



EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
JAPANESE COMMUNITY CENTER **ESGVJCC**

2025 STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM SISTER CITIES OF WEST COVINA AND OHTAWARA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to be able to speak Japanese to participate?

No. It is helpful to know a little Japanese, but it is not a requirement. However, this program is a great opportunity to learn Japanese and practice with your host family.

Does the student or family need to be members of the ESGVJCC?

No. You do not need to be members of the ESGVJCC to apply however, ESGVJCC Members will receive a discounted price. If you apply as a non-member, you will be subject to the non-member pricing.

Do we have to host students?

In order to gain the full experience of the program, each family is required to host one or two Japanese students in August 2026. Hosting a Japanese student is a remarkable experience that the entire family can benefit from.

What activities will we do while in Japan?

The activities are different each year. Typically, the group will visit local historic sites, visit a Japanese junior high school, visit Edo Mura (theme park), and eat lots of great food! There are also two free days planned by each student's host family.

Are the students accompanied by any adults?

Yes. Throughout the entire trip to Japan, at least two adult chaperones will accompany the students. These chaperones will be responsible for the students during travel and while in Ohtawara. While the students are with their host families, the chaperones will remain locally in Ohtawara and will be reachable by telephone.

Do we have to attend any meetings before the trip?

There are approximately 6 planned meetings before the trip to go over passport information, Japanese customs, what to expect in Japan, *omiyage* (souvenirs), and anything else needed for the trip. You are required to attend a minimum of 4 of the 6 meetings.

How much does the program cost?

The program costs \$2,500 for ESGVJCC Members (must be in good standing for past 2 years) and \$3,000 for Non-members which includes airfare, housing, transportation, food, and activities while in Japan. We encourage the students to fundraise throughout the year to help offset the cost of the trip.

How do I sign up?

Complete a Student Exchange Program application (available on the ESGVJCC Website). Applicants will be chosen by a selection committee. Upon selection, a \$200 non-refundable deposit is required. There is a limit of 8 slots.

What if my student needs to cancel?

If a student has to cancel and cannot attend the trip for any reason, written cancellation must be submitted on or before April 4th in order to receive a full refund. Cancellations after April 4th will incur a more significant forfeiture. The \$200 deposit made at the time the application was submitted is non-refundable.

What happens if the trip is cancelled by the ESGVJCC?

Eight students is the minimum number of students needed to send to Japan. If the minimum number is not met, the program will be cancelled for the year and a full refund will be provided.

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