



Sister Cities International

Strategic Plan 2014-2016

With five identified goals and subsequent strategies, we will fulfill our mission and support our vision by providing a blueprint for our leadership team and management of Sister Cities International for the next three years. The following goals are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and timely (SMART). Reports on each goal will be given at the Annual Conference or Spring Leadership meeting in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

MISSION: *Sister Cities International promotes peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.*

VISION: *Sister Cities International will continue to be the premier global network connecting people and communities from all backgrounds across the United States with people and communities around the world to foster peace and prosperity.*

ACCOUNTABILITY: *The entire Leadership Team of Sister Cities International will be deeply engaged in the oversight of the Strategic Plan to ensure adherence and compliance.*

IMPLEMENTATION: *Under the direction of the President and CEO, a designated staff member will closely manage the activities and tasks of each goal and its subsequent strategies.*

TRANSPARENCY: *The President and CEO and staff members will provide reports on the progress of the Strategic Plan at the Annual Conference or Spring Leadership meeting in 2014, 2015, and 2016.*

Goal One: Enlarge and Enliven our Membership and Network

Goal Two: Grow and Diversify Financial Resources

Goal Three: Support Our Members with Increased Benefits and Resources

Goal Four: Promote our Image and Partnerships

Goal Five: Strengthen our Leadership Team

**Goal One: Enlarge and Enliven
our Membership and Network**

Sister Cities International is an effective membership organization of over 500 US cities with over 1,900 partnerships in 146 countries. We recognize that the identity and purpose of sister Cities International is synonymous with our network. The network includes paid members, lapsed members and active non-member organizations in the United States, plus their relationship cities and communities around the world.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION
<p>EVALUATE MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE By evaluating our membership structure, we can offer access to more communities and individuals. We will enliven the network by reaching out with focused membership recruitment effectively communicating enhanced member benefits.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Youth Staff member assigned: Director of Membership Topics involved: Membership dues, new membership categories, recruitment events, membership retention Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Formal review of membership categories and rates; possible professional and global memberships; expanded and more specific benefits for members</p>
<p>INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIPS We will reach out to regions – such as Latin America, Middle East and Africa – that are not as active. We will support this by utilizing an enlarged network of state coordinators, by more closely coordinating with state organizations and by engaging like-minded organizations around the world. We will seek to reengage lapsed members and encourage new partnerships.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, State Coordinators, Task Forces Staff member assigned: Director of Membership and Membership Manager, Conference Manager Topics involved: Cities seeking cities evaluation Timeline: Report on status at Spring leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Improved relationships with twinning organizations, municipal associations, and embassies in targeted regions; 800 paid members with 2500 partnerships by the end of 2017</p>
<p>CONTINUE STRATEGIC EXPANSION WITH CHINA As part of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue outcomes, we are supporting the State Department’s mission to expand subnational interaction with China. We will also continue to promote trilateral relationships in our network of US – Africa – Sino relationships.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Conference Staff member assigned: Director of Membership, Membership Manager, Membership Coordinator and SAI Manager Topics involved: U.S. - China Sister Cities Conference, Memorandum of Understanding with Chinese Peoples Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries, Memorandum of Understanding with World Cities Scientific Development Alliance, Possible Memorandum of Understanding with Beijing Youth Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: U.S. - China Sister Cities Conference, 2014; fulfill outcomes in US – China Strategic and Economic Dialogue; Leadership meeting in China</p>
<p>REVIEW STAFF ROLES President will continuously monitor the present staff roles and future needs of SCI with a special focus on cross training.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Executive, Human Resources Staff member assigned: President & CEO Topics involved: Staff roles, organizational chart Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Evaluate staff structure; implement new performance plans for all staff roles; explore professional development opportunities</p>

Goal Two: Grow and Diversify our Financial Resources

Sister Cities International will seek all possible resources that will support the growth of our citizen diplomacy efforts. Other funding opportunities will be identified including government grants, private foundation grants, corporate support and individual donations. Events will be planned to maximize financial support and outreach. Our affinity partnership program will be expanded. We will continue to implement our multi-faceted fund development program to support the organization while developing other resources to support the pursuit of these goals

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION
<p>SEEK RESTRICTED FUNDS TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND UNRESTRICTED FUNDS TO EXPAND CAPACITY We will operationally fund and budget our programs by soliciting U.S. and country-specific government sources, international corporations and global foundations with interests and objectives common to ours.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development Staff member assigned: President & CEO and Fund Development Manager Topics involved: State Department grant(s), conference sponsorships, legacy gifts Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Fulfill Fund Development Plan goals for 2014, 2015, 2016</p>
<p>EXPAND EISENHOWER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP Special focus will be given to corporate members and what benefits will be available for this Council.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development, Executive, Honorary Board, and Global Envoys Staff member assigned: President & CEO, Fund Development Manager Topics involved: Corporate members; outreach to the private sector Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: 10 new members of EAC providing \$100,000 in unrestricted funding</p>
<p>ESTABLISH A DIVERSIFIED PLANNED GIVING CAMPAIGN Fund Development Committee along with the President and CEO will develop a legacy sustainable investment program and process which will include the Honorary Board, Global Envoys and other national network supporters.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development, Executive, Honorary Board, and Global Envoys Staff member assigned: President & CEO and Fund Development Manager Topics involved: Research history of campaign and how we can reinvigorate before 60th Anniversary Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: 50% of leadership participation; identify crowd funding opportunities; maximize small individual legacy giving.</p>
<p>EXPAND AND REINVIGORATE ANNUAL DONOR APPEAL CAMPAIGN AND THE 1956 SOCIETY Fund Development Committee along with President and CEO will implement an ongoing annually recurring individual donor process to expand and retain an ever increasing national pool of contributors. This team will reinvigorate and grow the 1956 Society by recognition and benefits for this specific committed donor pool. All annual giving will be dedicated to operational funding and annual budget requirements.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development Staff member assigned: President & CEO and Fund Development Manager Topics involved: Annual Donor Appeal and 1956 Society Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Fulfill Fund Development Plan goals for 2014, 2015, 2016</p>

Goal Three: Support our Members with Increased Benefits and Resources

Sister Cities International exists to support and expand the work of our members and their relationships. As a membership organization this goal is imperative. Increasing benefits and resources for our members to bring to their communities is a tangible way to fulfill our mission and further our vision.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION
SECURE GRANTS FOCUSED ON MEMBER PRIORITIES	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Fund Development Staff member assigned: President & CEO; Director of Membership, Fund Development Manager Topics involved: Developing a pipeline; evaluating members' thematic and program interests; ensuring compliance with grant guidelines; implementing monitor and evaluation strategies Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target outcomes: Grants aimed at maximum inclusion of members, particularly small/medium sized cities; travel funding; programmatic priority areas include youth, economic development, and municipal cooperation</p>
ENHANCE WEBSITE AS A PREMIUM RESOURCE FOR MEMBERS	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Conference, Governance Staff member assigned: Director of Membership, Membership Manager, Communications Manager and Conference Manager Topics involved: Develop and refine content; make website accessible; re-orient Leadership team to website as a platform Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Enhance member profiles with pages for each partnership showing key information; enabling member updates; ensure that all applications/requests can be made online; increase sister city members registered on website with access to member area; improve research/statistics available online; launch blog</p>
INCREASE "Cities Seeking Cities" OPPORTUNITIES	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Conference Staff member assigned: Director of Membership, Membership Manager, Membership Coordinator, Communications Manager and Conference Manager Topics involved: Attracting new members, retaining current members and align with strategic country and region opportunities Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Expand "Cities Seeking Cities" program with dedicated staff; increase number of strategic partnerships to assist with matching; provide more communications materials dedicated to promoting Cities Seeking Cities</p>
ESTABLISH A MAYORAL ADVISORY COUNCIL	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Executive Staff member assigned: President & CEO and Director of Membership Topics involved: Identify list of municipal officials to invite and determine goals, scope and mandate of Advisory Council Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: To connect municipal leadership with our network</p>
INSTITUTE AND ORGANIZE TRAVEL DELEGATIONS FOR MEMBERS	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Membership, Conference Staff member assigned: President & CEO, Director of Membership and Conference Manager Topics involved: Identify feasibility of pilot project; determine goals and sustainability of pilot project; explore pilot project as a potential recruitment and revenue tool Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target outcomes: To provide members with an opportunity to network, share best practices and provide another source of revenue for the organization</p>

Goal Four: Promote Our Image and Partnerships

Sister Cities International will increase support for our citizen diplomacy efforts by increasing awareness of the history and accomplishments of our organization, members and network.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION
<p>INCREASE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA A focus on using social media should continue and expand. An effective and inexpensive tool, it is also a proven way to reach the next generation of Sister Cities International’s leaders and volunteers</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development, Membership Staff member assigned: Communications Manager Topics involved: Crowdsourcing stories; crowd funding programs; curating history of citizen diplomacy Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Create Instagram account to showcase members photos; grow number of Facebook ‘likes’; grow number of Twitter followers</p>
<p>ESTABLISH MORE MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS We will focus on earned media opportunities</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development, Membership Staff member assigned: Communications Manager Topics involved: Capture member stories; chronicle history of organization and network; develop visual and digital content Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Double number of media partnerships nationally; Engage local media outlets</p>
<p>HIGHLIGHT MEMBER INITIATIVES We will use our best resource, our members, to tell the Sister Cities International story.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development, Membership Staff member assigned: Communications Manager Topics involved: Develop a systematic member feedback mechanism; chronicle history of organization and network; develop visual and digital content Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Increase number of press releases on SCI member activities; media outreach on sister cities in specific countries/specific topics to coincide with topical news items; grow webinar series; invite partner organizations to interact with members</p>
<p>PLAN AND EXECUTE A SUCCESSFUL 60TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Fund Development, Conference Staff member assigned: Communications Manager, Conference Manager Topics involved: Emphasize global partnerships; explore advocacy opportunities; develop political outreach plan to align with 2016 campaign Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Robust engagement with the State Department and diplomatic corps; partnerships with DC area think tank community; invite Eisenhower family/Foundation; attract 1000 attendees</p>
<p>LEVERAGE US AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS A unique strength of Sister Cities International is its ability to partner with organizations in the U.S. and around the world. We will collaborate with U.S. organizations, including relevant governmental entities and with national and sub-national organizations around the world through strategic Memoranda of Understanding and summits.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Executive, Governance and Conference Staff member assigned: President and CEO, Director of Membership, Communications Manager, Conference Manager Topics involved: Memorandums of Understanding task forces; summits and delegations Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Identify and engage with other international twinning organizations, and likeminded U.S.-based organizations such as Rotary International, Kiwanis and other citizen diplomacy groups.</p>

Goal Five: Strengthen Our Leadership team

Sister Cities International has a strong network of US cities with partners around the world. Our global network is second to none. To further our vision and fulfill our mission, education on professional leadership opportunities relevant to our members and volunteer leadership team is important. This will include implementing Booz Allen and Hamilton recommendations.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION
<p>INSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL ON-BOARDING AND ORIENTATION PROGRAMS To further our vision and fulfill our mission, education on professional leadership relevant to our members and volunteer leadership team is important.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Executive, Elections, Nominations Staff member assigned: President & CEO and Director of Membership Topics involved: Research best practices for nonprofit leadership, explore realignment of annual calendar Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Annual leadership retreat; better candidate recruitment</p>
<p>CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON RECOMMENDATIONS As a nonprofit, the volunteer board must be very well aware of their roles and responsibilities especially when government grants are involved.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Executive, Governance and Elections Staff member assigned: President & CEO Topics involved: Determine actionable recommendations and evaluate progress Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Board performance goals; define all roles and responsibilities of Board and develop metrics</p>
<p>DEVELOP NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT TRAINING RESOURCES Identify best practices of non-profit leadership and develop educational programs for our leadership team which includes Global Envoys, Board of Directors, State Coordinators and Honorary Board members.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Executive, Fund Development , Finance, Governance , Nominations, Elections Staff member assigned: President & CEO, Director of Finance, Director of Membership, Communications Manager Topics involved: Leadership training in non-profit responsibilities Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Increased board involvement in fundraising, media relations, and member recruitment</p>
<p>EVALUATE AND CODIFY LEADERSHIP ROLES As an international non-profit, a strong leadership structure is necessary to fulfill the mission and the vision of the organization.</p>	<p>Committee(s) tasked: Executive, Governance, Membership Staff member assigned: President and CEO, Director of Membership and Communications Manager Topics involved: Research best programs, National Council for International Visitors model and adapt to SCI Timeline: Report on status at Spring Leadership meetings and Annual Conferences Target Outcomes: Clarified responsibilities, roles, and outcomes for State Coordinators, Honorary Board, and Global Envoys; better interaction and engagement with the Board of Directors</p>