

Sister City Relationship Annual Report Form Questionnaire

City Clerk's Office
City Hall, Room 205
200 E. Wells Street

Milwaukee, WI 53202 PH: (414) 286-2221 WEB: www.milwaukee.gov/sistercities



LOCAL SPONSOR ORGANIZATION IN MILWAUKEE

Legal Organization Name

St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral

Mailing Address (Address, City, State, Zip Code)

3201 S 51st St, Milwaukee, WI 53219

Website

<https://www.stsava-milw.org/>

PERSON IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION FOR MILWAUKEE

Name

Miroslav Jovic

Phone

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Mailing Address (Address, City, State, Zip Code)

3201 S 51st St, Milwaukee, WI 53219

Email

president@stsava-milw.org

SISTER CITY

Name

Kragujevac

Country

Serbia

Population

171,186

LOCAL SPONSOR ORGANIZATION IN THE SISTER CITY

Legal Organization Name

City of Kragujevac

PERSON IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION IN THE SISTER CITY

Name

Mayor Nikola Dašić

Phone and/or email

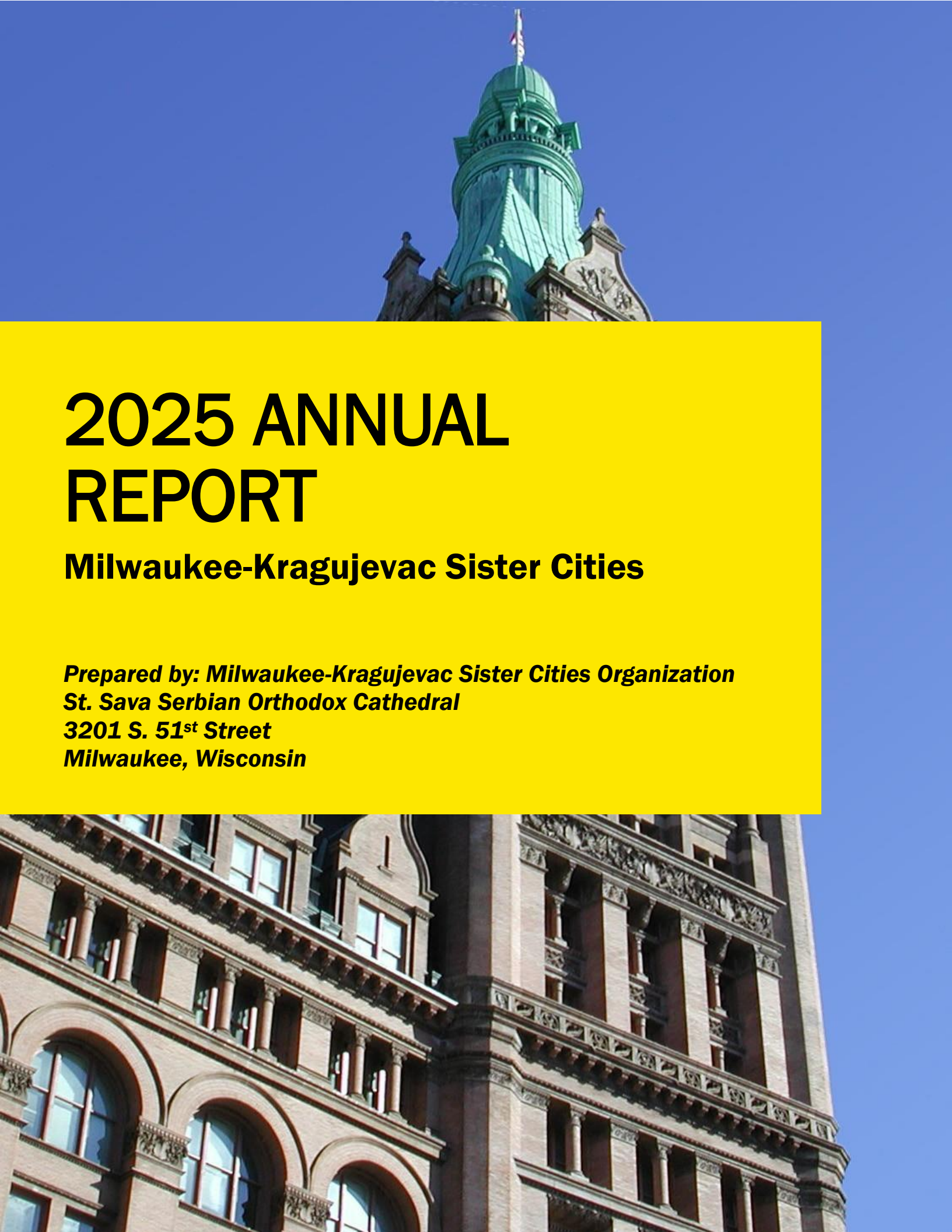
+381 34 306 106

Please provide information in your annual report by responding to the following:

1. What are the goals, areas of mutual interest, and involvement between Milwaukee and the sister city based on the areas of culture, business, and/or any other aspects for the past reporting year?
2. Please identify in length specific activities planned or performed and the methods used by the organization to achieve the goals and objectives for the sister city relationship for the past reporting year.
3. Please identify the progress made (or lack thereof) for the goals, objectives, and activities of the organization regarding the sister city relationship for the past year.
4. Please provide measurable outcomes and/or results for each activity.
5. Please complete the accompanying Activities Summary Worksheet or provide a summary in similar fashion to go along with your report.

Please also consider reporting on any information that has changed from the original application pertaining to:

- Goals, objectives, and activities (both short-term and long-term) for the sister city relationship.
- Local organizational structure in Milwaukee that supports the relationship including number of members, their professional and business background, names and contact information.
- Current list of Board of Directors and bylaws of your organization.
- Evidence of local community support for the sister city relationship including financial support, volunteer support, and interest.
- Information regarding the financial base or resources of the organization available and used to support the sister city relationship.
- Details of communication and consultation with the sister city regarding the existing relationship.



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities

***Prepared by: Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities Organization
St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
3201 S. 51st Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin***

Executive summary

In 2025, the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities organization advanced its mission of strengthening cultural, educational, community, and economic ties between Milwaukee and Kragujevac through several significant achievements and initiatives. These initiatives and efforts greatly contributed to the overall sister cities relationship by growing strategic educational investments, meaningful cultural programming, targeted economic facilitation, and organizational strengthening.

Key achievements

- **Teacher Grant:** Secured a \$62,800 grant from the Serbian government to fund a full-time Serbian language teacher at St. Sava Orthodox School, reinforcing the organization's commitment to education and cultural preservation and laying groundwork for a future sister-school partnership.
- **Harley-Davidson Dealership Prospect:** Successfully facilitated discussions aimed at establishing a Harley-Davidson dealership in Kragujevac. The organization helped connect Serbian investors with corporate leadership, ultimately completing its role as a catalyst for private-sector collaboration.
- **Sister Cities International Conference:** Strengthened global engagement by representing the Milwaukee-Kragujevac partnership at the Sister Cities International Summit in Izumisano, Japan. Participation elevated the visibility of the sister city relationship, provided access to best practices in citizen diplomacy, and generated new ideas to enhance local programming and long-term sustainability.
- **Miscellaneous Efforts:** Enhanced the visibility of the sister city relationship by hosting various community events, including Serbian Days Festival, basketball and soccer tournaments, career fair, suicide prevention training, a grandmaster chess event, and others.

Future Outlook

One of the principal goals of our organization remains the reciprocation of efforts in formalizing the sister cities relationship by holding a counter-signing ceremony in Kragujevac, Serbia. We hope that the delegation from Milwaukee will travel to Kragujevac in 2026 to perform the counter-signing as the Serbian counterparts eagerly await this development. Following diplomatic tradition, it is both appropriate and meaningful for the City of Milwaukee delegation to travel to Kragujevac, Serbia, to countersign the Sister Cities agreement.

Letter From the President

Dear Milwaukee Sister City Committee Members,

We are pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities organization, a year marked by meaningful progress, strengthened partnerships, and a deepened commitment to international friendship rooted in culture, education, community, and economic collaboration.

Throughout 2025, our shared efforts demonstrated the power of citizen diplomacy. From securing a landmark Serbian government grant to support Serbian language education at St. Sava Orthodox School, to facilitating international business dialogue, expanding cultural programming, and representing our partnership on the global stage at the Sister Cities International Summit in Japan, this year reflected both momentum and purpose. These achievements were made possible through strong collaboration among volunteers, community organizations, educators, public officials, and partners in both Milwaukee and Kragujevac.

As we look ahead, we are especially encouraged by the shared commitment on both sides of the Atlantic to formally reciprocate the Sister Cities agreement through a counter-signing ceremony in Kragujevac. This next step represents not only diplomatic tradition, but a reaffirmation of the enduring bond between our cities and our people.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed their time, expertise, and passion to this work. Your support continues to ensure that the Milwaukee-Kragujevac relationship remains vibrant, relevant, and forward-looking. We invite you to review this report as a reflection of what we have accomplished together and as an inspiration for what lies ahead.

With warm regards,

Miroslav Jovic, President
Church Executive Board
St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral



Major Achievements

Serbian Language Teacher Grant

One of the major achievements of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities in 2025 includes a \$62,800 grant from the Serbian government to employ a full time Serbian language teacher at the St. Sava Orthodox School on the South Side of Milwaukee. In addition to economic development and cultural exchanges, educational efforts such as this one are the key areas our organization is focusing on.

When it comes to educational exchanges and goals involving the same, our organization intends to initiate the establishment of a sister school relationship between St. Sava Orthodox School and an equivalent school in Kragujevac. Establishing a sister school relationship between a school in Milwaukee and a school in Kragujevac would create a powerful platform for cross-cultural learning, global awareness, and educational collaboration. Such a partnership would allow students and educators to engage in meaningful exchanges, both virtually or in person, promoting mutual understanding, language learning, and shared problem-solving across cultures. Joint projects in areas like history, art, environmental studies, and technology could broaden students' perspectives while fostering creativity and teamwork. Teachers would also benefit from exchanging best practices in curriculum design and pedagogy, enriching both educational systems. Beyond academics, this connection would help young people develop intercultural competence, empathy, and a sense of global citizenship.



Harley-Davidson Dealership Prospect in Kragujevac, Serbia

From the onset of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac sister cities relationship, and as outlined in the 2024 Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities Annual Report, economic development was at the forefront of our organization's efforts. To that end, resulting from one of many productive Kragujevac delegation's visits to several Milwaukee businesses, our organization focused heavily on the effort to establish a Harley-Davidson dealership in Serbia. With the assistance from Alderman Stamper II and his office, as well as the City of Milwaukee's Department of City Development, our organization was able to engage Harley-Davidson's representatives both in



Artist Rendering of the Proposed Dealership in Kragujevac, Serbia

Milwaukee and abroad, with the ultimate goal of facilitating the opening of a Harley-Davidson dealership in Kragujevac. The Serbian counterparts of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac relationship identified a serious partner willing to invest in opening such a dealership. The effort ultimately led to a meeting with Mirek Carvan, Lead Network Development representative with Harley-Davidson's office in the Czech Republic with whom the

prospect of opening a dealership was discussed. The meeting was very productive and the information obtained was most useful in outlining what the next steps need to be. The Milwaukee-Kragujevac organization handed over that relationship to the business interest and considered its role in facilitating this effort complete.

Representation at the Sister Cities International Summit in Japan

At the July 10, 2025 meeting of the Sister Cities Committee, Committee Member Durtka made an announcement about the Sister Cities International Summit in Izumisano, Japan, taking place from September 16th to the 19th. The Summit celebrated 170 years of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Japan, fostering collaboration between representatives from both countries, including local government officials and citizen diplomats. Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities representatives realized the importance of this event and decided to send Stefan Dostanic as their representative.

Attending the Sister Cities International Summit in Izumisano, Japan as a representative of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities Committee presented an invaluable opportunity to strengthen both personal and organizational ties within the global sister cities network. This summit brought together leaders, delegates, and volunteers from around the world who are committed to advancing international cooperation, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding. Representing the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities relationship on this global stage not only raised the visibility of our partnership but also reinforced Milwaukee's reputation as a city deeply invested in fostering people-to-people diplomacy and global engagement.

From a representation standpoint, being present ensured that the Milwaukee-Kragujevac partnership had a seat at the table among hundreds of other cities engaged in similar work. It provided the chance to share the unique history and ongoing initiatives between our two cities, ranging from cultural, educational, and artistic exchanges to community development efforts, and to showcase our successes and aspirations to a broader international audience. Strengthening these global relationships helped position both Milwaukee and Kragujevac as a proactive and collaborative cities that value cross-cultural understanding and international friendship.



Pictured: Committee Members Cheney-Trawinski and Durtka with Milwaukee-Kragujevac Representative Dostanic



Workshop at the Sister Cities International Summit in Izumisano, Japan

The summit's educational sessions and workshops were another major benefit. These sessions focused on best practices in city diplomacy, youth engagement, sustainability, economic development, and cultural programming. They offered a wealth of knowledge on how other sister city committees around the world overcome challenges, sustain engagement, and innovate their programming.

By having a representative at the Summit, our organization gained practical tools, resources, and new ideas to bring back to Milwaukee, helping to revitalize the Milwaukee-Kragujevac connection, expand participation, and develop new initiatives that align with both cities' evolving priorities.

Ultimately, participation in the Sister Cities International Summit was an investment in both growth and the long-term vitality of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac partnership. It provided a rare chance to connect with international peers, learn from successful sister city models, and apply those lessons to strengthen our own program and organization. The insights and relationships gained in Izumisano will undoubtedly help ensure that Milwaukee and Kragujevac continue to grow together through shared values of friendship, collaboration, and cultural exchange.

Hosting a Youth Grandmaster Chess Session at Serb Hall



Grandmaster Dejan "Max" Maksimovic played a simultaneous game with over 30 young players at the event.

The Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities Committee, in partnership with MKE Chess, organized a special event on October 12, 2025 at the American Serb Hall featuring Grandmaster-elect Dejan "Max" Maksimović. Max is a lifelong educator, mentor, and an International Chess Master who has dedicated his life to teaching and sharing the game of chess. The gathering offered a unique opportunity for community members - especially youth - to learn from a world-class Serbian chess talent while strengthening cultural ties between Milwaukee and Kragujevac. Events like this promote critical thinking, strategic problem-solving, and cross-cultural exchange, showcasing how sister city partnerships can bring educational and cultural enrichment directly to the Milwaukee community. The media attention the event garnered also undoubtedly promoted the sister cities relationship to a wider audience.

Suicide Prevention Training

Late Alderman Jonathan Brostoff was an early supporter of establishing the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister City relationship and pledged his support at the onset of that effort. His vote

to formalize this relationship at the Common Council's September 1, 2023 meeting was one of the fourteen as the measure passed unanimously. He continued to support the relationship and follow the work of our organization until tragically succumbing to chronic illness.

Following Alderman Brostoff's death, Rabbi Levi Stein of the Friendship Circle organized a suicide prevention training tour involving 41 stops for every year of Brostoff's life. Upon learning of this, our organization reached out to help organize one of the tour stops at the American Serb Memorial Hall. Co-hosted with the Milwaukee County Supervisor Sky Capriolo, who represents the 15th District the Serb Hall is located in, the event took place on August 20, 2025. Those who joined had the privilege to receive this first-rate training and join many others who are equipped to help in the time of need.



Rabbi Stein, Supervisor Capriolo, and Mr. Dostanic with the trainees.

Latvian Independence Day Event



Sister Cities Committee Member Al Durtka and Milwaukee-Kragujevac Representatives Dragana Knezic and Stefan Dostanic with the Latvian Ambassador to the United States of America Elita Kuzma

Members of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities Committee proudly joined the Latvian Independence Day celebration at the Milwaukee City Hall on November 16, 2025, standing in solidarity with Milwaukee's Latvian community and fellow international partners. The event highlighted the shared values of cultural exchange, friendship, and mutual support that unite Milwaukee's sister cities programs. Their participation underscored the importance of honoring global ties while celebrating Latvia's rich heritage and the resilience embodied in its independence.

Miscellaneous Cultural and Community Events



Youth Dancers Performing Traditional Serbian Dance

The committee supported major community gatherings such as the three-day Serbian Days festival in August, the Jos-Kos Basketball Tournament in early spring, the St. Sava Church Slava celebration in January, the International Evening held at the St. Sava Cultural Center in February, and Career Fair in December at Serb Hall. Our community also held several public service informational

sessions, including the one on obtaining FEMA assistance - following the historic flooding in the Milwaukee Area - as well as one on guiding eligible participants on how to enroll in Social Security. Most of these events featured one or more of the following: traditional Serbian food, dance performances, music, Sunday school cultural presentations, and athletic activities that brought together generations of Milwaukee's Serbian-American community. More importantly, our organization took the opportunity at these events to showcase our sister cities relationship and garner additional support for this significant and meaningful effort. Furthermore, these events drew many Milwaukeeans and members of the general public who got to experience Serbian culture through food, dance, educational presentations, and comradery, all in the traditionally welcoming environment the Serbs are widely known for.



Areal View of the Annual Serbian Days Celebration in 2025

Participation in Milwaukee Sister Cities Committee Activities



Consul General Marko Nikolic and Dignitaries at the Meet and Greet Celebration, including Mayor Johnson, Alderman Spiker, Alderwoman Zamaripa and St. Church President Miroslav Jovic.

The Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities organization proudly and actively participated in the events organized and hosted by the City of Milwaukee Sister Cities Committee, including the Meet and Greet celebration on May 16, 2025, as well as the Holiday Folk Fair in November of 2025, where members of our organization assisted with staffing the Milwaukee Sister Cities booth. It was a great honor for our organization that the Serbian Consul General Marko Nikolic and Vice Consul General Aleksandar Djordjevic from the Chicago Consulate

joined us at the Meet and Greet Celebration. In his remarks, Consul General Nikolic highlighted the importance of the sister cities relationship and was truly pleased and honored by the warm welcome him and his Vice Consul received at the Milwaukee City Hall. We are also grateful to the City Clerk Jim Owczarski and his staff for taking the time to give a fascinating tour of City Hall to the St. Sava Parochial School students.

Staffing the Milwaukee Sister Cities Booth at the Holiday Folk Fair was also a great pleasure and privilege, as our representatives - along with the representatives from other sister city organizations - talked to many attendees about the importance the sister cities relationships, the importance of citizen diplomacy, and the beauty of each one of the cultures showcased at the booth. We look forward to these opportunities in the future and hope to participate at other additional ones, as we remain committed to growing and strengthening the City of Milwaukee's Sister City Program.

Organizational Strengthening and Membership Expansion

Over the course of 2025, efforts were made to formalize the committee's structure, recruit additional regular members, and establish consistent meeting schedules to ensure sustainability and accountability of our organization. Learning from the lessons from the Sister Cities International Summit in Japan, as well as the resources available to us in Milwaukee and nation-wide, our organization will work to be bigger, stronger, more efficient, as well as even more active. We intend to demonstrate the value of the sister city relationship to as many

members of our community as possible, hoping to generate even greater interest that will translate in bigger and more frequent initiatives and successes in 2026.

Conclusion

In 2025, the Milwaukee-Kragujevac Sister Cities organization demonstrated the enduring value of citizen diplomacy by translating shared values into concrete action across education, culture, economic development, and community engagement. The initiatives highlighted in this report reflect a growing and increasingly sophisticated partnership, one that not only celebrates cultural heritage but also creates lasting opportunities for learning, collaboration, and mutual benefit for residents of both cities.

These accomplishments have strengthened institutional relationships, expanded community participation, and elevated the visibility of the Milwaukee-Kragujevac connection locally and internationally. As the organization looks toward 2026 and the anticipated counter-signing ceremony in Kragujevac, it does so with momentum, clarity of purpose, and a renewed commitment to building a dynamic, reciprocal, and forward-looking sister city relationship that will continue to flourish for years to come.

We remain ever grateful to the members of the City of Milwaukee Sister Cities Committee, and the entire City of Milwaukee government, for the opportunity to be part of the Sister Cities Program. This program plays a vital role not only in Milwaukee but across our entire nation as it fosters people-to-people diplomacy that connects communities to the world. Through cultural exchange, educational collaboration, and economic engagement, the program strengthens Milwaukee's global identity while promoting mutual understanding, inclusivity, and international cooperation. By linking residents, institutions, and businesses with partners abroad, Sister Cities enhances civic pride, expands opportunity, and helps position Milwaukee as an open, globally engaged city. Our organization looks forward to building upon the existing success and being part of the Sister Cities Program for many years to come.