



## TRAVEL DATASHEET 2026 Citizen Delegation to Neyagawa, Japan

(as of 5/14/2026)

**WHEN:** Monday, November 23 (arrive in Japan Nov. 24) through Tuesday, December 1, 2026

**WHERE:** Neyagawa, Osaka, Japan – Sister City to the City of Newport News since 1982

**WHAT:** A mixed-age delegation of **not more than 20 citizens**

**GOAL:** Direct "People-to-People" contact is the purpose of the exchange program. Through these contacts, SCNN seeks to build international understanding and peace, as well as foster business relationships. Delegates will stay with "host families" arranged by our partner organization in Japan.

The 2026 delegation to Neyagawa, Japan will also participate in a local cultural festival on Saturday, November 28 arranged by our hosts – NIEFA; Neyagawa International Exchange and Friendship Association. Selected Delegates will prepare, prior to departure, a special program for this festival. Applicants should indicate on their application any special talents or interests they have that would be helpful in creating the performance. **All are required to participate.**

**ESTIMATED COST:**

\$2,000*	– Round-trip airfare (booked and paid by delegates)
\$ 200	– SCNN travel confirmation fee
<u>\$ 400</u>	– misc. expenses
<b>\$2,600</b>	<b>– TOTAL</b>

\*Actual cost of the flight in 2024 varied between \$1,600 and \$2,400

### WHAT IS A SISTER CITY?

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"Sistering" is a process that links municipalities with foreign communities through formal "Sister City" agreements. These agreements, fostered by grass-roots citizen efforts and ratified by both City Councils, or their equivalent, foster peace and understanding. Sister Cities International (SCI) is the nation's foremost citizen diplomacy movement with more than 2,300 communities participating in 130 countries.

Sister Cities of Newport News began in 1982 with Newport News' Japanese partnership. Today, additional Newport News partnerships exist with China, Germany, Ireland, and France. Sister Cities of Newport News (SCNN) conducts "Reciprocal Exchange Programs" that operate at minimal expense and take advantage of the hospitality and long-standing relationships established in these "sistered" communities. SCNN is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

### Travel Eligibility:

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- ✓ Must be 18 years of age (at time of application) or as young as 16 years if travelling with a custodial adult
- ✓ Must be flexible and possess an adventurous spirit
- ✓ Must be available for travel on the selected dates
- ✓ Must adhere to the itinerary established by SCNN and the host city

- ✓ Must have the physical strength and stamina to endure full days of walking
- ✓ Must commit to participating with Sister Cities and executing the mission of the organization by hosting a future delegate in their home or actively volunteering with SCNN
- ✓ Must be willing to be hosted in a homestay selected by the host city
- ✓ Must be a member of Sister Cities of Newport News (membership starts at \$25/year)
- ✓ Must submit a completed "Citizen Diplomat" application by the stated deadline
- ✓ Must submit proof of passport (valid for 6 months after travel dates); those applying with non-US passport may face additional fees/restrictions as the law requires.
- ✓ **Must pay a non-refundable \$200 administrative fee upon selection, payable to SCNN.**
- ✓ Must arrive in Neyagawa with the full delegation All delegates will meet at Itami Airport, Osaka, Japan during designated window of time. Delegates will be picked up at the Itami Airport by Neyagawa City officials. Delegates may extend travel as desired after the visit.
- ✓ Must book and pay for the full cost of airfare as outlined in the "Flight Booking & Transportation Guidelines."
- ✓ Must comply with COVID-19 policies of the country visiting. **At this time, there are no COVID restrictions for Japan.** See here: <https://ie.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- *Failure to exhibit the necessary decorum and respect could result in removal from the exchange and exclusion from future exchanges.*
- *Delegates may extend their stay at the end of the exchange at their own expense.*

**Sister Cities Contacts:**

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Kate Helwig, SCNN Executive Director	<a href="mailto:info@sistercities-nn.com">info@sistercities-nn.com</a>	757-697-3129
Will Reddy, SCNN President	<a href="mailto:william.reddy@cnu.edu">william.reddy@cnu.edu</a>	508-397-1121
Sarah Sutton, Japan Committee Chair	<a href="mailto:suttonsems@gmail.com">suttonsems@gmail.com</a>	510-388-5440

**How Are Delegates Selected?**

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SCNN desires high-caliber delegates who are good representatives of our schools, city and nation. The Selection Committee reserves the right to select delegates **based on the applications received**, goals of the exchange, and the mission of SCNN. Travel preferences will be given to:

1. Applicants who have previously hosted delegates and/or actively volunteer with Sister Cities,
2. Applicants who live, work or attend school in Newport News,
3. Applicants with Japanese language skills,
4. Applicants who have not travelled with Sister Cities on a previous exchange,
5. DEMONSTRATED DIPLOMACY IS REQUIRED. In particular, the selection committee seeks delegates who exhibit the following characteristics:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| * Sister City Volunteerism  | * Consideration for Others       |
| * Friendliness              | * Maturity & Adaptability        |
| * Open-Mindedness           | * Trustworthiness                |
| * Interest in World Affairs | * Community / School Involvement |

## Exchange Timetable *(subject to change)*

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May 1	Travel Interest Forms Accepted: A rolling review of applications will be made. <b>A \$200 travel confirmation fee is due upon selection as a “citizen delegate”.</b>
May 14	Japan Committee Meeting – Topic: 2026 Travel Interest Meeting
June 11	Japan Committee Meeting - Virtual option only
June 12	2026 International Breakfast / 8-9 at CNU
<b>July 1</b>	<b><i>Recommended date to begin securing flights for approved applicants</i></b>
July 9	Japan Committee “Open House Event” / Delegation Meeting #1 (team building, language and cultural education)
August 13	Delegation Meeting #2 (plan group/individual festival performance)
<b>September 1</b>	<b>Deadline for travel interest forms (pending availability) No interest forms considered after this date</b>
September 5	Confirmation of 2026 SCNN Citizen Delegation Members / all flight arrangements confirmed by this date.
September 10	Delegation Meeting #3 (practice group/individual festival performance)
October 8	Delegation Meeting #4 (final preparations & pressed bookmark project)
November 12	Delegation Meeting #5 (pot-luck dinner/social)
Mon. Nov 23	<b>Depart USA</b>
Tues Nov 24	<b>Arrive in Japan / Meet-up at Itami Airport</b> <i>*Choose a flight to Itami Airport that arrives no later than 8:30 PM (Japan time)</i>
Sat. Nov 28	Neyagawa International Festival – <i>SCNN Delegation Performance!</i>
Monday, Dec. 1	<b>Depart Japan / Arrive in USA</b>
December 8	Delegation presents gifts & brief report to NN City Council ( <b>tentative</b> )
December 10	Delegation Report at SCNN Annual Meeting ( <b>evening event</b> )

### Cell Phone Use Overseas:

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Contact your cellular provider and inquire about using your mobile phone in Japan. Confirm that your device is compatible with GSM (Global System for Mobile) and inquire about an **international calling plan** which includes both talk minutes and data. Most are \$12 per day. **Other phone options include:**

- Keep your Wi-Fi turned on and set to notify you when it is available. Use free Wi-Fi and connect with applications like Facetime or WhatsApp.
- The delegation will communicate on the “GroupMe” app before, during and after the exchange.

### “Must Have” Items to Pack

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1. At least one “business” outfit
2. Travel bag to carry on plane with clothes and medications *in their original bottles.*
3. Electrical adapter plug - available on Amazon
4. Phone/Camera and charger / plus a backup battery source
5. Basic First Aid Supplies: Antihistamine / Tylenol / Advil / Antacids

### Other Travel Details:

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- Call your health insurance carrier to see if you are covered for overseas travel.
- Call your bank to let them know your credit card needs to be activated for overseas travel for the dates of this exchange. Consider taking two cards in case one does not work. Be sure to know the “PIN” for each.
- Consider getting foreign currency in advance at your bank or Currency Exchange International; <https://www.ceifx.com/>
- Please purchase a gift for you host family prior to departure. You may also want to pick one or two additional small gifts as you will meet people you want to thank. Be prepared.
- SCNN will provide official gifts for delegation leaders.
- If you plan to travel in Japan outside of the official visit, consider using a package or luggage service such at [YAMATO](#) / “Black Cat Service”

### Host Family Gift Ideas

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Handmade soap	Cigar	Alcohol
US-made candles	US Coins	Newport News-themed gift
Candy	Pottery	
Necktie or Scarf	Books of local interest	

### Places to shop for gifts:

The Virginia Store in Hampton / Mariners Museum Gift Shop / Newport News Welcome Center at Newport News Park / Starbucks – they have a cute Virginia mug / Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center / Yorktown / Hilton Village.