

2017 US Virgin Islands Cherry Blossom Princess Qualifications
[The Cherry Blossom Festival is part of the National Conference of State Societies (NCSS)
of which the Virgin Islands Association, DC (VIA-DC) is a member]

The mission of the program is to have the Cherry Blossom Princesses participate in educational, leadership, and cultural activities as they serve their nation and respective state, territory or embassy in a “Washington Classroom,” by introducing the princesses to many government officials; cultural, military and business leaders; and female role models, who work in the nation’s capital. In the past decade, the princesses have met with First Lady Laura Bush; former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi; Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson; Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton; Justice Sandra Day O’Connor; Naval Commander Yvette Brownwhaller; Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught; Red Cross President and CEO Dr. Bernadine Healey, among others. The USVI Cherry Blossom Princesses have also met with USVI members of Congress.

To qualify as a VIA-DC Cherry Blossom Princess candidate, all candidates must meet the following minimum qualifications in order to be considered to represent the US Virgin Islands in the 2017 Cherry Blossom Festival.

Residence: The female candidate must be a U.S. citizen and either have been raised in, be the daughter of a parent raised in, or the granddaughter, sister or niece of a grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle raised in the US Virgin Islands. She should be well informed about the US Virgin Islands. The candidate will need to reside in the DC area and be available to attend all of the Cherry Blossom Festival events. The 69th Cherry Blossom Festival will take place April 1 - 8, 2017 in Washington, DC. VIA-DC asks that the candidate’s connection be to a financially current VIA-DC member.

Age: The candidate is between 19 years of age, but no older than 24 as of the closing day, April 8, 2017, of the NCSS festival activities of the National Cherry Blossom Festival®.

Education: The candidate must be at least a high school graduate.

Marital: The candidate must be single, never have been married, no children.

General: Candidates are chosen based on her background, academics, leadership, community service and future ambitions. The candidate should possess poise, intelligence, maturity, have a good personality and character, and enjoy good physical, mental and emotional stability in order to withstand the rigorous schedule of Festival activities.

Availability: The chosen Princess must attend all scheduled NCSS Festival events and may be asked to participate in related events during the Festival week period. The program provides college-aged, professional women the chance to meet and interface with role models, gain an increased understanding of government and industry, as well as, be exposed to a broader international environment. In addition to the educational and professional development aspects, the program includes the following Mandatory events: the Stone Lantern Lighting Ceremony (4/2/17 from 2:30 - 4:30pm), Celebration of the States/Territories Reception (tbd), the Congressional Reception (4/5/17 from 6:30-8:00pm), the Official Cherry Blossom Grand Ball/Sushi Reception (4/7/17 from 6:00pm to midnight), the National Cherry Blossom Parade (4/8/17 from 10:00am to noon) and the Sakura Matsuri festival (4/8/17 from 11:00am to 6:00pm). Please note that the dates of some of the mandatory events may change, but they will fall in the week of 4/1 - 8/2017. Failure to participate in all mandatory NCSS events, will disqualify a Princess from the opportunity to participate in the NCSS sponsored U.S. Cherry Blossom Queen Selection Process. Every year since 1948, the U.S. Cherry Blossom Queen is chosen by a random spin of a wheel of fortune by the Japan Ambassador in Washington, D.C at the Official Cherry Blossom Grand Ball. Every year since 1973, the U.S. Cherry Blossom Queen has been officially invited, by the Japan Cherry Blossom Association (JCBA) to visit Japan in May. All expenses for the U.S. Cherry Blossom Queen's trip to Japan are covered by the JCBA.

Photograph: Each candidate must provide VIA-DC with a digital head shot color photo. If the candidate is chosen to represent VIA-DC, the picture will be used for the official Festival program book and publicity purposes and should be a head and shoulder portrait with just one pose.

Waiver: There will be no exception to the minimum age requirement of 19 years. In certain cases, VIA may be able waive the maximum age requirement of 24 years, with the approval of the NCSS Executive Committee.

Funding: The cost to participate as a Princess for the Cherry Blossom Festival is \$500. VIA-DC will cover this expense.

For any questions or clarifications, please feel free to email the VIA Cherry Blossom Committee at dcmetrovia@gmail.com

The 2017 USVI Cherry Blossom Princess application must be completed and returned to dcmetrovia@gmail.com no later than **Monday, December 12, 2016 by 5:00pm EST.**