



SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL®

FACT SHEET

Mission

Sister Cities International (SCI) is a non-profit citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between U.S. and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation, to promote cultural understanding, and to stimulate economic development. SCI leads the movement for local community development and volunteer action, by motivating and empowering private citizens, municipal officials, and business leaders to conduct long-term programs of mutual benefit.

Goals

- Develop municipal partnerships between U.S. cities, counties, states and similar jurisdictions in other nations
- Provide opportunities for city officials and citizens to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships
- Create an atmosphere in which economic and community development can be implemented and strengthened
- Stimulate environments through which communities will creatively learn, work and solve problems together through reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal, business, professional, and technical exchanges and projects
- Collaborate with organizations in the United States and other countries that share similar goals.

Benefits of Membership

- Eligibility for all SCI-managed grants
- Subscription to all SCI publications, including bimonthly issues of *SCI News* and the *Report to the Membership*, the annual membership directory, and instructional guides covering all aspects of local program development
- Processing of IAP-66 applications for J-1 visas for secondary school exchange programs at a rate of 80% less than other companies
- Eligibility to send voting delegates to the SCI Annual Conference and the ability to participate in all aspects of SCI growth and development
- Qualification to participate in the SCI Annual Awards Program and the SCI Young Artist Competition
- Assistance from the SCI staff regarding local program development and organization, finding a sister city, and expertise on protocol and international exchange program issues

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International Community Resource Center (ICRC) at www.sister-cities.org

- The ability to instantaneously send e-mail and translate documents in seven different languages, with more to be added in the near future
- For the first time ever, direct access to one of the most advanced and innovative “search engines” for foundations, corporations, and government grants
- The ground-breaking capability to report, track, and compile sister city program information throughout the world
- Entry to the only Web site with the power to report, track, and compile the tools and techniques, which promote outstanding sister city programs, including fund raising, publications, and capacity-building for local programs
- Finally collected in one place, information about partnerships with schools, business groups, service organizations, and other community-based international organizations
- Landmark entry to detailed community profiles and contact information for Member Communities and “Cities Seeking Sister Cities”
- Opportunity to purchase online discounted supplemental medical insurance when traveling abroad

History

Sister city, county and state affiliations between the United States and other nations began shortly after World War II, and developed into a national initiative when President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed a people-to-people program at a White House conference in 1956. Originally a part of the National League of Cities, Sister Cities International became a separate, non-profit corporation in 1967 due to the tremendous growth and popularity of the U.S. program.

President Eisenhower’s intention was to involve individuals and organized groups at all levels of society in citizen diplomacy, with the hope that personal relationships, fostered through sister city, county and state affiliations, would lessen the chance of future world conflicts.

The International Network

SCI is one of a number of international organizations that utilize the concept of town twinning to foster deeper cross-cultural understanding and global cooperation towards sustainable economic and community development.

SCI is the national membership association for sister city, county, and state programs in the United States. As the official organization that links jurisdictions from the United States with communities worldwide, SCI recognizes, registers, and coordinates sister city, county, and state linkages. Currently, SCI represents over 2,100 communities in 121 countries around the world.

To receive official recognition, a sister city, county or state relationship must have the endorsement of the local authorities, who support the efforts of community volunteers. Sister city agreements are then signed by the respective mayor and ratified by each city council, or its equivalent. This process opens global initiatives for participation by all people at the local level – citizens, local governments, businesses, media, private voluntary organizations, and educational institutions.

In every region of the world, sister cities, counties and states play a significant role in supporting long-term community partnerships through reciprocal exchange programs. SCI strives to ensure that each

project that is undertaken by its members reflects the diversity of its network. Specifically, SCI promotes the inclusion of ethnic and racial minorities, people with disabilities, youth, women, and people of diverse socio-economic status in all sister cities activities.

SCI promotes and supports new sister city partnerships in all corners of the globe, reaching areas traditionally underserved by other community development organizations. As international cooperation gains importance, city-to-city programs become increasingly significant to overall global development.

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