



**Economic
Development**
CITY OF AUSTIN



Recommended Path for Creating a Relationship with an International City International Exchange - Friendship Cities - Sister Cities

City of Austin Economic Development Department
Austin Sister Cities International (ASCI)
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Austin Sister Cities International (ASCI) is the organization that manages Sister City relationships on behalf of the City of Austin. ASCI's contact information is at <https://www.austinsistercities.com>.

A Sister City proposal will demonstrate that the following minimum requirements have been met:

1. Initial step:

- The establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between one or more organizations in Austin and the international city to pursue at least one exchange, which has a positive economic impact for both cities.
- The formation of an Austin Committee of at least 15 individuals to coordinate the exchanges between Austin and the international city. A majority of those committee members should be residents of the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (Austin MSA).
- Establishment of relations between the cities along with a suggested two years' worth continual exchanges pursuant to the MOU. Sister Cities International advises that it can take one to two years to make the necessary contacts, to build solid sister city programs on each side, and to develop good communication links before a formal relationship is established.

2. Second step:

- A Friendship City Agreement which outlines the original exchange and includes an updated MOU for an exchange with a strong economic development component, signed by the Mayor (or the highest municipal official) of the international city and by the Mayor of Austin.
- Two years of continual exchanges pursuant to the Friendship City Agreement.



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- During the two years of exchanges as a Friendship City, the Austin Committee will have non-voting membership in ASCI. Non-voting membership in ASCI requires the Committee to report its activities and finances annually and attend six ASCI Board Meetings per year.

3. Final step:

- A Sister City Agreement which outlines the exchange with a strong economic development component, signed by the Mayor (or the highest municipal official) of the international city and by the Mayor of Austin.
- After the international city has become a Sister City with the City of Austin, the Austin Sister City Committee has one full voting membership in ASCI and use of the ASCI 501(c)3 designation.
 - i. Full membership in ASCI includes mandatory annual reporting in January of prior year activities and finances and mandatory attendance at six ASCI Board Meetings per year.
 - ii. If the Austin Sister City Committee uses the ASCI 501(c)3 non-profit designation, the Austin Sister City Committee's bank account must be established under the ASCI bank umbrella of accounts.
 - iii. If the Austin Sister City Committee opts to maintain a separate bank account and 501(c)3 designation, the 501(c)3 designation must be established before being ratified as a Sister City with the City of Austin.
 - 1. If the Committee receives any funds from ASCI, the Committee must include a full detailed financial report with their annual report.
 - 2. The 501(c)3 designation must be maintained annually and in good standing with the IRS.
 - iv. After twelve months of inactivity with ASCI, the Sister City and Committee will be designated as dormant and steps will be taken to move the Sister City status to Emeritus with Sister Cities International.

The above requirements are minimum prerequisites only. Meeting the requirements does not guarantee that the international city will become a Sister City with the City of Austin. Likewise, the establishment of an MOU and the recommended two years of exchanges does not guarantee that the international city will become a Friendship City with the City of Austin.