



- A **Sister City** or **Sister Cities** 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/cities” relationship. Sister relationships may also include counties, municipalities, oblasts, prefectures, provinces, regions, states, territories, towns, villages, or any other subnational administrative distinction.
- A new partnership will be considered official only when Sister Cities international has received a signed copy of the sister city agreement. The document(s) must be signed by the top elected/appointed official of both communities.
- Sister Cities International will recognize a new sister cities partnership between a U.S. and an international community, even though another partnership may exist between that international community and a different U.S. community.
- Sister Cities International members may establish more than one sister city partnership in any given country.
- If two U.S. cities have the same sister city abroad, the city that first formed its relationship will be recognized as the “Charter Sister City” in Sister Cities International’s printed and online directories
- 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.
- Sister Cities International will recognize sister city partnerships in countries where formal U.S. diplomatic relations have not been established, provided that the U.S. government has an “Interest Section” operating in that country
- A **Friendship City** or **Friendship Cities** relationship is considered slightly less formal, and is sometimes used as a step towards the development a 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.
- Around the world various terms are sometimes used to describe these partnerships, including twin cities (Russia, United Kingdom), partner cities (Germany- partnerstadt), friendship cities (Japan and China), or twinning (France- jumelage).
- Sister Cities International will consider a relationship to be active unless notified otherwise.

## Changing the Status of a Relationship

- If a community wishes to formally designate a sister city or friendship city as dormant, it may be put into **Emeritus** status.
- 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 consider the relationship dormant and wish to change its status, with a copy sent to Sister Cities International. Partnerships that are in Emeritus Status are still considered valid, however, and will be listed in all Sister Cities International directories.
- To remove a relationship from Emeritus status, the mayor or highest elected official of the U.S. community must write a letter indicating that they consider the relationship is now active
- 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, with a copy sent to Sister Cities International. Sister Cities International will then remove the partnership from its directories.