

# UNION OF KANSAI GOVERNMENTS

関西広域連合

Osaka



Tower of the sun

Hyogo



Himeji Castle

Kyoto City



Togetsu-kyo Bridge (© Kyoto Media Support Center)

Sakai City



Nintoku-ryo Tumulus

Osaka City



Osaka Castle

Kyoto



Amanohashidate

Nara



Cherry Blossoms in Yoshino

Tokushima



The Whirlpools of Naruto

Tottori



Tottori Sand Dunes

Kobe City



Meriken Park

Wakayama



Nachi falls

Shiga



Hogonji Temple Karamon Gate, Chikubu Island

# Message from the Union President



Union President  
**Taizo Mikazuki**  
(Governor of Shiga Prefecture)

## Let's update the Union of Kansai Governments to version 2.0!!

Since its establishment in December 2010 as Japan's first and only pan-prefectural association, the Union of Kansai Governments has promoted region-wide administration, planning, and policy coordination in seven areas: disaster prevention; tourism, culture and sports promotion; industrial promotion; healthcare; environmental conservation; certification exams and licensing; and staff training. However, as we celebrate our thirteenth year of establishment, there have been significant changes around us.

While embracing the underlying idea of "Kansai is one, looking after each area of Kansai," we will take measures against COVID-19 and avian flu, and prioritize the safety and security of the citizens of the prefectures using our experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Thus, we aim to achieve the following three goals to upgrade the Union of Kansai Governments further:

The first is to become a "Kansai that takes charge." In March 2023, the Agency for Cultural Affairs relocated to Kyoto and began operations. Kansai is the only region in Japan that has achieved the relocation of a central government agency to a regional location since the Meiji period (1868-1912). Based on this achievement, we will continue to attain results as Kansai plays a role in building a decentralized society and a Japan with a bilateral structure.

The second is to become a "dynamic Kansai." Two major global events will be held in Kansai: Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai in two years, and the World Masters Games 2027 Kansai two years after that. Leveraging them as opportunities to attract the world's attention, we would like to work with the business community and various organizations to revitalize the Kansai region and send a message to the world.

The third is to create a "connected Kansai." Throughout history, Kansai has thrived due to its connections through water, roads, and culture. Let us create a Kansai that values and promotes such connections from the present to the future.

We hope to join our hearts and forces with all of you to progress toward a sustainable future for the Kansai region. We look forward to your continued guidance and support.

Let's give it our all, together!

## The UKG's Vision for the Future of Kansai

The Fifth Comprehensive UKG Plan of the Union of Kansai Governments (planning period: FY2023 - FY2025) sets forth the following three basic concepts for Kansai's future and aims to realize them by making the Union of Kansai Governments the hub for integrating Kansai's strengths.

### (1) Kansai creating a bilateral structure in Japan and promoting a decentralization reform

- Aim to break down the centralized administrative framework, have Kansai drive Japan's economic growth, and redress Tokyo's dominant role in the nation's life.
- Persistently seek the transfer of national government agencies, and proactively seek the transfer of national government affairs and authority necessary for the development of Kansai.
- Work with the business community to create a backup structure for capital city functions, and promote initiatives to address the disparity in infrastructure between the Tokyo metropolitan area and the rest of Japan.

### (2) Kansai thriving as a region by promoting digitalization and taking advantage of its individuality, strengths, history, and culture

- Seize the momentum of society's increasing digitalization and harness it for Kansai's overall development.
- Promote the charms of each Kansai locality, both in Japan and abroad, utilizing its deep unparalleled history, culture, and arts.
- Increase the number of people who are proud of, attached to, and believe in Kansai, and create a Kansai that flourishes as a region.

### (3) Kansai, a new value creation hub connected with Asia and the world

- Proactively undertake initiatives from a global perspective in each area, both in structural and non-structural aspects.
- Leverage global events to attract people, goods, and information to Kansai, have it create new value, and enhance its global presence.

# Union Profile

**Name** : The Union of Kansai Governments (hereinafter referred to as UKG)

**Date of Establishment** : December 1st, 2010

**Members** : Shiga Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, Tottori Prefecture, Tokushima Prefecture, Kyoto City, Osaka City, Sakai City, Kobe City (Fukui and Mie Prefectures participate as UKG partners.)

※Shiga Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, Tottori Prefecture and Tokushima Prefecture joined the UKG on December 1, 2010 (date of establishment). Osaka City and Sakai City joined on April 23, 2012. Kyoto City and Kobe City joined on August 14, 2012. Nara Prefecture joined on December 4, 2015

**President** : Taizo Mikazuki (Governor of Shiga Prefecture)

**Vice-President** : Takatoshi Nishiwaki (Governor of Kyoto Prefecture)

**The Commission of the UKG** : When the president of the UKG makes decisions about its policies, the Commission of the UKG coordinates with and communicates those decisions to the UKG members. Member governors and mayors who have been appointed commissioners of the UKG divisions then take responsibility for each project. The Commission shares responsibilities in making decisions and providing services.

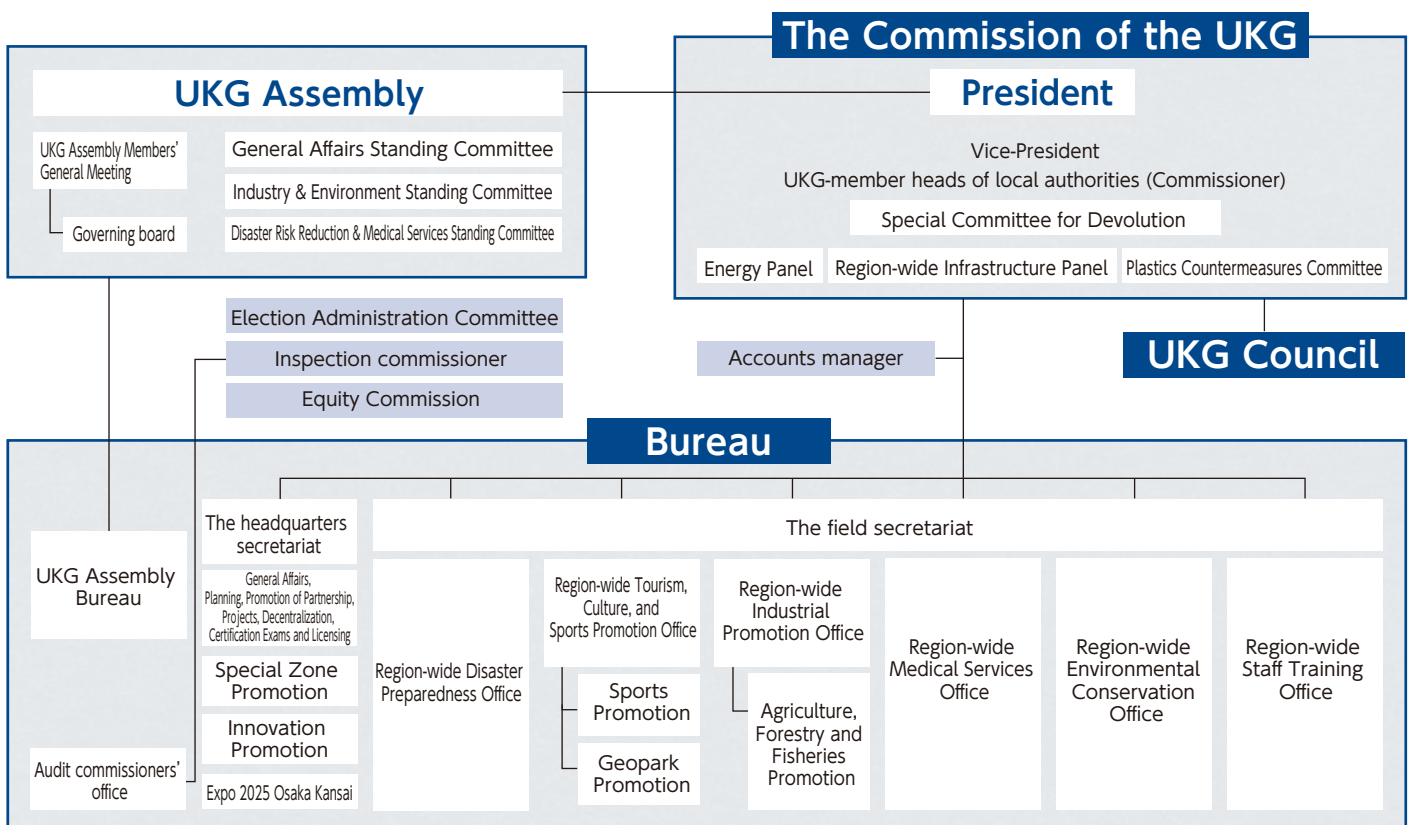
**The Assembly of the UKG** : As a legislative body, the Assembly has an authority that is equivalent to that of local government assemblies, including revision and repeal of ordinances and budget resolution. It is composed of 39 members selected from member prefectural and city assemblies.

**The Council of the UKG** : The Council hears a wide range of opinions from residents and discusses issues faced by the region of Kansai. It also discusses the UKG's vision for the future.

**Bureau** : Headquarters are set up to conduct official business such as general coordination and planning, decentralization policy, and work related to certification examinations and licenses. In addition, branch offices located in prefectures conduct office work in areas for which they are responsible. Staff from prefectural or city government offices works at these offices. Finally, a UKG Assembly bureau supports the Assembly's activities.



## UKG Overview



# Region-wide Initiatives

## Region-wide Disaster Preparedness Office

**Enhancing disaster preparedness as a region as a whole, we will bring safety and security to our residents!**

- Developing the "Kansai Plan for Disaster Prevention and Preparation" and the "Kansai Outline for Disaster Relief."
- Extending areas accessible to region-wide disaster relief in the case of a large-scale natural disaster.
- Facilitating the supply of relief goods in times of disaster.
- Conducting region-wide disaster drills in Kansai.
- Developing human resources for disaster prevention.



## Region-wide Tourism, Culture, and Sports Promotion Office

**With the use of strategic promotion of tourism, culture, and sports, we will make the Kansai region more attractive !**

- Promoting "Kansai Sightseeing and Cultural Promotion Plan."
- Promoting tourism initiatives for Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai and the World Masters Games 2027 Kansai.
- Attracting visitors to Kansai through diverse region-wide tourism.
- Running strategic promotion.
- Promoting initiatives by the Kansai Tourism Bureau established by the public and private sectors.
- Promoting the culture of Kansai and conveying its appeal internally and externally.
- Improving the culture of Kansai through cooperation and exchange.
- Passing on Kansai culture to future generations.
- Creating Kansai culture through industry-academia-government collaborations.
- Promoting new Kansai culture on the occasion of the Agency for Cultural Affairs' relocation.
- Making "Kansai, a leading region for lifelong sports."
- Making "Kansai, a Mecca for sports."
- Making "Kansai, a leading region for sports tourism."
- Supporting the hosting of the World Masters Games 2027 Kansai.



## Region-wide Industrial Promotion Office

**We will promote our industrial policy strategically with the aim of making Kansai an area where innovation is born!**

- Steadily implementing the "Kansai-wide Industrial Vision."
- Showcasing and strengthening Kansai's potential.
- Enhancing the innovation-creating environment and functions by taking advantage of Kansai's superiority.
- Supporting growth for small and medium-sized enterprises by adding to their value.
- Revitalizing the regional economy that makes use of the attractiveness of distinctive regions.
- Securing and training human resources who support Kansai.
- Steadily promoting the "Kansai Region-wide Vision of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries."
- Increasing local consumption of local products.
- Expanding overseas demand for Kansai food through the dissemination of Kansai food culture worldwide.
- Extending the distribution channels of agricultural and marine products inside and outside Japan.
- Enhancing competitiveness through agricultural diversification and by promoting collaboration between agriculture, commerce, and industry.
- Training and securing human resources in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.
- Revitalizing and preserving the multiple functions of rural areas through an exchange with cities.



## Region-wide Medical Services Office

We will make Kansai a level-4 healthcare area, creating a “Safe and Secure Healthcare Area, Kansai” !

- Promoting the “Plan for Kansai-wide cooperation in emergency medical services.”
- Improving emergency medical services Kansai-wide by utilizing the helicopter ambulance.
- Strengthening the region’s emergency medical services in readiness for disasters.
- Building a Kansai-wide medical service for solving problems.



## Region-wide Environmental Conservation Office

Working on Kansai-wide preservation of the environment, we will become an “Environmentally Advanced Zone, Kansai” !

- Promoting the “Plan for Kansai-wide environmental preservation.”
- Building a decarbonized society.
- Building a society in harmony with nature.
- Building a recycling-oriented society.
- Nurturing sustainable society leaders.



## Certification Exams, Licensing, etc.

With the unification of certification examinations and licenses, we will work more efficiently!

- Conducting nursing assistant, chef, and confectionary hygiene master examinations and licensing.
- Conducting poisonous and dangerous substance handler and registered seller examination.



## Region-wide Staff Training Office

By training officials to have a regional perspective, we will improve job performance!

- Implementing policy development training.
- Having staff belonging to the UKG prefectures and cities participate in group training seminars held in each city.
- Utilizing the Internet to train staff effectively.



## Other Region-wide Projects

The UKG will plan and carry out important policies to link the entire Kansai region.

- Conducting Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai
- Building region-wide infrastructure
- Promoting plastics reduction measures
- Promoting the energy policy
- Developing special zone projects
- Promoting innovation
- Creating measures for Lake Biwa and the Yodo River area
- Promoting women’s participation in society
- Promoting the dissemination of the SDGs
- Promoting digitalization
- Promoting the uniformity of forms and standards

# Realizing a decentralized society

## ~ Initiatives to create a bilateral structure in Japan and promote a decentralization reform ~

For the growth of the Kansai region, we will promote regional development and demonstrate that Kansai is a suitable region to support capital city functions, thereby promoting further relocation of government agencies, and creating a bilateral structure in Japan. Also, by building the achievements of a Kansai-wide administration, we will demonstrate our ability to take over the affairs and authority of the national government, which will lead to the delegation of the national government's duties that are appropriate for the Union. By promoting these initiatives comprehensively, we aim to realize a Kansai rich in individuality and vitality, leading a decentralized society in which the communities themselves can determine their policy priorities.

### ■ Building a backup structure for capital functions

In case of an emergency in the capital, it's essential to have a backup base that can support its political, administrative, and economic functions. We believe Kansai is an ideal location for this because of its high concentration of national agencies and corporate headquarters, excellent transportation and communication capabilities, and the ongoing support and cooperation of the public and private sectors, including the UKG.

### ■ Relocation of government agencies

To expand the effectiveness and innovativeness of policies of government agencies established in Kansai, such as the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Consumer Affairs Agency's Headquarters for New Future Creation Strategies, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication's Statistical Data Utilization Center, we will promote partnership and cooperation, including with affiliated bodies and the business community to further relocate government agencies and central government regional offices to the region.

### ■ Creating a Disaster Management Agency

We will continue to promote the creation of a Kansai-based Disaster Management Agency, a bilateral organization with expertise in a series of disaster countermeasures, including investigative studies and scenarios of disaster prevention measures based on past experience.

### ■ Transferring the national government's functions and authority

We will propose the decentralization of power to the national government in order to achieve a drastic expansion of the role of our "region-wide block-based union" and a transfer of authority. At the same time, we will seek the transfer of administrative duties and authority from the national government by building Kansai's region-wide administration achievements and demonstrating its ability to take over national administrative affairs and power.

## Cooperation with various entities

- To realize the "Union of Kansai Governments' Vision for the Future of Kansai," we will work with the business community, partner organizations (Fukui and Mie Prefectures), the national government, municipalities, and various other entities to become a hub for unifying Kansai's authority and revitalizing the entire Kansai region.
- We will actively communicate the merits of the UKG and information on regional affairs to residents, and emphasize its presence to improve the public's understanding. We will also reflect residents' opinions on our policies through the Council of the Union of Kansai Governments, which consists of representatives of regional organizations, academic experts, and publicly recruited committee members, and through periodic opinion exchange meetings with municipalities.

# Time Line of Major Activities

- Held the Committee of the UKG (December 2010)
- Held the Assembly of the UKG (January 2011)
- Formulated the Comprehensive UKG Plan (February 2011)
- Responded to the Great East Japan Earthquake (March 2011)
- Released the statement for creating a back-up structure of capital functions (April 2011)
- Commenced operation of the UKG's helicopter ambulances (April 2011)
- Made a decision to ask the national government to relegate 3 branch offices to the UKG (May 2011)
- Implemented disaster prevention with a combination of public and private sector entities
- Promoted the charms of Kansai overseas (from June 2011)
- Established a region-wide infrastructure panel (July 2011)
- Established an energy panel (August 2011)
- Held the first UKG Council (September 2011)
- Developed the Kansai Plan for Disaster Prevention and Preparation (March 2012)
- Developed the Kansai Sightseeing and Cultural Promotion Plan (March 2012)
- Developed the Kansai-wide Industrial Vision (March 2012)
- Developed the Kansai-wide Cooperation in Emergency Medical Services Plan (March 2012)
- Developed the Kansai-wide Environmental Preservation Plan (March 2012)
- Began unifying procedures to register National Government Licensed Guide Interpreter (April 2012)
- Established the Kansai Innovation International Strategic Comprehensive Special Zone Promotion Headquarters (May 2012)
- Established the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Promotion section in the Region-wide Industrial Promotion Office (July 2012)
- Set up the execution committee for the Kansai International Tourism Year 2013 (August 2012 – December 2021)
- Promoted cormorant control measures based on the Kansai-wide Cormorant Control Plan (March 2013)
- Established the Study Group of the Do-Syu system (set up in March 2013 and submitted a final report in March 2014)
- Started facilitating member operation of foreign offices and of help desks for overseas business in collaboration with UKG members (April 2013)
- Began unifying procedures for certification exams and licensing (April 2013)
- Started support for the World Masters Games 2027 Kansai
- Organized a study group of the emergency plans for the areas around Lake Biwa and the Yodogawa River (July 2014)
- Organized a study group to examine prospects for the Kansai area and published a final report (September 2014 – September 2015)
- Organized the Kansai Health and Medical Services Meeting (July 2015)
- Asked the national government to transfer agencies to Kansai
  - Established the Headquarters for Vitalizing Regional Cultures, Agency for Cultural Affairs (April 2017)
  - Established the Statistical Data Utilization Center, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (April 2018)
- Launched the Consumer Affairs Agency's Headquarters for New Future Creation Strategies (July 2020)
- Started operations of the Agency for Cultural Affairs in Kyoto (From March 2023)
- Established the Sports Promotion section in the Regional Tourism, Culture, and Sports Promotion Office (September 2015)
- Developed the Kansai-wide Sports Promotion Vision (March 2016)
- Established the Kansai Tourism Promotion Bureau (From March 2016 (merged with the Kansai Foundation for Regional Development and launch of Kansai Tourism Bureau in April 2017)
- Formulated the Strategy for Revitalizing Kansai 2016 – 2019 (April 2016)
- Dealt with the Kumamoto earthquake and Central Tottori earthquake (April, October 2016)
- Launched a forum to exchange opinions with younger members of the UKG Council (September 2016)
- Supported Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai
  - Osaka chosen as the host for Expo 2025 (November 2018)
  - Established the Osaka Kansai Expo Kansai Pavilion Planning Committee (January 2022)
  - Released the outline of the construction plan for the Osaka Kansai Expo Kansai Pavilion (October 2022)
- Established the Council for Kansai Disaster Relief Supplies (January 2017)
- Published the final report on the establishment of the Study Meeting on the Ideal State of Region-wide Administration (September 2017-March 2019)
- Established the Kansai Women's Achievement Promotion Forum (December 2017)
- Participated in the Kansai SDGs Platform (December 2017)
  - Worked with JICA-Kansai and the Kinki Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry toward achieving the SDGs, serving as the secretariat of the project.
- Supported the G20 Osaka Summit, 2019
- Responded to the earthquake in the northern part of Osaka Prefecture, torrential rains, and Typhoon No. 21 (June, July, and September 2018)
- Issued the Kansai Zero Plastic Waste Declaration (May 2019)
- Formulated the Guidelines for Kansai-Wide Countermeasures for Displaced Persons (September 2019)
- Responded to Typhoon Hagibis (October 2019)
- Responded to the COVID-19 pandemic (From January 2020)
- Established the Plastics Countermeasures Committee (April 2020)
- Issued the Kansai New Era Declaration (November 2020)
  - On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Union of Kansai Governments, a declaration was made on the vision for Kansai that should be pursued over the next ten years
- Issued the Kansai Declaration for a Decarbonized Society (November 2021)
- Compiled proposals and opinions regarding the UKG Leading the Way to Hope for the Future (May 2022)
- Started the Kansai-wide Industrial Co-Creation Platform Project (November 2022)

# Union of Kansai Governments Office Contact Information

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- **Region-wide Staff Training Office**

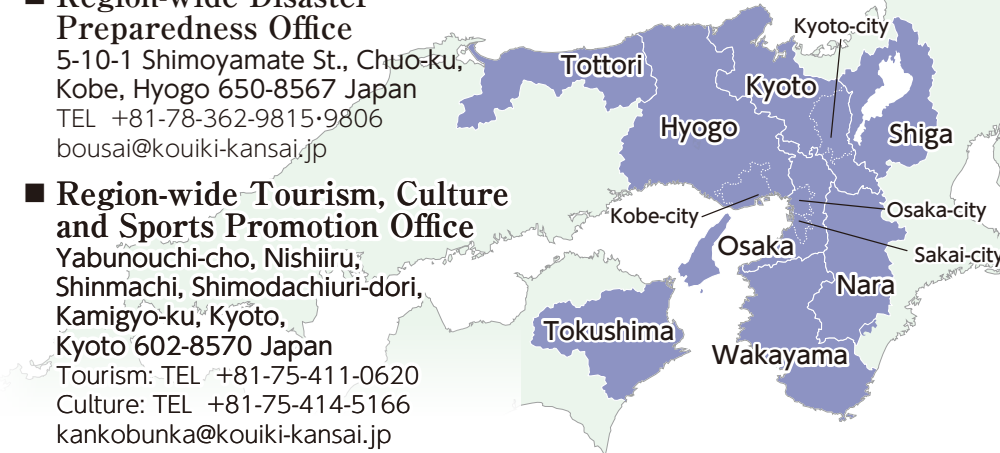
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The UKG is Japan's first extended inter-prefectural association, comprising eight prefectures (two *Fu* and six *Ken*) and four cities. The area has a population of 22 million, making the UKG the largest local public organization in Japan.

What is an extended inter-prefectural association?

It is a special local public entity with assemblies and administrative committees as stipulated in Article 284 of the Local Autonomy Act. It can flexibly and comprehensively deal with region-wide administrative needs that extend beyond the bounds of prefectures. An inter-prefectural association can be assigned the national government's functions and authority under laws and regulations.



To mark the fifth anniversary of establishment and official membership of Nara Prefecture, the UKG has chosen a new logo from ideas submitted by the public. Using the letter K for Kansai as a motif, it represents the UKG's gathering of forces and its strive for making Kansai full of character and power.

## World Masters Games 2027 Kansai

The World Masters Games are an international multi-sport athletic competition for athletes over the age of 30 and into their middle age and senior years. The World Masters Games Kansai will be held across the Kansai region, with 35 sports and 59 events. It was postponed due to the COVID-19, and now the new session has been decided.

The new session :

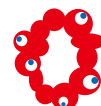
May 14, 2027 to May 30, 2027 (17 days)

It is expected that 50,000 people from Japan and abroad will participate.

World Masters Games 2027 Kansai  
Website <https://wmg2021.jp/>



## Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai



OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN  
EXPO2025



The World Expo on the theme of "Designing Future Society for Our Lives" is set to take place in Yumeshima, Osaka, for 184 days from April 13 to October 13, 2025. The Expo is a great opportunity to show the world what Kansai has to offer. The entire Kansai region is committed to revitalizing the region.

Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition Website  
<https://www.expo2025.or.jp>



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UKG Official Website  
<https://www.kouiki-kansai.jp/>



UKG Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/kansai.kouiki>



UKG X (Twitter)  
<https://twitter.com/KansaiKouiki>

