Operating since 2005, CLTA-WA originally functioned under the name ‘Chinese Language Teachers Network’ (CLTN). It has undergone several stages of metamorphosis before reaching its current incarnation as the Chinese Language Teachers Association-Washington (CLTA-WA) . Each stage has benefitted from the passion and dedication of many Chinese education professionals. What follows is a brief account of the evolution of the organization.

CLTN started with the work of Professor Greg Youtz at Pacific Lutheran University, as part of a grant from the Freeman Foundation. That portion of the grant allocated funding for a meeting of Chinese language teachers in the Puget Sound region. PLU's effort gained immediate support from Professor Lotus Perry at the University of Puget Sound, and subsequently, Adam Ross of The Lakeside School. Perry and Ross led the initiative, created and maintained a member listserv, and tentatively branded the group as the Chinese Language Teachers Network. Through CLTN, they began the task of providing Washington state Chinese language teachers a networking forum and funding for professional development opportunities.

In 2006, Chunman Gissing, Adam Ross, Meitsu Chuang-Mendel and Michele Anciaux-Aoki met to form the Chinese Language Core Team of the State of Washington. Together with CLTN, the two groups worked to establish a framework to focus on language learning and teaching in support of the initiative to expand Chinese language learning capacity in Washington State. The groups developed a "Starting a Chinese Program in Your Community" program to inform and support Washington State communities that wanted to establish Chinese programs in their institutions. The program has been requested by and offered many times throughout the years.

High caliber workshops, at least twice annually, occurred in the region at this stage of collaboration between CLTN and the Chinese Language Core Team. Throughout this period, the groups received generous support from a State Innovation Grant, individual members, as well as institutions, such as the University of Puget Sound, The Lakeside School, and University Prep. The generosity of these institutions and individuals, as well as the hard work and persistence of many volunteers, made possible a series of free workshops, led by prominent Chinese language educators, such as Dr. Cynthia Ning of the University of Hawaii, Dr. Haiyan Fu of the Chicago Public Schools District, Dr. Jennifer Liu of Indiana University and others. These workshops informed and advanced the professional knowledge and skills of Chinese language teachers in Washington State, and Oregon, as well.

Formally registering with the state in 2008, CLTN-WA served as a transitional organization with the goal of establishing the Chinese Language Teachers Association - Washington State. Lotus Perry and Adam Ross led the planning to move the organization toward the establishment of CLTA-WA. In 2009, CLTA-WA registered with the State of Washington as an official organization. The first president, Pollyanna Wang, took up her role with gusto and determination, leading CLTA-WA to work closely with the newly established Confucius Institute of the State of Washington (CIWA) to promote quality Chinese language education in the State of Washington and to support Chinese language teachers.

Another important component has been the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) Startalk Critical Language Teacher Certification Program, initially funded under the National Security Language Initiative in 2007. This grant project is the only Startalk project nationwide that assists teacher candidates with the process of qualifying for Washington state teaching certificates from beginning to end. The brain child of Betty Lau and Dr. Margaret Chow, SPS Startalk has produced over 40 certificated teachers of Chinese, who are teaching in public and private schools, universities and colleges all over the state, with one teaching Chinese in Oregon. Many of these “Startalkers” have become members and officers of CLTA-WA.

Since the founding of the CLTA-WA, the organization continues to offer high quality, professional development workshops to area teachers. One highlight was an all day workshop given by Dr. Myriam Met. Participation included area teachers of any world language. About 100 teachers of Chinese, Japanese, French, Spanish and other languages gathered to learn about differentiation techniques from Dr. Met.

CLTA-WA strives to provide a forum for area Chinese language teachers to advance the cause of language learning and teaching. It also worked with CLTA-USA by helping to create a framework to enable CLTA to establish formal affiliations with regional Chinese language teacher professional organizations throughout the US. CLTA-WA is now a formal regional organization affiliated with CLTA-USA.

The CLTA-WA board seeks to continue the great work of serving the community with dedication, passion and commitment summarized best in the Association mission: "to promote quality teaching of Chinese language at all educational levels in the State of Washington. ”