
**THE ATLANTA MAYOR'S OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S
INNOVATION AWARD FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

WASHINGTON, DC – The city of Atlanta has won the Sister Cities International (SCI) 2017 Innovation Award for Economic Development for a city with a population between 100,001 and 500,000. The Sister Cities Innovation Award for Economic Development recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding community and individual sister city programs that promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

The Atlanta Mayor's Office of International Affairs and Invest Atlanta were awarded for their significant contributions to the launch of the first Atlanta International Startup Exchange with Atlanta's sister city Toulouse, France. The goal of the exchange is to ingrain an international strategy in the foundation of Atlanta's emerging enterprises. The two-week residency program provided selected companies a platform for global expansion as well as identify potential partners, investors, clients, and access two of the top aerospace and tech industries clusters. The program also provided an opportunity to showcase Atlanta and Toulouse as economically-sound choices for future international operations to the visiting Toulouse-based and Atlanta-based companies, respectively.

SCI's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth and Education), and Volunteer of the Year. Award winners will be honored at the Lou Wozar Diplomatic Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 15 during SCI's 61st Annual Conference in Virginia Beach, VA.

SCI's 61st [Annual Conference](#) events, which include a [Youth Leadership Summit](#) and a [U.S.-Russia Mayors' Summit](#), will take place in Virginia Beach, VA from July 12-16, 2017. The events will bring together hundreds of the most influential global leaders in diplomacy, foreign affairs, policy, business, and innovation. Elected and municipal officials, business leaders, youth delegates, and citizen diplomats will discuss this year's theme "Global Communities for World Peace," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships through communities.

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About Sister Cities International

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for 500 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in 145 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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