



VANCOUVER JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL & JAPANESE HALL
バンクーバー日本語学校並びに日系人会館

Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH)

Vancouver, BC

Position Profile

Executive Director (ED)



About VJLS-JH

Established in 1906, the Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH) [Vancouver Nihon-go Gakko narabi ni Nikkei Jin Kaikan] is a non-profit, community-based and driven organization, committed to education, culture and community. The organization, located in historic Japantown in the Downtown Eastside, is designated as a [National Historic Site](#). A more detailed history can be found at <https://vjls-jh.com/about-us/history/>. The organization currently runs four streams of activities:

- Children's World (daycare and preschool);
- Japanese Language Instruction (Saturday classes and adult weekday evening classes);
- Community Programming (cultural events, local history walking tours, etc.); and
- Facility Rentals (community hall, meeting rooms and classrooms).

The organization is founded on the intergenerational learning of the language, history and culture of Japan, as well as the history and culture of the Japanese Canadian experience. Due to its longstanding connection to the Japanese Canadian community and their esteem, much of the activity of VJLS-JH is substantially supported by community volunteers. With the exception of a small administrative staff, paid part-time and full-time teachers and Children's World daycare and preschool staff, virtually all other activities are performed by volunteers. The organization's board of directors has been a 'working' board and is currently transitioning to a governance board with the help of a consultant. The successful applicant will be the first Executive Director of the organization, following an Interim Executive Director who joined in October 2019 to prepare for a permanent hire.

VJLS-JH has, by its National Historic Site designation, become a focus of both the resilience and the wrongdoing of the past, and is considered by some to represent the Japanese Canadian experience in Canada. Along with this comes a perceived responsibility to represent these themes to government and the greater community.



The 1928 Japanese Hall joins three National Historic Sites in Metro Vancouver: Stanley Park, Lions Gate Bridge and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery (in Steveston). This heritage wing has seen comprehensive renovations in 2012 and has been customized for the Children's World childcare centre. Additional facility upgrades are in progress to complete the creation of an Interpretive Centre, which tells the history of the organization as a microcosm of Japanese Canadian history; This centre will create a local community and regional education hub. This capital project is the third and final phase of a multi-phase renovation that started in 2008. The phases included the structural rehabilitation of the 1928 heritage wing building and the launch of the childcare centre, incorporating environmental principles such as installing solar panels.

The organization has been financially stable for the past five years since the addition of Children's World, and there is immense potential to scale up fundraising especially after receiving our historic designation. VJLS-JH has long-standing relationships and partnerships with numerous Japanese Canadian organizations, neighborhood organizations and various government levels. The school division, which is the largest Japanese language school in Vancouver, sees a continuously high enrollment of students with approximately 300 adults and 250 children annually.



Why Work for VJLS-JH?

This is a unique opportunity for you to make a difference in our complex world. Being well-respected by funders, partners and community, we are poised to enter an exciting phase and are well-positioned for growth. This position is an opportunity to transform and modernize a long-standing historical organization and build on a legacy of resilience and community spirit. We are eager to welcome a passionate leader for this highly-respected and beloved organization. As the incoming Executive Director, you can count on a dedicated staff team, board members and volunteers to help guide and build upon generations of effort to create far-reaching impact on individuals, organizations, neighborhoods, and the community of communities we live in. This is a great opportunity to serve by transforming and strengthening a creative and innovative place-based community hub. We will aim to provide you with the resources and training to succeed in this exciting and challenging position.



VJLS-JH Structure and Leadership

The organization is governed by a ten-member board of directors (Board), employs sixteen full-time staff and approximately 25-30 part-time instructors and childcare staff. The Executive Director currently has five direct reports (Childcare Manager, Language Program Manager/Principal, Office Manager, Facility Coordinator and Program Coordinator).

The Position and Priorities

VJLS-JH is seeking a new Executive Director who will help raise its profile, expand its presence and programs within all communities it serves, and help develop and set future-focused strategic priorities.

Desired Experience, Skills and Attributes

- **Passionate about the mission.** Recognize that the work we do has an impact on people's lives, their families, and eventually the entire community that sustains us. A connection to Japanese culture and identity is an asset as the organization is rooted in Japanese language, traditions and culture, and the Japanese Canadian experience.
- **VJLS-JH strives to strengthen its commitment to social-justice-based action.** The ability to create interventions and programs which embody the tenets of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion is a key requirement for the leader of a community hub encompassing the various programs, initiatives and projects.
- **A 'people' person** with high emotional intelligence and perceptiveness in order to develop, build and maintain strong relationships in a multicultural environment. Demonstrated real-world skills to motivate and inspire across the spectrum of community, volunteers, staff and stakeholders to bring them together to accomplish greater and sometimes distant goals.
- **Strong leadership skills** with an ability to unify and align board, staff and stakeholders in a shared strategy. Integrity and transparency are required to make difficult decisions. Ability to identify emerging opportunities and coordinate strategic external partnerships.
- **Demonstrated financial management skills** and a pragmatic mindset with experience in creating workable and effective budgets, and accountable management of expenditures.
- **Demonstrated success in hiring, managing and developing staff** with skills in team building, effective delegation and performance management. Ability to both train and motivate staff. Working knowledge of contemporary human resource policies and practices.
- **Ability to develop and implement** systems, policies and procedures that are effective and practical to accomplish goals. Able to handle a fast-paced, multi-stakeholder environment, to enhance infrastructure and processes, to work hands-on to lead a small team and to manage multiple competing priorities with resourcefulness and innovation.
- **Strong communication skills and talents** with an ability to listen and process stakeholder input. Accomplished at developing and delivering a compelling message. Communicates effectively both verbally, and in writing, and has the ability to be a persuasive spokesperson for the organization and the community.
- **Background in successful fundraising strategies** and managing donor relationships.

- **Experience in volunteer management**, including a response to the changing face of volunteerism. An ability to attract, retain, develop and lead volunteers effectively is critical.
- **Japanese language competency** is an asset.
- **Knowledge of multicultural or immigrant life experience** and its relationship to the community will be considered.

Accountability: The Executive Director is directly accountable to the Board of Directors.

Salary: Anticipated range of \$80-100k + benefits.

Hours of work: The standard work week is 40 hours including evenings, weekends, and hours (as needed) to accommodate activities such as Board meetings and representing the organization at public events.

Equity: VJLS-JH is committed to employment equity and believes that a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve strengthens our ability to achieve our mission. We strongly encourage applicants of all genders, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities, and with a range of life experiences to apply.

Accessibility: Please note that our main office space is located on the second floor of the building. The various levels of the newer wing are equipped with an elevator. The two-storey heritage wing does not have an elevator.

How to Apply: Please send your application with a cover letter and resume in one pdf file to recruitment@vjls-jh.com.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. **Early applications are encouraged.** All applications will be kept in strict confidence. We thank you for your interest and ask for your understanding that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. We look forward to hearing from you!