

## Matsuri Management—Request For Proposals

Term: Annual, recurring  
Start Date: September 1 2024  
Contact: Please send proposals to [info@jaswdc.org](mailto:info@jaswdc.org)

Japan-America Society of Washington DC (JASWDC) is uniquely situated to pursue its mission of promoting friendship and understanding between the United States and Japan. Drawing on the unique resources of the nation's capital and the Society's long history, JASWDC offers diverse programming that spans the educational, cultural, business, and policy spheres. JASWDC produces over 80 cultural and educational programs each year and has the longest-standing Japanese language school in the National Capital Region. For over 60 years, JASWDC has been the organizer and presenter of the Sakura Matsuri-Japanese Street Festival ("the Matsuri"). JASWDC is also home of the National Japan Bowl Japanese language & culture competition, as well as JASWDC's Annual US-Japan Capital Gala.

**Japan-America Society of Washington DC seeks a Management company or individual to serve as Operations Manager, annually, for the Society's Sakura Matsuri-Japanese Street Festival.** The Matsuri is often described as the largest Japanese cultural event in the United States, and it is currently in its 63<sup>rd</sup> year. With a budget of roughly \$1mil, the Matsuri represents two thirds of the budget of Japan-America Society of Washington DC. The Matsuri is truly a National Capital Region community activity, as it relies on the planning, input, and day-of work of 80 Volunteer Leads and as many as 600 additional day-of volunteers.

The Matsuri Operations Manager works under the supervision of Matsuri General Manager and in close communication with the rest of the JASWDC Team, primarily including the President, Communications Manager, Office Administration Manager, Volunteer Coordinator (volunteer), and Volunteer Team Leads.

### **Goals:**

- 1- Sustain the Sakura Matsuri as one of the pillars of US-Japan civil society exchange in the United States.
- 2- Maximize profitability of the Matsuri through effective management of existing assets (pricing of tickets, on-site vending, exhibitor fees, licensing opportunities on-site and beyond, sponsorships, advance ticket sales).
- 3- Represent JASWDC in a positive way, including imparting volunteers and volunteer team leaders with a sense of accomplishment, ownership, and empowerment.
- 4- Work seamlessly with the District of Columbia to support Mayor's economic development and cultural enrichment objectives and reinforce the Society's historic partnership with City.

### **Duties**

#### **Licensing, Regulatory & Insurance**

- Prepare and submit plans and required documentation to Mayor's Special Event Taskforce Group (MSETG).
- Work closely with Matsuri General Manager to present and explain Matsuri plans to MSETG, adjust plans as required by MSETG.
- Serve as primary entity with responsibility for working with relevant DC Agencies to obtain all required permits and maintain compliance with license and permit guidelines and requirements.
- Review the Society's Matsuri Insurance policies and advise Matsuri General Manager regarding adequacy and recommended adjustments in compliance with city requirements and industry best practice.

### **Planning**

- Maintain and manage the Matsuri's databases and project management platform, including Cloud-based file storage (Sharepoint) and FestivalPro, the Matsuri's participant registration, volunteer registration/assignment and ticket sales platform.
- Working under the direction of the Matsuri General Manager, produce the Matsuri layout and architectural plan in consideration of:
  - Previous years' experiences,
  - Any changes in site and regulatory circumstances,
  - Particular plans for this year's Matsuri.
- Identify, negotiate contracts with, and manage all contractors who are responsible for digital and physical event infrastructure and services, in accordance with Society financial practices and contracting policies.
- Plan and manage Matsuri setup and teardown timeline; properly sequence contractors in order to avoid operational conflicts.
- Prepare lists of needed equipment and supplies for the day-of the Matsuri (Sponsors, Logistics, Chairs/Sub-chair team).
- Prepare and communicate load-out and load-in plans for Matsuri materials and pertaining to two separate inventory locations (JASWDC office and Dulles-based warehouse facility).
- Review volunteer training plans and advise Matsuri General Manager as needed.
- Work with Volunteer Coordinator to manage and Volunteer Team Leads and Day-of Volunteer assignments, provision of volunteer benefits such as refreshments and volunteer t-shirts.

### **Days-of**

- Serve as on-site manager of volunteer team leads & contractors.
- Manage load-out and overnight setup operation/oversee work of overnight setup volunteer team.
- Manage breakdown of Matsuri/oversee work of volunteer team and load-in.
- Oversee timely distribution of supplies and inventory fulfillment throughout Matsuri.
- Serve as on-site contact for DC agencies over the Matsuri weekend.
- Apprise Matsuri General Manager and, as needed, Society President of pertinent developments; respond to problems as needed, as and when they

arise.

- Be available via event radio at all times for inquiries from Matsuri General Manager and volunteer team leads.
- Understand and as needed, enact management plans and protocols for medical and security emergencies.
- Maintain team-focus throughout the Matsuri and lead and support volunteer team leads in maintaining a collegial and positive working environment.
- Work with Volunteer Coordinator to provision volunteer benefits such as refreshments and volunteer t-shirts.

### **Participant Management**

- Work with the Matsuri General Manager to collect participant contracts in FestivalPro.
- Work with the Matsuri General Manager to manage participant contracts, ensuring payments are received and logistical needs of exhibitors and performers are met.
- Communicate location allotments to participants as per the Matsuri layout.
- Assist Matsuri General Manager and Volunteer Coordinator in overseeing volunteer team leads' management of participants in their designated thematic areas of the Matsuri.
  - Work with Matsuri General Manager and Communications Manager to ensure that obligations to sponsors are fulfilled at and pertaining to Matsuri.

### **Financial Management:**

- Promptly submit contractor invoices through Society billing system with appropriate financial coding.
- Code revenue reports as needed or as requested by Administrative Manager.
- Work closely with Matsuri General Manager to provide prompt updates to Matsuri financial report, based on quotes and invoices, in order to maintain real-time financial performance estimates Matsuri, advise on cost saving measures or strategic spending opportunities; report significant cost savings or overruns promptly to Society President.

### **Volunteer Training and Volunteer Team Support**

- Work with Matsuri General Manager to draft & distribute agenda for each monthly meeting of the Matsuri's 18 Volunteer Team Chairs (December through April).
- Attend Volunteer Team Chair meetings, including invitations, venue (normally JASWDC Office), refreshments.
- Support the needs of the Volunteer Team Chairs; communicate to them the information they need to coordinate with and support the participants in their area of the Matsuri
- Prepare day-of information materials for volunteer team leads to assemble (vendor lists, maps, drop-off lists)

**Communications & Promotion:**

- Assist Matsuri General Manager in ensuring that public facing content (Matsuri description, key dates, schedule, performer and participant descriptions, sponsor list, etc.) is accurate and up to date on the Matsuri website, Matsuri app (and/or web-based platform), and for distribution through Society media such as newsletter and social media posts.
- Manage ticketing platform and sales of tickets through website/Festival Pro and day-of credit card and cash sales.
- Assist Communications Manager with the creation of the public-facing Matsuri map, and ensure accuracy in accordance with architectural plan
- Assist the Matsuri General Manager with management of any Matsuri assistants or interns and help oversee their responsibilities.
- Assist Matsuri General Manager to ensure prompt responses to Matsuri e-mail and phone inquiries ([sakuramatsuri@jaswdc.org](mailto:sakuramatsuri@jaswdc.org))