

[Recruiting and Supporting International Chinese Language Teachers in U.S. K-12 Programs](#)

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During the past 15 years, inspired in part by the economic rise of China, interest in learning Mandarin Chinese has exploded in grade K-12 language education, and an unprecedented number of Chinese language programs have been established across the United States. The growing numbers of programs translate to tens of thousands of students. Where there are students, there must be teachers! Several notable efforts have been made to increase the supply of Chinese language teachers who already live in the United States and are highly educated. For a number of reasons, however, preparation, certification, and recruiting of domestic Chinese language teachers continues to be a challenge. The employment of international Chinese language teachers, therefore, has become a viable solution to the ongoing shortage of qualified and effective Chinese teachers in the United States.

This Brief describes the decisions and processes for recruiting, selecting, hiring, and supporting international Chinese language teachers, with discussion of specific considerations that are crucial to this process and guidelines for supporting these teachers to ensure their success. It

- Describes efforts that have been and are being made to bring international Chinese teachers to the United States.
- Discusses considerations for bringing international teachers to a program, addressing issues at the institutional, hosting community, and individual levels, including
 - Identify how the international teacher(s) will contribute to the mission and long-term goals of the program.
 - Assess the current state of the Chinese language programs in your organization and recruit international teachers to match your purpose.
 - Identify and collaborate with a sponsoring organization for international teachers.
 - Garner support for and build ownership of the international teacher program among key stakeholder groups, including the local, school, and district communities.
 - Understand and be prepared for the surprises and benefits brought by international teachers.
- Describes support that needs to be provided at the program and local community levels.
- Describes the infrastructure, resources, and tools that must be in place for these teachers to live and teach successfully in U.S. schools.

Resources in the Appendices provide step-by-step guidelines and practical suggestions for recruiting, hiring, and supporting these teachers.

As programs mature and more education leaders select Chinese as a mainstream language offering in U.S. schools, the demand for teachers will continue to expand, and the presence of international Chinese language teachers will likely to increase, not diminish. These teachers bring another language and culture to our students and communities. They also provide real-person, real-time intercultural communication experiences that can have an indelible impact on all parties. The life-changing nature of successfully teaching in a foreign country and classroom furnishes them with a multitude of experiences that they can share in their home countries, with an even wider audience. This is a gift for communities in both nations.

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