

Types of Affiliations

Sister City Relationship

A Sister City relationship is formed when the mayor or highest elected official (or, if elections do not take place, highest appointed official) from a U.S. community and a community in another country or territory sign a formal agreement on behalf of their communities endorsing a **“sister city/sister cities” relationship. Sister city agreements shall be considered active/valid** unless otherwise indicated by one or both of the respective communities.

Sister Cities International shall formally recognize only those relationships by cities/members in good standing (i.e. who are current on membership dues) in its Membership Directory or on its website. However, Sister Cities International shall not assert as invalid or otherwise impugn the legitimacy of those relationships formed by non-members.

Friendship City

A Friendship City or Friendship Cities **relationship is often formed by cities as a “stepping stone” to a more formal “Sister City” agreement. Typically Friendship City agreements are** referred to as such in the formal documents that are signed. Sister Cities International shall recognize Friendship City relationships by members in its Membership Directory and website.

As per Sister Cities International Board of Directors:

Sister Cities International will recognize a new sister cities affiliation between a U.S. and an international community, even though another affiliation may exist between that international community and a different U.S. community, only if a cooperative agreement among all involved communities is filed with Sister Cities International. If a cooperative agreement is denied, or no response to the request is received within a reasonable amount of time, Sister Cities International will recognize the partnership as a *friendship city* and it will be delineated as such with a symbol in the membership directories.

The cooperative agreement *must be sent by* the *Mayor/County Executive/Governor* of the requesting community, and *must be sent to* the *Mayor/County Executive/Governor* of each of the existing partnership communities. Although the *Mayor/County Executive/Governor* may request input from, or may be given input by, the sister cities program, it is up to the discretion of the *Mayor/County Executive/Governor* to sign the cooperative agreement. Although Sister Cities International will help with the cooperative agreement process, it is up to the requesting community to get the agreement signed. **Sister Cities International will not, in any way, force a community to “share” and sign the cooperative agreement.**

To place a relationship into **Emeritus** status, the mayor or highest elected official of the U.S. community must write a letter to the mayor of the foreign city indicating that they wish to remain sister cities, but understand that the relationship will remain inactive until such time as both cities are able to sustain an active relationship. Sister Cities International should be informed in writing by the mayor of the U.S. city of the situation. Sister Cities International will

then place the partnership into Emeritus Status and will reflect this status in directories and all lists of sister city programs.

If a community wishes to **terminate** a sister city relationship, then a letter from the mayor or highest elected official of the U.S. city should be sent to the mayor of the sister city. Sister Cities International should be informed of this action in writing by the mayor of the U.S. city and Sister Cities International will then remove the partnership from its directories and all lists of sister city programs. We do not recommend terminating a relationship simply because it is dormant. Many partnerships wax and wane over the years, and in many cases a dormant partnership may be reinvigorated by local members years after it has been inactive.

General Guidelines

In order for a sister city/county/state partnership to be recognized by Sister Cities International (SCI), the two communities must sign formal documents which clearly endorse the link. This presumes several key items: that the U.S. community is already a member of SCI and has followed proper procedures (e.g. passed a city council resolution declaring the intent to twin with the specific city); that both communities share a mutual commitment to the relationship; and that both have secured the necessary support structure to build a lasting relationship. You should check with your local sister city program to see if they have any additional requirements before pursuing a sister city relationship.

SCI often refers to these agreements as a “Sister City Agreement” or “Memorandum of Understanding.” However, as the following examples show, the actual name and format of your documents is left up to you.

A few things to keep in mind as you draft your agreement:

- **Your agreement can range from the ceremonial, with language focusing on each city’s commitment to fostering understanding, cooperation, and mutual benefit to the precise, with particular areas of interest, specific programs/activities, or more concrete goals related to anything from numbers of exchanges to economic development.**
- **Don’t try to include everything you plan to do. Some specifics, like particular areas of interest or participating institutions are good to include. However, there’s no need to include all the programs you plan to do if it makes the document too lengthy or limits the scope of projects.** This is a formal document to establish the relationship; specific tasks, responsibilities, or other nuts-and-bolts text related to implementation or administration of the partnership can be expressed more fully in a separate memorandum between the respective sister city committees. Your partnership agreement is a historical document and should not be dated or limited by being aligned with very specific tasks.
- Work with your counterparts. Remember that this is signed by both cities. You should share drafts of your agreement with your international partners and solicit feedback on **what they’d like to see in the agreement. Be flexible to cultural or municipal priorities.**
- Ask your counterparts to translate the agreement if it is drafted in English. It is important for the citizens of your partner community to be able to read and understand the commitment their city has made. Have someone in your own community who



speaks that language check the foreign-language version to make sure it mirrors what you have in your own agreement.

- Keep it to one page. Ceremonial documents such as these partnership agreements work best if they can be posted in their entirety.
- Most sister city agreements include some acknowledgement of the founding principles of the sister city movement—to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.
- Consider using official letterhead and/or other embellishments such as city seals or logos to reflect your enhance the document. Sister city agreements are often posted at city hall or other municipal offices and should reflect their historical importance
- Look at other agreements your city has signed. These agreements may give you an idea of what is acceptable or possible, and they may be in an easily replicable format. If you cannot access older agreements please contact Sister Cities International, we may have them on file, although we do not have copies of all partnership agreements.
- Documents must be signed by the top elected official of both communities.
- Check with your mayor, city council, town clerk, et al. to make sure that the agreement is OK with them. The mayor is the one putting his or her name on the paper, and you **don't want to spend time developing an agreement which will never be signed.**
- Official documents are usually signed during a formal ceremony recognizing the partnership. Be sure both communities receive a signed set of the official documents for their records.
- Remember to send your signed agreement to Sister Cities International. After we receive your agreement we will post the relationship in the City Directory and make sure it is included in our Annual Membership Directory.

Remember that each city's sister city program is independent and can impose requirements like the establishment of a committee, a review period, sustainability/funding plan, among others, before sanctioning a sister city agreement. Check with your local program or mayor's office to see if this is the case.

On the following pages you'll find a series of partnership agreements to give you an idea of what is possible. While you should feel free to use some of the formatting and language, we encourage you to make your agreement your own and be creative with what you produce. If you are unsure about your agreement or want advice you can always solicit feedback by sending it to our Membership Director at akaplan@sister-cities.org or contacting us at (202) 347-8630.



دائرة بلدية أبوظبي وتخطيط المدن
ABU DHABI MUNICIPALITY & TOWN PLANNING

**AN AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
SISTER CITIES RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
THE CITY OF ABU DHABI (U. A.E)
AND
HOUSTON , TEXAS (U.S.A)**

The Sister City Program, administered by Sister Cities International, was initiated By the President of the United States of America in 1956 to encourage greater Friendship and understanding between the United States and other nations through Direct personal contact; and

In order to foster those goals, the people of Abu Dhabi and Houston, in a gesture of Friendship and goodwill, agree to collaborate for the mutual benefit of their Communities by exploring education, economic and cultural opportunities.

Abu Dhabi and Houston, sharing a common interest in energy , technology and medicine, and the desire to promote mutual understanding among our citizens do hereby proclaim themselves Sister Cities beginning on the 13th day of March 2001, the date of Houston City Council resolution establishing the Sister City relationship became effective.

Signed on this 26 of October 2002, in duplicate in the Arabic and English Languages, both text being equally authentic.

**Sheikh Mohammed bin Butti Al Hamed
Chairman of Abu Dhabi Municipality
& Town Planning**

**Lee P. Brown
Mayor of Houston**



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

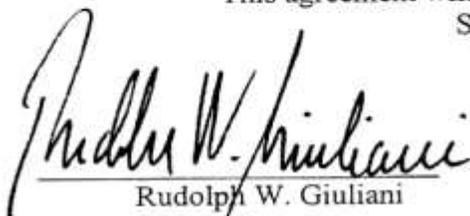
THE NEW YORK CITY-LONDON SISTER CITY PARTNERSHIP Memorandum of Understanding

The Sister City partnership between New York City and London will foster mutually beneficial solutions to common challenges for these two great cosmopolitan entities. Consequently, the Sister City relationship between the two will be one of the most important in their network of global partnerships, as it strives to:

- Encourage and publicize existing exchanges between London and New York City so that they can flourish to benefit a wider cross-section of the citizens of both;
- Support and promote the development of new social, economic, academic and community programs to encourage both cities' citizens to share their experiences as a medium for learning from one another;
- Generate an improvement of the operation of the cities' various government agencies by serving as a conduit of information;
- Identify themes, common to both, that can generate new initiatives to further and nurture the increasingly powerful financial, social and cultural relationships between the cities;
- Promote key mayoral priorities relevant to both London and New York City;
- Provide financial or in kind support to community-led programs that advance the aims of the Sister City partnership;

With the above purposes in mind, the Mayor of the City of New York and the Mayor of London solemnly confirm that these two cities are united by an official partnership by the protocol of this Memorandum of Understanding.

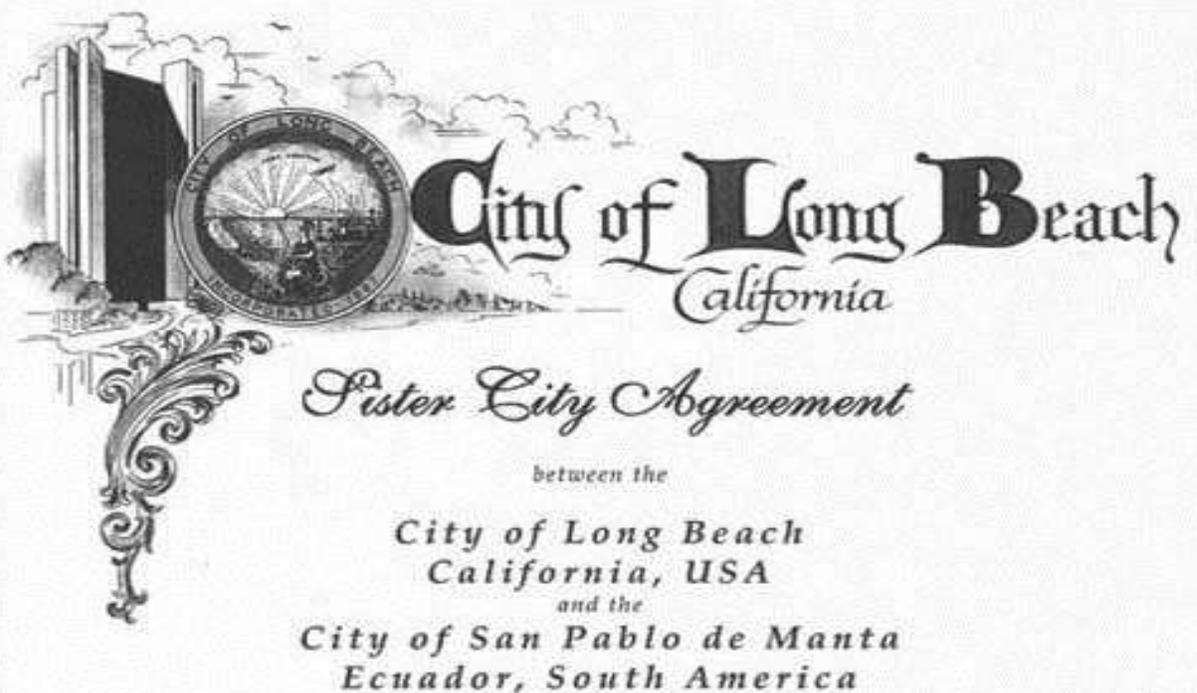
This agreement will go into effect from the date of signatures.
Signed in March of 2001



Rudolph W. Giuliani
Mayor
New York City



Ken Livingstone
Mayor
London

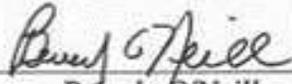


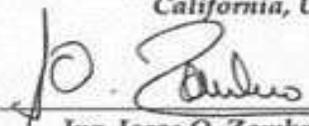
In accordance with the authorization and approval expressed by the City of Long Beach, California, USA, and the City of San Pablo de Manta, Ecuador, South America, it is declared that a "Sister City Agreement" between the two cities is hereby established for the following purposes:

- (1) to promote and expand the effective and mutually beneficial cooperation between the people of Long Beach and the people of San Pablo de Manta; and*
- (2) to promote international goodwill, understanding, and expanded business relations between the two cities and their respective nations by the exchange of people, ideas, and information in a wide variety of economic, social, cultural, municipal, environmental, professional, technical, youth, and other endeavors; and*
- (3) to foster and encourage charitable, scientific, trade and commerce, literary and educational activities between the two cities;*

This Sister City Agreement shall be officially established and shall become effective when this document has been duly executed by the Mayor of Long Beach, California, USA, and the Mayor of San Pablo de Manta, Ecuador, South America.




Beverly O'Neill
Mayor, City of Long Beach
California, USA


Ing. Jorge O. Zambrano Cedeño
Mayor, City of San Pablo de Manta
Ecuador, South America

Dated: September 19, 2000

