



J-LEAP (Japanese Language Education Assistant Program) Prospectus

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 a 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 community to further strengthen 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 Laurasian Institution. JF provides full funding of this program and Laurasian Institution sponsors the visa for the Assistant Teachers 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 of 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) Are 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 accredited 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 Laurasian Institution 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) During each participation year, 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 classrooms 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 is a cultural promoter, engaging in cultural events and activities in the area.
- (6) Professional development for the LT.
- (7) LT receives high quality of care and professional support from specialists throughout the program.

Host Site's Responsibilities:

- (1) Sign a contract with Laurasian Institution 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; developing curricula and programming; and 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 of the first year. 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 and In-Service Training for second year LTs will be held in late July. 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 first year and In-Service Training in the second year (e.g. covering substitute costs).
- (7) Verify the site's intent to continue the Japanese program beyond the AT's two-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 in late July (excluding travel) in the first year and In-Service Training in late July at the beginning of the second year (attendance at both are mandatory).
- (2) Guide AT in goals and expectations of the Japanese language program
- (3) Maintain contact with Laurasian Institution 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 a "mentor" to future LTs.
- (7) Understand that the 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 their policy. J-LEAP does not provide dental coverage.

Two-Year Program Timetable

October	Host site, AT recruiting begins
Early January	Host site application deadline
February-March	JF and Laurasian Institution review applications, conduct video (Skype) interviews with potential LTs; conduct in-person interviews with potential ATs; LTs and ATs are selected
April	Host sites announced; approved host sites review and sign program contracts with Laurasian Institution; sites are notified of their AT in order to begin host family search. (LTs/host families should not contact the AT until after Pre-Departure Training in May/June.)
May/June	Pre-Departure Training (only for new ATs), school assignments announced. ATs sign program contract and apply for (J-1 exchange visitor) visas
Early July	Host Family Interview Form, Information Form, and photos due
Late July Beginning of First Year	ATs arrive in the U.S. and participate in Arrival Training LTs join Arrival Training Second-year participants join In-Service Training
October/November – First Year	Site visits to new J-LEAP sites; Follow-Up Training (only for new ATs)
October/November – First Year	JF and Laurasian Institution staff visit new host sites to observe a few classes as well as meet with the LT, AT, and others as needed
Late July – Second Year	In-Service Training
Summer of Following Year	End of two-year program 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 one year, renewable (if mutually agreeable) once, for a two-year maximum. The AT will work at the host site from the summer of the first year 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 that 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 Laurasian Institution, 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 Laurasian Institution. 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) Laurasian Institution organizes Arrival, Follow-Up, and In-Service Training for program participants. Training is designed to introduce ATs to living and working in the United States, the U.S. education system, and cross-cultural communication. LT/AT pairs also work to develop a strong teamwork ethic.
- (2) Laurasian Institution 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 Laurasian Institution provide ongoing support to the ATs by offering professional guidance and resources.
- (4) JF and Laurasian Institution 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

Without the J-LEAP program, I would not have had the experience of working with such an AT as Ms. Okuda. Also, the J-LEAP program does an excellent job in finding high-caliber participants and preparing them for what they will be doing in the coming year(s). I also think that the stipulations that J-LEAP offers (monetary compensation, ability to drive, possibility of staying for two years as opposed to one, etc.) allows ATs to dedicate more time to the job and, thus, their output is far richer and thorough compared to that of someone without these stipulations. I think J-LEAP is a one-of-a-kind program.

- Ms. Shiomi, Elementary School Teacher

Mina has brought many ideas that 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 pep 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 and possibilities that will help me grow.

- Mr. Smith, High School Teacher

My J-LEAP AT helped to consolidate the program, injecting energy and Japanese culture with music, events, celebrations, and technology. Every day, students were eager to come to class to try a new activity or game we prepared for them. As the only Japanese teacher in the school for years, it was a lot of fun to have another teacher in the classroom to brainstorm and support the development of a better Japanese curriculum for our students. The AT was also the liaison for a community learning service program where Japanese students volunteered at the Carnegie Library teaching Japanese to children.

- Ms. Espino de Valdivia, High School Teacher

The J-LEAP program has enriched the K-12 Japanese Immersion Program in our school district by offering our students many more opportunities to improve their Japanese skills through interactions with their J-LEAP Assistant Teacher. Not only do our students benefit from the J-LEAP program, but our teachers develop professionally as they share their classroom and practice with their Assistant Teacher. We are thankful for the opportunity to be a part of such an important program.

- Ms. Huffman, Elementary School Principal

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