

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 Irish Festivals Inc		
Mailing Address (Address, City, State, Zip Code) 1532 Wauwatosa Ave Wauwatosa WI 53213		
Website Celticmke.com		
PERSON IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION FOR MILWAUKEE		
Name Caitlin Ward	Phone 414-507-7018	
Mailing Address (Address, City, State, Zip Code) 1532 Wauwatosa Ave Wauwatosa WI 53213	Email caitlinw@irishfest.com	
SISTER CITY		
Name Galway	Country Ireland	Population 85,910
LOCAL SPONSOR ORGANIZATION IN THE SISTER CITY		
Legal Organization Name City of Galway		
PERSON IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION IN THE SISTER CITY		
Name Ruairi Lehmann	Phone and/or email (091) 536 400 ruairi.Lehmann@galwaycity.ie	

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.

Milwaukee Galway Sister City Partnership

2024 Activity & Moving Forward

Cultural Exchange: Music

Cultural exchange through music remains at the heart of the Milwaukee–Galway Sister City relationship. In 2024, CelticMKE welcomed artists from Galway to perform at Milwaukee Irish Fest, creating meaningful connections between musicians and audiences. These performances not only enrich our festival’s cultural offerings, but also promote Galway’s vibrant music scene to tens of thousands of attendees.





Cultural Exchange: Other

Beyond music, CelticMKE has engaged in a broader cultural exchange with Galway through festivals, parades, and local partnerships. Our connection to Galway, rooted in Irish traditions like Samhain, sparked opportunities like the showcase of Ireland- Home of Halloween here in Milwaukee at Irish Fest. We plan on this being a multi year partnership with Galway being one of the main hub cities for the initiative.

Future Business and Investment Opportunities

Milwaukee–Galway Sister City partnership advanced through impactful cultural exchange and international collaboration. As we look to deepen our engagement, we're excited to expand into economic development initiatives. In January, we met with Thomas Fisher of Platform 94, a Galway-based organization with over 30 years of experience helping businesses scale globally. With existing connections in Chicago, Platform 94 is now actively exploring opportunities in the Milwaukee market. We look forward to introducing them to local economic development leaders this summer to explore mutually beneficial partnerships in innovation, entrepreneurship, and cultural enterprise.



Tourism and International Promotion

CelticMKE proudly promotes Galway as a premier cultural destination to North American audiences. By featuring Galway in our print, online, and on-site materials, and through consistent media partnerships with Galway Bay FM, we highlight the city's charm and heritage. Hosting dignitaries and performers from Galway at Irish Fest has further expanded international awareness and interest in travel. We intend to strengthen our marketing alignment with Tourism Ireland and Galway City Council to pursue joint tourism campaigns, cross-promotional travel incentives, and special programming that encourages Milwaukee-Galway cultural immersion.

Tourism and International Promotion Cont.

In 2024, the City of Galway brought 20 representatives to Milwaukee including:

- Galway Mayor Peter Keane
- Cllr. Josephine Forde
- Cllr. Helen Ogbu
- Cllr. Eibhlin Seoighthe
- CEO Leanard Cleary
- Nine additional City Staff
- Six Business owners and City ambassadors

In lodging this resulted in a direct spend of over \$15,000 in City of Milwaukee hotel room nights from the City of Galway in addition to other ancillary spending such as food, beverage and transportation



Moving Forward

- We are working on creating an internal committee to help manage and grow our relationship. This will be a focus of ours this fall.
- We have begun discussions with the Chicago's Galway sister city committee to determine where we can partner on initiatives.
- We look forward to continuing our cultural initiatives through Milwaukee Irish Fest



