

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Membership Policy Changes (December 20, 2017)

#### Table of Contents

1. Overview	1
2. Associates	3
3. Nonprofit / Government / Education	3
4. Japanese American Leadership Delegation Participants and Alumni	4
5. Other Members and Groups (Asian American Leadership Delegation, TOMODACHI-Mitsui & Co. Leadership Program, TOMODACHI Emerging Leaders Program, Friends of the Council)	5
6. Summary of Changes	5
7. Membership Criteria	6

#### Overview

##### **1. What changes were made relating to USJC membership categories and annual contributions structure?**

In 2017, the Engagement Committee (formerly known as the Membership Committee) evaluated and discussed several issues and processes relating to USJC membership categories and the dues structure. The first issue was determining the process for Associates (under 40) who are “aging out” of this category, and who have been active in USJC and desire to continue membership as Council Leaders. Second, a new contribution structure reflecting equity among categories of membership was determined, along with the recommendation to offer a new category and rate for members who work in the nonprofit, government, and education sectors.

The updated schedule of contributions impacts alumni of the Japanese American Leaders Delegation (JALD) Program who work in the business sector.

##### **2. Why are member dues now referred to as member contributions?**

For USJC, “paying dues” is not a payment in exchange for a membership transaction for professional or social benefit. We believe that “paying dues” should be considered a tax-deductible contribution to USJC, a nonprofit whose mission, programs and activities members believe in and wish to support. To better position this philosophy, it was suggested that the term “dues” be replaced with “annual contribution.” To remain in

good standing, members are asked to make an annual contribution according to the dues structure.

**3. Throughout this document, annual contribution rates for Council Leaders are referred to as \$500 - \$1000. Can you explain this reference?**

The minimum contribution rate for Council Leaders and Friends of the Council is \$500, and \$1,000 is referenced because we encourage members to contribute more if possible. Members who contribute \$1,000 are recognized as Contributing Benefactors in USJC's annual report. USJC appreciates the additional contributions which supports the Council's basic infrastructure, operations and general programs.

**4. What is the timeline for the changes?**

A one-year notice will be given to Associates turning 40 years of age, and for those already 40+ years old. JALD alumni working in the business sector, who are impacted by the increased annual contribution, will also be given a one-year notice. Contributions in 2018, the transitional year, will be \$250 for both groups. Standard rates for both groups will be applied in January 2019.

Effective January 1, 2018, the new category of nonprofits, government, education for Council Leaders who are not able to pay the standard rate will have the option of paying \$250 annually.

**5. Why is the Council making these changes on annual contributions?**

The USJC member annual contributions established in 2009 remain basically the same today and have not increased over the years. Member contributions, Board contributions, and general contributions provide important support for USJC's basic infrastructure and general programs. Given the Council's growth over the past eight years, it seems an appropriate time to review the dues structure.

Furthermore, it was an opportunity to review and ensure equity and fairness for all categories of membership as Associates transition to become Council Leaders, and for special discounted rates for groups like JALD.

**6. What was the process for making these change?**

Two subcommittees of the Engagement Committee reviewed issues relating to the Council's future membership composition and structure, with a long-term view to promote a dynamic, viable and sustainable U.S.-Japan Council. From April to June 2017,

the subcommittees met and made recommendations to the board for review, discussion and approval. In August 2017, the Board of Directors approved the recommendations.

**7. Why is the Membership Committee now called the Engagement Committee?**

“Engagement” better reflects the work of membership engagement. In addition to recruiting and retaining members, the Engagement Committee has expanded its role to engage members in activities within regions.

**Associates**

**8. What is the process for Associates to become Council Leaders?**

As with all new Council Leaders, Associates interested in becoming Council Leaders shall be nominated by a current member and supported by a second member, both in good standing. The Associate’s nomination to Council Leader will be presented to the Engagement Committee for review and approval. Approximately one year before Associates turn age 40, USJC will send them a notice about the maximum age. As Associates are already involved in the Council’s network, they will have the advantage of already having access to Council Leaders who can support their nomination.

**9. Why wouldn’t Associates automatically become Council Leaders?**

Some Associates are not actively engaged with the Council, and may not be interested in becoming Council Leaders, or may not meet the criteria for membership. This underscores the need for a distinct process for Associates to become Council Leaders, rather than simply allowing all Associates to automatically become Council Leaders when they turn age 40.

Associates currently pay \$100 (or \$50 contributions, depending on age). When they become Council Leaders, they will pay the same contribution levels as all other Council Leaders. We want to ensure with the nomination process that Associates wish to continue being an active Council Leader and will fulfill the requirements of membership.

**Members Who Work in Nonprofit, Government, Education Sectors**

**10. Why was the new annual contribution option for members in the nonprofit, government, and education sectors established?**

The new option was established so that USJC can remain inclusive of leaders from these sectors who may find that the standard rates are difficult to afford. The standard annual contribution for a Council Leader is \$500 - \$1,000. Starting on January 1, 2018, members who work in the nonprofit, government, and education sectors who are not

able to pay standard rates will have the option of paying \$250 annually.

Individuals are encouraged to contribute at higher levels if they are able to (e.g., some Council Leaders contribute \$1,000 annually and are recognized as Contributing Benefactors). Annual contributions support USJC's general funds, and are tax-deductible.

### **Japanese American Leadership Delegation (JALD)**

#### **11. How are the contribution rate changes impacting JALD Alumni? Who else is impacted?**

Currently, JALD alumni are automatically invited to join USJC with no nomination requirements, and are offered a rate of \$250. To give JALD alumni who work in businesses more time to prepare for the increase to \$500, JALD currently paying \$250 will remain at that level during 2018 (considered a transitional year). In 2019 and beyond, standard rates by sector will be in effect. JALD alumni impacted will be informed of the change one year in advance. JALD alumni who work in the nonprofit, government, and education sectors will have the option of remaining at the \$250 rate.

JALD alumni will still be invited to join USJC without having to go through the regular nomination process (nomination and supported by two members in good standing, approval by committee). Selection in JALD requires a very competitive process which involves USJC, the Consulates and MOFA, and it was determined that the additional USJC nomination process was not required.

For Associates who are transitioning to Council Leader status, 2018 will be a transitional year for those turning 40 years old (or already 40+ years old). For this one year only, those Associates impacted will only be required to pay \$250. In 2019 and beyond, standard rates by sector will be in effect.

#### **12. Why was the contribution rate changed for JALD alumni?**

The significant jump in Associates to Council Leader contribution, \$100 to \$500-\$1,000, was an important theme and discussion point that encouraged the committee to evaluate the current dues structure for all groups. This evaluation resulted in recommending a more equitable dues structure across all categories of membership and that it was no longer necessary to have a special rate for JALD alumni, who currently have the option of contributing a special discounted rate of \$250, compared with other Council Leaders. The new nonprofit, government and education rate should be affordable for JALD Alumni from this sector.

## **Other Members and Leader Groups**

### **13. How are other groups, like the participants of the Asian American Leadership Delegation (AALD) Program, TOMODACHI-Mitsui & Co. Leadership Program and TOMODACHI Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) impacted?**

We currently offer members of all three leadership groups a one-year complimentary membership after their respective programs have ended to encourage them to become more acquainted with USJC and to connect with USJC members in their respective regions. After a one-year complimentary membership, AALD alumni, who are all elected state officials, will be invited to join USJC at the \$250 government rate. Mitsui and ELP alumni are invited to join at the Associate rate of \$100. Like JALD alumni, members of these special leadership groups are not required to go through the regular nomination process.

### **14. Are Friends of the Council impacted by any of these changes?**

No. Those individuals who opt to be Friends of the Council are not impacted by any of these changes.

Friends of the Council are individuals who for various reasons—usually due to professional stature—are not able to be actively engaged in the Council’s activities. They may not be able to attend events or participate on committees on a regular basis, but continue to support the Council’s work and initiatives, and want to affiliate with and support the organization. Examples of the kinds of individuals who might fit this category are: governors or other elected officials; senior government officials; heads of other U.S.-Japan related institutions; some academics; and some members of the media.

## **Summary of Changes**

### **15. There are so many changes. Can you summarize them?**

- At age 40, Associates transitioning to Council Leaders will need to be nominated by a current member, supported by a second member, both in good standing.
- For Associates transitioning to Council Leaders, 2018 will be a transitional year for those turning 40 years old (or already 40+ years old). For this one year only, annual contributions of \$250 will be offered for all sectors. In 2019 and beyond, standard rates by sector will be in effect.

- For nonprofit, government, education members who cannot pay the annual standard rate of \$500 - \$1000, a \$250 annual dues option will be offered.
- For participants of the Asian American Leadership Delegation Program, a one-year complimentary membership will be offered after the delegation returns from the trip and the program ends; \$250 government sector annual contributions will be in effect in the second year and beyond.
- For participants of the Japanese American Leadership Delegation Program, the contribution will be \$250 in the first year, which starts upon their return from their trip; standard rates by sector to be in effect in the second year and beyond.
- For Japanese American Leadership Delegation alumni, 2018 will be a transitional year. Those paying \$250 will be allowed to pay \$250 in 2018. In 2019 and beyond, standard rates by sector will be in effect.
- The term “dues” will be changed to “annual contribution.”

## **Membership Criteria**

### **16. Has the criteria for membership changed?**

No. USJC still pursues and encourages the nomination of industry leaders and professionals with demonstrated achievements and accomplishments, and Associates who show leadership and potential for further growth.

### **17. What are the characteristics USJC seeks in new members?**

- Leadership – demonstrated history (or potential in case of Associates)
- Interest in and support of U.S.-Japan relations – through education, professional engagement, community investment or personal interest
- Americans with a personal connection to Japan – this includes heritage, but also extensive living/studying/working in Japan, marital connections, etc. (Other nationalities may also meet this description, such as Japanese Brazilians living in the United States.)
- Japanese with a personal connection to the United States – this includes heritage, but also extensive living/studying/working in the States, marital connections, etc.
- Understanding and appreciation of the Japanese American experience
- Willingness to engage in support of USJC’s mission – with time, talent and resources