

The Local Government Officials Training Program in Japan 2010

“LGOTP Guide to Training in Japan”



Council of Local Authorities for International Relations
(CLAIR)

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I. Overview

You will be traveling to Japan as a participant in the “Local Government Officials Training Program (LGOTP) in Japan”. The LGOTP is coordinated by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) under guidance from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), but the program is directly implemented by individual local governments in Japan.

The majority of training on the program is conducted by individual host government institutions; however, CLAIR provides support at all levels including the recruitment, pre-departure guidance, arrival orientation and the Japanese language studies.

Of course we hope that you will master the technology and skill during the specialized training. We also hope that you will use this opportunity in Japan to learn about the language and culture and to make your life in Japan a fun one.

In this guide, you will find information that will be useful for your training and stay in Japan. Please read this guide carefully and begin your preparations to come to Japan. To find out more about CLAIR, an outline is written on page 12.

1. The Local Government Officials Training Program in Japan (LGOTP)

1.1 Overview of the Program

The Local Government Officials Training Program in Japan was established in 1996 in order to further promote the direct international cooperation activities of local governments. Through the LGOTP, foreign local government officials have been hosted by prefectures, cities, and other municipalities in Japan and over the years, 870 trainees from 34 countries and areas have participated. The training programs provided are in a wide variety of fields, including general administration, education, environmental preservation, and agriculture.

The two main objectives of the LGOTP are as follows: (1) to invite government officials from foreign local governments for training at Japanese local governments in order to transfer knowledge and technical skills that can be utilized to help improve your respective local governments; and (2) to have trainees cooperate with activities for internationalization planned by the local governments in Japan and also for trainees to play an important role in maintaining friendly ties between the Japanese local government and their respective governments.

For more information, please look on the CLAIR website:

<http://www.clair.or.jp/e/sien/kouryu/index.html>

For inquiries, please direct them to Mr Teruya Miyazaki or Mr Takehito Otsuki or Mr

Matt Douglas at the International Cooperation Division:

Tel: +81-3-5213-1726 Fax: +81-3-5213-1742 Email: lgotp@clair.or.jp

1.2 Schedule and Important Dates in 2010

Before Arriving in Japan

- **Obtaining the Proper Visa**

You should quickly begin the procedures for obtaining your visa to enter Japan. Please refer to "Obtaining the Proper Visa to Enter Japan-IMPORTANT!" on page 8.

- **Traveling to Japan (Arrival Sunday, May 23rd)**

You will receive information about your flight to Japan from CLAIR through a representative travel agent in May. Please follow their instructions for details of picking up your air ticket.

- **Tokyo Orientation (May 24th-25th)**

The Tokyo Orientation is held over two days directly after your arrival

in Japan. The objective of the orientation is to provide trainees with useful information to ensure that your stay in Japan be pleasant and productive. It will also include meeting briefly with representatives from your local host institution, Japanese language placement test in preparation for JIAM and a study tour in Tokyo.

- **Japanese Language Training in JIAM (May 27th-June 24th)**

An intensive Japanese language training course is held at JIAM for about one month. In addition, there will also be opportunities to learn more about the Japanese local administration system and Japanese culture through a series of workshops, study tours and local government related lectures.

*Note: Depending on the Japanese level of the trainee and the requirement necessary for their specialized training program, the local host institution may request the trainee to participate in an additional two week Japanese language course at JIAM.

Outline of the LGOTP Schedule	
Mar~May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procedures for obtaining visa• Study Japanese• Contact with host institution
Late May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrive in Japan• Tokyo Orientation
Jun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japanese Language Training in JIAM
Jul~ End	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialized Training at host institution
Mid-Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autumn Conference

What is JIAM?

The Japan Intercultural Academy of Municipalities (JIAM) is a training facility that was established with the goal of developing the capacity of local government personnel with a special focus on international affairs. JIAM is located in Shiga Prefecture near Kyoto in central Japan. For more information, see the enclosed JIAM pamphlet or visit their website. <http://www.jiam.jp/>

Specialized Training (June 25th-End of Training)

After the JIAM training, trainees depart for the various host institutions in Japan. Each trainee will begin their specialized training program prepared by their host institution. See "Tips for a Successful Training Experience" on page 9 for more about how to prepare for your specialized training.

Autumn Conference (Mid-October)

After three to four months of training, all participants will gather in mid-October for a 2 day conference where each will report on the progress of their training and exchange ideas. This will be the last time that all of the trainees will meet together.

II. Basic Program Conditions and Expectations of Participants

1. Program Guidelines and Restrictions

All participants admitted into the program have already submitted a signed "Written Pledge" outlining the most basic of the participants' obligations, please be sure to reconfirm your understanding of the pledge. In addition to honoring the terms of the pledge, please carefully read and understand the guidelines and restrictions in the following pages.

(Extracted from the Written Pledge)

1. Observe Japanese laws.
2. Observe the instructions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), CLAIR, and the host institutions in Japan.
3. Will not enter any false information in documents submitted to MIC, CLAIR, and the host institution in Japan.
4. Will carry out the training as earnestly as instructed and abide by the rules and regulations of the host institution.
5. Will not carry out any political activities or similar acts.
6. Will not do any work for remuneration.
7. Will personally bear any expenses incurred in excess of the amount of money provided to me by the host institution and will not request an increase in the money paid to me by the host institution.
Also, if I discontinue my training before the designated period is completed and return to my home country without compelling reason, I will personally bear all incurred expenses.
8. Will personally repay all debts incurred during my stay in Japan.
9. Will not object should MIC, CLAIR, or the host institution judge that it is difficult to continue the training and order that the status of cooperation and exchange trainee be discontinued.
10. Upon completion of the training, utilize in my own country the know-how and technical skills acquired during the training in order to promote friendly ties with Japan and the Japanese host institution as well as contribute to the prosperity of my own country.

2. Important Points

- **Restriction on Accompanying Family Members**

In general, it is not possible for trainees to bring family members to Japan because of a variety of factors including difficulties in getting visas for family members, living expense and accommodation problems, and difficulties in adjusting to life in Japan (especially the Japanese language). Therefore, it is important that you follow the instructions from your host institution regarding this matter.

Japanese government regulations state that dependents of trainees participating in this program may NOT qualify for dependent status in Japan.

- **Returning Home During the Training**

In principle, trainees are not permitted to make trips back to their home country during the period of training. In extremely rare cases, a return trip may be approved if the reason for the trip is judged to be compelling and the trainee is granted a re-entry permit. In such cases, the costs for travel shall be borne by the trainee. Approval for return trips is generally only given under extreme circumstances, such as with the death or serious illness of a close relative.

NOTE: If you temporarily go back to your home country, you must obtain a re-entry permit before departure in order to return to Japan on the same visa. Please consult with your host institution supervisor before going to the local immigration office.

- **Mandatory Attendance at All Scheduled Training Activities**

We ask that you and your dispatching organization make your full participation in the training program a top priority. The funding for each participant's training comes from tax payers in Japan. Therefore, LGOTP participants are expected to attend all portions of the scheduled training program. In general, it is not acceptable for trainees to skip scheduled training activities, including language training classes at JIAM, to meet with friends or in principle, to tend to work assignments such as acting as interpreter for senior officials from your home country when they visit Japan. Exceptions to mandatory attendance are rare, but may be possible only after thorough consultation with CLAIR and your host local government.

- **Differences in Conditions Among Trainees**

As this program is implemented by the various local governments across the country, there will naturally be differences in the conditions for trainees, such as housing, training hours, and the general living environment. Furthermore, there may be differences in conditions of trainees who have come to Japan on other programs, such as the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Training Program.

Trainees are requested to accept that such differences exist. Please understand that all host institutions, while taking regional characteristics into consideration, have planned to provide the trainees with an environment and resources that will allow them to live comfortably while undergoing training.

Trainees who feel that their living situations are unacceptable should consult with the staff of their local host institution or CLAIR as necessary.

- **Restrictions on the Use of Motorized Vehicles (Cars and Motorcycles)**

In order to reduce the possibility of unforeseen problems during the trainees' stay in Japan, we discourage all trainees from driving. In general, you are not allowed to drive during working hours. However, as long as you have the proper license and insurance, there is no regulation to prevent you from driving in your private time or for commuting. But in any case, we ask that you consult with the staff member in charge at your host institution about such matters. In the case that you will drive a vehicle, please know the Japanese law well.

- **Cycling**

There will probably be many opportunities to ride a bicycle at your local host institution. In principle, one should cycle on the left hand side of the road and if cycling on the pavement, should cycle slowly while giving priority to pedestrians. In Japan, there are laws relevant to cycling, therefore please know the law well.

- **Termination of Training**

As a rule, when a trainee discontinues the training before its scheduled completion, the trainee or the trainee's dispatching institution is responsible for paying the costs of the training program up to that point. In any case, it is important to carefully discuss such matters with the staff at your local host institution because the sudden discontinuation of the training program may have a negative effect on the friendly relationship between the institutions involved.

3. Reports

Trainees are required to submit two training reports to CLAIR, including a mid-term and final training report.

4. Health

Trainees are expected to be in good health, both physically and mentally, so that they will be able to successfully complete the training course.

However, living overseas for an extended period of time can be stressful and emotionally demanding. It is common for people to feel lonely and irritated at times while living overseas with cultural differences such as food, language, customs, etc. As a result, some trainees may feel stressed or homesick during the long-term training program. Many trainees tend to fall ill in the first couple of months after arrival in Japan.

If you feel unwell during the course of your training in Japan, please do not hesitate to immediately discuss with appropriate persons around you. The local host institution is obliged to pay for the overseas travel insurance for each trainee in case of any medical emergencies. This insurance provides for reimbursement of medical treatment with a maximum limit. (This takes effect from the date of departure to the date of return to the trainee's home country). It is important to note that the insurance excludes the following: pre-existing illnesses, dental care etc. If you have a tooth cavity or any injuries, we suggest that you get it treated before coming to Japan.

4. Termination of Trainee Status

If a participant fails to observe the above mentioned obligations, or performs poorly during the course, his/her status as a LGOTP participant may be terminated.

III. Preparation for Departure

1. Obtaining the Proper Visa to Enter Japan **IMPORTANT!**

There are two steps needed to be taken by all trainees before coming to Japan.

Step 1: Provide Your Host Institution with Required Documents

Your local host institution must apply to the local immigration office in order to obtain a "Certificate of Eligibility". You will later need this certificate in order to obtain the proper visa to allow you to enter Japan as a trainee.

Your host institution needs the following items and documents in order to complete the application. If you have not done so already, please send these items **as soon as possible**. Please note that translations into either Japanese or English are required for documents written in other languages.

① Items to Be Prepared by the Trainee:

- 5 Passport-sized photographs: 4cm x 3cm (x 3); 4.5cm x 3.5cm (x 2)
- Copy of personal identification document (passport, or other formal official document that shows full name stated in your passport, date of birth, and gender)

② To Be Prepared by the Dispatching Organization in Your Home Country

- Post-training return-to-job guarantee form (original and duplicate)

*We also recommend that you keep a copy for your personal records.

Important Note for People Who Do Not Currently Hold a Valid Passport: While your host institution can apply for an "Immigration Status Certificate" without a passport, you will need a valid passport to obtain a visa and to enter Japan. If you do not already have one, it is important to apply for one as soon as possible. However, in the case of trainees from China, you will not need to apply in person as this will be conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Step 2: Use the Certificate of Eligibility to Obtain Your Visa for Japan

After receiving the Certificate of Eligibility, your host institution will send it directly to you. Please take the certificate to the Japanese Embassy in your home country and apply for the visa to enter Japan as a trainee. After receiving your visa from the Japanese Embassy, please contact your Japanese host institution to inform them of the application date and the date of issue of the visa from the Japanese Embassy.

*For trainees from China, the CLAIR Beijing Office is in charge of Japanese entry visa procedures, thus you do not have to go through the Japanese Embassy. For further information, please contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in your country.

2. Tips for a Successful Training Experience

2.1 Studying Japanese Prior to Departure

To ensure that you have the most effective training possible, CLAIR will provide you with a set of Japanese language textbooks for self-study before you come to Japan. A working knowledge and competency in Japanese will be very important to ensure the success of your specialized training program, especially for trainees who will receive training in Japanese. Problems may arise between the trainee and the host institution if the trainee comes to Japan with insufficient Japanese skills.

Even for trainees whose training language will primarily be English, Japanese language skills will be necessary for you to enjoy your daily life. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you study hard before coming to Japan.

After studies, please return the completed Japanese language assignment by fax to ARC Academy Japanese Language School by no later than April 30st.

2.2 Contacting Your Host Institution

The local host institutions design the training programs based on the comments of the trainee's application. Before you arrive in Japan, it may be a good idea for you to contact the person in charge of organizing your training program to confirm the content of your training program. You can help your host institution by giving them information about your background, abilities and training expectations. Of course the host institution may not be able to meet all of your requests, but the better the host institution understands your situation, the better they can begin to prepare an appropriate program.

Moreover, good communication with your host institution can provide you with useful information about the local climate, your training schedule, and your future living environment, thereby helping you to prepare for your long-term stay in the local host municipality.

To avoid misunderstandings regarding your training program and living conditions, please be sure to have plenty of contact with your host institution before leaving for Japan.

International Call to Japan

The international dialing code for Japan is '81'.
To call Japan from overseas, dial 81+ local number (omitting the initial '0').

For Example: To Call the International Cooperation Division at CLAIR
From within Japan: 03-5213-1726
From overseas : +81-3-5213-1726

2.3 Becoming Ambassador of Your Home Country

One of the objectives of the LGOTP is to have the participants cooperate with activities for internationalization planned by the local governments in Japan. In this regard, you may be asked to introduce your hometown or country and its customs to residents in your host municipality. Therefore, you may want to consider bringing some of the following items with you to Japan:

- Photos: family, work, places of interest, food, everyday scenes, unique events and celebrations
- A fact book about your country with statistics, maps, and photos
- Everyday items such as a music CD
- Traditional clothing of your home country

You may also want to consider songs, dances, or other cultural performance that you could do.

2.4 Being Familiar with Japanese Culture and Language

We also encourage you to actively participate in local events in your area after work or during weekends. Most prefectures in Japan have prefectural international associations or international centers where you can easily participate in their Japanese language or cultural classes offered to foreigners.

3. Guidelines for Packing

3.1 Climate in Japan

Japan has four seasons where it is generally hot in summer, cold in winter and spring and autumn are generally mild. But the weather can vary greatly depending on your location within Japan, please be sure to ask your host institution about the climate of your locale. Usually, June is the rainy season (*tsuyu*), and Japan experiences many typhoons from summer to autumn.

(For more information: <http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/index.html>)

3.2 Clothing

	Duration	Main Clothing Required
Tokyo Orientation	4 Days	Training- Business attire Welcome Reception- Business attire or traditional clothing
JIAM Training	4 Weeks	Opening/Closing Ceremony- Business attire Language Training- Informal attire
Specialized Training	5-11 Months	Business attire and clothing appropriate to your specialized training. Please contact your hosting institution for exact requirements

3.3 Dividing Your Baggage and Prices in Japan

- Please divide your belongings into 3 separate baggages when coming to Japan, as they will be sent to different places immediately upon your arrival.

	Duration	Necessary Item(s)	Baggage Type
Tokyo Orientation	4 Days	Business attire	Hand luggage
JIAM Training	4 Weeks	Business/casual/sports attire	Suitcase or equivalent- Sent from hotel to JIAM on May 25 th
Specialized Training	5-11 Months	Clothing necessary for specialized training period, materials for specialized training, gifts etc.	Suitcase or equivalent- Sent directly from Narita Airport to host institution on May 24 th

The accommodation used by trainees will not be spacious and it is therefore recommended that you do not bring too much luggage with you. Everyday necessity items can be purchased in Japan but you may be surprised by the high prices compared to those in your country. (For example: a taxi ride begins with the meter at around 700 Yen (about US\$7)). You may want to consult with your host institution about what to bring.

3.4 Currency Exchange

After arriving in Japan, you can change US dollars and a few other major currencies for Japanese yen at either the airport or banks in Tokyo. We recommend that you bring Japanese yen or US dollars before departing for Japan.

*** Important ***

Foreign currency exchange is not available at the hotel where you will be staying, therefore, please exchange at Narita International Airport if necessary.

3.5 Internet Connection

There is an internet corner available in the hotel that you will be staying at in Tokyo (100 Yen for 10 minutes). If you have brought a laptop computer along, you may connect to the internet in your hotel room via a LAN cable (available at the hotel reception though limited).

During the JIAM training, you may make use of the computer facilities in JIAM free-of-charge during the regular hours. If you have your own laptop computer, you could connect to the internet using a LAN cable. A limited number is available for rental at JIAM.

After proceeding to your respective host institutions for the specialized training, your respective situations will vary. Please enquire about the availability of internet connection with your host institution.

3.6 Electric Current in Japan

Electric Current in Japan

Standard electrical outlets in Japan accept only two-pronged plugs. Electric current for home use is 100 volts (AC) throughout Japan (the frequency is 50 hertz in eastern Japan and 60 hertz in western Japan).



For a wealth of information about Japan on the Internet, try the Japan National Tourist Organization website: <http://www.jnto.go.jp/>

*Information available in English, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, French, German, Portuguese, Thai and Russian.

About CLAIR

CLAIR was established in 1988 as a joint organization of local authorities to promote local level internationalization in Japan. CLAIR is made up of government officials from the various municipal and prefectural governments in Japan.

CLAIR supports the international exchange and cooperation activities of Japanese local governments. CLAIR also supports human resource development projects with an international focus for local governments.

CLAIR's head office is located in Tokyo, but also has overseas offices in New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and Beijing. The overseas offices are used to support the international activities of Japanese local governments and they also implement various research projects.

For more information about CLAIR, please see our homepage: <http://www.clair.or.jp>