
**BIRMINGHAM SISTER CITIES WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S INNOVATION AWARD FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

WASHINGTON, DC – Birmingham Sister Cities (BSC) has won Sister Cities International's (SCI) 2016 Innovation Award for Economic Development for a city with a population between 100,001 and 300,000. The 2016 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.

In 2015, BSC started two excellent economic initiatives, a new relationship with Liverpool, United Kingdom and the creation of an EB-5 program. The relationship with Liverpool came about through a bi-annual International Forum for Business, a several week long business fair and forum. BSC sent a delegation including their Mayor who was a major presenter at the conference. Birmingham's business Incubator, Innovation Depot, and Invest Liverpool had a lot of common projects along with connections between Birmingham's large research University (UAB) and Samford and Liverpool- Hope Universities. They also found that Birmingham's world class research program, Southern Research, which specializes in bio-tech research, had some very good connections for Liverpool as well.

Since their sister city signing in fall of 2015, the two cities began creating an EB-5 visa program as a way to attract investors to Birmingham and to fund their sister city program. Foreign investors who finance projects with a value of \$500,000 or more and who produce jobs for three years in low income areas can qualify for family Green Cards. This program will be used by BSC to recruit from their sister city nations and others to attract businesses to partner with local businesses to bring development to low income/high unemployment areas.

Development fees are planned to help fund BSC's general fund. Birmingham has had significantly valuable long term contracts between their Southern Research and various bio-tech firms in Liverpool. A large multi-national Liverpool based bio-science firm will be opening an office in Birmingham. Birmingham has had one local business open their new UK office in Liverpool and Birmingham will have 10 businesses from their Innovation Depot attend the IFB in 2016, with a chance to formally and informally present their business investment opportunities.

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 16 during SCI's 60th Anniversary Celebration in Washington, DC.

SCI's 60th anniversary celebration will include an [Annual Conference](#) and [Youth Leadership Summit](#) in Washington, DC July 13-16, 2016. The celebration 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 "Peace through People," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships.

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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 570 member communities with 2,300 partnerships in 150 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the



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organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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