

SISTER CITIES OF NASHVILLE

Considerations for a New Sister City Relationship

The Sister City relationship is the foundational component of all SCN activities and the mechanism through which we promote our mission. “Sister Cities of Nashville connects the people of Nashville to people of the world - one person, one community at a time.” Person-to-person diplomacy happens through our city-to-city relationships.

Consequently, the decision to form a Sister City relationship is one of the most important decisions the Board can make. Such a decision should be made with thorough consideration of factors necessary to a successful partnership.

While there are no hard and fast rules or criteria that apply across the board, there are important principles that should guide any such consideration.

1. Purpose

A Sister City relationship serves to further international understanding at all levels of the community on a continuing long-term basis. Within the program cities and their citizens exchange people, ideas and culture in a variety of educational, municipal, professional, technical and youth projects.

This purpose is the guiding principle for considering all aspects of a potential Sister City relationship.

2. Longevity and Vitality

To achieve the mission of SCN, partnerships need to last and remain vital. Partnerships require continuing activity, not just a single effort or program.

In entering into a new Sister City relationship, consideration should be given to the likelihood of long-term projects and programs developed out of mutual desires and interests. For example, is there an expectation of regular exchanges between citizens of the two cities?

3. Support

The most successful affiliations involve citizens and organizations in both communities engaged in continuing projects of mutual interest.

Interest in and support for the partnership within the community is vital. Individuals and groups with such interest should be identified and recruited. It is important to have people ready, willing and able to serve on the committee of a new sister city and to help in activities.

The capacity of SCN staff and volunteers should be sufficient to fully support a new relationship.

4. Commonality of Goals

A new Sister City partner should share the goals and objectives of SCN generally as well as those specific to that partnership. SCN's goals include providing unique and rewarding exchanges that benefit citizens of both cities, enabling participants to:

- Exchange ideas and develop friendships with their counterparts in another culture on a direct personal basis.
- Establish an identity as members of the global family involved in the constructive process of building world peace.
- Develop a way for the many and diverse elements of each community to come together to enjoy and benefit from a cooperative program.
- Open new dialogues with the people of another culture to find unique solutions to improving the quality of life of all citizens.
- Participate in a program with a real partner in another country so all members of the community can feel they are contributing to international understanding in a direct personal way.
- Better understand their own community by interpreting their way of life to the people of another culture.

5. Similarities in Cities

As a general rule, some similarity between the two cities is needed, especially when the focus is the sharing of best practices or mutual learning from common experiences and challenges.

Sister Cities International uses a "Community Pairing Survey" to gather information useful in connecting cities looking for partners. Common criteria used in pairings include population size, geography, historical connection, previous collaboration by other organizations and similar industries.

SCN'S standing Committee on New Cities will engage in similar information gathering as part of the consideration of a new Sister City relationship.