



2025 Student Delegate Information Packet and Application

Return no Later than March 20, 2025

It is our hope that you will find all of the information you need in order to decide if you would like to apply to be a delegate of the Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization in this packet. If you are still unsure, or perhaps needing additional information we welcome you to our monthly meetings held the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Drop us an email at AntiochChichibuSCO@gmail.com with any questions and to get the location and time of our next meeting!

The Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization was formed in 1967, the cities of Antioch and Chichibu had both been looking for Sister Cities . The Sister City relationship was proposed by the Sister City International Organization based on the similarities between cities and the desire on the part of each to establish a Sister City in each other's country. These two cities were likely candidates to be each other's sister city as each city had manufacturing plants, were situated near a river, had a mountain in the vicinity, and were at the edge of the economic sphere of a large metropolitan area (San Francisco and Tokyo). Antioch first sent a delegation in 1969, to formally initiate the newly formed Sister City relationship.

Every year we exchange students and adult chaperones with Chichibu, Japan. Odd years we send a delegation to Chichibu, even years they send a delegation to Antioch. Each delegate to Chichibu will be assigned to a host family. You will get to experience life as part of their family. The best part is living with the host family and seeing a bit of life in Japan. From a cultural exchange point of view, you can't get much better than this.

The type of home where you may be invited to stay may include:

- A traditional Japanese home with shoji (Japanese doors), tatami (bamboo) mats with futons on the mats
- An older residence with historical appearance and few modern conveniences
- A western style that resembles our houses in Antioch

No matter which style of home you might visit, each is uniquely Japanese and the delegate is welcomed as a family member.

From the host's home, delegates will go on tours and activities planned by our hosts, the Chichibu-Antioch Sister City organization. You will likely visit local popular, historical, and cultural areas. Delegations are scheduled to coincide with the annual Mid-summer KAWASE Festival in Chichibu. During this festival, the shrines of local Shinto deities are carried through Chichibu in processions.

On most occasions, delegates are tourists, well taken care of by their host families. At other times, delegates will represent the Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization at official events or meetings with Chichibu City officials. On those occasions delegates are expected to be quiet and respectful, speak when spoken to, and speak clearly and slowly.

Families that host a Sister-City delegate from Chichibu may apply to be part of the delegation to Chichibu the following year and will receive top priority during our selection process. If your family has not hosted, prior to you going as a delegate, you *must commit to host* (or secure another suitable host in your place) a delegate from Chichibu the following year. Those that have hosted in previous years will be given priority in future visits. Priority will also be given to Antioch residents/ students of Antioch Schools. The most active members in the organization will be given priority as well. Non-Antioch residents/ students who have not hosted in previous years will not be considered. Delegates must be members of the Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization. (Membership application is included in this packet.)

Student delegate applicants must:

Be at least 15 years old

Submit a student application form including a release form sign by parent/guardian

Complete the Emergency Notification form

Have valid medical insurance

Have valid passport

Attend scheduled meetings in preparation for the visit

At times more students may apply to be delegates than can be accommodated by our Chichibu hosts. In this case, delegates are selected by the Antioch-Chichibu Sister City board. A likely student candidate would be:

- An active member of the Antioch Chichibu Sister City Organization
- A member of a family that has hosted delegates from Chichibu in the past.
- A sophomore or junior in high school with interest in international studies and who has taken a Japanese language course.
- A student active in school or civic activities (Key Club, Student Council, etc).
- A resident of Antioch

When will we be traveling? This year's trip is tentatively scheduled to be from **July 16th - 31st**. Logistics are subject to change, but the trip revolves around the delegation's participation in Chichibu's midsummer KAWASE festival on July 19th.

What is the cost? Since we are a home based exchange program your housing and meals are provided by our Sister Organization and your Host Family, the primary cost to students is the flight, 2023 the cost was roughly \$1,900.00 per person round trip. You will also want to allot funds for souvenirs and foods and drinks not provided.

As a delegate of the Antioch Chichibu Sister City Organization you are expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- abide by all laws of Japan while there.
- follow and respect local customs and cultural standards.
- participate in all activities to the best of your ability.
- respect the rules of your Host Family, as well as their individual customs and property.

- speak in public, and have your photo taken for promotional materials.
- always stay with the group, your host family or whomever is your guide at the moment.
- maintain your personal hygiene.
- STUDENT DELEGATES you agree to not use or consume any alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

For further information please check out <https://www.facebook.com/AntiochChichibu>

Updates and additional information will be on our Instagram @Antioch_Chichibu and Facebook group, [facebook.com/antiochchichibuSCO](https://www.facebook.com/antiochchichibuSCO). Follow us for updates on this year's delegation, and for news on future events being held in our city!

Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization

Student Delegate Application

Summer 2025

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Have You Previously Hosted: : _____ Yes _____ No Will You Commit to Hosting: _____ Yes _____ No

Address: _____

Street

City

Zip

Cell Phone : _____ Home Phone: _____

Email: _____ Current Passport: _____ Yes _____ No

School: _____ Grade: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Contact: _____

Please Submit along with this completed form the following:

1. Essay: A one-page personal statement as to why you would be an ideal delegate to Chichibu. You may want to include your goals, college plans, anything unique you would bring to the organization.
2. Letters of Recommendation: Minimum of three letters of recommendation. Suggested sources are school teachers or administration, church, job, scouts, clubs, etc.
3. Current photo (to be shared with Host family)

Once completed please submit by mail to:

Antioch/Chichibu Sister City Organization

P.O. Box 933

Antioch, Ca 94509

Items may also be emailed to:

AntiochChichibuSCO@gmail.com

Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization

Application for Membership

With this membership you:

- Agree to be an active participant in an amazing organization that has provided over 50 years of interaction with our Japanese members.
- Agree to help with the home-stay aspect of our organization.
- Have an opportunity to be a representative of our Antioch Sister City Delegation to Japan.
- Have the privilege of voting for and/or holding elected positions within the organization.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Business Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Members in Family (include ages):

Membership Levels:

- ___ Individual \$20 Annual Fee
- ___ Family \$40 Annual Fee
- ___ Organization \$100 Annual Fee
- ___ Individual Lifetime Membership \$200
- ___ Family Lifetime Membership \$200

Signature

Date

Antioch-Chichibu Sister City Organization

FAQs

Q: Where is Chichibu (秩父市)?

A: Chichibu City is located in **Saitama** prefecture (roughly equivalent to a State in the US), on the main island of Japan. Present population of Chichibu city is approximately 61,000. The city was formally "incorporated" in 1950, but Japanese have lived in this area for thousands of years.

Interestingly, like Antioch, there is a river that runs through Chichibu – the Arakawa River - and Mount Buko rises south of the city center. These geographical similarities are part of what initially prompted Chichibu to be proposed for a Sister City in Japan.

Q: What are the dates of the 2025 trip to Japan?

A: As of posting, the group will depart on July 16 and return on July 31. The trip revolves around July 19th, the day of Chichibu's midsummer KAWASE festival.

Q: How old does a student have to be to visit Japan through this program?

A: The minimum age for student delegates is 15. The minimum age for an adult delegate/ chaperone is 21.

Q: Are vaccinations needed to visit Japan?

A: No vaccinations are needed, although making sure you are up-to-date on your regular vaccinations is recommended.

Q: What is the time difference between Chichibu and Antioch?

A: Chichibu is 17 hours "ahead" of Antioch, that is, at 7:00PM Monday in Antioch, it is Noon Tuesday in Chichibu. Communication between the two cities is convenient from 3:00 PM Antioch time (8:00AM the next day in Chichibu) to 7:00 PM Antioch time (Noon the next day in Chichibu).

Q: How difficult will it be to "navigate" in Japan; do many Japanese speak English?

A: Delegates are most often with their host family and/or the delegation who will help them navigate around Japan.

Delegates will always have the contact information for the group leader on hand in case the need for additional help should arise.

Smartphones with translator apps are very useful! You can also purchase a portable translator that works with or without internet connection.

Many Japanese we meet in our visits speak some English, as English is taught starting in the third grade. Interestingly, their written English is generally superior to their spoken English, as English is often learned from books, with less stress on verbal communication. Sometimes communication between delegates from Chichibu and their hosts in Antioch is easier by writing notes.

Q: How can I get Yen (money) to spend in Japan?

A: You can purchase Yen from many of the major banks in town, this does take some time as they have to order it from larger banks in San Francisco. Please allow plenty of time for this transaction.

Currencies can be exchanged at either airport. Note that most of the costs to delegates (food, lodging) will be covered by our host families. For personal spending (Ice cream? Souvenirs?) Yen will be needed.

Once in Japan, you can get cash:

- Use your Visa Delta/Cirrus/Plus (check the back of your card for these logos) debit card to get from a CashPoint/ATM machine. These can be found at the local post office, 7Elevens and other convenience stores, and there are some Citibank ATMs as well. There is usually an English option on

the menu once you enter your card. **Make sure to notify your bank that you will be withdrawing money from Japan, or they may freeze your card.**

Most businesses and restaurants will accept credit cards. Some smaller vendors at festivals will require cash.

Keep in mind that any time you exchange dollars for Yen, you are selling your dollars and buying Yen, and there will be a handling fee for this service (often 3% of your purchase or withdrawal) in addition to the exchange rate, which is “bundled” into the nominal exchange rate. This bundled fee results in the difference between the nominal rate of yen per dollar and dollars per yen. You can view the current exchange rate online through Google or Xe.com and your credit card and bank will let you know their additional service charges

Q: Will my cell phone work in Japan?

A: Maybe. Most newer smartphones will work in Japan on international roaming. Check with your cell provider for rates and prices.

Renting an international sim card before you depart will allow you to use your phone in Japan. There are several options online for this, including PicCell Wireless.

<https://www.piccellwireless.com/PartnerOrderNewLogic.aspx>

However, for trips less than 2 weeks, International roaming and calling cards may suffice. You can use a calling card bought in the U.S. or buy one in Japan. Often you can find calling cards at the airport or at 7-Eleven in Japan. 5G service is standard in Chichibu.

Texting will likely be at no charge. Many delegates use WhatsApp or other chat apps to connect with family instead of phone calls.

Q: How do I call to Japan from the U.S.

A: The Country Code for Japan 81. From most phones, dial 011+81+phone number.

For example, the City of Chichibu phone number is 0494-22-2211. From the U.S., you would dial: 011+81+274+494-22-2211. As you see, you drop the “0” from the number given in Japan. When calling a Japanese number from inside Japan, you would use that “0.” Toll-free numbers in Japan begin with 0120 or 0088.

Q: How do I call the U.S. from Japan?

A: The international access number when calling from Japan is 010; and the US code is 1.

From most phones, dial 010+1+area code+phone number.

For example, the City of Antioch phone number is 779-7000. If you are using a Japanese-based calling card in Japan, you would dial: 010+1+925-779-7000.

Q: What happens after I apply? When do I know if I’ll be a delegate this year?

A: We will work quickly to sort through applications and you will be notified via email or phone on next steps, including setting up an interview time and submitting further information for your student or adult delegate.

Need more info? Check out our links below by scanning the QR with your phone camera:

