

Only dues-paying members in good standing with Sister Cities International will have their sister city partnerships formally recognized.

- New partnerships will be considered official only when Sister Cities international has received signed copies of the sister city agreement(s). The documents 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.
 - 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 members may recognize more than one sister city partnership in any given country.
 - Sister Cities International will consider a relationship to be active unless notified otherwise. Sister Cities International will provide guidance in periodically evaluating a relationship. Sister Cities International will also assist in revitalizing a relationship or in terminating a relationship, if the partners agree it is not working out. Inactive partnerships may be designated as a “Sister City Emeritus.” Under this category, relationships which are no longer active will still be honored, but the international city will be available for another sister city partnership.
 - 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 at least an “Interest Section” operating in that country and provided that no federal funds are used by Sister Cities International to support the partnership.
1. 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 city agreements shall be considered active/valid unless otherwise indicated by one or both of the respective communities.

Sister relationships may also include counties, municipalities, oblasts, prefectures, provinces, regions, states, territories, towns, villages, or any other subnational administrative distinction.

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*).

2. 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.
3. A **Friendship City or Friendship Cities** relationship is often formed by cities as a “stepping stone” to a more formal “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.
4. 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 wish to remain sister cities, but understand that the relationship will remain inactive until such time as both cities are able to sustain an active relationship. Sister Cities International should be informed in writing by the mayor of the U.S. city of the situation. Sister Cities International will then place the partnership into Emeritus Status and will reflect this status in directories and all lists of sister city programs.
5. 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. Sister Cities International should be informed of this action in writing by the mayor of the U.S. city and Sister Cities International will then remove the partnership from its directories and all lists of sister city programs.