6) Professional development for the LT (clockhours offered or graduate credit available)
- (7) LT receives high quality of care and professional support from specialists throughout the program

Host Site's Responsibilities:

- (1) Sign a contract with TLI agreeing to the terms and conditions of J-LEAP
- (2) Assign an assistant position to the AT. Responsibilities may include: assisting teachers of Japanese language for approximately 15-20 hours/week of student contact hours. In addition to these contact hours, ATs may also be expected to take part in developing curricula and programming, creating teaching materials, grading, and planning cultural enrichment activities. Working more than 40 hours/week should not become the norm.
- (3) Provide a host family with whom the AT will live until November 30, 2016. After this period has expired, the AT and host family may continue the homestay experience, if mutually agreeable. If the AT prefers other living arrangements, such arrangements are the responsibility of the AT. Should the host family situation not work out after reasonable effort on the AT's side, the host site and LT are responsible for finding an alternate host family.
- (4) Recognize the Japanese language teacher as the AT's supervisor. This person will support the AT with professional matters at work and also help the AT adjust to the community
- (5) Send the LT to Arrival Training to meet and work with the AT. (New Lead Teacher Training will be held in Atlanta, July 26-August 1, 2016 (approximate dates) and In-service Training for second year LTs will be held July 28-August 1, 2016 (approximate dates). The LT's travel, lodging and most meal expenses will be covered by J-LEAP.
- (6) Provide for any non-travel costs incurred in order to support the LT's attendance at Arrival Training in the 1st year and In-service training in the 2nd year (e.g. covering substitute costs)
- (7) Verify the site's intent to continue the Japanese program beyond the AT's 2-year term
- (8) Provide a working space in the classroom or department office and a parking space at no cost

Lead Teacher's Responsibilities:

- (1) Attend Arrival Training from July 26-August 1, 2016 in the first year; In-service training at the beginning of the 2nd year from July 28-August 1, 2016. (Dates are approximate but attendance at both are mandatory.)
- (2) Guide AT in goals and expectations of the Japanese language program
- (3) Maintain contact with TLI as needed and through a written reporting mechanism
- (4) Provide regular feedback to the AT (at least once a week during the first 3-4 months)
- (5) Assist the AT in acclimating to the community and find someone to help AT with "settling in" issues (e.g. purchase of car and car insurance)
- (6) Agree to serve as "mentor" to future LTs
- (7) Understand that AT is not a certified teacher; thus, ATs are not allowed to teach alone in the classroom.

Compensation of ATs:

JF provides the ATs with the following compensation:

- (1) Relocation Cost: airfare (economy class) and moving costs between Japan and the host site
- (2) Housing Cost: The ATs will provide \$500/month compensation to the host family. This compensation is for room, board, and sharing the Host Family's American life with the AT. When living independently in an apartment or house, the AT will receive up to \$800/month as a housing allowance
- (3) Transportation Cost: Stipend to defray the cost of a car and auto insurance
- (4) Health Insurance: the ATs will receive funds to cover full health insurance. Each AT is responsible for understanding his or her policy (J-LEAP does not provide dental coverage.)

Program Timetable

October 2015	Host site, AT recruiting
January 19, 2016	Host site application deadline
February-March 2016	JF and TLI review applications, conduct video (Skype) interviews with potential LTs; conduct in-person interviews with potential ATs
April 2016	ATs are selected Host sites announced; approved host sites review and sign program contracts with TLI. Sites are notified of their AT in order to begin host family search. (LTs/Host Families should not contact AT until after Pre-departure training in May/June.)
May/June 2016	Pre-departure training (only for new ATs), school assignments announced. ATs sign program contract and apply for (J-1 exchange visitor) visas
July 1, 2016	Host family interview form, information sheet, photos due
July 26, 2016 July 26-August 1, 2016	ATs arrive in the United States. Arrival Training in Los Angeles LTs join Arrival Training; second year participants join in-service training
October/November 2016	Site Visits to New J-LEAP Sites; Follow-up training (only for new ATs)
October/November 2016	JF and TLI staff visit new host sites to observe a few classes as well as meet with the LT, AT, and others as needed
Approx late July 2017	In-service training
Summer 2018	End of the 2016-2018 cycle

Conditions

- (1) Host sites may apply for only one AT. Host sites may apply for another AT in the future, but the applying LT will need to participate in the selection process again, with no guarantee of selection.
- (2) The AT's contract is 1 year, renewable (if mutually agreeable) once, for 2 year maximum. The AT will work at the host site from the summer of 2016 until the end of the contract period (no later than two weeks after the last day of school in contracted year).
- (3) ATs are provided a visa which enables them to stay in the U.S. for no more than two years. They must return to Japan after completing the Program. This Program is designed as a short-term solution to the shortage of assistance to Japanese teachers in the United States and the needs of young adult exchange between Japan and the U.S. The ATs shall not be expected to permanently fill any full or part-time positions. Participating schools are required to certify that the ATs will not permanently replace full- or part-time employees. The Program is not designed to recruit and train non-citizens for permanent employment in the U.S.
- (4) Participating schools and districts, under contract with TLI, serve as host sites. In compliance with J-1 exchange visitor regulations, ATs can only be assigned to teach K-12 students in accredited primary or secondary schools.
- (5) The Japanese ATs' strengths and expertise are in language teaching. They are most qualified to assist Japanese language and culture classes. They may also serve as cultural resources to support other subjects such as social studies, art, music, international studies, etc.
- (6) The AT is eligible for all holidays observed by the host site. In the case of emergencies, the AT is allowed to return to Japan with consent from the host site, JF and TLI. Salary will be adjusted by JF based on the number of days that the AT will be absent from school.
- (7) If an applicant moves to the interview round, J-LEAP will ask for contact information of a reference who can attest to the applicant's capacity as a teacher or mentor.

Additional Support Provided during the Program

- (1) TLI organizes arrival, follow-up, and in-service training for program participants. Training is designed to introduce the ATs to living and working in the United States, the U.S. education system, cross-cultural communication. LT/AT pairs also work to develop a strong teamwork ethic.
- (2) TLI and The Japan Foundation Los Angeles design professional development training that covers topics related to curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and practices in the U.S.

- (3) JF and TLI provide ongoing support to the ATs by offering professional guidance and resources.
- (4) JF and TLI maintain ongoing communication with all the ATs through email and by phone to check on their work progress in the U.S.

Testimonials from Current and Past Participants

Mina has brought many ideas which we have incorporated. She brings a young, new energy. She has a lot of knowledge and adds to each lesson! For example, she knows the roots of kanji and how they are derived. She is the best after-school tutor that I have ever seen! She has participated in everything from homecoming chaperone to prep rally eating contest! The school, students and I love her and I often feel like Japan has brought me a life-long friend!
— Ms. Olson, High School Teacher

I was in a bit of a rut before J-LEAP. J-LEAP had forced me out of my shell and has made me examine my teaching in a different way. This has re-enforced some of the good things I do, but has also helped me become more aware of things I can do to improve. I believe one definition of a good teacher is someone who doesn't stop learning. J-LEAP has given me so many new avenues to explore that I doubt I will get to fully understand a fraction, but it has helped me see new ideas possibilities that will help me grow.
—Mr. Smith, High School Teacher

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