



National Association of Japan-America Societies

NAJAS: New England's Grassroots Seedbed
How Your Group Can Partner with NAJAS
(... and we, with you)

Andrew Wylegala

Conference of New England Japan-focused Non-profits
Newport, Rhode Island
October 26, 2025



NAJAS: “the holding” for US-J Friendship



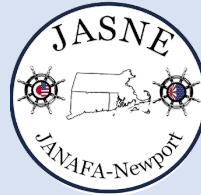
- **41** Societies
- **29** States & Provinces
- **15** major media markets
- **Room** to fill-in gaps in network
- **29** affiliates in Japan ("AJS")

Why is NAJAS Weekending in Newport?

Mission

- To network with JASNE & 15 regional non-profits
- Build NAJAS bond with sister cities post "Summit"
- To enlist future NAJAS members

Means



Consul General
Seiichiro Takahashi



Moment

- "Shimoda week" (#8)
- Sat-Fest/Mon-Mentor
- Warm-up for Kochi Grassroots Summit **May 25-31, 2027** (200th Manjiro Anniv.)
- Fortify P2P in an era of bilateral & global flux

NAJAS in DC (and, briefly, Boston)



Emma Chanlett-Avery

Chairwoman

*(D/D Asia Society Policy
Institute)*



Andrew (Andy) Wylegala

President



Misha D. Clive

*Sr. Manager
Operations &
Communications*



Bianca Sánchez Álvarez

*Manager, Development &
Member Services*

*(Relocating to DC from
Boston Area)*

Agenda for Today ...

- Introduce the broadest, most representative alliance of individuals and firms dedicated to advancing U.S.-Japan ties
- Sample channels to collaborate regionally (and across continent and Pacific) to better support the U.S.-Japan partnership and leverage it for good
- Kickstart relationships ... potentially, expand your non-profit's network by connecting it to ours (recruiting NAJAS member #42)

Unique Status, Important Role

No other such partnership nor infrastructure serving another relationship between countries.

NAJAS catalyzes grassroots action and helps navigate a vast landscape of Japan(-America) societies and, increasingly, many **external organizations**, to strengthen cooperation and understanding between our two **people**.

NAJAS Work Streams



Connect & Support an Ecosystem

Spur member collaboration
info & benefits to members,
value to partners



Deliver Content

Develop programs,
aggregate for grant
distribution



Support P2P Exchange

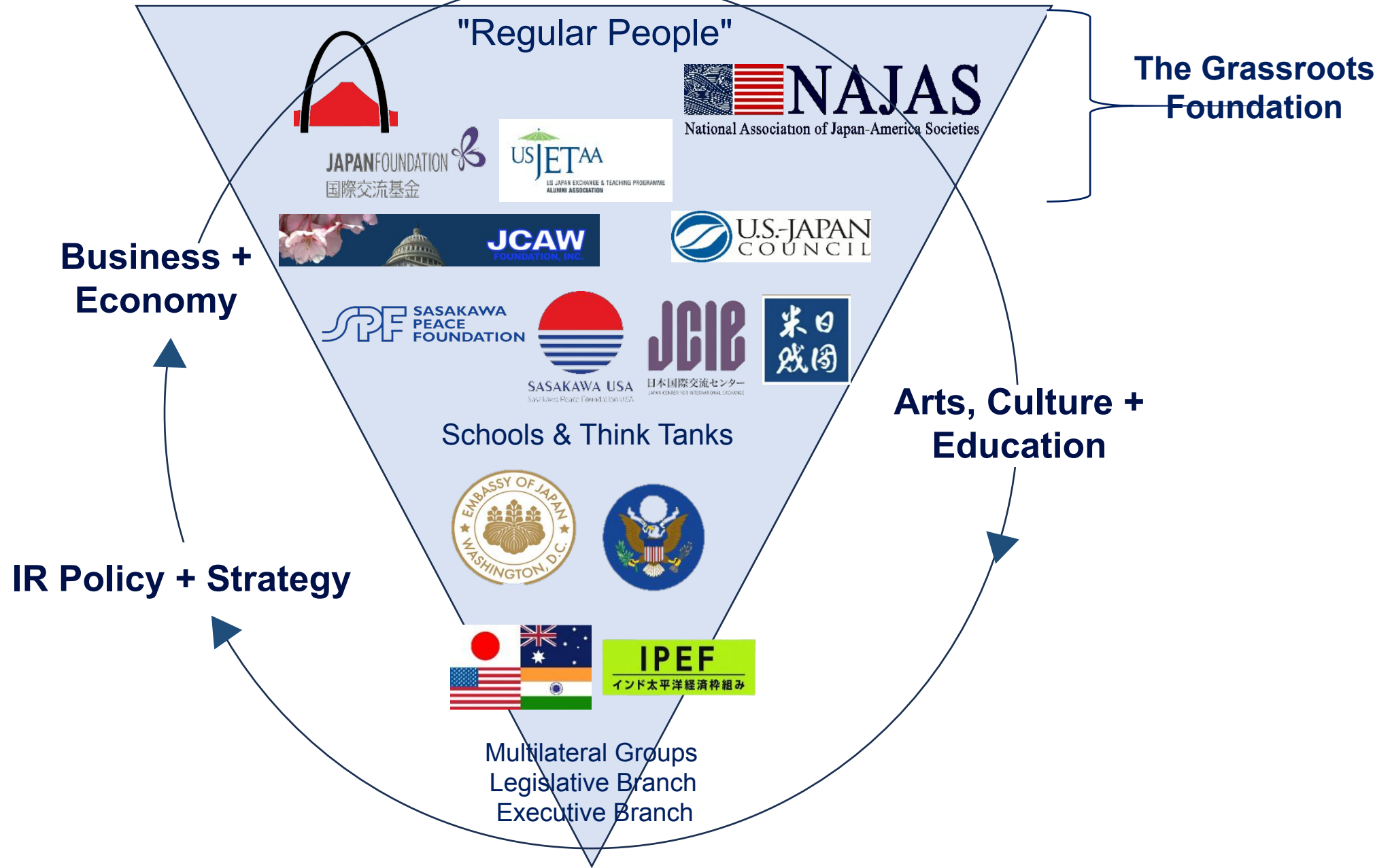
Administer
three programs: GRS, TTF,
HSD



Strengthen the Alliance

Advocating in support of the
relationship

US-J Ecosystem – a Corrected Perspective



By the Numbers

~9,700

Individual
Members of
Japan-America
Societies

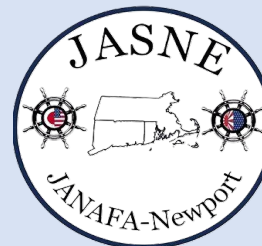
~2,300

Corporate
Members of
Japan-America
Societies

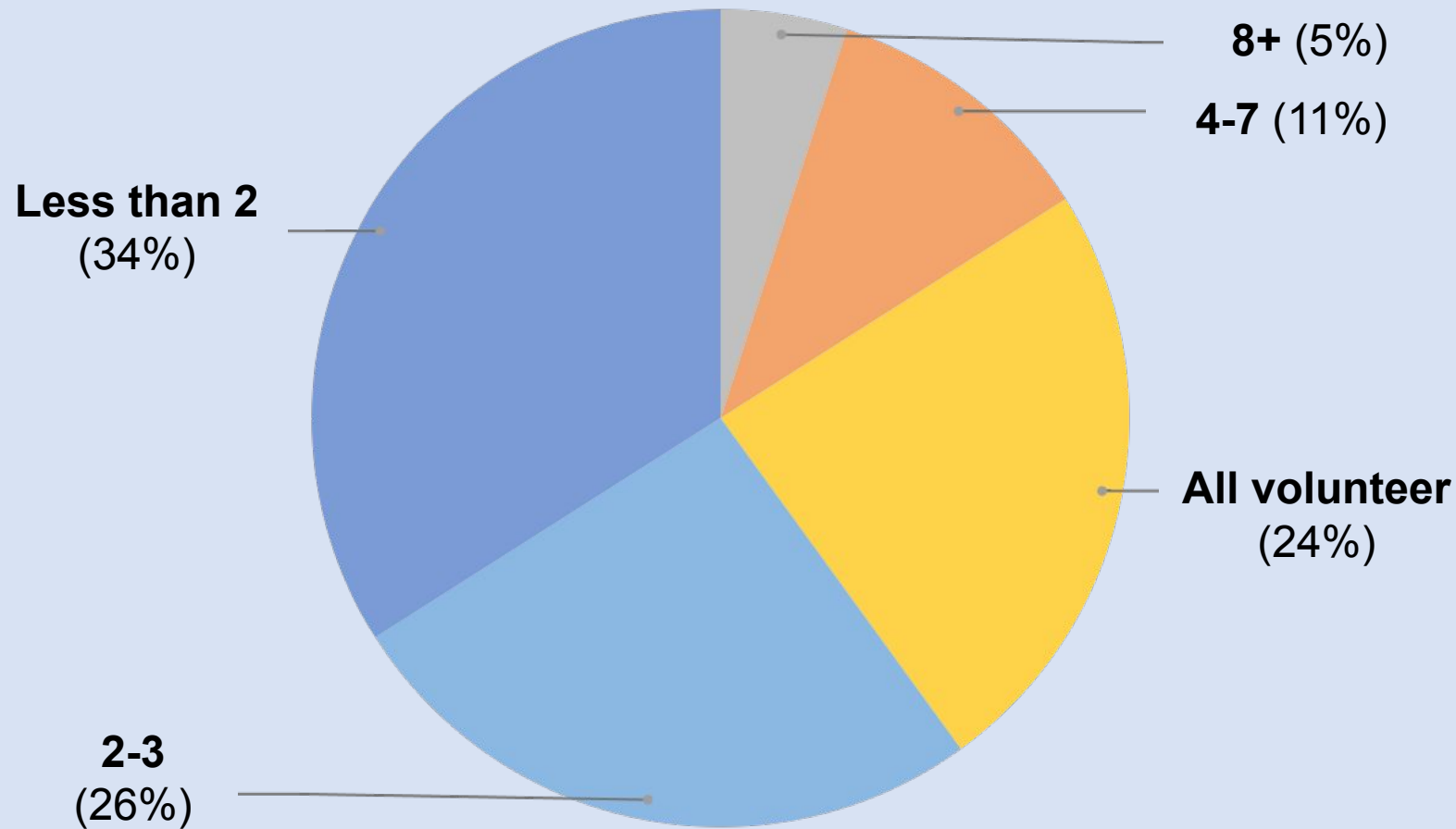
12K individual & corporate members-of-members
Oldest society founded **121** years ago
Youngest society founded in **2025**

4 societies have joined
NAJAS in the past 3 years

Newest
Member:



Full-Time Staff Headcount



Societies range in make-up with majority run by 0-2 paid staff

All are independent 501-c-3's

About 1 in 4 are all volunteer

Recent Grant Programs for Societies

Funded

- Japan Currents & Outreach
- KKC/NAJAS Business Speaker Series



Discontinued / Seeking Support

- Geostrategy in the Grassroots
- ACCJ/NAJAS Business Leader Series
- Digital Reproduction of Art ("Tsuzuri")
- JUMP / "U.S. Military Wellsprings"



□ NAJAS looks for new program partners and concepts, including for programs in emerging technology, environment, art, film & performance.

Embassy of Japan “Currents” & “Outreach” Series

**Increased to 12 Public Affairs Talks
(economic focus)**

'24 Outreach events in less-served
areas: Little Rock and Phoenix;
St. Louis book talk at Whitehaven.

'25 includes *New England Conference*,
return to Arkansas ... and another stop.



NAJAS 2025 Network Conference

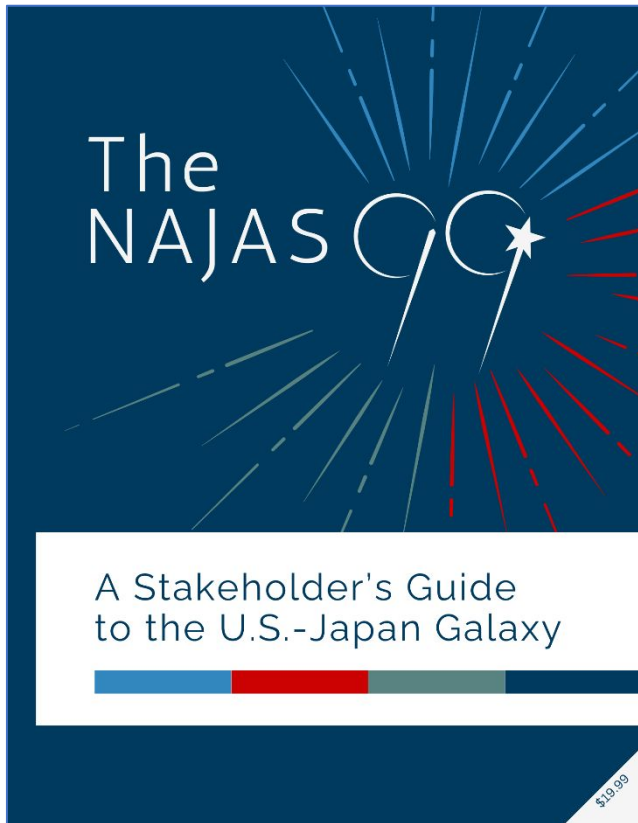


Advocating for a Globally Instrumental Partnership

**Lexington, KY, Aug 20-22, 2025, with 300
attendees, two screenings, a factory tour,
and a forays into network-to-network
connections for travel, baseball, sake ...
& Transpacific business**



Charting the U.S.-Japan Ecosystem



The NAJAS-99: A Stakeholder's Guide to the U.S.-Japan Galaxy

Our first step to charting the vast/disparate U.S.-Japan "galaxy"

- Features 99+ nonprofit, governmental, and regional entities.
- Print edition launched at NAJAS 2024 Conference with help from NHK WORLD-JAPAN
- "Flipbook" online and hard copies available at us-japan.org/Beyond-NAJAS/ or visit the **QR code**



Better activating the U.S.-Japan Ecosystem

We aim to create the first
community-based
interactive site for
U.S.-Japan synergy:
JapanHands.org



So, what's in it for us? NAJAS offers ...

All like-minded NFPs

Info: Events, grant announcements, tools & general news

- us-japan.org, biweekly newsletter, NAJAS-99

Intros: Join the one open day of Aug. Network Conference or outreach like today's

Informal interconnections:
...@us-japan.org

All Regular Members

Savings: Insurance; web & magazine subscriptions' hotel; airlines; F&B, more to come

Grants: Limited and competitive...but attractive!

Help: Management counsel, Member-only web pages, New E.D. mentoring

Community: 41 JAS, 30 AJS ++

All Members, continued

Full access to network conference with travel
subsidy or smaller members

DC Office: Drop-in space available on request

Invite to shape NAJAS
through Board/Committee service

Is Membership Feasible for Us? Worthwhile?

Appropriate?

Depends on **objectives and culture** ...

... but something for most, *especially* smaller and volunteer, who likely to receive **2-3x return in monetary terms**, and more in capacity and intangibles

Requisites

- Status/location, mission/values, primary filters
- No minimum size, no nomenclature required
- Application is simple and acceptance by vote of Members

Once joined

- Annual dues and survey, recognition of membership & partners

Dues levels

- Progressive scale based on revenue
- 6 bands start at \$600 annually
- Unchanged in 12 years

See NAJAS flyer for more

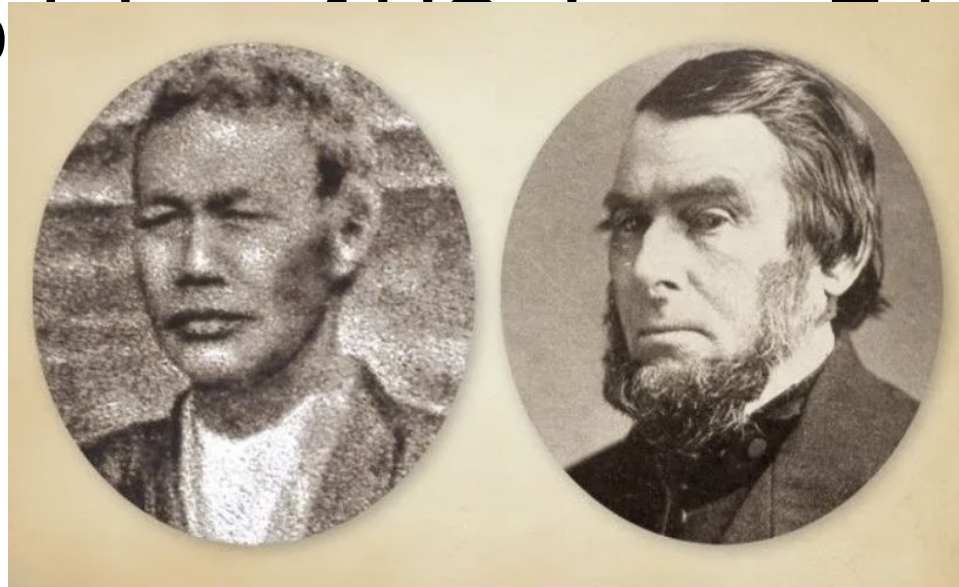
ご清聴ありがとうございました。
We Look Forward to Working With You!

Stay in touch

Andrew: wylegala@us-japan.org

Bianca: sanchezalvarez@us-japan.org

Countdown to 2027 -- Manjiro's 200th birthday and the obuse whitfield friendship



The Nakahamas and the
Whitfields

5th- 6th, and 7th generations
on!



2022 Obuse Grassroots Summit

2024 Wakayama Grassroots Summit



American Granpa!!



Fun for all ages
from U.S. and
from Japan!!

たのしいね～！

1991 年より 34 年間で 55,000 人以上の市民たちが交流 (参加者・ホストファミリー・ボランティア等総数)

※ 2020 年・2021 年はコロナ感染拡大の影響のため、オンラインでの交流



I am 70 years old.
I came to America
for the first time.
My dream came
true!!!

I love my
host mother!!



Join us for the Future Summits:

October, 2026 in **Philadelphia**

+ Fairhaven, NYC, DC, or VA.

May, 2027 in **Kochi**

+ Okinawa, Kagawa, Noto, Iwate??



John Manjiro-Whitfield Commemorative
Center for International Exchange

公益財団法人ジョン万次郎ホイットフィールド記念 国際草の根交流センター



今後の日米草の根交流サミット予定：

2026 年 フィラデルフィア大会

2026 年 10 月 20 日～ 27 日

ポストサミット：フェアヘヴン、NYC、DC・VA

2027 年 高知大会

2027 年 5 月 25 日～ 31 日

ポストサミット：沖縄、香川、能登、岩手など（仮）



SF Summit in June, 2025



CIE-US members



Whitfields and Nakahama

Questions?