



MEMORANDUM

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

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To: Ald. Russell W. Stamper, II
From: Jack Carroll – LRB Intern
Date: April 7, 2017
Subject: Sister City Organizations in Wisconsin Municipalities

This memo is in response to your request for information about Sister City programming in Chicago and in the 10 largest Wisconsin municipalities, including information about organizational staffing, job requirements and duties, and descriptions of coordinators.

Most of the municipalities examined in this report use committees or nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations to maintain Sister City relationships. Of the municipalities in this report, five use a 501(c)3, four use a committee, and one uses informal connections. Generally, a committee consists of volunteers appointed by the mayor or common council from the community, and often includes a member of the common council. The nonprofit organizations vary on staffing and on the scale of operation, with some acting as local arms of municipalities and others encompassing many programs from many cities.

The most common outcomes of Sister City programs include fostering student and adult travel exchanges, raising cultural awareness of Sister City partnerships through events, directing economic exchanges through trade partnerships, and other cultural art exchanges.

The duties of program coordinators include the following:

- Organizing exchanges and trips:
 - Coordinating student and municipal exchanges, choosing host families, planning tours and excursions, and making travel arrangements.
- Maintaining contacts with Sister Cities:
 - Communicating through correspondence, organizing mutual exchanges, etc.
- Communicating with the common council and mayor about Sister City status and exchanges.
- Coordinating events related to Sister Cities for cultural, business and educational awareness and fundraising.

Chicago, IL

The City of Chicago has 28 Sister Cities that are maintained through Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI), a 501(c)3 organization. Considered one of the most active Sister City programs in the world, CSCI has an advisory board with 8 members (the chair was appointed by the mayor in 2009).

The CSCI staff includes 6 members. The titles and descriptions of the members are presented in the following table:

Staff Title	Job Description
1. Executive Director (Leroy Allala)	Oversees all aspects of CSCI's business including board management, committee and program development, communications and finance.
2. Deputy Director	Provides leadership, direction, and facilitates communication for CSCI staff and Council of Chairs and committee members. Focuses on implementation of CSCI's plans and policies.
3. Director of International Programs	Maximizes coordination between Sister City committees to promote collaboration. Oversees all committee activities, and directs programming staff for committee activities.
4. Senior Manager of International Programs (2 positions)	Manages volunteer Sister City committees, facilitates international delegation visits, and coordinates other exchanges focused on culture, business, education, and environment services between Chicago and Sister Cities.
5. Manager of International Programs	Similar role as Senior Manager of International Programs with a focus on education initiatives for CSCI.

CSCI also has a committee of volunteers dedicated to each Sister City relationship, working on promoting exchanges between the two cities. Each of these committees is led by a chair or vice-chairs who collectively make up the Council of Chairs. There are also three committees focused on specific issues, including humanitarian concerns, healthcare concerns, and social services. The extensive nature of the organization allows it to serve many functions in its international relationships with Sister Cities, and the complex organizational duties of the staff reflect this large-scale capacity.

Wisconsin Municipalities

Appleton, WI

Appleton has three Sister Cities, and each Sister City relationship is maintained by a different 501(c)3 organization.

The Kanonji-Appleton Partnership is a nonprofit, volunteer-led organization to help Appleton residents learn more about Japanese culture and language. The Partnership has coordinated exchanges between the Sister Cities, including summer student exchanges, mayoral trips and other trips between the two cities.

Fox Cities-Kurgan Sister Cities Program is a citizen-driven community collaboration nonprofit organization. The program focuses on three areas of exchange with the Russian Sister City of Kurgan, primarily in civil society, student exchanges, and art exchanges. The Fox Cities-Kurgan Sister Cities Program has a nine member board of directors.

The Appleton Nicaragua Partners which works with the Sister City of Chinandega, Nicaragua, is associated with the state-wide Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas (WNP). WNP is a not-for-profit, non-political organization that promotes cultural awareness and sustainable community development through people-to-people programs. For the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas, each Sister City partnership is conducted by an autonomous organization and elected officers.

Brookfield, WI

Brookfield has one Sister City partnership with Seligenstadt, Germany. The City of Brookfield maintains the Sister City partnership through the Brookfield International Friendship Association, a 501(c)3 organization that evolved out of the Brookfield Sister Cities Committee. The goal of the program is to build partnerships and cooperation, and create an environment where citizens, business, and officials can creatively learn through reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal, business, professional, and technical exchanges.

The Brookfield International Friendship Association has helped create annual high school exchange programs, governmental exchanges, police exchanges, and adult citizen travel exchanges. The president of the Association is responsible for coordinating exchanges, maintaining contact with the German Sister City Committee Chair, and overseeing the Association meetings. The City of Brookfield does not provide funding for travel expenses, but the Association hosts an annual German Holiday Market celebrating German culture and raising money for future exchanges.

Eau Claire, WI

Eau Claire has one official Sister City partnership with Lismore, Australia that is registered through Sister Cities International, and one unofficial Sister City partnership with Miramar, Costa Rica. A professor from UW-Eau Claire had spearheaded the program and helped to develop an exchange for students studying nursing with Lismore, the Australian Sister City. When he retired, however, it was difficult for the City to find someone to replace him and the program dwindled.

There is no committee for Eau Claire's Sister City partnership, and the operation of the program is informal. Eau Claire operates through Sister Cities International, and the current city contact for the program is Cathy Marohl. Her duties include maintaining correspondence with the Sister City, and keeping the common council informed about the status of the Sister City.

Ms. Marohl commented that Sister City programs tend to have ebbs and flows of contact, and currently Eau Claire is experiencing diminished contact. The commitment required to maintain a vibrant Sister City relationship requires work and effort.

Green Bay, WI

Green Bay currently does not have a Sister City program. Previously, there was a Sister City partnership that operated through the Greater Green Bay International Sister City Initiative. A Sister City agreement was signed in 2006 with Irapuato, Mexico and several exchanges took place between Green Bay and its Sister City. The program was terminated through a lack of community interest.

The Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) has recently coordinated with Door County, which has been working with a Sister City in China since 2004. In 2016, a delegation from NWTC traveled to the Sister City with a student exchange program, and there are further plans for the Door County Board Chairman to lead a delegation to witness the opening of Door County Square, which will be in the heart of the Chinese Sister City.

Door County passed a resolution in 2014 creating the Ad Hoc Jingdezhen Sister City Informal Advisory Group. The group has five members, and its main purpose is to coordinate delegations to and from the Sister City.

Janesville, WI

Janesville does not participate in a Sister City program. A Sister City program was considered in 2014, but the City was not prepared to cover the funding for the program, and local community interest was low.

Kenosha, WI

Kenosha has four Sister Cities, maintained by the Sister Cities Association of Kenosha, a 501(c)3 organization. The organization is run by unpaid volunteers, and receives funding from the City of Kenosha as well as grants and donations from the local community. The Association meets at least once annually, and meets more often when exchanges are being planned.

The president of the Association is the coordinator for the Sister City program. The most demanding role for the coordinator is planning adult exchange programs. The president plans and coordinates host families that house guests from Sister City exchanges, plans

tours of the city and plans for trips to Chicago for visiting delegations. The president emphasizes the importance of acknowledging that people from other countries are more similar than different, and that creating a welcoming environment provides the best experience for exchanges. To this end, the Association will pay for the expenses of picking up delegations from the airport, and for weekday excursions. The president of the Association also coordinates with the mayor about exchanges and helps plan travels to Sister Cities.

The Sister Cities Association of Kenosha does not directly work with high school exchanges, but will aid and help pay for language exchange programs when area high schools reach out with interest in Sister Cities. UW-Parkside has formed several student exchanges in coordination with the Sister Cities Association of Kenosha.

One interesting component of Kenosha's Sister City program is the naming of a local park after the German Sister City of Wolfenbuttel, as well as a fountain donated by the citizens of the French Sister City, Douai. The Sister Cities program has fostered travel exchanges between all but one of the four sister cities.

Lacrosse, WI

Lacrosse maintains Sister City partnerships with seven different cities. The City of La Crosse International Committee exists as an overarching committee to advise the mayor and common council and to act as a resource on international matters, to advise and to recommend future Sister City relationships, and to coordinate activities among the La Crosse Sister City Committees.

The International Committee is set up by an ordinance which stipulates that there should be no more than 12 members, with one council member and 11 other members, including representatives from the individual Sister City committees. The positions are not paid. For leadership of the International Committee, the chair presides at meetings and promotes the purpose, goals and by-laws of the Committee, and the vice-chair serves in the absence of the chair.

The duties of the International Committee, as provided in the ordinance, include assisting the mayor's office with international visitors, promoting awareness of the cultural, educational and business opportunities and scenic attractions in the La Crosse area for foreign visitors, expanding community awareness of the benefits of participation in programs of international value, and submitting an annual report to the common council about each year's activities.

Madison, WI

Madison has nine Sister Cities. In 2012, the City passed an ordinance (ORD-11-00019), creating a Sister City Collaboration Committee, which includes 11 members. Membership is comprised of a representative from each Sister City Program, one

alderperson, and one adult resident of Madison. The duties of the Committee are as follows:

The Committee shall review inactive Sister City partnerships, explore potential for joint initiatives, and set criteria for the addition of new Sister City partnerships. It is tasked with raising the profile of Madison Sister City partnerships, making connections with cultural, educational and humanitarian programs, and maximizing educational opportunities, as well as exchanging cultural, educational, business and economic ideas for Madison companies and Sister Cities.

The Committee coordinates the Sister City activities for each Sister City relationship, and if the Committee approves of a Sister City relationship, the applicants for that relationship are required to do the following:

- Submit to the Sister City Coordinating Committee annual work plans/activities. As part of annual plan, provide specific plans for citizen participation in committee planning and trips.
- Make arrangements for all trips, activities, events, ceremonies, documents and gift selection and assume responsibility for related expenses and payments.
- Take steps to achieve formal status as tax exempt organization (IRS 501(c)3 designation) within a two-year period following approval of the Madison City Council of the Sister City Relationship. Tax exempt status must be maintained as long as the sister city relationship is determined to be active by the Sister City Coordinating Committee.

The current City staff member on the committee is the Deputy Mayor for Administration and Finance, who acts as a liaison to several other City agencies, and also has lead staff responsibilities including budget, appointments, and Mayor's Office Administration in addition to working with the Sister City Collaboration Committee.

Racine, WI

Racine's Sister City Planning Committee has 12 members. The Committee works with four Sister Cities as a volunteer organization operating under the mayor's office. The group is comprised of interested citizens recruited by fellow Committee members, or suggested citizens originating from alderpersons or the mayor. Ideally there is a representative from the common council seated on the committee, but currently due to a lack of interest in Sister City programming, there is no representative of the common council.

The duties of the chair of the Sister City Planning Committee include appointing subcommittees to perform specific tasks such as extending hospitality toward delegations from Sister Cities for educational or cultural exchange, calling meetings, and determining the active/inactive status of each Sister City relationship. The Committee also helps to provide student exchange programs.

Sheboygan, WI

Sheboygan has two Sister City relationships, which are maintained through the Mayor's International Committee. The Committee has 13 members, and has a primary function of promoting, facilitating and hosting or assisting official visits to or from Sheboygan and its Sister Cities. At the request of the mayor or common council, the Committee also performs these same functions for diverse cultural, education and business groups, societies, and organizations from other countries. The Committee plans fundraisers and events to increase capabilities to promote Sister City relationships. The chair of the Committee oversees meetings and delegates tasks according to the needs of the Committee.

An example of an event that the Mayor's International Committee hosted is Esslingen Fest, which celebrated the German Sister City Esslingen's "Zwiebelfest"– Onion Fest. The event featured signature onion dishes, live music, and German food, celebrating and bringing cultural awareness of the Sister City.

Waukesha, WI

Waukesha has one Sister City partnership, and like the Appleton Nicaragua Partners, operates through the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas. The state-wide organization helps support projects and exchanges between Wisconsin cities and partner cities in Nicaragua.

The Sister City relationship is less formalized, and does not use a committee. Instead, more ad hoc exchanges are used. An example of this is a planned student trip from Carroll University which is scheduled to take place in May of this year. For the occasion, the mayor will send a plaque with the student group to present to the mayor of the Sister City of Granada, Nicaragua.

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