



**SisterCities**  
INTERNATIONAL

Connect globally. Thrive locally.

**2024**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

# LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Colleagues:

The past year has been a whirlwind of activity for Sister Cities International, and this Annual Report is a reflection of the dedication, commitment, engagement and successful work that has gone into the organization and its membership.

Core to any successful membership-based organization is a focus on increasing, supporting and retaining its membership, and Sister Cities International has grown its membership by 34% since September of 2023. This increase is due, in large part, to highly effective staff, a focus on customer service, successful recruitment, and Boots on the Ground Calls that have had a success rate of 82%.

Sister Cities International has also significantly increased its financial stability through debt payment, increased fundraising, membership growth, and strong investment growth. Also, Sister Cities International was the recipient of a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of State to recruit, train, and manage eighty-nine Youth Ambassadors for the U.S. Pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka Japan in 2025. This grant has significantly increased the visibility and influence of Sister Cities International on the world stage.

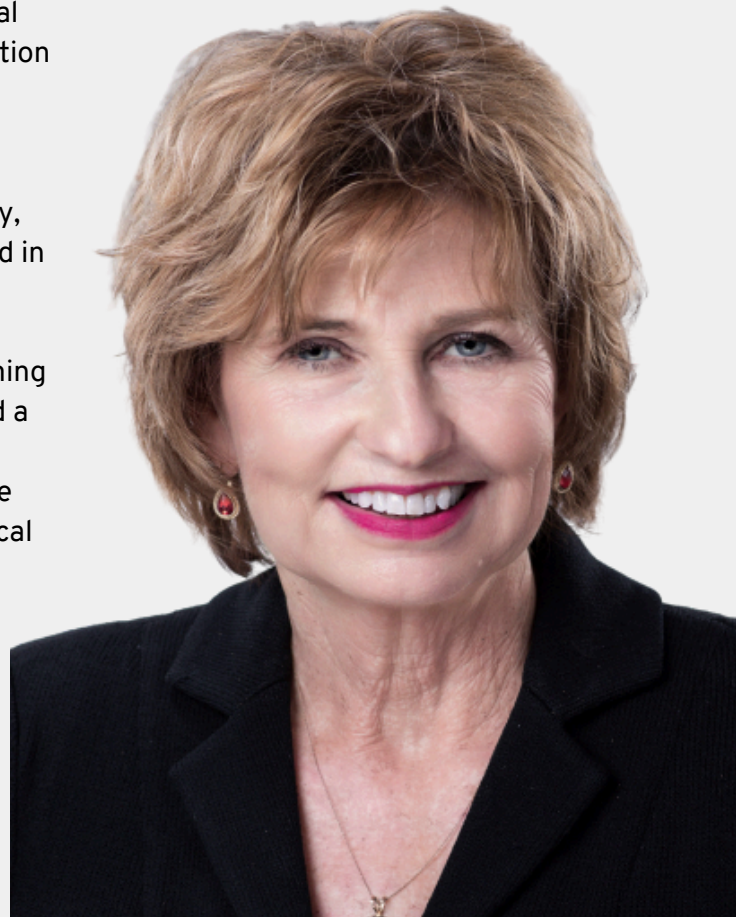
An enhanced focus on programming also resulted in the first in-person Youth Leadership Summit since 2019 in Washington, DC, which brought fifty youth to the nation's capital for leadership and personal development, events, and a diplomacy simulation at the U.S. Department of State. The Young Artists and Authors' Showcase attracted 325 entries from countries around the world in original art, musical composition, photography, and writing. SCI's Annual Awards also returned in person and is being enhanced and expanded.

Finally, Sister Cities International is transforming its connectiveness through a new website and a newly integrated Customer Relations Management System that will further enhance our ability to connect with and support our local programs and our partners around the world.

Sincerely,



Ricki R. Garrett, PhD  
President and CEO



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

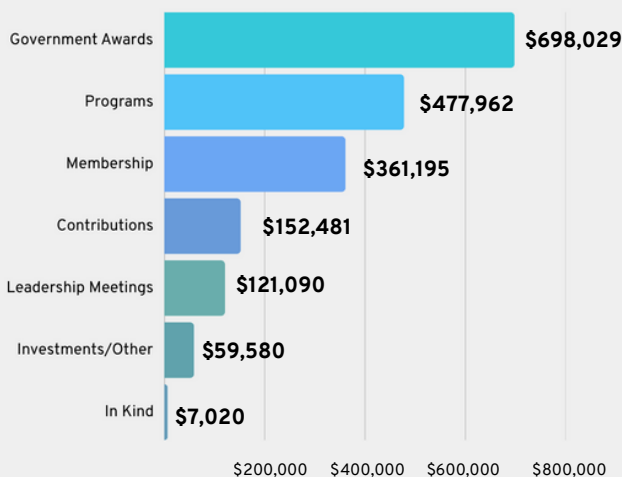
## 2024

### An Inside Look at SCI's Financial Impact

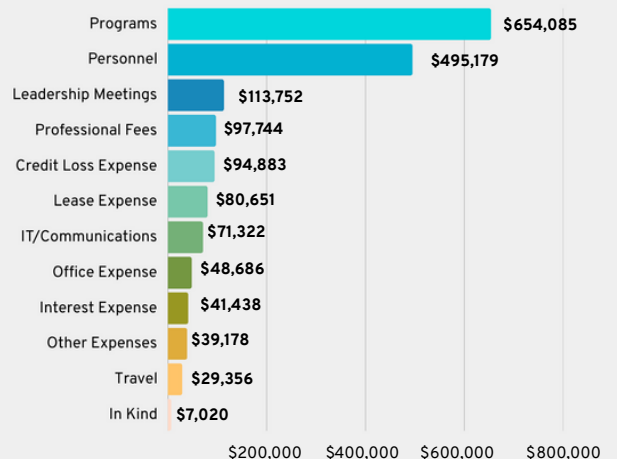


The overall financial stability of Sister Cities International is significantly better with increased membership, increased fundraising, investment growth, and debt repayment. Additional corporate sponsorships for events such as the All Americas Summit have also been beneficial.

**2024 Revenue: \$1,877,357**

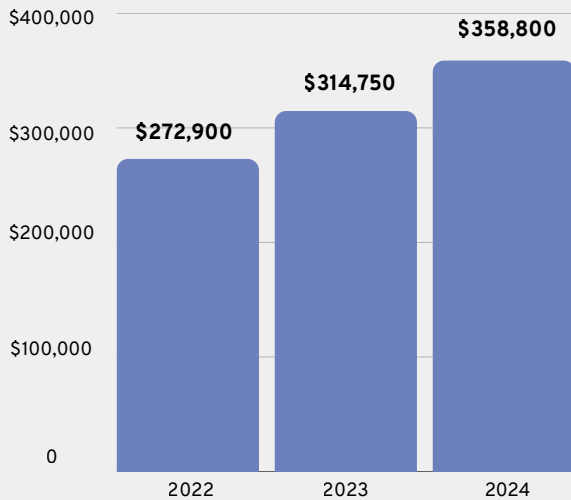


**2024 Expenses: \$1,773,294**



# REVENUE & EXPENSES

## SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL



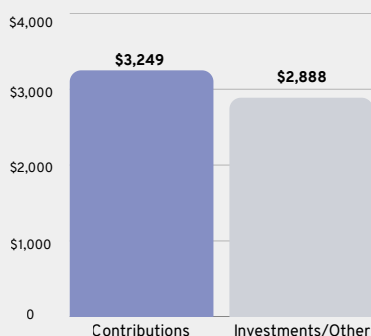
**Membership Revenue**



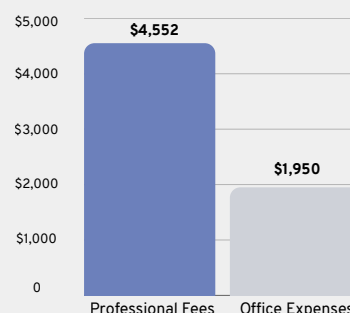
**Total Liabilities and Net Assets**

- The income from membership has grown from \$272,900 in 2022 to \$314,750 in 2023 and \$358,800 in 2024.
- Also, efforts to get lapsed members to rejoin has significantly increased the percentage of returning members.
- The awarding of the \$2.2 million Osaka Youth Ambassador grant to Sister Cities International in 2024 provided additional resources and enhanced the overall visibility and reputation of the organization, further supporting membership development and participation.
- Fundraising events, such as *I Like Ike* and *Ike's Birthday*, as well as SCI's Presidential Inaugural Gala, have provided additional income resources and increased the donor base.
- The return of in-person Leadership Meetings, in-person Youth Leadership Summits, and focus specific conferences such as the All-Americas Summit and the upcoming U.S.-Japan Sister Cities Summit have also increased financial stability, as well as the overall influence and brand recognition of Sister Cities International.
- Although the line of credit increased slightly in 2023, in 2024 the debt was paid down by almost 10%.
- Total liabilities and net assets increased from \$1,237,767 to \$1,460,552.

## SCI FOUNDATION



**SCI Foundation 2024 Revenue: \$6,137 USD**



**SCI Foundation 2024 Expenses: \$6,502 USD**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The last 12 months have been transformational for our organization.

Let's start with my favorite part – naming Dr. Ricki Garrett as our permanent President & CEO. Ricki is motivated and tireless. I have never met a leader who believes in our mission as much as she does. You can find Ricki returning phone calls, on Zoom meetings, or crafting emails seven days a week. I'm convinced she doesn't sleep. We're so fortunate to have her.

We should also be proud of the \$2.2M grant we won from the Department of State for the Youth Ambassador program at the World Expo in Osaka, Japan. Out of 1,500 applications from the most outstanding young men and women in the country, we chose 89 superstars who are in Japan right now representing our country.

The Inaugural Gala Celebration, graciously hosted by German Ambassador Andreas Michaelis, was a success, bringing together 300+ people from across the country.

New task forces are working on key areas of opportunity, including a new strategic plan.

Our *7 for 70 Initiative* with the Department of State is creating key relationships with Pacific Island nations and has been lauded by the highest levels of government. Our work in Africa continues to be a priority area, expanding partnerships and possibilities.

The upcoming 2025 U.S.-Japan Sister Cities Summit (September 16-19 in Osaka) will feature high-level speakers and enrich attendees with cultural experiences, with a full day at the World Expo. All 465 U.S.-Japan Sister Cities from the past 69 years have been invited. Sugo!

In a world full of unpredictability, we are reassured by YOU – the citizen diplomats doing great work around the world to advance our mission of “peace through people.”



Carlo Capua  
Chair, Board of Directors  
(Fort Worth, Texas)



# Our Impact



**1,631**

**CITIZEN  
DIPLOMATS**

PARTICIPATED IN  
NATIONAL PROGRAMS

**YAAS & YLS**



**367**

YOUNG CITIZEN DIPLOMATS  
PARTICIPATED IN OUR YOUTH  
PROGRAMS



**SPRING, SUMMER, FALL**

**162**

**PARTICIPANTS  
IN LEADERSHIP  
MEETINGS**



**IN-PERSON ATTENDEES**

**770**

**ATTENDED OUR EVENTS  
IN 2024**

# PRESIDENT AND CEO'S NETWORKING AND ENGAGEMENTS



## Expanding SCI's Outreach

The President and CEO represents the organization and Eisenhower's vision of citizen diplomacy at various events, including speaking engagements, networking events, summits, and meetings with U.S. and foreign delegations, mayors, and dignitaries. Additionally, the President & CEO participates in Boots on the Ground calls to support SCI members in forming and maintaining sister city partnerships and to promote awareness of the Sister Cities International brand and the impact of people to people diplomacy.



“  
***A priority for Sister Cities International, along with growing and enhancing membership, is to expand our outreach in D.C. and beyond. By attending events at Embassies and with our fellow international partner organizations, we can build ties, enhance relationships, and expand the influence and prestige of the organization.***  
— Ricki Garrett,  
President & CEO  
”

The SCI National Headquarters' engagements vary from embassy visits to national and international presentations. In 2024, some of these events included:

- Meeting with the ECA Public Affairs Officer and our Department of State ECA Liaison.
- Attendance at FestPAC, the gathering of all the nations of the Pacific Islands to promote the 7 for 70 Initiative and its first official signing.
- Attendance at the American Library Association Annual Conference in San Diego, California, to speak on the 500-in-5 Initiative
- Development of a trade mission for Ukraine with the Washington Institute for Business, Government, and Society
- Speaking engagement at the Montgomery County Humanitarian Day at Montgomery County Community College

# NATIONAL STAFF



**Ricki Garrett**  
PRESIDENT and CEO



**Kerri Carter**  
Director of Operations



**Ashleigh Manuel**  
Membership Manager



**Alexa Storzinger**  
Program Manager



**Evan Welser**  
Executive Assistant



**Mamiko Reeves**  
Program Manager  
*2025 World EXPO Youth  
Ambassador Program*



**Queen Epomba**  
Assistant Program  
Manager  
*2025 World EXPO Youth  
Ambassador Program*



**Busra Yilmaz**  
Youth Programs  
Consultant

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sister Cities International is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors. Twenty-one members who represent the general voting members of SCI are elected by the membership; one Director position is filled by the Chair of the Board; one Director position is filled by a qualified State Representative – nominated by the Chair and approved by the Board of Directors; and one Director position is filled by a Young Professional Representative, between the ages of 21 and 34, who is elected by the membership.

Board members serve three-year terms. The Chair of the Board, the Young Professional Representative and the State Representative each serve two-year terms. Board of Directors terms are staggered. The Board elects the secretary and treasurer of the Board, who each serve one-year terms, and the vice-chair, who serves a two-year term.

## Executive Committee



**Carlo Capua**  
Chair



**Sheri Capehart**  
Vice Chair & NLC Liaison



**Lee Guio**  
Treasurer



**Cheryl Selby**  
Secretary



**Pat Fallin**  
Parliamentarian and  
State Representative  
Director



**Janet Huston**  
Exec-At-Large



**Meg Mizutani**  
Exec-At-Large



**Pam Foley**  
Exec-At-Large

## 2024 - 2025 Board of Directors

Board Member Name	City	Term End Year
Carlo Capua	Fort Worth, TX	2026
Sheri Capehart	Arlington, TX	2028
Lee Guio	Union City, CA	2025
Cheryl Selby	Olympia, WA	2026
Pat Fallin	Tulsa, OK	2026
Janet Huston	Cincinnati, OH	2026
Meg Mizutani	Sebastopol, CA	2026
Pam Foley	San Jose, CA	2027
Jean Bailey	Silver Spring, MD	2026
Harbir Bhatia	Santa Clara, CA	2026
Fatima Benghe	Houston, TX	2026
Joseph (Joe) Forte, Jr.	Tempe, AZ	2027
Peter Ives	Santa Fe, NM	2027
Greg Jackson	Fort Worth, TX	2025
Bill C. Littlejohn	Houston, TX	2025
Shomari Maynard	Pasadena, CA	2025
Manny Pelaez-Prada	San Antonio, TX	2026
Sequanna Taylor	Milwaukee, WI	2027
Larry Uebner	Omaha, NE	2026
Martha Vera	El Paso, TX	2027
Victor Wang	Palo Alto, CA	2027
Christine Warnke	Washington, DC	2025



## NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Name	Title	City, State
Peter Svarzbein	Chair Emeritus "Ex-Officio"	El Paso, TX
Fred Blanton	Honorary Board Alumni Chair	Staunton, VA
Pat Fallin	Parliamentarian & State Representative Director	Tulsa, OK
Ricki Garrett	President & CEO	Washington, DC

## PAST CHAIRS

Name	City
Peter Svarzbein	El Paso, TX
Carol Robertson Lopez	Santa Fe, NM
Ron Nirenberg	San Antonio, TX
Stephen "Tim" Quigley	San Jose, CA
Bill Boerum	Sonoma, CA
Thomas A. Lisk	Richmond, VA
Brad Cole	Carbondale, IL
Michael Hyatt	Fort Worth, TX
Mae Ferguson	Fort Worth, TX
Sherman Banks	Little Rock, AR
Glenn Gray	Juneau, AK
Nancy Huppert	Rochester, NY
Charles Stokke	Menomonie, WI
James Amato	Lexington, KY
Richard Neuheisel	Tempe, AZ
Rodger Randle	Tulsa, OK

# HONORARY BOARD ALUMNI

Sister Cities International’s Honorary Board Alumni is comprised of key individuals who have shown outstanding leadership to Sister Cities International through the years. They are long-standing volunteers from membership, former Board Members, or former State Representatives who were voted Honorary Board Alumni members because of their outstanding support and involvement in the organization. As a self-governing body, the Honorary Board Alumni is ready to assist our members with a wealth of institutional knowledge and experience.

## Fred Blanton Chair

Leroy Allala	Michael Curd	Norris Hermsmeyer	Clare Petrich	Jean Vanbuskirk
James Amato	John Dabeet	Robert Heuermann	Ronda Pierce	Hans Vielberth
Tony Anderson	Alix Desulme	Cheryl Hill	Mario Porras	Carla Walker
Raveen Arora	Rick Donohue	Kevin Hill	Thelma Press	Joshua Walker
Suhail Arastu	James Donovan	Bill Hinkle	Jennifer Priest	Mark Walton
Randy Avon	Sherry Dowlatshahi	Michael Hyatt	Brian Propp	Damian Wampler
Sherman Banks	Janet Downey	Linda Jay Jackson	Roxanne Qualls	Christine Warnke
Mimi Barker	Al Durtka	Ivan Jaime	Avi Rabinovitch	Paula West
Gary Barnabo	Jody Edgerton	Laverne Johnson	John Raeside	Wylie Williams
Bill Behrens	Nancy Eidam	Lorna Johnson	Rodger Randle	Jane Wood
Steve Beinke	Mary Jean Eisenhower	Ash Kalra	Carolina Rendeiro	Corey Woods
Courtney Bennett	Cindy Elliott	Lisa Keyes	Carlos Reyes	Polly Yu
Joe Bice	Michael Fahey	Aldon “AM” Kinney	Shirley Rivens-Smith	
Carolyn Bishop	Pat Fallin	Launa Kowalski	Carol Robertson Lopez	
Fred Blanton	Mae Ferguson	Roger Lawrence	Kathleen Roche-Tansey	
Bill Boerum	Stelle Feuers	Holly Lazzerini	Patricia Sanders	
Brenda Brumfield	Mary Ellen Fox	Jessey Lee	Burga Santiago	
Carol Burdette	Michael Fox	Tom Lisk	Kay Sargent	
Jane Cahaly	Ruth Fraser	Mark Mallory	Louise Schoene	
Sheri Capehart	Brenda Frinks	Boubker Mazoz	Barbara Shepard	
Carlo Capua	John Henry Fullen	Sandra McCormick	Teri Simmons	
Magdalena Carrasco	Gilbert “Gil” Garcia	Michael McQuary	Brian Smith	
A.J. Chahal	José Luis Garcia	Sue Myrick	Charles Stokke	
Alan Chambers	Ricki Garrett	Jane Neuheisel	Kausi Subramaniam	
Irene Chase	Jane Gehlhausen	Richard Neuheisel	Teddy Taylor	
Brad Cole	Angie Gomez	Ron Nirenberg	Tom TenHoeve	
Henry Cole	Glenn Gray	Kevin O’Donnell	Georgianne Thomas	
James Conway	Bob Greninger	Len Olender	Earnestine Thomas-Robertson	
Dave Cortese	Priscilla Harris	Mary Palko	Frank Tripicchio	
Ruth Cotter	Kate Helwig	Raul Peralez	Larry Uebner	

## HONORARY BOARD ALUMNI MEMORIAL

Ed Adams	Nancy Huppert	Raymond Schultz
Martha Atherton	Tom Labonge	Michael Scorcio
Mary Cort	Georgiana McLeod	Ethelda Singer
Frances Dias	William Mitchell	Robert Swart
Bill Evans	Norman Mineta	Jane Tublin
Ann Galloway	Virginia Mueller	Charles Wheeler
Roxana Goin	Tim Quigley	Linda Whitton
Ron Gossett	Sharon Receveur	
Satoye Ruth (Yamada) Hashimoto	Sylvia Sass	

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*SCI Honorary Board members have distinguished themselves either through lifelong service to a local member city, extended service as an SCI State Representative, and/or completed one or more terms on the SCI Board.*

*In addition to their significant dedication to SCI, Honorary Board members hold the institutional memory of Sisters Cities International, and help SCI evolve from the early founding and successes of the 20th century to the innovations in citizen diplomacy in the 21st century.*

*– Fred Blanton,  
Chair, Honorary Board Alumni*

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# STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Sister Cities International's State Representatives are a volunteer group of leaders in the sister cities network who provide expertise and assistance to members in their respective states. If you are interested in becoming a state representative, please email Pat Fallin, State Representative Director, at [patfallin@msn.com](mailto:patfallin@msn.com).

State	Name	Email	Phone
Alabama	Lisa Keyes	lykeyes@gmail.com	205-310-4949
Alaska	Linda Jackson	director@hhnepal.org	907-338-8128
Arizona	Joe Forte	jrfortejr@gmail.com	914-906-9069
Arkansas	Mary Zunick	mzunick@hotsprings.org	501-545-6960
California (Northern)	Starr Hurley	starned@msn.com	916-425-5558
	Brenda Brumfield	brenbrum@sbcglobal.net	707-642-0815
California (Southern)	Elena Galvez	galvezelena@gmail.com	661-510-0885
	Bob Zasa	bzasa@dpsistercities.org	626-840-4248
	Michael McQuary	drmcquary@icloud.com	858-752-9544
Colorado	Gayle Stallings	colosci@gmail.com	303-246-7528
District of Columbia	Christine Warnke	cwarnke@sistercities.org	202-549-9524
Florida	Brenda Frinks	brendafrinks@gmail.com	904-563-5324
	Donna Scantlebury	donna.gflsci@hotmail.com	754-204-3710
Georgia	Teri Simmons	teri.simmons@agg.com	404-873-8612
Hawaii	Stephanie Ohigashi	stephanieohigashi@gmail.com	808-281-4535
Illinois	Darius Robinson	drob360@yahoo.com	847-613-8178
Indiana	Peter Kirkwood	pkirkwood@internationalcenter.org	317-974-0658
Iowa	John Dabeet	johndabeet@gmail.com	563-554-1353
Kansas	Cindy Elliott	globalcindy@yahoo.com	785-650-3378
Kentucky	Kay Sargent	kays@lexingtonky.gov	859-258-3137
Maryland	Drew Powell	drewpowell.sci@gmail.com	240-382-3343
Michigan	Maxine Hankins Cain	maxinecain@me.com	517-580-2165
Minnesota	Lynnette Welsch	scandia1@yahoo.com	651-433-2444
Mississippi	Ricki Garrett	rgarrett@sistercities.org	601-940-6383

Missouri	Renee Franklin	senegalsistercities2011@yahoo.com	314-323-0950
Montana	Katie Willcockson	kwillcockson@mt.gov	406-841-2750
Nebraska	Larry Uebner	bankomaha@cox.net	402-490-5140
New Jersey	Dosso Kassimou	dkassimou1@gmail.com	973-951-1768
New Mexico	Richard Buckler	rbuckler3@comcast.net	505-291-8175
North Carolina	Barbara Shepard	bshepard_10@yahoo.com	828-380-3103
Ohio	Janet Huston	jrhuston@cinci.rr.com	513-403-9796
Oklahoma	Pat Fallin	patfallin@msn.com	805-245-9075
Texas	Sheri Capehart	capeharts@arlingtontx.gov	817-296-2678
Virginia	Fred Blanton	fredbsta@gmail.com	314-267-2829
Washington	Clare Petrich	clarepetrich@gmail.com	253-304-8437
Wisconsin	Alexander Durtka Jr.	aldurtka@gmail.com	414-732-4192
West Virginia	Fred Blanton	fredbsta@gmail.com	314-267-2829
Wyoming	Gayle Stallings	colosci@gmail.com	303-246-7528



# COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES

The Country Representatives team is the national operational field team which provides direct service to SCI member programs to support the maintenance and development of the SCI mission and network. This team facilitates the growth of the membership network, advises and assists member programs at the local, county, and state levels, and serves as a vital conduit for communication amongst individual member programs for networking, mutual support, best practice sharing, and collaborative opportunities. If you are interested in becoming a Country Representative, please contact Kevin O'Donnell at [kevin.p.od.1989@gmail.com](mailto:kevin.p.od.1989@gmail.com).

Country	Name	Email
Afghanistan	Rick Burns	karadahproject@gmail.com
Angola	Fatima Benge	fbenge@houstonluandasc.org
Argentina	Mary Palko	mary@palko.me
Bahamas	Ginger Moxey	gingermoxey@bahamas.gov.bs
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Drew Powell	drewpowell.sci@gmail.com
Brazil	Rodger Randle	randle@ou.edu
Burkina Faso	Sonia Harrison	hailmarycare@gmail.com
Chile	Christine Warnke	drchristinewarnke@gmail.com
China	Carol Robertson Lopez	crobertsonlopez@comcast.net
China	Cindy Elliott	globalcindy@yahoo.com
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Ethiopia	Gayle Stallings	colosci@gmail.com
Russian Federation	Bill Boerum	bill@vom.com
France	Mary Palko	mary@palko.me
Fiji	Peter Ives	peternelsonives@gmail.com
Finland	Shomari Maynard	shomari.maynard@gmail.com
Ghana	Prince Kwame Kludejeson	pkwamek@yahoo.com
Ghana	HRH Naa Mildred Yacoba Noyaa (The First) Vanderpuije	ms.mildredv@gmail.com
Greece	Christine Warnke	drchristinewarnke@gmail.com
Haïti	Alexandre Telfort	alexandretelfort@gmail.com
Hungary	Greg Jackson	gjackson@gregjacksonlaw.com
India	Suhail Arastu	suhail.arastu@gmail.com
Iraq	Rick Burns	karadahproject@gmail.com

Country	Name	Email
Ireland	Pam Foley	pam.foley@sanjoseca.gov
Israel	Peter Svarzbein	pgsvarzbein@gmail.com
Italy	Joe Buscaino	buscaino4@gmail.com
Japan	Al Durtka	aldurtka@gmail.com
Japan	Kevin O'Donnell	kevin.p.od.1989@gmail.com
Kazakhstan	Carol Robertson Lopez	crobertsonlopez@comcast.net
Kenya	James Donovan	jmdadec@gmail.com
Kenya	Phyllis Venable	phvenable@gmail.com
Liberia	Effua McGowan	effuamcgowan1@gmail.com
México	Sharzhad (Sherry) Dowlatshahi	sdowlatshahi@sanantionio.gov
Morocco	Boubker Mazoz	boubker.mazoz@gmail.com
New Zealand	Starr Walton-Hurley (Honorary Consul)	starrned@msn.com
Nigeria	Hassan Leckey	hlecky08@gmail.com
Palestine	John Dabeet	johndabeet@gmail.com
Panama	Neita Wiese	scicharleston@gmail.com
Papua New Guinea	Carlo Capua	cacapua@hotmail.com
Peru	Bill Boerum	bill@vom.com
Philippines	James Donovan	jmdadec@gmail.com
Portugal	Carolina Rendeiro (Honorary Consul)	rendeirocarolina@gmail.com
Qatar	Neita Wiese	scicharleston@gmail.com
Samoa	James Donovan (Honorary Consul)	jmdadec@gmail.com
Saint Kitts & Nevis	Shomari Maynard	shomari.maynard@gmail.com
South Africa	Jean Bailey	jeanbaileyphd@aol.com
Spain	Martha Vera (Honorary Consul)	consulspain@gmail.com
Taiwan	Hung-bin Ding	hbding@gmail.com
Tanzania	Ronda Pierce	scicountryrep.tz@gmail.com
Thailand	Lee Guio	lee@leeguio.com
Ukraine	Harbir Bhatia	harbirbhatia@gmail.com
United Kingdom	Rodger Randle (Honorary Consul)	randle@ou.edu
Uzbekistan	Carol Robertson Lopez (Honorary Consul)	crobertsonlopez@comcast.net
Zambia	Richard Buckler	rbuckler3@comcast.net

**Interested in becoming a Country Representative?**  
**Contact Kevin O'Donnell at [kevin.p.od.1989@gmail.com](mailto:kevin.p.od.1989@gmail.com).**

# Global Envoys

Global Envoys are esteemed volunteer leaders of Sister Cities International who represent the organization globally through presentations, speeches, and participation in various events. They serve as diplomats and spokespersons at U.S. embassies abroad, and at international embassies in the U.S. Appointed for a five-year term, this role can be renewed by the Chair of the board.

## SCI Global Envoys:

- Mike Hyatt
- Mary Palko
- Thelma Press
- Carol Robertson Lopez
- Teri Simmons
- Hans Vielberth



# Region Representatives

The Region Representatives team is comprised of national and community leaders who have expert knowledge of or a strong interest and experience in the assigned region/country (or have a similar broad international perspective). This enables an understanding of and appreciation for the role that SCI holds in the worldwide citizen diplomacy movement and the assigned region/country.

## SCI Region Representatives:

- Africa – Lorna K. Johnson
- East Asia & Pacific – Cindy Elliott
- Europe & Eurasia – Mary Palko
- South & Central Asia – Lee Guio
- Western Hemisphere – Bill Boerum
- International Organizations – James Donovan



# OUR MISSION: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR A MORE PEACEFUL WORLDSPACE

Sister Cities International (SCI) remains at the forefront of global citizen diplomacy, fostering connections that promote peace, cultural understanding, and economic collaboration. Founded in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, SCI has grown into a powerful network that unites communities across borders, empowering citizens to create lasting relationships that transcend political and geographical divides.

In today's world, where understanding and cooperation are more crucial than ever, SCI continues to serve as a champion for peace and prosperity. Through people-to-people engagement, we help communities find common ground, celebrate diversity, and work together toward shared goals.

## EXPANDING OUR GLOBAL REACH

With over 1,800 partnerships in 140 countries, SCI's impact spans six continents, connecting cities in meaningful ways that drive cultural exchange, educational opportunities, and sustainable development. Our work extends beyond symbolic agreements – each partnership represents a living, evolving relationship that strengthens over time through exchanges, collaborative projects, and mutual learning.

This year, we have expanded our programs to engage new communities, enhanced virtual and in-person exchanges, and deepened our commitment to sustainable development goals. SCI continues to evolve to meet the needs of our global society, leveraging technology and youth engagement.



## EMPOWERING CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

At the heart of SCI's work are the thousands of volunteers, municipal leaders, educators, and young ambassadors who drive our mission forward. Through initiatives like the Young Artists and Authors Showcase (YAAS), the Youth Leadership Summit (YLS), and the J-1 High School Homestay Program, we empower the next generation of global leaders to embrace diplomacy and cultural exchange.

Our programs provide life-changing experiences, fostering understanding and cooperation between individuals and communities. From city delegations working together on climate resilience to students engaging in cross-cultural dialogue, our initiatives create real-world impact that strengthen international bonds.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect on this year's successes, we remain committed to our mission of fostering peace through international partnerships. The challenges we face as a global community – whether social, economic, or environmental – require collaborative solutions. SCI stands ready to support our member cities in building the networks and knowledge necessary to drive positive change.

Together, we are not just linking cities – we are shaping a more interconnected and peaceful world.

# YOUTH PROGRAMS



# YOUNG ARTISTS AND AUTHORS SHOWCASE (YAAS)

For YAAS 2024, Sister Cities International (SCI) accepted art from 325 students mailing from 11 countries, amplifying youth voices on climate resilience through art and literature. The theme, “Climatescape: Resilient Cities for Tomorrow’s Climate,” aligned with the UN’s 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11.

Each year, the Young Artists and Authors Showcase (YAAS) encourages youth from across the globe to express their creativity and global awareness through original artwork and literature. The competition is open to both U.S. member communities and their sister city partners.

Submissions are received virtually from participating cities, and a panel of judges select winners based on originality, theme interpretation, and overall composition. Many sister city programs host their own local competitions and send their community’s winners to compete at the national level.

Submissions for YAAS 2024 closed on June 1, 2024, after being extended from the original May 1 deadline due to continued interest and enthusiasm from participants. Once the applications were closed, the SCI team worked diligently to verify each submission, ensuring they met the eligibility criteria. Any missing or incorrect information was addressed with the help of sister city contacts, and disqualified submissions were removed from the pool.

In the end, 317 eligible entries were considered, with the most popular category being classic art (106 submissions), followed by digital art (48), poetry (40), photography (38), short essays (25), and original music (19).



**Reflect, Loralee House –  
Norfolk Sister City Association  
Classic Art Showcase Grand Prize Winner**

“My inspiration for this piece is: Our human desires. The more we wish for the more the earth must suffer. The pictures represent the chaos of our world. In the center of it is a reflection. It's not quite clear. Is it who has doomed our planet? Or is it who has come to save it? It is up to us to save our planet one small step at a time.”



***Renew Our Cities or Stay Living in Pity,  
Rachel Sarmiento –  
Norfolk Sister City Association – Philippines  
Digital Art Showcase Grand Prize Winner***

The winning students hailed from various countries, including the Philippines, Mexico, Tanzania, New Zealand, China, and the states of California, Texas, Virginia, and Arizona.

As part of the celebration, all winners were also awarded an online certificate and press release for personal use. Their winning entries were showcased in a virtual gallery on SCI's website, a tradition that was continued from the COVID-19 pandemic years. The 2024 winners' creations were highlighted across SCI's social media channels, showcasing the diverse talent and global participation in the program.

The judging process for the 2024 competition began in mid-July, with volunteers from the SCI Honorary Board Alumni. The judges based their assessments on originality, theme interpretation, and the mediums used. The process was completed on schedule, thanks to their dedicated work.

Winners were announced through SCI's website and social media channels, with 18 students receiving monetary prizes. First-place winners received \$1,000, second-place winners received \$250, and third-place winners received \$100.



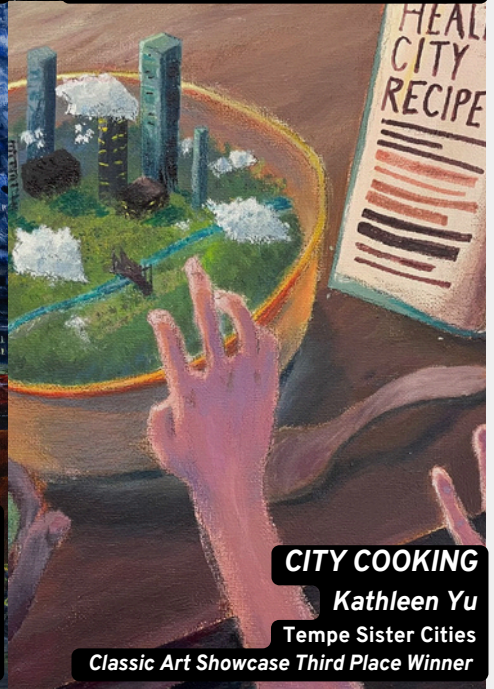
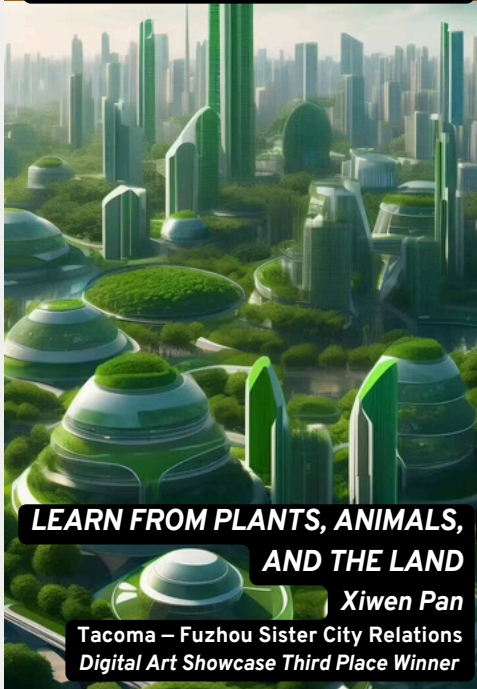
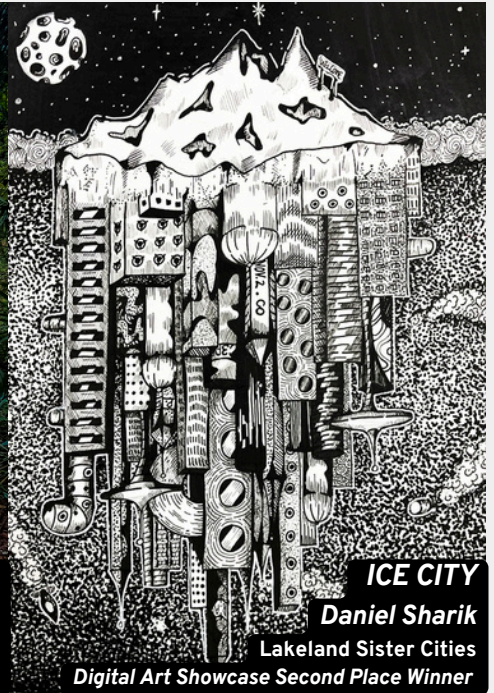
***Green Spaces, Celeste Jenkins-O'Reilly –  
Fort Worth Sister Cities International  
Photographers Showcase Grand Prize Winner***

**INTERESTED  
IN  
YAAS?**



**[HTTPS://SISTERCITIES.  
ORG/YAAS/](https://sistercities.org/yaas/)**

# YAAS 2024 WINNERS



“City’s plan, nature’s hand in play  
Ecosystems thrive, day by day  
Rise, act now, for future’s sake  
Resilience, future’s make”

**RESILIENT CITIES FOR TOMORROW'S CLIMATE"**

**Sarah Huang**

Tacoma – Fuzhou Sister City Relations  
Poetry Showcase Third Place Winner

“...In that moment, Adam realized that he,  
too, was part of this vast interconnected  
system. His choices and actions mattered.  
The world was evolving, and so was he.”

**GREENHOUSE**

**Christabel Yun**

Santa Clarita Sister Cities  
Essay Showcase Third Place Winner

“In the face of adversity, we stand tall,  
Building walls that will not fall,  
Innovating, adapting, and transforming,  
Creating a future that is warming.”

**CITYSCAPE OF CLIMATE CHAMPIONS"**

**Juliana Rose Dinglasan**

Santa Clarita Sister Cities – Sariaya, Philippines  
Poetry Showcase Second Place Winner

“...Arusha also has made climate change,  
adaptation strategies that are made by  
integrating nature-based solutions into its urban  
fabric.”

**ARUSHA AS A RESILIENT CITY: ADDRESSING  
THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW**

**Natasha Lewis Laizer**

Sister Cities of Durham – Arusha Committee  
Essay Showcase Second Place Winner

“Mother Nature weeps, her tears unseen,  
In polluted waters that once ran clean.  
Her breath stolen by fumes of our creation,  
Yet she offers hope, a chance for salvation”.

**HER CRIES**

**Mary Lyzette Anne Capadocia**

Norfolk Sister City Association – Philippines  
Poetry Showcase First Place Winner

“...I remember 13 years ago when Sendong  
happened. When the city wept the death of its  
people....This created a bitter picture we  
would carry forever.”

**THE RESILIENCY OF OUR CITY"**

**Nicolette Ranan**

Norfolk Sister City Association – Philippines  
Essay Showcase First Place Winner



**Forgotten Futures**

**Nikita Schwass**

Palm Desert Sister Cities – Gisborne District, New Zealand  
Music Showcase Third Place Winner



**SLIVER OF EARTH**

**Alan Curritt**

Issaquah Sister Cities  
Music Showcase Second Place Winner



**City of Resilience**

**Gianna Renee Alexa Mantilla**

Norfolk Sister City Association – Philippines  
Music Showcase First Place Winner

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (YLS)

The 2024 Youth Leadership Summit (YLS), held from August 4-10 at American University in Washington, DC, brought together 42 high school students from across the U.S. and internationally for a transformative week focused on leadership, diplomacy, and global issues. This year marked the successful return of YLS as a stand-alone program after a four-year hiatus, offering students an immersive experience in citizen diplomacy, international cooperation, and professional development.



“Participating in Sister Cities International’s Youth Leadership Summit was an unforgettable experience that allowed me to connect with inspiring individuals, gain invaluable insights, and create lasting memories.”

– 2024 YLS Participant



## Overview

YLS 2024 provided a structured and engaging environment where students developed leadership skills, explored global issues, and engaged with experts in diplomacy and sustainability. Through interactive workshops, panel discussions, and cultural experiences, participants gained invaluable insights into the importance of international collaboration and civic engagement.

## A Revitalized Vision

Sister Cities International (SCI) relaunched YLS with a renewed commitment to fostering next generation global leaders. SCI ensured a structured, safe, and enriching environment for all participants. With a one-to-ten chaperone-to-student ratio, participants received dedicated guidance throughout the program.



## Engaging Curriculum & Activities

YLS featured dynamic sessions led by global leaders and subject matter experts. Students explored intercultural communication with Dr. Omekongo Dibinga of American University, learned about U.S. Department of State youth programs from Carlos Centeno, and gained insight into diplomacy from John Dinkelman, Diplomat in Residence for the DC Metro Area. Zulema Dabian-Erasmus, Minister Plenipotentiary for Aruba, led a session on climate change and diplomacy, reinforcing the importance of global cooperation.

Additional highlights included a diplomacy simulation at the U.S. Department of State, a mentorship dinner with SCI leaders, and cultural excursions, such as a Washington Nationals game and visits to national landmarks, which deepened students' appreciation for global perspectives.

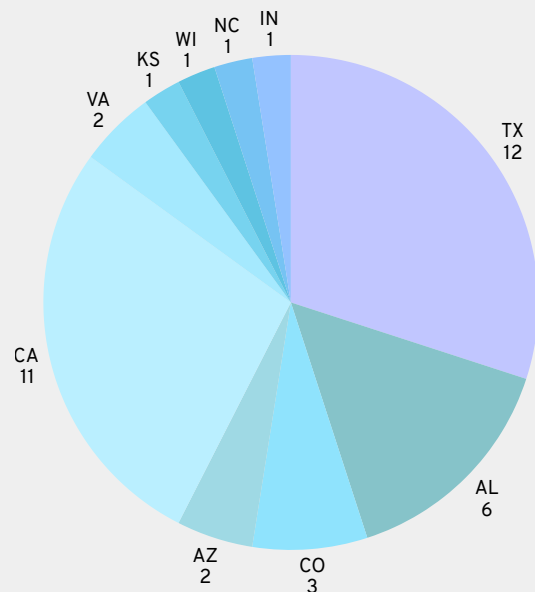
“This Youth Leadership Summit has definitely, it sounds cliché, been a life changing experience for me. [It] gave me the opportunity to travel that I wouldn't have had.”

– 2024 YLS Participant



## Marketing & Outreach

YLS 2024 promotions spanned multiple platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter(X), and LinkedIn, with engaging graphics and key details shared widely. SCI leveraged its network by promoting YLS through State Representatives, Board Members, and Embassy Staff, ensuring broad reach. Targeted email campaigns via MailChimp further extended awareness, while a dedicated one-pager introduced the program to potential international participants through diplomatic channels.



YLS Participants' States

## Impact

As the first in-person Youth Leadership Summit in four years, YLS 2024 marked a significant milestone in re-establishing SCI's commitment to youth engagement and leadership development. The overwhelmingly positive response highlighted the program's success, with 100% of participants reporting satisfaction and 63% stating they were "extremely satisfied." The Diplomacy Simulation, Washington, DC tour, and mentorship dinner emerged as standout activities. Many students emphasized that the summit significantly shaped their perspectives on international affairs and career aspirations. The in-person nature of the event fostered deeper connections, immersive learning experiences, and a renewed sense of global citizenship among participants.

The success of the 2024 Youth Leadership Summit has set a strong foundation for future in-person gatherings, demonstrating the immense value of experiential learning and cultural exchange. With strengthened partnerships and a proven model, SCI aims to continue expanding the program's reach and impact in the years to come.

## Looking Ahead

SCI remains committed to expanding opportunities for young leaders and looks forward to continuing this impactful program in the years to come. With strengthened partnerships and an ever-growing network of engaged students, YLS is poised to shape the next generation of global changemakers and peacemakers.



“Coming here [YLS], learning about the State Department, learning about these careers, for me really made a difference. I feel so much more confident about what I want to do and what I don't want to do [with my career], and it's all because of Sister Cities.”  
– 2024 YLS Participant

**INTERESTED  
IN  
YLS?**



[HTTPS://SISTER  
CITIES.ORG/YLS](https://sistercities.org/yls)

# OTHER PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES



# ANNUAL AWARDS 2024

## Honoring Excellence in Global Partnerships

Each year, Sister Cities International recognizes exceptional member programs with its prestigious Annual Awards, celebrating initiatives that foster global collaboration and cultural exchange. The 2024 Annual Awards, for the first time since pre-COVID, were held at the scenic Foss Waterway Seaport Museum in Tacoma, Washington, provided a stunning waterfront backdrop for this evening of recognition and inspiration. Attendees, including Sister City representatives, dignitaries, and community leaders, gathered to celebrate the impact of citizen diplomacy.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Mark Milgard Foundation, the evening featured a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with beautifully decorated tables and lively energy as guests arrived via shuttles from the Hotel Murano.

### A Night of Inspiration and Celebration

Board Chair, Carlo Capua, led the program, introducing keynote speakers Michael Fowler, Sam Kaplan, and Chris Staudinger, who shared insights on diplomacy and leadership. Guests enjoyed a Latin buffet as awards were presented, each accompanied by a short video highlighting the recipients' achievements. Many honorees accepted their awards in person, receiving handcrafted glass trophies made by a Tacoma local. The evening was a powerful tribute to the dedication of Sister Cities members and the enduring impact of global partnerships.



# ANNUAL AWARDS 2024 WINNERS

## Innovation in Youth & Education

Population:  
25,001 –  
100,000

**Neighbors Abroad of  
Palo Alto and the City  
of Enschede**

Population:  
100,001 –  
300,000

**Tacoma Sister Cities  
& Fawcett Elementary  
School**

Population:  
300,001 +

**Fort Worth Sister  
Cities International**



## Innovation in Business, Trade, and Professional Exchange

Population:  
< 25,000

**Aspen Sister  
Cities**

Population:  
25,001 – 100,000

**Hot Springs Sister  
City Program**

Population:  
100,001 – 300,000

**Birmingham  
Sister Cities**

Population:  
300,001 +

**San Antonio  
Sister Cities  
Program**

# ANNUAL AWARDS 2024 WINNERS

## Innovation in Arts and Culture

Population:  
< 25,000

**La Cañada  
Flintridge Sister  
Cities Association**

Population:  
300,001 +

**Sister Cities of  
Nashville**



## Innovation in Humanitarian Assistance

Population:  
300,001 +

**Denver Sister  
Cities  
International**



## Best Overall Programs

Population:  
< 25,000

**Hermosa Beach  
Sister Cities  
Association**

Population:  
25,001 –  
100,000

**Highland Park Illinois  
Sister Cities  
Foundation**

Population:  
300,001 +

**Lexington Sister  
Cities**



# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

IN MEMORY OF



## Tim Quigley

Chair, Honorary Board of Directors, Chairman Emeritus,  
Global Envoy

Learn More

ANNUAL AWARDS

<https://sistercities.org/annual-awards>

# 7 FOR 70 INITIATIVE

The 7 for 70 Initiative, announced by The White House at the U.S.-Pacific Islands Forum Summit on September 25, 2023, is a groundbreaking effort led by Sister Cities International (SCI) in partnership with the U.S. Department of State and the White House National Security Council. To commemorate SCI's 70th anniversary, the initiative aims to establish seven new sister city relationships in the Pacific Island region by 2026. The initiative has had a significant impact by strengthening diplomatic and cultural exchanges between U.S. and Pacific Island communities. These relationships have encouraged dialogue on key areas such as trade, tourism, education, and historical preservation.

## Progress

- Sister City Partnerships:** Long Beach and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Poplar, WI and Madang, PNG are all moving forward with Letters of Intent (LOI) to formalize their partnerships.
- FestPAC Engagement:** SCI's delegation successfully participated in the Festival of the Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) in Hawaii, the largest gathering of Pacific Island nations.
- Pacific Wrecks Collaboration:** The discovery of American WWII pilot Richard Bong's plane in Madang, PNG has bolstered efforts to establish a sister city relationship between Madang, PNG and Poplar, WI.
- U.S. Speaker Program & State Department Support:** The U.S. Embassy in Papua New Guinea has expressed strong support for the initiative, facilitating connections and potential travel opportunities for SCI leaders.

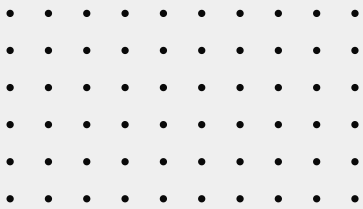
By promoting grassroots diplomacy, the 7 for 70 initiative has also reinforced U.S. strategic interests in the Pacific and gained strong support from the U.S. State Department, embassies, and local leaders.

## Looking Ahead

SCI remains committed to fostering sustainable relationships between the U.S. and Pacific Island communities. Regular meetings, continued collaboration with key partners, and participation in international events will ensure the success of this initiative, further strengthening cultural diplomacy and subnational ties in the Pacific region.



# ALL AMERICAS SUMMIT



Sister Cities International (SCI) hosted its first regional summit focused on the Western Hemisphere, the All Americas Summit, from May 28-31, 2024, in San Antonio, Texas. **Bringing together over 450 attendees from 138 cities and 20 countries**, the event convened citizen diplomats, dignitaries, and officials to discuss key issues such as economic development, sustainability, arts, and culture.

San Antonio provided an ideal setting as a major gateway connecting the Americas, offering attendees a rich cultural experience. The summit facilitated new sister city partnerships, business connections, and the exchange of best practices, reinforcing the importance of international collaboration in fostering global understanding and regional progress.

Held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, the summit served as a vital platform for discussing economic development, sustainability, arts, culture, and governance – key areas that shape the future of communities across the Americas. The event highlighted the growing importance of sister city relationships in advancing economic growth, cultural diplomacy, and social resilience.



## Critical Topics Shaping the Region

A major outcome of the summit was the strengthening of international cooperation through new agreements and initiatives. Delegations from cities such as Monterrey, Mexico, engaged in dialogue on regional economic ecosystems, highlighting how local governments can collaborate on industry growth and social development. These discussions reinforced the idea that cities across the Americas share common challenges and can achieve greater progress through collective action.

Throughout the summit, discussions centered on pressing regional issues such as tourism, trade, education, and cultural exchange. Economic development took center stage, with experts emphasizing trade and investment opportunities that drive prosperity across borders. Sustainability and climate resilience were also key themes, particularly as cities navigate challenges like water management and extreme weather. Leaders from various municipalities shared strategies for addressing these concerns through cross-border cooperation.



# Driving Meaningful Change for The Future

The SCI All Americas Summit featured diverse sessions that tackled important regional issues.

Topics ranged from *People-Centered Smart Cities*, focusing on sustainable urban tech solutions, to *Supply Chains and Transportation*, examining cross-border logistics. The summit also highlighted the *Transformative Impact of Arts in Community Development*, explored *Travel and Tourism as a Unifying Force*, and addressed Immigration trends across the Americas. These sessions and many more allowed leaders to collaborate and explore solutions for a connected, inclusive future.



The All Americas Summit was not just a forum for discussion but also a catalyst for action. By fostering dialogue on economic, social, and environmental priorities, the event set the stage for long-term partnerships that will continue to shape communities across the Western Hemisphere. As cities work together to address these issues, sister city relationships remain a key tool for promoting sustainable development, cultural exchange, and international understanding.



# All Americas SUMMIT

SisterCities  
INTERNATIONAL

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



# 2024 Leadership Meetings

The Sister Cities International leadership teams meet at least three times a year – in Spring, Summer, and Fall – to collaborate on policy, governance, best practices, education, and networking.

**162**

LEADERSHIP  
MEETING ATTENDEES

**21**

LEADERSHIP  
MEETINGS

**23**

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY  
EVENTS

## 2024 Spring

The 2024 SCI Spring Leadership Meetings took place in Washington, DC, March 11-13. The meetings empowered leaders with advocacy tools, strategic discussions, and high-level diplomatic engagement, strengthening SCI's mission, and policies, goals and governance.

The event began with "The Art of Lobbying" session, which equipped leadership members with skills to advocate for Sister Cities International and citizen diplomacy. Many attendees successfully met with congressional representatives to advance SCI initiatives.

Key discussions spanned governance, finance, membership, and strategy. The Thailand Embassy reception was highlighted, celebrating the Austin-Chiang Mai sister city partnership with cultural performances and diplomatic engagement.

The meetings concluded with Capitol Hill appointments and a Board Meeting at the Dirksen Senate Building, reinforcing SCI's presence in policy discussions and global cooperation.



## 2024 SUMMER

The 2024 SCI Summer Leadership Meetings, held July 16–17 in Tacoma, WA, provided a dynamic platform for networking, leadership development, and strategic discussions, strengthening SCI’s mission and global impact.

The event began with a rooftop Welcome Reception, fostering connections between SCI leaders and Washington State sister city associations.

Key meetings covered finance, regional initiatives, and governance, culminating in a pivotal leadership transition. Outgoing Chair, Peter Svarzbein, passed the gavel to incoming Chair, Carlo Capua, marking the beginning to a new chapter for SCI’s Board of Directors.

The Leadership Meetings were followed by the Annual Business Meeting, which was held in person and via Zoom. All SCI Leadership Teams and SCI members are welcome to attend the Annual Business Meeting every year.



*“The 2024 SCI Summer Leadership Meetings in Tacoma were a powerful reminder of what makes Sister Cities International so impactful—collaborative leadership, global connection, and a shared vision for peace and partnership.”*

**– Ricki Garrett  
President & CEO**



## 2024 FALL



2024 Fall Leadership Meetings were held October 15-17 in Long Beach, CA. On day one buses departed from the historic Queen Mary Hotel for a breakfast reception with the Mayor of Long Beach at City Hall.



A strategic planning activity for SCI Board Members followed this. Then, participants were able to tour the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), which also included a film screening and a panel discussion.



The Meetings concluded with a fundraising gala hosted by Jessey Lee and Cherie Chan at The Conrad Hotel, which included a seated dinner, speaking program, auction, and artist performances.

“

*The development of leadership is critical to any organization, and the SCI Leadership Meetings provide educational and networking opportunities, as well as strengthening ties with our grassroots leadership and programs.*

*– Ricki Garrett,  
President & CEO*

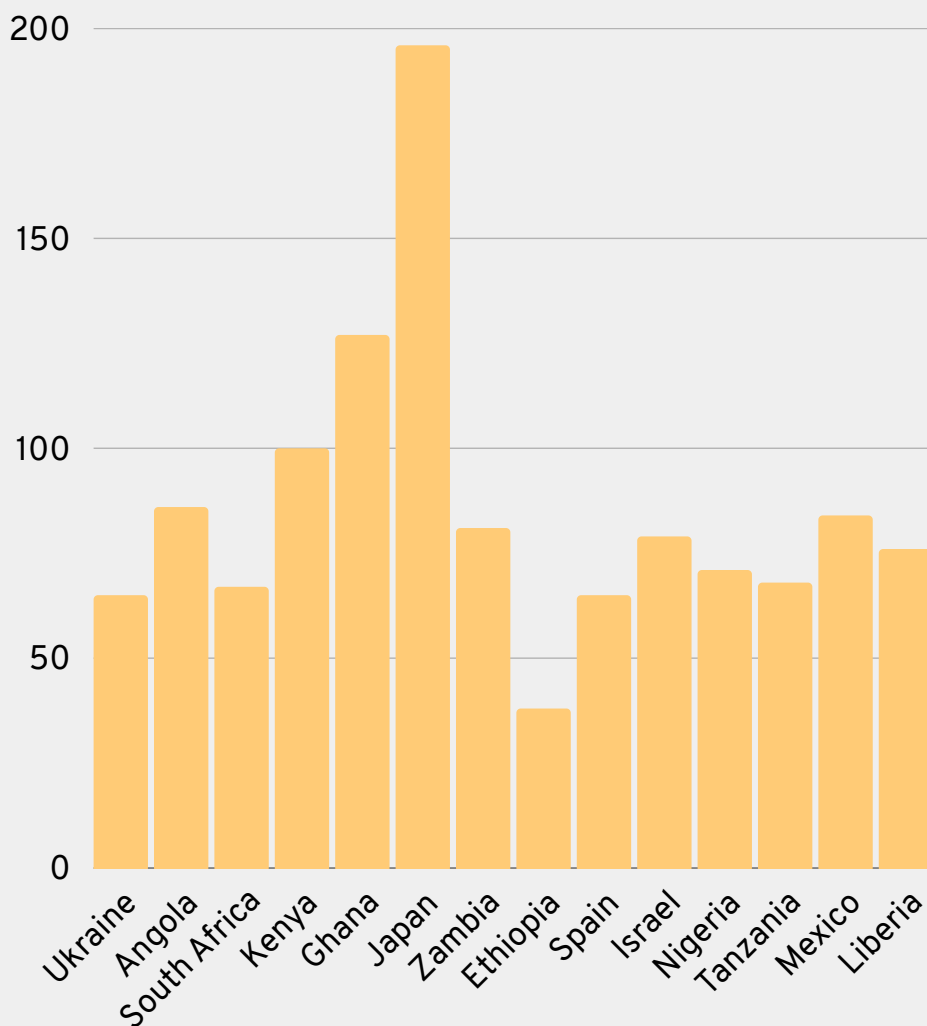
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# SCI NETWORKING ENGAGEMENTS

## Roundtables

SCI Country and Region Roundtables are dynamic virtual forums that bring together representatives from U.S. cities and their international counterparts to discuss key issues, share best practices, and explore opportunities for collaboration. These roundtables focus on specific countries or regions, providing participants with valuable insights into cultural, economic, and diplomatic priorities. Through open dialogue and strategic networking, the roundtables strengthen global partnerships and support SCI's mission of fostering peace and mutual understanding through citizen diplomacy.

***In 2024, SCI held 16 roundtables covering 5 regions which brought 1,264 registrants. All roundtables took place on Zoom, allowing people from around the globe to hear updates from their SCI Country Representatives***



Number of Roundtable Registrants by Country

# Impact by Region

## AFRICA

SCI expanded its impact across Africa through various sister city partnerships and by using the momentum of the 500 in 5 Initiative.

Notably, the Denver-Axum collaboration in Ethiopia earned SCI's Innovation in Humanitarian Assistance Award. In Kenya, SCI worked on strengthening ties with Kisumu and Busia. In Zambia, projects focused on water, scholarships, and medical aid from Albuquerque.

SCI also made strides in other African nations: partnerships in Tanzania and South Africa supported student exchanges and youth programs. In Angola, new sister city agreements were signed. Nigeria raised awareness on domestic violence, Rwanda focused on water and clean energy, and Ghana emphasized cultural and economic collaboration.



## SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA

SCI made a significant impact in Southeast Asia and Central Asia, working to enhance partnerships and foster new opportunities.

In Thailand, SCI's efforts focused on overcoming bureaucratic challenges to strengthen sister city relationships, particularly the U.S. partnerships with Chiang Mai and also Chiang Rai. Country representatives also supported flood relief and explored student exchange programs. In 2024, SCI explored potential collaborations with Kazakhstan through the America250 committee and highlighted successful National Guard partnerships, like those between Uzbekistan and Mississippi, aiming to extend these successes throughout the region.



## EUROPE / EURASIA

SCI strengthened its presence across Europe and Eurasia in 2024 by fostering new partnerships, advancing humanitarian efforts, and encouraging collaboration on global challenges.

From expanding ties in Spain and supporting cultural and innovative city initiatives to collaborating with French authorities on human trafficking prevention ahead of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, SCI played an active role in promoting meaningful connections. In Ukraine, efforts focused on boosting community morale and engagement through special events and roundtable discussions, emphasizing the power of sister city relationships in times of crisis.

## WESTERN HEMISPHERE

SCI also enriched its partnerships across the Western Hemisphere through various events and cultural initiatives.

At the All Americas Summit and the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly, SCI enhanced its collaboration with the OAS, expanding its regional influence and diplomatic ties. In Cuba, Representative Paul Bardwil focused on revitalizing historical city partnerships and fostering new cultural exchanges, including the proposed World Peace Center art project and ongoing student and artist exchanges between Santa Fe and its Cuban sister city.



## EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

In 2024, SCI strengthened its connections in East Asia and the Pacific through summits, cultural events, and new collaborations.

One of the most significant initiatives was the *7 for 70 Initiative*, which aims to establish seven new sister city relationships in the Pacific Island region by 2026. There was also substantial progress on a potential partnership between Fort Lauderdale and Iloilo City in the Philippines. In Japan, SCI engaged with local companies and cultural groups in preparation for the 2025 U.S.-Japan Sister Cities Summit. Meanwhile, the Taiwan Bubble Tea Festival was held in Rockville, MD, drawing over 10,000 attendees to celebrate the cultural ties and shared democratic values between Taiwan and the United States.

# MEMBERSHIP

CONNECT

GLOBALLY

THROUGH

LOCALLY

# MEMBERSHIP REVIEW



**Member Growth Rate**

**42%**



**2023**

**&**

**2024**

By joining the Sister Cities International network, members commit to promoting peace, respect, and mutual understanding. Sister city relationships help communities form and strengthen cultural and historical bonds, increase youth opportunities, develop diverse economies, and collaboratively tackle emerging issues. SCI relationships encourage and cultivate thriving, globally competitive communities.

**1715**

**PARTNERSHIPS**

as of December 31, 2024

**405**

**MEMBERS**

as of December 31, 2024

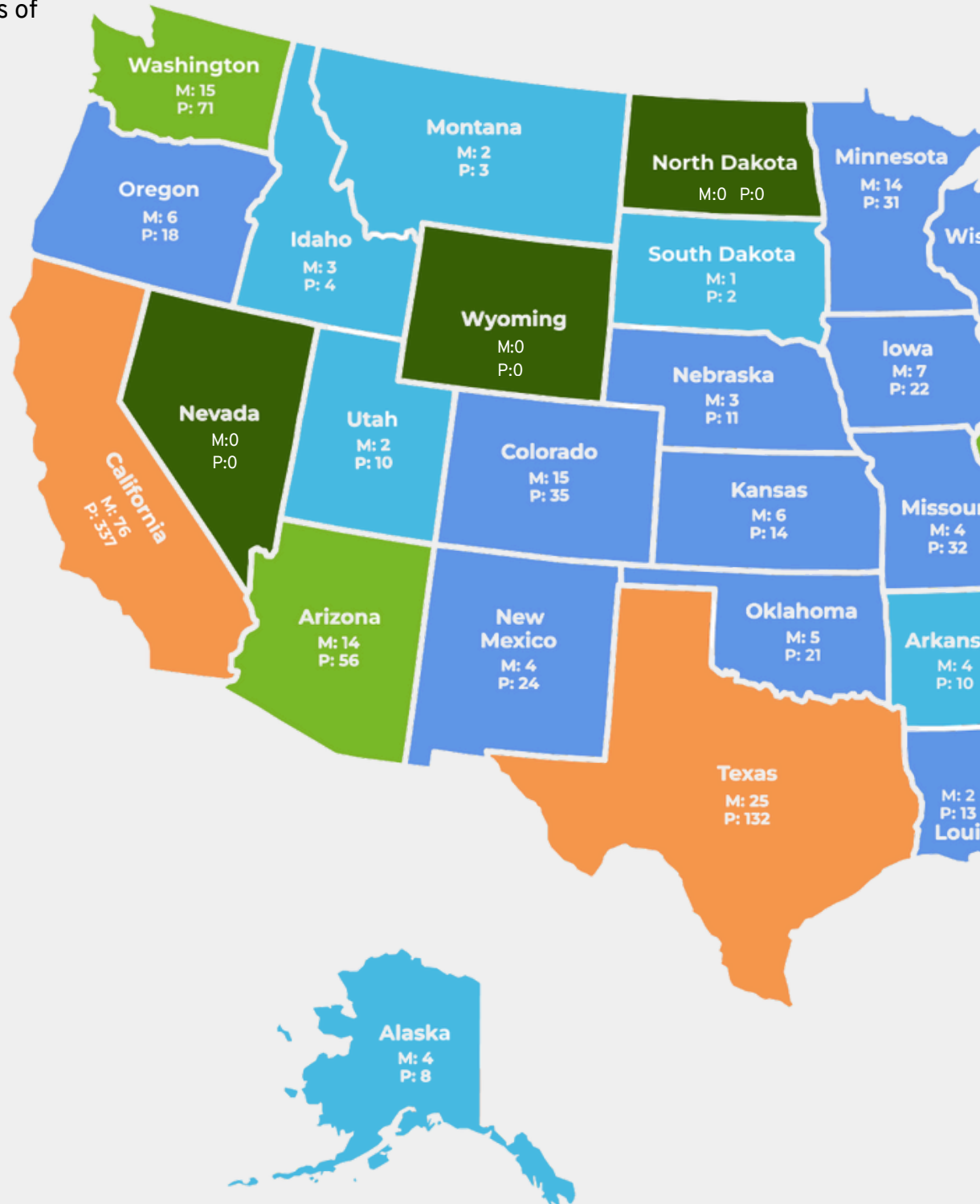


**415**  
Communities



**1,800+**  
Partnerships

Data current as of  
May 1, 2025

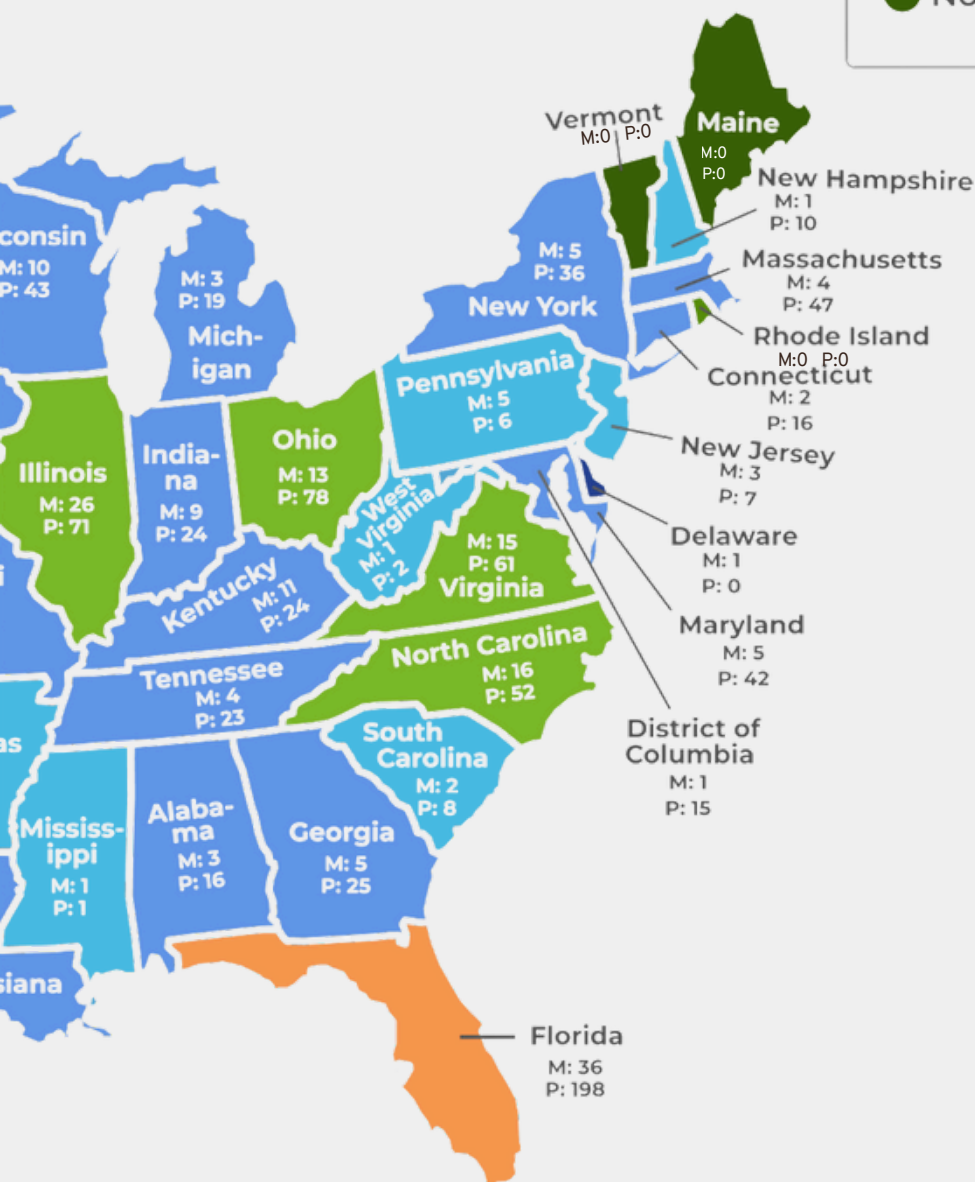


**KEY** M=Number of Memberships  
P=Number of Partnerships

Member Communities & Partnerships

100+ 51 - 99 11 - 50 1 - 10

No Members No Partnerships



# MEMBERSHIP AT SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL

Sister Cities International offers a number of services and resources to help members find partners, promote their activities, expand and improve programming, and save time and money. Whether it is developing new skills, recognizing milestones or providing much needed information and connections, SCI is committed to boosting the impact of its membership. At the heart of all of our services is assistance by our knowledgeable staff and leadership teams who have experience working with communities around the United States and globally.

## WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

Becoming a member of Sister Cities International (SCI) opens doors to a world of meaningful connections, fostering global partnerships that strengthen cultural understanding and diplomatic ties. As a member, cities, organizations, and individuals gain access to a dynamic network of over 400 U.S. communities engaged in more than 1,800 partnerships across 140 countries. These relationships facilitate exchanges in education, business, culture, and humanitarian efforts, helping communities grow through collaboration and shared experiences. By joining SCI, members become part of a global movement that promotes peace, international cooperation, and people-to-people diplomacy.

Sister city relationships create platforms for business engagement, allowing cities to establish international partnerships, attract investment, and participate in economic exchanges that drive local and global growth. Additionally, SCI members receive training, leadership development resources, and invitations to international conferences and summits, equipping them with tools to build successful and sustainable global partnerships. These programs not only enhance local economies but also foster long term collaboration between cities worldwide.

Beyond economic and diplomatic advantages, SCI membership supports cultural exchange and community engagement. Through student exchange programs and arts and music collaborations, sister city partnerships bring people together in meaningful ways. Members also gain recognition through SCI's annual awards programs, which highlight outstanding global initiatives and innovative partnerships. Whether a city is looking to expand its international presence, create new opportunities for residents, or contribute to global peace and understanding, SCI membership provides the platform to make a lasting impact on the world stage.





# MEMBER RESOURCES

## BOOTS ON THE GROUND CALLS

SCI offers Boots on the Ground calls (virtual meetings) to members and prospective members to provide information on either forming a sister city committee in their city or forming partnerships with international cities. SCI offers an overview of member resources and highlights the benefit of accessing the member portal on our website. Through the portal, Member Toolkits provide valuable information for cities in the very beginning stages of creating a sister city relationship and for those who wish to grow their program, strengthen partnerships or revitalize programs that may have been dormant.

In 2024, SCI staff conducted 56 Boots on the Ground calls, 12 of which involved current, active members seeking resources to help either grow their program or revitalize a dormant sister city relationship; 44 calls were held with prospective members seeking to establish their first sister city partnership. Out of these 44 prospective members, 35 joined our organization within a month of the initial Boots on the Ground call.

## MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

SCI's Membership Directory is one of our most used resources by both members and non-members alike. It lists all of SCI's members and their partnerships and is searchable by U.S. state and by country. Also included are lists of the executive board, honorary board, state, country and region representatives, and national staff.

The 2024 Membership Directory was created and disseminated in the summer of 2024. This directory is available in an online format and kept current as changes are continually being made. Physical copies were shared with all stakeholders.

## CITIES SEEKING CITIES

The City Connection Marketplace (also called Cities Seeking Cities) is a resource that supports communities seeking to develop new sister city partnerships. Cities seeking a partnership complete a community pairing survey, and SCI staff uses this information to formulate a list of potential matches. In 2024, 32 new cities were added to the City Connection Marketplace. Overall, this resource has proven successful at expanding SCI's global network and providing an improved way for SCI to connect its members with potential partners.

Find the community pairing survey on our website!

**"Peaceful relations between nations require understanding and mutual respect between individuals."**

**– President Dwight D. Eisenhower**

## MEMBER TOOLKITS

SCI offers its members full access to our member toolkits, which are invaluable resources and serve as a how-to guide to support programs in various areas. One toolkit focuses on Establishing a Sister City Program, including sample documents and templates for writing letters of agreement. Another toolkit provides instruction on Maintaining a Sister Cities Program.

Other toolkit topics include information on:

- Delegations and Exchanges
- Marketing and Fundraising
- Economic Development Projects
- Sister Schools and our newest toolkit for Sister Libraries.

Video resources and a detailed FAQ sheet are provided to members.

## MEMBER BENEFITS

- Access to SCI's member portal containing our toolkits on a variety of topics
- Boots on the Ground (BOTG) calls with SCI staff and leadership to support you in establishing a sister cities program, revitalizing dormant programs, community outreach efforts, navigating roadblocks, and much more
- Members may have their Community Pairing Survey shared on our webpage, Cities Seeking Cities, which draws global attention to what your community has to offer
- Monthly Roundtables on best practices and country-specific topics
- Direct access to SCI headquarters' staff
- Networking opportunities
- Inclusion in our printed and digital Membership Directory, listing all official members and all sister city partnerships
- Opportunity to have students from your city qualify to participate in our Youth Leadership Summit (YLS) and our Young Artists and Authors Showcase (YAAS)
- Discounted registration to many events
- Direct support and collaboration with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs
- Advisement on issues of governance and policy
- Participation in SCI Board of Directors yearly elections



# Where Do I Start?

1

**PLAN:** The initial step in establishing a sister city relationship is to obtain consensus among all parties, including the local sister city organization and the highest-ranking official, who must approve and formalize the partnership.

2

**RESEARCH:** Sister city relationships are strategic, long-term partnerships. Identifying potential partners is crucial for success. If you lack a possible sister city, consider data points such as population size, geography, industries, academic institutions, cultural institutions, preexisting relationships, or historical connections to find communities with similar characteristics.

3

**COMMUNICATE:** Start by sending a letter of introduction from one mayor to another. This letter should introduce your community, express interest in a sister city relationship, outline potential program opportunities, and provide a contact person.

4

**CORRESPOND:** Cities establish communication, explore exchanges, and set goals while engaging through virtual or in-person interactions. This phase may include trial programs like pen pal exchanges or professional collaborations, with delegations helping to strengthen the partnership.

5

**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT:** Both communities must sign a partnership agreement recognized by Sister Cities International to formalize the relationship. This document can be ceremonial or detailed, outlining commitments, specific programs, and goals. SCI provides a toolkit and template to assist in drafting the agreement.

6

**SIGNING CEREMONY:** Once approved, the highest-ranking officials sign the partnership agreement, often in a formal or virtual ceremony. SCI provides a guide for this process. After signing, send an electronic copy to SCI.

7

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Now is the time to implement the programs and exchanges outlined in the cooperative plan. Set a date to evaluate the partnership within six months to two years and make any necessary adjustments. For issues, concerns, or program ideas, feel free to contact Sister Cities International.

# Membership Fees

## U.S. Member Application

Community Population	Annual Cost
Under 5,000	\$190
5,000 - 10,000	\$310
10,000 - 25,000	\$440
25,000 - 50,000	\$610
50,000 - 100,000	\$810
100,000 - 300,000	\$1,030
300,000 - 500,000	\$1,380
500,000 - 1,000,000	\$1,910
1,000,000 and above	\$2,280

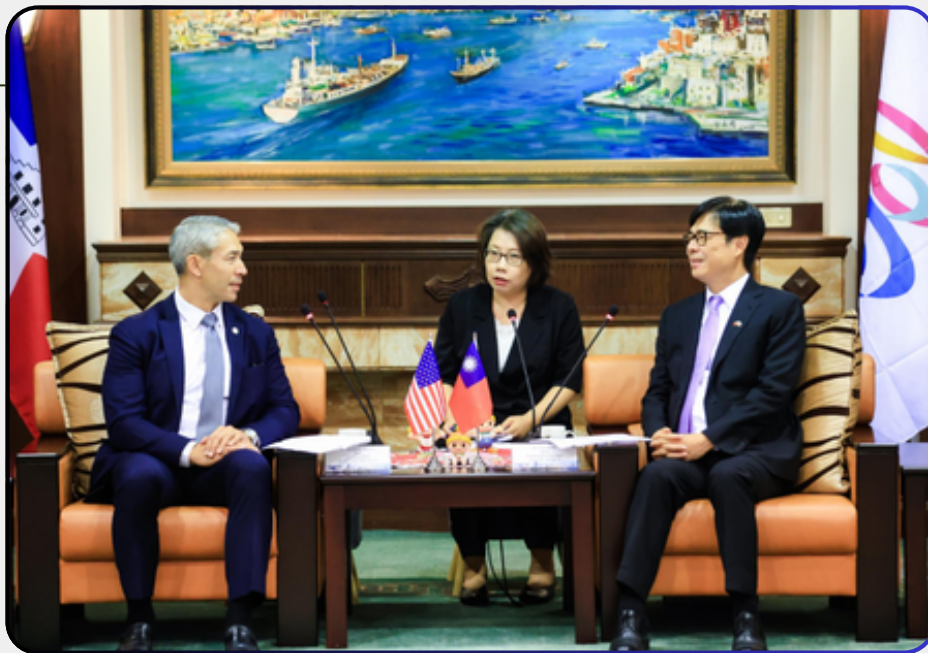
## Global Member Application

Community Population	Annual Dues
Under 50,000	\$250
50,000 - 100,000	\$750
100,000 - 500,000	\$1,750
Above 500,000	\$2,500

# MEMBER STORY

## SAN ANTONIO SISTER CITIES

#ACTIVE ALL AROUND



San Antonio Sister Cities paired diplomatic engagement with business engagement to foster mutually beneficial business, trade, and professional exchange partnerships within their sister cities.

In 2023, the sister cities program engaged with diverse volunteers and organizations. Volunteers played a key role in Mayor-led trade and cultural missions, particularly to Taiwan. The Mayor led a 5-person delegation to Taiwan, which included city officials and community members. The visit focused on sister city relationships and building business, cultural, and educational ties in Kaohsiung. The visit also celebrated four decades of sister city exchange and strengthening ties of friendship.

# MEMBER STORY

## HOT SPRINGS - SANAMAKI SISTER CITY PROGRAM

### #SAKE BREWERY



Since its inception, the program has sown seeds of friendship, cultural exchange, and economic collaboration, leading to a fruitful partnership that has benefited both cities. One of the most significant outcomes of this partnership is the establishment of a sake brewery in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

This project singlehandedly introduced a new industry while deepening the cultural and educational ties between Hot Springs and Hanamaki, showcasing the power of dedicated effort and international cooperation. This ambitious project, which began in 2012 with the visit of a business delegation to Hanamaki, has since evolved into a thriving cultural and economic initiative.

# Thank you to all our donors!

The Donor Wall acknowledges our valued Community Partnerships for an annual term. At each giving level, donors receive recognition associated with their philanthropic leadership and strengthened commitment to our mission.

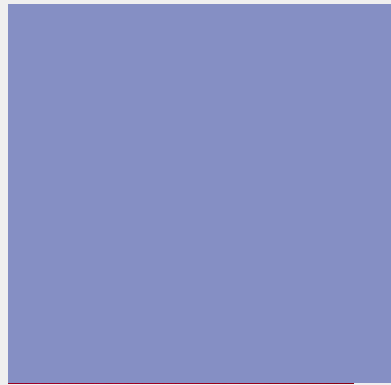
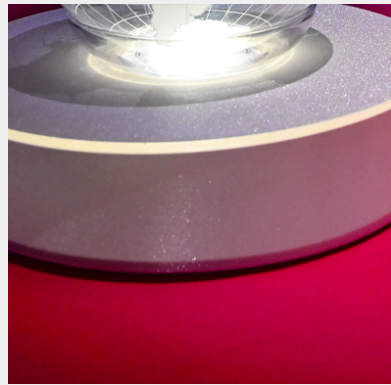
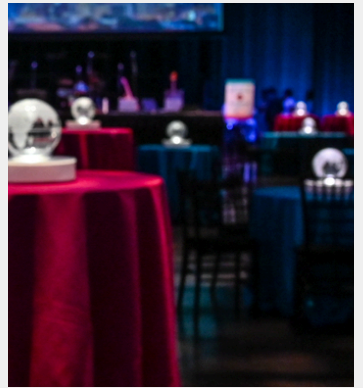
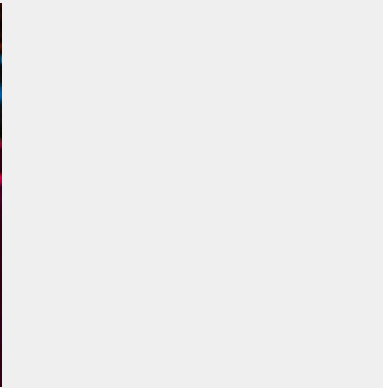
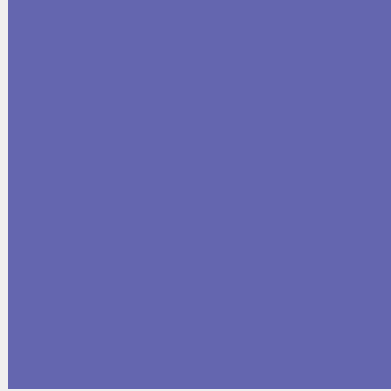
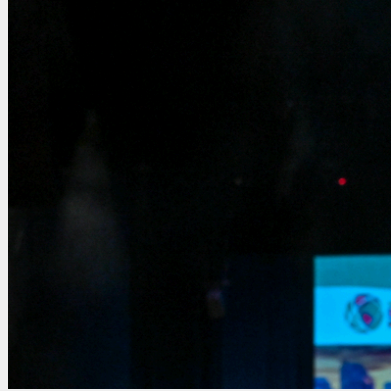
Tier	Donation Amount	Donors
High Commissioner	\$50,000 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of San Antonio</li> </ul>
Ambassador	\$25,000 – \$49,999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of North Miami</li> <li>• Port of San Antonio</li> <li>• HMS Host</li> </ul>
Chargé D'Affaires	\$10,000 – \$24,999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Denver Foundation</li> <li>• CPS Energy</li> <li>• Walmart</li> <li>• Visit El Paso</li> <li>• AT&amp;T</li> <li>• Duty Free Americas</li> <li>• Microsoft</li> <li>• Visit San Antonio</li> </ul>
Diplomat	\$5,000 – \$9,999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angelina Kwong</li> <li>• The Denver Foundation</li> <li>• Sharon and Al Durtka</li> <li>• ETRO</li> <li>• IBC Bank</li> <li>• Jessey and Cherie Lee</li> <li>• KRTU</li> <li>• Muhammad Saeed Sheikh</li> <li>• SAWS</li> <li>• Tamer Qafiti</li> <li>• Tecma Group of Companies</li> <li>• VIA Metropolitan Transit</li> <li>• VMS - Vehicle Management Solutions</li> </ul>

Tier	Donation Amount	Donors
International Attaché	\$2,500 - \$4,999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austin Sister Cities International</li> <li>• Carlo Capua</li> <li>• Christina Warnke</li> <li>• Fatima Bengé</li> <li>• Greater: SATX</li> <li>• Gregory Jackson</li> <li>• Harbir Bhatia</li> <li>• Janet Huston</li> <li>• Jean Bailey</li> <li>• Joseph Forte</li> <li>• Judge Bill Littlejohn</li> <li>• Larry Uebner</li> <li>• Lee Guio</li> <li>• Meg Mizutani</li> <li>• Mexican Cultural Institute (MCI)</li> <li>• Monterrey Iron &amp; Metal</li> <li>• Peter Ives</li> <li>• Richard Buckler</li> <li>• Ricki and Jesse Garrett</li> <li>• SCI Foundation</li> <li>• Sheri Capehart</li> <li>• Thomas Lisk</li> <li>• Victor Wang</li> </ul>
Special Envoy	\$1,000 - \$2,499	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frederick Blanton and Bobby Barron</li> <li>• Cheryl Selby</li> <li>• Ginger Moxey</li> <li>• Jamie Polzin</li> <li>• Lorna Johnson</li> <li>• Mike Long</li> <li>• Richard Neuheisel</li> <li>• Suhail</li> <li>• Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Kinney III</li> <li>• Teri A. Simmons and Arnall Golden Gregory</li> <li>• Mamiko Reeves</li> <li>• Iñigo Arzak</li> <li>• German American Cultural Foundation Inc.</li> </ul>

Tier	Donation Amount	Donors
Special Envoy	\$1,000 - \$2,499	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kee Concrete and Construction, Inc.</li> <li>• Gunay Evinch, Esq.</li> <li>• Maryland Türkiye Sister State Committee</li> <li>• See DC Today</li> <li>• Paradies Lagarde Travel Retail</li> <li>• Taiwan Sister Cities</li> <li>• Arlington, TX Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau</li> <li>• The Rockwood Pottery Co.</li> <li>• Martha Vera</li> <li>• Kevin O'Donnell</li> <li>• Benedict Herbst</li> <li>• Kelley Eubanks</li> <li>• Polly Yu</li> <li>• James Donovan</li> <li>• Gayle Stallings</li> </ul>
Counselor	\$ 500 - \$999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 209 Staton Restaurant LLC</li> <li>• Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation</li> <li>• Bill Boerum</li> <li>• Carol Burdette</li> <li>• Carol Robertson Lopez</li> <li>• Don &amp; Ashley Rudolph</li> <li>• George Behringer</li> <li>• Lisa Keyes</li> <li>• Markus Grunewald</li> <li>• Pam Feather (Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation)</li> <li>• Peter Svarzbein</li> <li>• The Petrich Family</li> <li>• Sequanna Taylor</li> <li>• Sotoak Reality, LLC</li> <li>• Texas Municipal League</li> </ul>


Tier	Donation Amount	Donors
Citizen Diplomat	\$100 – \$499	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrea Henderson</li> <li>• Angie Gomez</li> <li>• Anthony Slawniak</li> <li>• Aspen Sister Cities</li> <li>• Charles Marr</li> <li>• Clarissa Rentz</li> <li>• Devon Maynard</li> <li>• E. Maltz</li> <li>• Embassy of Angola</li> <li>• Frank Rivera</li> <li>• In honor of Thema Press (Carol Press Pristoop)</li> <li>• Jack Chung</li> <li>• Jaqueline Davis</li> <li>• Jessica Censotti</li> <li>• Karen Dang</li> <li>• Kathleen Watanabe</li> <li>• Kathy and Robert Stevie</li> <li>• Kay Sargent (Lexington Sister Cities)</li> <li>• Margaret and Hans Steuck</li> <li>• Mark Swerdik</li> <li>• Mary Eisenhower</li> <li>• Mary Zunick</li> <li>• Micheal McQuary</li> <li>• Mike Hyatt</li> <li>• Mun Hee Han</li> <li>• Nancy Neal</li> <li>• Pam Foley</li> <li>• Phyllis Venable</li> <li>• Rosemary Schlacter</li> <li>• Roxanne Qualls</li> <li>• Ruthann Sammarco</li> <li>• Sherry Dowlatshahi</li> <li>• Shirley Rivens Smith</li> <li>• Shomari Maynard</li> <li>• Stephen T. Honey</li> <li>• Thomas Harris</li> <li>• William T. Kalin</li> </ul>






# Thank You

Contact us to learn more about our programs!

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