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MEDIA CONTACT:

Megha Swamy
mswamy@sister-cities.org
202-347-8637

Tacoma-Pierce County Sister Cities Council receives funding to send four-member delegation to Kitakyushu, Japan

WASHINGTON, DC – Tacoma, Washington is one of seven U.S. cities selected by *Sister Cities International* to receive the *Leading Asia: Renewing the U.S. and Japan Sister Cities Network* exchange funding. The funding will enable a 10-day Tacoma delegation visit to their Japanese sister city, Kitakyushu.

The Tacoma-Kitakyushu sister city relationship, formalized in 1959, boasts visits between the two cities nearly every year. Exchanges have focused on art, education, environment, and business. Tacoma will use the *Leading Asia* funding to focus on creative economies. It will center its new programming on the development of a Japanese garden and focus on professional training for local landscape architects and gardeners to help build their capacity.

The purpose of the *Leading Asia* exchange funding is to launch programming in the following areas: business development, sustainability, creative economies, and young professional development. In 2011, five cities were awarded funding during the first round.

The *Leading Asia: Renewing the U.S. and Japan Sister Cities Network* is funded by a grant from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships. The objective of this grant award is to improve and expand existing relationships between the U.S. and Japan. To see the entire list of exchange funding awardees and to learn more about *Leading Asia*, please visit http://www.sister-cities.org/programs/leading_asia.cfm

About *Sister Cities International*

Sister Cities International facilitates nearly 2,000 partnerships in 136 countries on six continents between 600 communities in the United States with similar municipalities abroad. *Sister Cities International* represents citizen diplomats who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and cultural understanding through economic and sustainable development programs, youth and education projects, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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