

CITY OF SAN JOSE

SISTER CITY GUIDELINES

A Sister City is an official City relationship established with an international city to develop long-term civic and people-to-people linkages, promote global cooperation and cultural understanding, and stimulate economic development.

The relationship requires approval by the City Council, a signed formal agreement between the Mayor and the top official of the proposed sister city, and recognition by Sister Cities International, the non-profit membership organization which registers and coordinates sister city linkages between communities in the U.S. and cities worldwide.

Because a sister city relationship involves official recognition and participation by the City of San Jose, the City evaluates and approves proposed affiliations. However, Sister City activities are to be promoted and managed by Sister City Committees and shall not be dependent upon City contributions.

The following guideline governs the management of the Sister Cities program, including the criteria for selection and the proposal process in establishing a new Sister City affiliation, City recognition of a Sister City Committee, and terminating an inactive Sister City affiliation.

A. Criteria for Selection

The City of San Jose will evaluate proposals for a new Sister City affiliation and Council approval based on the following criteria:

1. Compatibility of the proposed sister city with regard to population, colleges and universities, arts and culture institutions, community organizations, economic base, and opportunities to develop economic and tourism linkages.
2. Opportunity for mutually beneficial cultural and educational exchanges and program activities between community-based organizations.
3. Demonstrated interest and commitment by a broad-based San Jose community group to develop cultural, education and community exchanges; and to raise funds to ensure long-term program support.
4. A civic or official group must also be organized in the prospective city with the intent to plan and develop ongoing sister city programs with the San Jose community group.

5. The municipal government of the proposed city must demonstrate support for establishing and developing a sister city affiliation with San Jose.
6. Establishing a new Sister City affiliation will be dependent on the availability of City staff and other public resources that will be necessary to help develop and sustain a successful city-to-city relationship.
7. Successful Sister City relationships require extensive community and government support. If the proposed city has one or more Sister City relationships with U.S. cities, it must be demonstrated that the proposed Sister City has extensive community interest to support a long-term sister city relationship with San Jose.
8. Sister Cities International requires a Cooperative Agreement when the proposed Sister City has one or more Sister City affiliations with U.S. cities. Thus, a Cooperative Agreement must be reached with the proposed Sister City, the U.S. city or cities engaged in the Sister City relationship and the City of San Jose. If a Cooperative Agreement is required to establish a new Sister City affiliation, only the Mayor or their designated representative will initiate communication with the municipal governments of cities that would be required to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the City of San Jose.

B. Proposal Process

1. Prior to initiating or responding to a formal request for a proposed Sister City affiliation, the San Jose Sister City committee will meet with the City of San Jose to present an overview of the proposed city and program goals.
2. In cooperation with the Sister City group in the proposed Sister City, the San Jose Sister City committee will prepare and submit the following to the City of San Jose:
 - a. A detailed demographic profile of the prospective city.
 - b. Documentation of broad-based community support, with a minimum of 10 members on the organizing committee.
 - c. A preliminary program plan, outlining objectives and funding sources.

3. Following an initial review of the proposed sister city affiliation by the City of San Jose, the Sister City committee will be required to:
 - a. Develop and implement programs to promote cultural and educational exchanges between residents and community organizations of San Jose the Sister City.
 - b. Raise the necessary funds to support Sister City activities.
 - c. Develop an organizational structure that is in compliance with state and federal regulations for non-profit corporations.
4. If the proposed Sister City meets the criteria for a new Sister City affiliation and the San Jose Sister City committee is able to demonstrate success in planning and implementing sister city programs in the community and has raised funds to support on-going activities, the City administration will prepare a memorandum regarding a new Sister City affiliation for the Council's consideration.

C. City Recognition and Financial Support of Sister City Program Committees

A successful sister city program requires broad-based community support through a committee of individuals that are committed to ongoing efforts to plan and organize a wide range of programs in the community to advance San Jose's sister city relationship with a sister city. The City has provided funding on an annual basis through a grant contract to sister city program committees. The level of City funding made available to the sister city committees can vary each year based upon the City's budget. City funding is intended to be a small portion of fund raising efforts of each Sister City Program Committee. Each sister city program committee must meet the following requirements to receive City recognition and qualify for City grant funding.

1. Have a minimum of eight active members.
2. Provide the City with a list of active members and identify its elected officers.
3. The Sister City Committee or its non-profit oversight entity must maintain its non-profit incorporation active status with the State of California.
4. Provide the City with a brief annual work plan.
5. Provide the City with an annual report of their programs and activities for the previous fiscal year. The activities and programs of each sister city program will be included in an annual report that will be prepared for the Council.

In the event that more than one community-based organization seeks City recognition and funding for their Sister City Committee, representatives of the organizations will meet with the City of San Jose to present their plan for advancing the sister city relationship. In consultation with municipal officials of the sister city in question, the City administration will select the organization to be eligible to receive City funding to advance the sister city relationship in the community.

D. Terminating a Sister City Affiliation

While regrettable, it is sometimes necessary and prudent for a city to terminate a Sister City affiliation.

Sister City affiliations are meant to be long-standing official city linkages that involve extensive community participation beyond government. For a variety of reasons, a sister city relationship may lose community interest and support for an extended time locally and/or in the sister city. While the preferred course of action is to revitalize an inactive sister city program, there may be a time that San Jose or the sister city may opt to terminate the Sister City relationship.

If a Sister City affiliation is inactive for a period of five years or longer and there is a lack of community support for the sister city relationship to continue, the City may initiate the process to terminate the sister city affiliation with the sister city and Sister Cities International.

The Mayor or their designee will send a letter to the Mayor or lead representative of the Sister City to express the City's intent to end the Sister City affiliation. The Mayor or their designee will then notify Sister Cities International that the Sister City affiliation with the City in question has ended. Sister Cities International will decertify the Sister City affiliation.

Adopted by San Jose City Council – May 20, 2008