

FAQs on JACL/OCA DC Leadership Conference

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Who is eligible to attend?

All national JACL members in good standing, who have not previously attended, are eligible to apply through their districts. The National Youth/Student Council is also encouraged to submit candidates.

I am also a member of OCA– can I apply through OCA as well?

Although JACL started this program in the mid-1980s, we now co-convene it with OCA National (formerly the Organization of Chinese Americans) with each organization sending 15 participants. OCA National has its own recruitment and organizational process, which is entirely separate from JACL. Please check with your OCA National chapter for its procedures. Members who attend as JACL participants are expected to represent JACL.

How do I apply to attend?

Applications/guidelines are available on the JACL website. Two slots are reserved for each district, and the National Youth/Student Council is encouraged to submit a candidate (in case a space is available). Selection of delegates is done at the district level. Regardless of the mechanism for selection by the district, anyone interested in attending should check with his/her district governor for district deadlines and other procedures.

When is the conference?

This annual conference takes place in March every year. It begins on a Friday in the evening with a kick-off reception after work and goes through the following Tuesday afternoon (four days). Exact dates are announced as soon as determined.

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How much will it cost me?

"Tuition" for the program includes meals and accommodations (for a shared double hotel room for the days of the conference) and is paid by the National JACL with a grant from State Farm (with some help from the participant's district) for all district delegates. Depending on your district, either your chapter or the district should pay your airfare/travel expenses. Any extraneous costs (entertainment, telephone, single room, extra nights) are your responsibility.

What does the schedule entail? Who will we be meeting?

This is a rigorous four-day conference that goes all day, from breakfast to dinner (with meals included in the program). Please see the schedule from a previous year (also posted on the JACL website) to get an idea of what is involved. While the program is subject to change, the schedule will closely follow that of previous years. We expect to meet with a number of APA elected and appointed officials, as well as other community groups and coalition partners.

Please note that this conference does not include sightseeing excursions, so if you are interesting in seeing some of Washington's historic landmarks or museums, please build enough time into your schedule either prior to or after the conference.

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What if I can't make the entire conference?

Attendance at all functions – including meals – is mandatory for all participants. If you will be unable to attend the Friday evening reception (usually starts around 5:30 or 6:00) because you will be en route, please notify the JACL DC office. Otherwise, all participants are expected to attend all sessions of the conference.

Can I bring my spouse/partner/relative?

As this conference is closed to the public, we do not recommend that participants bring family members or friends. Since there is very little extra free time during the conference (including meals), it is likely that you will not have the opportunity to spend much if any time with them.

What about travel arrangements?

Delegates selected by their districts should immediately begin to make their own travel arrangements once they have been notified of their selection. Plan to arrive on Friday around 4:00 in the afternoon and leave no earlier than 5:00 PM or so on Tuesday. Hotel reservations will be made by the Washington, DC office, and you will be requested to share a room with another participant (rooming assignments are made by JACL DC office). If you desire a single room, please make that request to the DC office and understand that you will be expected to cover the additional hotel expenses. Further information about the hotel, getting to/from the airports, etc. will be provided as the conference approaches.

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Can I stay with friends/family instead of at the hotel?

Because networking and developing a sense of camaraderie is so important to the conference, we expect that all participants will stay in the hotel where the program is being held and remain with the group throughout the conference. Please refrain from making other plans until the conference has ended on Tuesday.

Can I stay longer or come earlier?

Certainly. We would be more than happy to extend your reservations for extra days/nights at the hotel (additional nights will be at your own expense). Please notify the JACL DC office as soon as you have made your travel plans.

What do I need to bring?

Further information will be provided as the conference date approaches. The dress code for the conference is business casual (no t-shirts, jeans, shorts or sandals). You will need regular business attire for two days of meetings on Monday and Tuesday (suit + tie, equivalent for women), and bring comfortable shoes as we will be doing a lot of walking to get to our meetings on those days. An umbrella and coat may also be necessary. You are advised to check the weather reports in advance, especially those who are coming from much warmer parts of the country.

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Can I take pictures?

Yes, by all means bring your camera but please refrain from distracting the speakers by taking pictures during the actual sessions. We will try to reserve time after the various sessions for photo opportunities. As this conference is wholly off the record, no recording of any of the sessions is allowed.

Anything else?

For questions regarding application/selection process, please contact your district governor or alumni of this program from your district. Once you have been selected, the DC office will be in contact with further information. However, we appreciate your patience regarding the details of the schedule and specific logistical information.

We look forward to seeing you in our nation's capital!