



1ST NORTHERN CALIFORNIA JAPANESE LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

August 14, 2025

We, the participating organizations of the 1st Northern California Japanese Language Conference, recognize the importance of foreign language education, as it enables students to obtain a new perspective of the world, which in turn helps them deepen their understanding of themselves, the community they live in, and the culture they come from. At a national level, foreign language education promotes a comprehensive understanding of the countries in which that language is spoken, furthering the mutual understanding with those countries.

However, foreign language education programs are changing and becoming more limited due to various challenges, not just in Northern California, but across the United States. In the case of Japanese language education in Northern California, many Japanese language programs face an overall decrease in student enrollment, language teacher shortages, and budgetary stringency, despite the popularity of Japanese culture and the aforementioned benefits of studying a language.

We, the participating organizations of this Conference, are mindful of these challenges that could potentially lead to Japanese language program reductions. Nevertheless, the widespread interest in Japan within the U.S. indicates a demand for Japanese language education for students to learn more about the country, its language, and its culture.

To respond to these challenges, we will work together to:

- Form a network of educators, community members, and stakeholders who are mindful of the aforementioned challenges.
- Keep up-to-date on the emerging situations of foreign language and Japanese language programs, and will collaborate amongst ourselves to address them. In doing so, we will convene for an annual conference to keep track of the changing landscape of foreign language learning and Japanese language education.
- Advocate for the sustainability and enrichment of Japanese language education by, among others,
 - Providing community events and school activities that expose students to Japan, its culture, and its career and internship opportunities, in collaboration with local communities including the sister cities network, and
 - Promoting Japanese language teaching as a career option for Japanese nationals and U.S. nationals, especially Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program alumni, to address the issue of Japanese language teacher shortages.

As this is a community-led effort and an inclusive and ever-growing process, we will continue to invite stakeholders that are equally mindful and willing to advocate.

2025 Northern California Japanese Language Conference Participating Organizations:

Northern California Japanese Teachers Association (NCJTA)

California Association of Japanese Language Teachers (CAJLT)

California-Japan Sister Cities Network (CJSCN)

JET Program Alumni Association of Northern California & Nevada (JETAANC)

Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California (JCCNC)

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Council

Japan Society of Northern California

Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco