



### Delegation Exchange Toolkit (Outbound)

Whether you're leading an exchange for the first time, or you're just looking to revamp your exchanges, this toolkit provides guidelines for how to arrange and lead a fun and productive exchange!

Exchanges are at the core of any sister city relationship, and one of the best ways to take part in citizen diplomacy while helping your own city. To make sure that the exchanges are mutually beneficial and fruitful, the criteria below help to give direction to the exchange.

#### A. Purpose

- 1) Theme - An exchange theme provides a framework to allow both sides to focus in on making the exchange relevant and useful to everyone involved. Suggested themes include: Education, Business and Trade, Sustainable Energy, Urban Planning, and Tourism.
- 2) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Signing MOUs is a good way to move the relationship forward and strengthen the relationship. MOUs do not need to be signed during each exchange, but it is important to consider if a signing a MOU makes sense during your particular trip. MOUs should never be the sole purpose of a trip, but a way to open the door or create a path for future trips. MOUs are also a good way to involve the Mayors or other city leadership in a delegation visit.
  - Reasons for signing MOUs: Are you celebrating an anniversary? Is it time to make the relationship move in a different direction? Are there new cooperative activities between your two cities?
- 3) Projects - On-going or recently completed projects between you and your sister city are tangible focal points for an exchange. In particular, if there are ways that all delegates can participate in an on-going project during the visit, the exchange will have stronger purpose and meaning for everyone.
  - Example: There is a sister school pen pal program occurring between you and your sister city. All delegates can go to that school to volunteer or give presentations about their work to the students.

#### B. Time

- 1) To identify the best time for an exchange, coordinate with your sister city to make sure you are visiting at a time that is convenient for both sides.
- 2) If traveling abroad to visit your sister city, be sure to give yourself enough time to prepare for any additional meetings and visas. For smaller delegations (2-15 people), give yourself 1.5-2 months to prepare for the trip. For larger delegations (15+), give yourself more than 2 months for preparation.

#### C. Roles for visiting delegation and host city

- 1) Determine clear roles between you and your host sister city, including an understanding of what your host sister city will arrange and what your visiting delegation will arrange. Questions to consider:
  - While in your host sister city, will the hosts help arrange an itinerary during the visit?
  - Who will handle the hotels, local transportation, and food?
  - Will there be mandatory events in which all visiting delegates should participate?
  - If translators are needed, will the delegates bring your own translator or can your host sister city provide them?
  - Who is the point of contact on both sides while arranging the delegation trip?



### D. Delegates

- 1) Sister city relationships are open to the community and the choice to join a delegation should be open to the whole community. The best sister city delegations include both delegates who are focused on strengthening the relationship and delegates who are focused on the exchange theme.
- 2) While many delegates may not have specific roles, the following delegation roles are important:
  - Delegation Head - This person is the leader of the delegation
  - Delegation Coordinator - This person can be the point of contact for planning the delegation trip. This person should know the itinerary well and act as a troubleshooter and a source of answers for all delegates on the trip.
  - Translator - If needed, this person is the translator on the trip. This person should not be the delegation coordinator.

### E. Visas

- 1) If your trip requires visas, make sure to coordinate with the host sister city to receive letters of invitation early on in the preparation for the trip.
- 2) Sister Cities International can help with additional visa inquiries.

### F. International Travel

- 1) You may decide to travel to the sister city together or separately. Regardless, consider identifying meeting points throughout the course of international travel to and from the sister city so that people can meet up if desired.

### G. Local Itinerary

- 1) A robust itinerary during your delegation visit will allow your cities to strengthen your sister city relationship while accomplishing set goals for the trip. Depending on traffic congestion and the culture of the sister city, Sister Cities International suggests 2-4 meetings/activities per day.
- 2) Whether your host sister city is helping to arrange the itinerary or you are doing it yourself, the following meetings and activities are important to keep in mind during a visit:
  - Meeting with city leadership (mayor, deputy mayor, city council, etc.)
  - Theme-related meetings (city departments, private companies, NGOs, etc.)
  - Cultural activities (local parks, museums, restaurants, musical performances, etc.)
  - Project activities (take part/perform site visit to current sister city projects)
  - MOU signings
  - Gift exchanges (Gift exchange can take place at either MOU signings, city leadership meetings, or anywhere you see fit.)
  - Meetings with Embassies or Consulates

### H. Return home

- 1) Surveys and questionnaires that evaluate the exchange are a good way to measure the strength of the delegation exchange and to identify new areas of improvement.
- 2) Share your results and stories with Sister Cities International!



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# Member Toolkit

## Delegation Exchange

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### **I. Sample Agenda for city leadership meetings**

- a. Delegation and Host introductions
- b. City overviews
- c. Discussion on previous sister city programs and exchanges
- d. Discussion on program complications
- e. Discussion on future initiatives
- f. MOU Development (if applicable)
- g. Gift Exchange
- h. Conclusions