
SISTER CITIES PROGRAMS



SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL
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"Sister Cities Programs are an important resource to the negotiations of governments in letting people give expression to their common desire for friendship and cooperation for a better world for all."

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Affiliations between cities throughout the world began after World War II. They became known in the United States as *sister cities*. The U.S. program was launched when President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed the People-to-People idea at a White House Conference in 1956. His idea was to involve people and community organizations in personal diplomacy.

To promote sister cities on a national scale, the Civic Committee of People-to-People was established. At the request of the Civic Committee, the National League of Cities, representing more than 15,000 cities, towns and villages in the U.S., agreed to serve as a clearinghouse to expand sister cities through its members.

Initially, a dozen active affiliations began. By the early 1960s, the number of sister cities increased rapidly. It became clear that a new, national organization, devoted exclusively to the support of the Sister Cities Program, was needed.

The Town Affiliation Association of the U.S., Inc. was incorporated on June 12, 1967 as a nonprofit, membership organization to foster international cooperation and understanding through sister cities relationships.

The organization is governed by a board of directors. Voting membership is held by cities, counties, states, associations of municipalities, the National League of Cities, and local sister cities organizations that pay annual dues and are responsible for carrying out an affiliation with a community in another country.

Sister Cities International [SCI] is now widely used and recognized as descriptive of the U.S. Sister Cities Program. SCI programs and services are handled by a professional staff under the management of an executive director and division directors. A network of state coordinators—all volunteers—assist individuals, communities or organizations interested in the Sister Cities Program.

Today, over 900 U.S. cities are linked with 1,500 foreign cities in 110 different countries. The global growth of the Sister Cities Program is creating environments in which people learn, work, and create together. People are reaching out to grasp new challenges and are solving some of societies' problems together. They are responding to the growing need for international cooperation and understanding. They are doing it all through Sister Cities Programs.