



### **Our Vision**

Red Wing thrives as a vibrant, creative river town that values its natural environment, welcomes all people, and unlocks opportunity for everyone.

### **Our Mission**

We strive to create a sustainable, healthy, accessible, resilient, and equitable community where every person feels at home.

## **Meeting Announcement and Agenda Sister Cities Commission Workshop Community Development Building, 419 Bush Street, Red Wing, MN Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 5:15 PM**

### **1. Roll Call**

### **2. Public Comment**

This period is reserved for public comment on matters not on the agenda. If a public comment is desired on an agenda item, please inform the presiding officer (Chair) or Executive Director before the meeting begins. Otherwise, be prepared to promptly seek recognition when the agenda item is considered.

### **3. Workshop Items**

- 3.A. Change to September Meeting date. Staff Liaison, Lisa Acker, will be out of town on the date of the regularly scheduled meeting. Therefore, the date needs to be moved to September 30, 2026. We will formally adopt the updated meeting schedule at the March meeting.
- 3.B. Welcome to new commissioner, Kendal Swanson. Kendal was sworn in at the February 23rd City Council meeting.
- 3.C. Statutory Requirements for commission members participating in a meeting via interactive technology.
- 3.D. Ikata Student Exchange Program - Go over new forms, discuss processes for student interviews, selection of students (how to score them, what to consider), discuss guidelines for chaperone, develop a Mission statement/ goal for the exchange, chaperone and student selection timeline, how can we improve the program, etc?
- 3.E. Quzhou/Friendship Delegation Update
- 3.F. Review Committee Assignments

### **4. Adjournment**

Accommodations for signing interpreter, Braille, large print, etc. can be made. Call City Hall at 385.3600 seven days prior to the need. Hearing assistance devices are available during meetings.

This notice supersedes any previously sent.



**~ Sister Cities Commission 2026 Regular Meeting and Workshop Schedule ~**

The Red Wing Sister Cities Commission will hold its regular meetings at City Hall, 315 W 4<sup>th</sup> St., Red Wing, MN. The meeting will take place in the City Council Chambers beginning at 5:15 p.m. They will hold their regular workshops at the Community Development Building, 419 Bush St., Red Wing, MN, beginning at 5:15 p.m. Commission members may participate in meetings via interactive technology.

<b>Regular Meeting</b> Council Chambers, City Hall 315 W 4 <sup>th</sup> St., Red Wing, MN	<b>Workshop</b> Ignite Conf. Room, Community Dev. Bldg. 419 Bush St., Red Wing, MN 55066
	Wednesday, February 25, 2026
Wednesday, March 25, 2026	Wednesday, April 22, 2026
Wednesday, May 27, 2026	Wednesday, June 24, 2026
Wednesday, July 22, 2026	Wednesday, August 26, 2026
Wednesday, September 30, 2026	Wednesday, October 28, 2026
Monday, November 16, 2026	Wednesday, December 16, 2026

A quorum of the Red Wing City Council Members may be in attendance.

**Please publish in the Republican Eagle Government Calendar.**

**From:** [Mallon, Emily](#)  
**To:** [Kohn, Steve](#); [Hill, Melissa](#); [Dow, Shantel](#); [Smith, Amy](#); [Brower, Dan](#); [Howe, Brandy](#); [Kvanbek, Cara](#); [Acker, Lisa](#); [Chorney, Shari](#); [Klatt, Kyle](#); [Dawn Gielau](#)  
**Subject:** Updated 2026 Meeting Schedules & Virtual Attendance Requirements  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 11, 2026 9:13:04 AM

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Hello Staff Liaisons,

I wanted to provide a brief heads-up that I will be sending out updated 2026 meeting schedules shortly. These updates are being made following recent guidance from our City Attorney indicating that if any City Council or Board member plans to attend a meeting via interactive technology, the meeting notice must specifically state that option. This differs from our previous understanding that a physical public notice was not required. Including this language will help ensure we are fully compliant, particularly in last-minute situations.

Additionally, I wanted to share a reminder of the statutory requirements related to members participating via interactive technology. A meeting governed by Minnesota Statute §13D.01, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, may be conducted by interactive technology provided that:

1. All members participating in the meeting, regardless of physical location, can see and hear one another, as well as all discussion and testimony presented at any location where at least one member is present.
2. Members of the public present at the regular meeting location can see and hear all discussion, testimony, and votes of the body.
3. At least one member of the body is physically present at the regular meeting location.
4. All votes are conducted by roll call, so each member's vote on each issue can be clearly identified and recorded.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

**Emily Mallon | Administrative Support Manager**

Administration Department  
City of Red Wing | [redwingmn.gov](http://redwingmn.gov)  
315 West Fourth Street | Red Wing, MN 55066  
Office: 651-385-3633



## Student Application – Japan Exchange Program

### Program Overview

This exchange program provides selected students the opportunity to experience Japanese culture, education, and daily life through homestays and cultural activities. Participants will gain valuable cross-cultural understanding, leadership skills, and lifelong friendships.

#### Program Dates:

The exchange generally takes place from mid to late July, with students returning before River City Days in August.

#### Hosting Requirement:

Families of selected students are expected to host a visiting Japanese student for approximately two weeks following the return from Japan.

### Section 1: Student Information

- Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_
- School Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2: Parent/Guardian Information

- Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Preferred Contact Method:  Phone  Email  Either

### **Section 3: Short Response Questions**

*(Please respond thoughtfully in complete sentences.)*

1. What interests you most about visiting Japan?
2. How do you think participating in this exchange will benefit your personal growth or education?
3. Describe a time when you adapted to a new or unfamiliar situation. What did you learn from it?
4. What qualities make you a good representative of your school and community?
5. What aspects of Japanese culture (e.g., food, customs, language, traditions) are you most excited to experience?
6. How would you handle feeling homesick or overwhelmed while abroad?

### **Section 4: School and Community Involvement**

List your extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and community service experiences:

### **Section 5: Academic and Behavioral Standing**

- Current GPA: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you had any disciplinary actions within the past two years?  
 No       Yes (If yes, please explain below)

### **Section 6: Letters of Recommendation**

Two letters of recommendation are required to complete this application.

Please submit one from a teacher or school staff member and one from a community member, coach, or supervisor who can speak to your character, responsibility, and readiness to represent your school abroad.

Each letter should include:

- The recommender's name, title, and contact information
- How long and in what capacity they have known you
- An assessment of your maturity, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability

Attach both letters to this application or submit them directly to the program coordinator by the deadline ([lisa.acker@redwingmn.gov](mailto:lisa.acker@redwingmn.gov)).

### **Section 7: Family Hosting Commitment**

As part of this exchange, families of participating students are expected to host a Japanese student for approximately two weeks following the trip to Japan. Hosting responsibilities include providing a safe, welcoming home environment, meals, transportation to activities, and opportunities for the visiting student to experience local culture and family life.

Please acknowledge your understanding of this requirement below.

- Yes, our family is willing and able to host a Japanese student for two weeks.
- No, our family is unable to host at this time (please explain):

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 8: Health and Emergency Information**

*(Confidential – used only for travel and safety planning.)*

- Allergies or medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_
- Current medications: \_\_\_\_\_
- Emergency Contact (if different from parent/guardian):  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 9: Student Commitment**

I understand that being selected for this exchange is both an honor and a responsibility. I agree to represent my school and community with integrity, follow all program rules, and show respect for Japanese culture and customs.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 10: Parent/Guardian Consent**

I grant permission for my child to apply for and, if selected, participate in the Japan Exchange Program. I understand the expectations, including the travel timeframe (mid to late July, returning before River City Days in August) and the hosting requirement, and agree to support all program responsibilities.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Interview Questions – Japan Exchange Program

Name:

Cell Phone:

1. What inspired you to apply for this exchange program to Japan, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?
2. How would you show respect for Japanese customs and traditions that may differ from those in the United States?
3. Imagine you encounter an unfamiliar food, custom, or daily routine while in Japan. How would you handle that situation?
4. As a participant, you'll represent your school, community, and country. What does that responsibility mean to you?
5. How do you contribute to a group when working or traveling with others who have different personalities or opinions?
6. If a misunderstanding occurred between you and your host family due to language or cultural differences, what steps would you take to resolve it respectfully?
7. Describe a time you stepped outside your comfort zone. What did you learn about yourself from that experience?
8. How would you manage feelings of homesickness or nervousness while being away from your family for two weeks?
9. After returning from Japan, your family will host a Japanese student. What kind of environment do you hope to create for your guest?
10. This program requires preparation, cooperation, and participation in group activities before, during, and after travel. How will you ensure you fulfill all of these expectations?

### Interviewer Notes

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Is this a quality candidate?    Yes    No    Maybe

# SISTER CITIES COMMISSION

Red Wing Park  
in Japan



Ikata



Welcome Festival 2025

## IKATA STUDENT EXCHANGE:

TRAVEL TO JAPAN, LEARN ABOUT THE CULTURE, AND CREATE NEW CONNECTIONS!

Open to all students!

Info Meeting: **Grades: 8 - 11**

When: Mon. Dec 1st

Where: RWHS, Room H109/H110

Time: At 6:30 pm

**Bonus! Enjoy Japanese snacks!**



Toyko



WELCOME



kyoto



Hiroshima



JOIN

US!



## The Red Wing-Ikata Student Exchange

This program was established in 1995 to promote cultural exchange between cities of different nations to foster strengthened economics, world peace and a greater understanding of the world issues. This annual program is aimed at high school students from the sister cities of Red Wing, MN and Ikata, Japan. Participants will travel to Japan to participate in a home stay and community events. Upon their return, they will host students and participate in our community events. Each year this takes place from mid-July to mid-August to coordinate with the Ikata festival and River City Days in Red Wing.

### An Experience to Remember

The first part of the trip: • Sightseeing in Kyoto, Hiroshima or Osaka and Tokyo • In Ikata, you will stay with a host family and learn about home life in Ikata. • Participate in the local festival and cultural activities. The second part of the trip: • Host an Ikata student • Participate in RW Parade & other events • Show Ikata students hometown living in Red Wing, Minnesota



### What happens if you participate?

• Make new friends • Experience a different culture • Try new foods • Learn to communicate with limited language • Share your involvement with community and schools

### To qualify for the program:

• Student in grade 8-11 • Reside in the Red Wing school district • Be interested in foreign cultures and show enthusiasm to try new things • A willingness to participate in the 2nd half of the program • Share your experience with the program with the school, commissioners and other groups • Possess a valid passport or be able to obtain one before the program begins • Participate in fundraising to help with costs The cost does vary from year to year, however averages around \$3000-3500 with airfare. Typically, with fundraising and grant writing, the out-of-pocket expense was less than \$500. Some students have raised more than was needed.

QUESTIONS? Interested in this great opportunity? Applications are on the City of Red Wing website/Ikata Exchange Program page and are **due Friday, December 5, 2025.** They can be dropped off at 419 Bush Street, Red Wing, MN, between 7-4:30 pm Monday-Thursday or 7-11 am on Friday.

Red Wing Sister Cities Commission - 419 Bush Street Red Wing, MN 55066

Lisa Acker – Staff liaison – Phone: 651-385-5113 - [Ikata Exchange Program | Red Wing, MN](#)



## Thoughts from Red Wing Parents from the 2025 Ikata Exchange

1. We absolutely loved our time with our Ikata students. We still miss them and our entire family keeps in touch with them. It's amazing how close you can get with someone in such a short time.
1. I was very apprehensive to have students stay with us. I was worried about how nice and clean our house was and what they would think of it. After their arrival, I quickly realized they are teenagers, and they didn't care about any of that. They were just excited to be here and have the experience.
2. As far as the cost, it was about what we expected. We felt very lucky that Audrey, essentially, had a free trip (minus the deposit and spending money). I think the suggested amount we were given for them to bring was accurate. I do realize that Audrey spent quite liberally and used her own money, but from what she claims, it was within the range expected.
3. Overall, this was a great experience. I could not have asked for a better group for my daughter to travel with, nor a better group of parents to go through this experience with. The students that came to her were so pleasant. They all seemed to get along and enjoy their time together. And, thanks to the Red Wing students that went last year and still participated in the events. Thank you for the time everyone took in communicating, setting up fundraising, planning events and making sure they had the best experience.
4. I think Yunon blended well into our family –while she was quiet and shy to an extent, we were still able to talk and communicate about wants/needs and likes/dislikes. I am not sure if it was merely chance or if there is some secret formula you have but however it is decided which student goes where on both ends worked well for us. To make things easier for us we had Bella ask ahead of time if there were any "American" foods Yunon wanted to try while she was here. Interestingly enough, what she picked was mostly Italian, which was no problem at all since I like to cook. As far as homesickness went, the only thing I noticed was she really wanted our dog to like her and that made her miss her dog more.
5. This program is incredible, offering a wealth of new experiences and insights into Japanese culture. Having Rena with us was spectacular! At first, she was shy but grew more confident with time. She showed interest in everything and tried to teach us new Japanese words each day, just as we shared Spanish sayings with her. Since we are a Hispanic family, we served Hispanic dishes, which she enjoyed.

# Chaperone Application – Japan Exchange Program

## Program Overview

The Japan Exchange Program provides students the opportunity to explore Japanese culture, education, and daily life through homestays and cultural experiences. The trip typically takes place mid to late July and lasts approximately 14 days, with participants returning before River City Days in August.

Chaperones play a vital role in ensuring student safety, cultural sensitivity, and a positive educational experience. Selected individuals must demonstrate strong leadership, reliability, and enthusiasm for supporting youth in an international environment.

## Section 1: Applicant Information

- Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Employment and Background

- Current Occupation/Position: \_\_\_\_\_
- Employer/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
- Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you previously served as a chaperone or group leader?  
 Yes     No  
If yes, please describe the experience:
  
- Have you traveled internationally before?  
 Yes     No  
If yes, please specify countries visited and purpose of travel:

### Section 3: Short Response Questions

*(Please answer each question thoughtfully and completely.)*

1. What motivates you to apply as a chaperone for this exchange program to Japan?
2. Describe your experience working with students or youth in a supervisory or mentorship role.
3. What strengths or qualities do you possess that would contribute to the success and safety of this program?
4. How would you handle a situation where a student is homesick, overwhelmed, or struggling to adjust?
5. As the only chaperone, you will work closely with program coordinators, host families, and local guides in Japan. How would you ensure effective communication and collaboration with all parties?
6. Describe how you would model cultural respect and appropriate behavior for students while abroad.

7. What strategies would you use to maintain organization, accountability, and safety for all students during travel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. How would you handle an emergency or unexpected situation while overseas?

#### **Section 4: Letters of Recommendation**

Two letters of recommendation are required to complete this application.

Please submit:

- One letter from a school administrator, colleague, or supervisor who can speak to your professionalism and reliability.
- One letter from a community member, organization leader, or colleague who can comment on your character, leadership, and ability to work with youth.

Each letter should include:

- The recommender's name, title, and contact information
- How long and in what capacity they have known you
- An assessment of your leadership, responsibility, communication, and problem-solving abilities

Attach both letters to this application or have them sent directly to the program coordinator by the stated deadline ([lisa.acker@redwingmn.gov](mailto:lisa.acker@redwingmn.gov)).

#### **Section 5: Availability and Commitment**

- Are you able to attend all pre-departure meetings and training sessions prior to travel?  
 Yes       No
- Are you able to commit to being available for the full 14-day duration of the exchange in mid to late July, as well as assisting with follow-up activities after the group returns?  
 Yes       No

- Are you willing to assist with pre-trip preparation, such as student meetings, fundraising events, or orientation sessions?  
 Yes       No

## **Section 6: Health and Emergency Information**

*(Confidential – used only for safety planning.)*

- Allergies or medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_
- Current medications: \_\_\_\_\_
- Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 7: Authorization and Agreement**

I understand that serving as a chaperone for this program carries significant responsibility. If selected, I agree to:

- Uphold the highest standards of conduct and professionalism.
- Prioritize the safety, well-being, and learning experience of all students.
- Follow all program guidelines, travel policies, and cultural expectations.
- Participate fully in all pre-trip and post-trip meetings.

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 8: Program Acknowledgment**

I understand that this exchange program takes place mid to late July and lasts approximately 14 days, returning before River City Days in August. I also understand that I will be expected to assist with student preparation and follow-up activities as part of my chaperone duties.

Applicant Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Candidate Information**

Name:

Cell Number:

## **Personal and Professional Background**

1. What experience do you have working with students in a school, travel, or extracurricular setting?
2. Have you previously participated in or led any international travel programs? If so, please describe your role and key responsibilities.
3. What motivates you to serve as a chaperone for this exchange program to Japan?

## **Leadership and Supervision**

4. How do you handle situations where students are not following instructions or program expectations?
5. Describe your approach to balancing authority with approachability when supervising students.
6. How would you ensure the safety and well-being of all students while abroad, especially in unfamiliar environments?

## **Cultural Awareness and Adaptability**

7. What interests you most about Japanese culture, and how do you plan to help students engage respectfully with it?
8. Describe a time when you had to adapt quickly to a new culture or environment. What did you learn from that experience?
9. How would you help students navigate potential cultural misunderstandings or differences in etiquette?

## **Teamwork and Collaboration**

10. How do you handle disagreements or differences in opinion when working as part of a team?

11. How would you collaborate with program coordinators, host families, and local guides in Japan to ensure a smooth and positive experience for the students?

### **Problem-Solving and Crisis Management**

12. What steps would you take if a student became ill, homesick, or experienced an emotional crisis while in Japan?
13. Describe a situation where you had to make a quick decision in a challenging circumstance. What was the outcome?

### **Commitment and Expectations**

14. Are you able to commit to attending all pre-departure meetings, fundraising, and post-trip presentations?
15. What personal qualities do you possess that make you an ideal representative of this exchange program?

### **Interviewer Notes**

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Was this a quality candidate?    Yes    No    Maybe

# CHAPERONE NEEDED FOR SUMMER 2026

## IKATA EXCHANGE- RED WING SISTER CITIES

The Red Wing Sister Cities Commission is searching for a community member who is willing to serve as a chaperone for six students, ages 14-17, selected for the 2026 exchange trip. The students and chaperone will serve as ambassadors of the Red Wing Community and carry on a tradition of exchanges between the two cities that was agreed upon when Ikata and Red Wing entered into an agreement to establish friendship relations back on August 8, 1995. Ikata is a small collection of towns, population around 8,400 located in Nishiuwa District, Ehime Prefecture, Japan.

The chaperone selected would travel with the students to Japan for approximately 10-13 days and visit Tokyo, Hiroshima or Osaka, and Kyoto prior to the homestays commencing in Ikata. The Chaperone would be responsible for the students during this time as well as helping them prepare for the trip beforehand by organizing and participating in fundraising and coordinating preparation gatherings with students with the assistance of the Ikata Student Exchange committee. The total cost for the trip is approximately \$4000. In the past the chaperone has received at least \$2500 in assistance from the commission and generous donations and fundraising for travel fees. The chaperone has often had very little personal expense.

“Thinking about being a Chaperone in Ikata, Japan? DO IT! As the 2018 Ikata Chaperone I cannot encourage you enough to set aside any irrational fears and jump at this opportunity; you will not be sorry. You will be rewarded greatly for taking my advice. When

else will you get to be treated like an ambassador in your travels to a foreign land? How else can you foresee being invited into the homes of strangers and welcomed as an old friend? In what capacity will you get the honor of representing the USA in a manner that is so good and real? All these things can be yours by taking a chance and offering to be a citizen of the world - Chaperone today!” – Jeff Schneider, 2018 Chaperone



“In 2008, I chaperoned a group of ten students. Responsibilities with the students on the trip were to be the liaison for any issues that arose and help with logistics with students while travelling. Prior to this trip, I was involved in setting up fundraising and participating in fundraising events. Upon our return to Red Wing, I participated in Sister Cities events such as River City Days, dinners and other activities with the students who came to Red Wing from Ikata. My trip was out of pocket expense of about \$700.00. I enjoyed the trip very much and felt it was a wonderful experience to enjoy with the students and would highly recommend the chaperone experience. I would be happy to discuss in further detail the duties and things I wish I knew before going on the trip. It is a great opportunity for someone who is energetic, loves travel and enjoys leading youth.” – Cyndi Reese, 2008 Chaperone and Sister Cities Commissioner

“Chaperoning five high school students on their Sister City exchange trip in 2017 was a highlight of my life. Never having been to any Asian country, I was intrigued by the opportunity to see beautiful Japan and help the students navigate a new culture. Preparing the students for this trip was a wonderful way to get to know them better and to teach them about the people, food and customs. We drank tea, went to a Japanese sushi restaurant in Rochester, made origami paper cranes and learned to use chopsticks, all before even setting step on the plane. Each grocery bagging event we did helped the students value the trip even more by putting their time and talents to use to raise money and interact with the public about this adventure. It was an amazing journey of sightseeing in the major cities of Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima, and then the week of getting to know our sister city of Ikata with the wonderful people there who made our stay so memorable. When we welcomed the Japanese students to Red Wing upon our return to the U.S.A., we were able to share our city pride with them, making this truly a cultural exchange. I highly recommend this chance to accompany the students and experience another part of our world.” – Gretchen Anderson, 2017 Chaperone and Sister Cities Commissioner

**Applications will be taken until Friday, October 10, 2025.** Applicants will be interviewed between October 13-21, 2025. The Commission plans to select the 2026 Ikata chaperone at the October 28, 2025, special meeting. Applications can be returned via email to Sister Cities Staff Liaison, Lisa Acker, at [lisa.acker@ci.red-wing.mn.us](mailto:lisa.acker@ci.red-wing.mn.us) or dropped off in person at the Community Development Department between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday -Thursday or 7:00 am -11:00 am Friday (419 Bush Street, Red Wing). Questions on the student exchange program can be directed to Lisa Acker at 651-385-5113.

# *Interested in being our 2026 Chaperone to Ikata, Japan?*

Ready to embark on a life-changing cultural journey? Apply to be the next Sister Cities Chaperone to Ikata, Japan.


## Why become a Chaperone?


- ✓ Cultural Immersion
- ✓ Make lifelong friends
- ✓ Share experiences with our students
- ✓ See historical spots

**APPLY NOW** 



 [www.redwingmn.gov](http://www.redwingmn.gov)

 651.385.5113

 Red Wing, Minnesota

Application can be found at: <https://www.redwingmn.gov/482/Ikata-Exchange-Program>

Application deadline: Friday, October 10, 2025

Email questions: [lisa.acker@redwingmn.gov](mailto:lisa.acker@redwingmn.gov)



For Immediate Release  
September 23, 2025

Contact: Lisa Acker  
Permits & License Manager  
Sister Cities Staff Liaison  
651.385.5113

### **Sister Cities Commission Searching for Chaperone for 2026 Ikata Student Exchange**

(September 2025, Red Wing, Minn.) – Every year the Sister Cities Commission facilitates a student exchange program between high school and middle school students in Red Wing, MN, and our sister city, Ikata, Japan. Our students travel to Japan and learn about its language and customs through homestays and cultural immersion. The program provides a unique, enriching experience for the students of Red Wing and an equally exciting opportunity for the group's chaperone.

The Commission is searching for a community member who is willing to serve as a chaperone for up to six students who will be selected for the 2026 exchange trip and serve as ambassadors of the Red Wing community. The chaperone would travel with the students to Japan during the trip, tentatively set for 10-13 days in late July of 2026, and be responsible for the students during that time. The chaperone would also meet with the students prior to the trip to organize and participate in fundraising efforts and other activities related to the trip. There will be some financial assistance available to the selected chaperone to assist with the cost of airfare. A full listing of the chaperone expectations and application form can be found at <http://www.red-wing.org/482/Ikata-Exchange-Program>.

**Applications will be taken until Friday, October 10, 2025.** Potential chaperones will be interviewed by a committee of the commission between October 13-20, 2025. The Commission plans to select the 2026 Ikata chaperone at their October 28, 2025, meeting.

Applications can be returned via email to Sister Cities Staff Liaison, Lisa Acker, at [lisa.acker@ci.red-wing.mn.us](mailto:lisa.acker@ci.red-wing.mn.us) or dropped off in person at the Community Development Department between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 7:00 am - 11 a.m. on Friday's (419 Bush Street, Red Wing). Questions on the student exchange program can be directed to Lisa Acker at 651-385-5113.

The City of Red Wing is dedicated to the ongoing health and wellbeing of its residents. With its tradition of growth, stability and innovation, city leadership continues to maintain a proactive approach and a firm commitment to businesses, history, natural resources and, most important, the Red Wing community.

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419 Bush Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066  
Website: [www.red-wing.org](http://www.red-wing.org)  
Phone: 651.385.3623

## **Ikata Chaperone Expectations and Job Description**

1. You are an ambassador of the Red Wing community and your behavior and conduct during the trip MUST always reflect that. The City of Red Wing has had a relationship with Ikata, Japan since 1995.
2. Participation in student applicant interview process, this will occur in November 2025.
3. You will be responsible for up to six students entering 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, or 11<sup>th</sup> grade (ages 14-17) and a mixture of male and female students, while travelling to and from Japan.
4. Participation in planned activities with the students while in Ikata, roughly the last two weeks of July 2026.
5. Participation and coordination of fundraising activities with assistance from the Sister Cities Commission, Red Wing Student delegation and their families. Fundraising activities will begin in November/December since the trip occurs at the end of July. The Commission will assist with setting up the fundraising. The chaperone should never leave the students unattended during fundraising events unless a parent assists you.
6. Participation and scheduling of orientation and planning meetings with the Red Wing Student Delegation with assistance from the Sister Cities Commission. The commission will assist with finding locations to hold these meetings and providing you with some materials to educate the students on Japanese culture and expectations during the exchange. These meetings may need to be held monthly prior to the trip for learning and team building purposes and then more frequently as the trip nears. It is important that the students get to know each other and for the chaperone to get to know the students they will be traveling with. Some of these meetings will need to include students and parents but most meetings or gatherings will just involve the students. Some of these “meetings” can occur while fundraising, etc.
7. Participation in some events with the Ikata students while they are in Red Wing roughly the first week or two of August 2026. The Sister Cities Commission will set up/organize activities for the Red Wing Students and the visiting Ikata Students to participate in such as meals, tours of Red Wing, and many other events.
8. You must obtain a valid passport at your own expense if you don't already have one.
9. You must be willing to share your experience with the community. We may request to interview you for an article for the city website, newspaper, or Facebook page, and Channel 6, and request jpg images of photos taken on the trip for use in future presentations/slideshows/PowerPoints, social media posts, or that you share your experience on the Sister Cities Facebook or Instagram page while in Ikata, etc.
10. If asked, you must be willing to speak to any civic group such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, American Legion/Elks, etc. about the exchange program and your experience in Ikata. This occurs only if these entities donate funds to this program. You should also assist the student delegation in writing Thank you notes to any organization or individual who assist in any fundraising activities.
11. Be available, flexible, and responsive to students and their families. Parents will be entrusting you with their child while in another country. You may find that once you are selected as chaperone, students and parents will be contacting you with questions or concerns before, during and after the trip. You will need to be responsive to their questions via text, phone, or email. The Ikata Student Exchange Committee Chair will help you with this as well.

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Updated 9-23-2025

12. You may be asked to handle student's funds and passports while travelling to, from, and in Ikata. This will require organization to keep funds separated for students and to track used funds or return unused funds.
13. You may be required to monitor medication administration for students if anyone is travelling with medication.
14. Monitoring student's health while in Ikata (especially fluid intake).
15. Monitoring students' behavior travelling to, from and while in Ikata.
16. Alcoholic beverages may be served at some exchange events and gatherings in Japan or in private homes. While it is permissible for the chaperone to consume alcoholic beverages at these functions, as a role model for students and representative of the City of Red Wing, he/she should do so only with the utmost discretion.

The Ikata student exchange is intended to facilitate friendships and understanding between students in Red Wing and Ikata. Students who travelled to Ikata with some of the first student delegations still visit or correspond with friends they met in Ikata or students they hosted at their homes in Red Wing. This is an opportunity to learn about another culture, see what life is like in Japan, and to have an experience you will never forget.

## Student and Chaperone Interview Protocol

1. Committee members should determine dates and times for interviews that allow for a majority of the committee members to attend to ensure applicants are interviewed by the same interview panel.
2. If a date is not found that works for a majority of the committee members then the committee should seek an alternate commission member that may be able to fill that seat.
3. Interviews should not be conducted by less than 2/3rds of a committee. The same panel should be present for all interviews.
4. All applicants must be given the opportunity to interview and be considered.
5. Student and chaperone recommendations to the commission must be discussed and voted on by **all** members of the committee before going to the commission. This may require a teleconference, phone calls, etc. to ensure all members of the committee have been given the opportunity to have input on the decision and be heard.
6. The chair of the committee, or their designee, shall bring forth any recommendation made to the commission at their next meeting. This recommendation will be communicated to the Sister Cities Staff Liaison prior to the meeting date.

The goal of this protocol is to make sure all applicants are treated equally and are given the same opportunity as their peers to be considered for the exchange.

# Red Wing Sister Cities 2026 Committee Assignments

**Updated 1/29/2026**

Quorum number will be 6 for 2026 based on 11 voting commission members. All committees can now have 5 voting members and no limit on non-voting members.

**Ikata Student Exchange Committee (2)** – Dani DeWitt and Tammy (Co-Chair) – will float between committees and keep things on track.

Subcommittee 1- advertising the program to recruit a chaperone and students, make changes/review chaperone materials, interviews, organizing parent meeting, fundraising (grocery bagging deposits/letter writing with students), reserving hotel for students & chaperone from Ikata, and organizing the cultural and language meetings with the students and chaperone.

1. Austin Knott
2. Ingrid Hokanson
3. Tammy Jaynes
4. Ashlynn Werner
5. Dani Dewitt
6. Nisha Catarino Santiago – non-voting member (Student Advisory)

Subcommittee 2 – Reserves Colvill and organizes welcome dinner, reserves Baypoint and organizes farewell dinner, sets up the activities in Red Wing for exchange (including parade), gets the gifts for the students and Ikata commission and works with Dawn on t-shirts.

1. Kim Clancy
2. Sheena Whitlock
3. Tammy Jaynes
4. Dani DeWitt
5. Tricia Perau

**Ikata/Quzhou Friendship Delegation Committee – Will need members and a chair once we gets some dates and an invitation to come to Quzhou.**

1. **Tao Peng (continue as a volunteer after term ends 12/31/2025) – community volunteer**
2. Kim Clancy
3. Alexandra Klitzke
4. Open
5. Open

## **YAAS Artist Showcase**

1. Sheena Whitlock
2. Renee Kreye - Chair
3. Dani DeWitt
4. Ingrid Hokanson
5. Open

**Shawn Niebling – community volunteer to assist with this in 2026**

### **Community Visibility Committee (no chair needed)**

1. Lisa Acker – (Facebook) Staff Liaison
2. Sheena Whitlock (Instagram)

### **Finance Committee**

1. Lisa Acker – Staff Liaison
  - **If more than quorum is present during a meeting, conference call or email chain, it is considered a public meeting and must be posted beforehand.** You will be notified when the number for quorum changes as it varies depending on how many voting members are currently on the Commission.
  - **Committee Chairs oversee their respective committee** and will be responsible for **giving the committee updates during the monthly meetings**, if necessary.
  - Committee Chairs should notify the Commission Chair **at least ONE WEEK PRIOR** to the meeting if they want to bring something to a vote or want something discussed during the meeting. This allows the Commission Chair and Staff Liaison to add the item/s to the agenda and post it in a timely manner.