KANAGAWA BAR ASSOCIATION

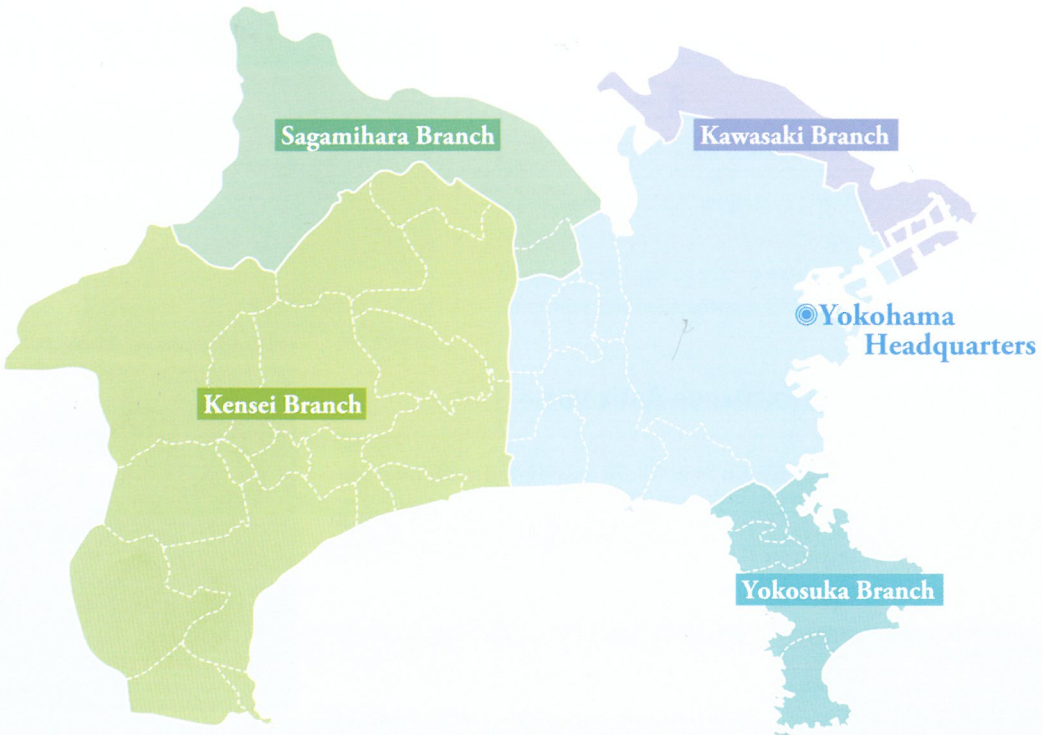
Profile of the Kanagawa Bar Association

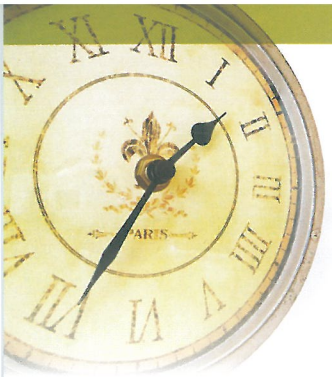
The Kanagawa Bar Association is an organization established under the Attorney Act of Japan. The Attorney Act provides that a bar association shall be established in the jurisdictional district of each district court. The Kanagawa Bar Association is based in Kanagawa Prefecture (hereinafter referred to as "Kanagawa") which is under the jurisdiction of the Yokohama District Court. Additionally, attorneys, legal professional corporations and local bar associations across the country form the Japan Federation of Bar Associations.

The Kanagawa Bar Association consists of all attorneys and legal professional corporations that have a law office in Kanagawa; membership is mandatory for those who wish to set up a law office in Kanagawa.

The Kanagawa Bar Association headquarters are in Yokohama, with four branches: Kawasaki Branch, Yokosuka Branch, Sagamihara Branch and Kensei ("western Kanagawa") Branch. Branch activities are carried out by member attorneys practicing in each region.

As of June 1, 2015, 1,491 attorneys and 51 legal professional corporations belonged to the Kanagawa Bar Association.





2 History

History of the Kanagawa Bar Association

After a modern judicial system was introduced in Japan, *daigennin*, predecessors of modern-day attorneys, started to practice law. In 1880, the Yokohama *Daigennin* Association was established by *daigennin* in Yokohama. This eventually became the Kanagawa Bar Association.

In 1893, the initial Attorney Act ("Initial Act") was enacted in Japan, bringing about a new name for attorneys (*bengoshi*), the establishment of the bar exam, and compulsory membership of a bar association for all attorneys. In the same year, the Yokohama Bar Association was established.

In 1933, the Initial Act was amended ("Second Act"): legal services became the monopoly of attorneys, and females became able to qualify as attorneys.

In 1949, the current act ("Current Act") was enacted. Whereas the Minister of Justice had control over attorneys previously, attorneys became self-governing, and each bar association became involved in the system for disciplining its member attorneys.

In 2016, the name of the Yokohama Bar Association was changed to the Kanagawa Bar Association.

According to existing records, membership of the Kanagawa Bar Association was 67 in 1923, over 100 in 1929, and continued to increase at a good rate after the Current Act was enacted in 1949. As of June 1, 2015, there were 1,491 members.

3 Attorneys

Law Offices of Attorneys who Belong to the Kanagawa Bar Association

Attorneys who belong to the Kanagawa Bar Association either run or work for law offices in Kanagawa. There are a few relatively large law offices with about 20 attorneys, but the most of the law offices in Kanagawa are small with about five or fewer attorneys.

Most clients of attorneys who belong to the Kanagawa Bar Association are either individuals living in or companies based in Kanagawa. Attorneys who belong to the Kanagawa Bar Association can also work for individuals and/or companies outside Kanagawa.

An attorney who belongs to the Kanagawa Bar Association can be a procedural attorney at any court in Japan.

Major Activities of the Kanagawa Bar Association

Human Rights Protection

The Bar Association, known at the time as the Yokohama Bar Association, established "The Yokohama Bar Association Human Rights Award" in 1997, with the aim of honoring outstanding individuals and organizations that have made major contribution to human rights protection.
The Kanagawa Bar Association is also involved in other human rights protection activities including:

- warning police that an investigation may be violating a suspect's human rights
- warning media organizations whose reporting may be violating someone's privacy

Services Provided for the Public

Legal Consultation

Legal consultation is provided by member attorneys in eight legal counseling centers within Kanagawa. Member attorneys also visit city halls, town offices and other organizations to offer legal consultation, giving the public easier access to legal support.

Response to Criminal and Juvenile Cases

The Criminal Advocacy Committee conducts a broad range of activities related to criminal defense, including:

- handling of the court-appointed defense system and serious criminal/juvenile cases
- contribution to revision of the court-appointed defense system
- implementation of training responding to revision of laws (e.g. *saiban-in* trials)
- public relations regarding criminal defense

Activities for Elderly and Disabled People

The Kanagawa Bar Association deals with issues concerning elderly and disabled people, so that their rights can be protected, and legal as well as welfare support can be implemented properly. As well as specific activities to protect legal rights, the Kanagawa Bar Association also conducts:

- study in the field of law and welfare
- seminars (e.g. regarding guardianship, property administration, prevention of abuse)

Dispute Resolution Center

Some people are not willing to take legal proceedings, but prefer to settle disputes through negotiation. The Kanagawa Bar Association meets these needs through an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) agency .

Public Seminars on Daily Legal Issues

Seminars on daily legal issues are offered by the Kanagawa Bar Association at eight places in Kanagawa to disseminate knowledge of law to the public.

Legal Education

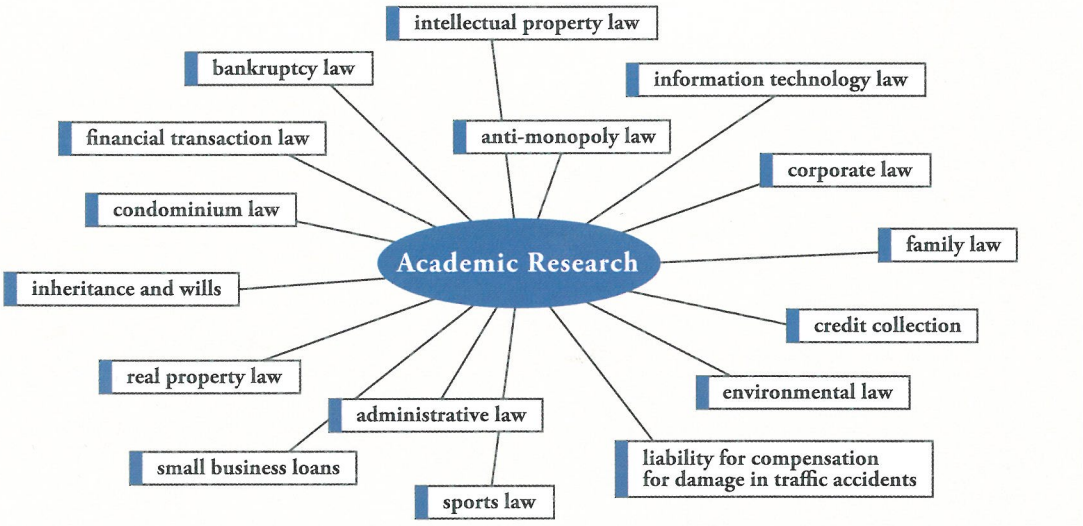
The Kanagawa Bar Association's Legal Education Center organizes activities such as trial observations, visiting lectures and mock trials for students and the general public.

Services for Small and Medium Enterprises

The Kanagawa Bar Association considers it important to support SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises). The attorney referral service is one example of such support. Support for SMEs' overseas market entry has also been strengthened in recent years.

Academic Research

The Kanagawa Bar Association has 16 specialized and practical study groups. Each study group is active in research about its own area of practice. The results of this research are published annually in "*Senmon-Jitsumu Kenkyu* (Research on the Specialty Practice)". Specific practice areas are as listed below:



International Exchange Activities

The Kanagawa Bar Association is actively associated with overseas legal organizations. Agreements were signed with the Gyeonggi Central Bar Association in Korea in 2003, and with the Shanghai Bar Association in China in 2009. Reciprocal visits and international seminars are held with each partner. Visits have also been made to the Indonesian Advocates Association (PERADI) in Indonesia, and the Hanzhou Bar Association and the Dalian Bar Association in China. The Kanagawa Bar Association will further continue its efforts to strengthen ties with overseas entities.

Organization Chart

Executive Bodies

- **President**
  - Vice President
  - Secretariat
- **Advisory Bodies**
  - Research Office
  - Treasury Office
  - Secretariat Administration Office
- **Committees**
  - Human Rights Protection Committee
  - Criminal Advocacy Committee
  - Committee on Legal Problems of the Elderly and People with Disabilities
  - Consumer Affairs Committee
  - International Exchange Committee
  - etc.
- **Civic Organizations**
  - Legal Consultation Center
  - Dispute Resolution Center
  - Rescue Center for Victims of Organized Crime Groups
  - Crime Victims' Assistance Center
  - Contact Center

- **Decision-Making Bodies**
  - General Assembly
  - House of Delegates
- **Financial Auditing Organization**
  - Auditor-Secretary
- **Independent Bodies**
  - Qualifications Screening Board
  - Disciplinary Actions Committee
  - Disciplinary Enforcement Committee
  - Election Administration Committee
- **Branches**
  - Kawasaki Branch
  - Kensei Branch
  - Yokosuka Branch
  - Sagamihara Branch

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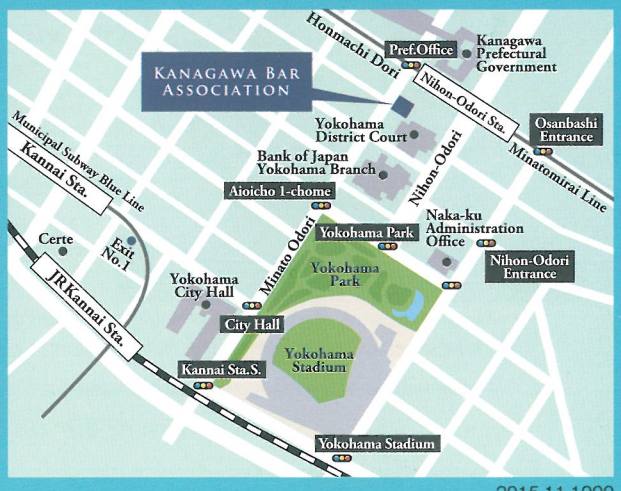

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