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A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE

JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION UPDATE 39: RECRUITING JAPANESE TEACHERS

by Amanda Rollins, Japanese Language Program Coordinator

Japanese Language Education Update 39: Recruiting Japanese Teachers
By Amanda Rollins, JFLA Program Coordinator

There is a [national teacher shortage](#). The [JF Survey 2015](#) confirmed that this trend is affecting Japanese language teacher numbers as well. What can our community do about it?

First of all, what is “our community”? Who are we?

There is a vast network of passionate Japanese language teachers in the United States. Not only are there [Japanese teachers' associations](#) across the country, but we are also connected to other organizations like [Japan-America Societies](#), [Consulates-General of Japan](#), [Japanese chambers of commerce](#), and [Sister City Organizations](#). And please remember that the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles is ready to support this community with [grants](#) and [advocacy](#).



Together, our community has the resources to reach out and support new teachers.

When someone tells you, “I’m thinking about teaching Japanese,” what should you do?

Immediately share the [Becoming a Japanese Language Teacher](#) page with them. It now has a Japanese translation for native speakers: [日本語教師を目指したい!](#)

Tell them about the local [teachers' association](#) and encourage them to join. Other members can give them advice about teacher licensing and teaching methodologies. Maybe they'll even find a mentor who will let them observe a class or two.



Find pre-service teachers!

Teachers' associations should maintain contact with [universities which train Japanese language teachers](#). A new Japanese language teacher must start his or her career connected to support networks full of people who can answer questions. Find the person who is in charge of teacher training and send them an email to update them about your association's activities.

Several young teachers have told me, "I wish somebody had hunted me down and recruited me as a student! Nobody told me that this organization exists!"

What about experienced teachers who are currently outside of our network?

Your teachers' association probably has a list of members and their schools. Cross-check your list with the [JF Survey's school database](#), which will be updated soon with the 2015 data. Which schools are NOT on your member list?



Make a list of target schools for recruitment and send it to your members. Say to them, "Do you know anyone teaching Japanese at the schools on this list? Please contact them and tell them about the benefits of being a member. If you recruit a new member, your next year of membership will be free!" And of course, provide your members with a list of membership benefits to share.

It's also a good idea to establish a "recruiter" position on the board itself. It can be that person's job to call every school and get in direct touch with potential members.

Sometimes a school district decides to start Japanese and nobody tells us. How do we find out about it?

Often, school districts have a "world language supervisor" who would know about new programs in their district. These supervisors have an association of their own called the [National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages](#) (NADSFL). Find the world language supervisors in your region and email them to establish a connection. Even if



the district doesn't offer Japanese, the winds could change and they might consult with you about reasons to start one. And feel free to start the conversation by telling them about our [grants](#).

I also recommend maintaining close contact with your state Department of Education's world language supervisor. They are probably a member of the [National Council of State Supervisors for Language](#) (NCSSFL). It's their job to support language teachers in the state, so they need to know that you exist and have a voice.

The more connected we are, the farther our information and support can travel. Good luck!

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