



PURPOSE

The goal of the U.S. SISTER CITIES PROGRAM is to give people, and their communities, the chance to make a difference in a changing world through collaboration. To realize this goal, it is first necessary to link the mutual interests of communities and address these interests through the international exchange of people, ideas and cultures. Affiliations are one vehicle by which U.S. cities, counties and states create opportunities for exchanges of citizens, youth, trainees and professionals for educational, cultural, professional and humanitarian purposes. The program unites community and volunteer resources for the joint advantage of providing private citizens with an active role in public diplomacy to further international cooperation and understanding.

HISTORY

Affiliations between cities throughout the world began after World War II. They became known in the U.S. 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. Out of this grew Sister Cities International which has assisted more than 900 U.S. cities, representing over 125 million Americans, linked with some 1,500 cities in 110 different countries.

MEMBERSHIP

SCI's membership categories are: Government/Local Program member, Individual member, Service/Institutional member, and Corporate Sustaining member. Association activities are supported by these memberships and by foundation, corporation and government grants.

LEADERSHIP

A 39 member board of directors governs SCI with assistance from an international executive committee. The board is composed of 24 elected members, two past presidents, three elected "ex officio" members for one year terms from special groups of the association, nine appointed positions by the president with the approval of the board, and the chair of the international executive committee. The 24 elected directors are elected at-large by and from the membership of the association at the annual business session—eight directors each year for three year terms. There are eleven officers—president, chairman of the board, chairman of the executive committee, six vice-presidents, secretary and treasurer.

ACTIVITIES

In addition to policy development, the primary activities of SCI are member services and grant programs. Member Services includes affiliations, local program development and management, leadership development and membership. Grant programs vary as national resources develop, but generally are for specific projects like youth, education, municipal and technical exchanges. SCI sponsors the Reader's Digest annual awards program and the annual Eisenhower International Golf Classic.

MEETINGS

The association holds an annual conference in the United States in the summer. Throughout the year, state and local workshops and training sessions are held for sister cities volunteers.

For more information, contact:

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