

2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & LEADERSHIP MEETING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Introduction

This is a request for proposal (RFP) for cities interested in hosting the 2017 Sister Cities International Annual Conference. For the 2017 Annual Conference, the leadership of Sister Cities International has decided that all states are eligible to apply. Cities applying must also be dues paying members of Sister Cities International and be one of the top 50 cities in the United States based on population, or a city that requests an exception be granted by SCI staff as it meets all the criteria required of the top 50 cities except being on the top 50 cities list.

Per the SCI 2011 vote by the Board to consider top 50 Cities, the cities that currently fit the initial criteria are: *

Albuquerque, N.M.	Kansas City, Mo.	Raleigh, N.C.
Arlington, Tex.	Long Beach, Calif.	Sacramento, Calif.
Atlanta, Ga.	Los Angeles, Calif.	San Antonio, Tex.
Austin, Tex.	Louisville-Jefferson County, Ky	San Diego, Calif.
Baltimore, Md.	Memphis, Tenn.	San Francisco, Calif.
Boston, Mass.	Mesa, Ariz.	San Jose, Calif.
Charlotte, N.C.	Miami, Fla.	Seattle, Wash.
Chicago, Ill.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Tucson, Ariz.
Cleveland, Ohio	Minneapolis, Minn.	Tulsa, Okla.
Colorado Springs, Colo.	Nashville-Davidson, Tenn.	Virginia Beach, Va.
Columbus, Ohio	New York, N.Y.	Washington, DC
Denver, Colo.	Oakland, Calif.	Wichita, Kans.
Fort Worth, Tex.	Oklahoma City, Okla.	
Fresno, Calif.	Omaha, Nebr.	
Houston, Tex.	Philadelphia, Pa.	
Indianapolis, Ind.	Phoenix, Ariz.	
Jacksonville, Fla.	Portland, Ore.	

*Again, if your city does not meet the initial criteria, you may be granted an exception by SCI staff if your city meets all the criteria required of the top 50 cities, except being on the top 50 cities list.

This RFP contains background information on Sister Cities International, the annual conference, and outlines the necessary requirements for each proposal.

Background on Sister Cities International:

Sister Cities International (SCI) is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between U.S. and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation at the municipal level, to promote cultural understanding and to stimulate economic development. SCI leads the movement for local community

development and volunteer action by motivating and empowering private citizens, municipal officials and business leaders to conduct long-term programs of mutual benefit.

The mission of Sister Cities International is to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, & cooperation - one individual, one community at a time.

Annual Conference Background

Now in our 59th year, Sister Cities International has a long standing tradition of convening our membership annually for education sessions, networking and an annual members' meeting. Although attendance has varied greatly over the years, the anticipated number of attendees for the 2017 Annual Conference is 500-600 delegates from the United States and abroad.

Attendee Profile

- The majority of attendees are members of Sister Cities International.
- Attendees will be from a wide-range of backgrounds including municipal government representatives from sister city programs throughout the world, federal and state officials, diplomatic delegations, business owners, students and a variety of people involved in international relations.
- Attendees are volunteers or their local government officials and are therefore very price conscious.
- Attendees are also interested in learning about the local history of the host city and their involvement in Sister City relationships.
- Major reasons for attending: networking opportunities, exchange of ideas, education from experts, leadership development and sharing best practices in regards to public diplomacy, international affairs and economic development.

Host City Overview

A Host City must be a dues paying member city of Sister Cities International and have an active sister city program. The Host City will work closely with the Sister Cities International and the Annual Conference Host Committee and be asked to contribute their time and resources in a number of areas to make the annual conference an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all.

The Annual Conference Host Committee will be made up of state coordinators from the region, sister city program leaders, host city leaders, the host city convention and visitors bureau representatives, a representative from the local city government and/or Mayor's office, Sister Cities International staff, and any additional local experts. This group will assist with recruiting attendees and providing a positive experience for everyone at the 2017 Annual Conference. The Annual Conference Host Committee will also be responsible for providing Sister Cities International staff with support for planning the conference.

Host City Evaluation

Sister Cities International's selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Transportation systems, including international airport access
- Attractions and activities (that will be taking place before, during and after the scheduled conference dates)
- Fundraising capabilities of local host committee in conjunction with development team from Sister Cities International including examples of past fundraising events and drives
- Strength of local sister city program (i.e. number of volunteers in program, attendance at local events and state meeting (overnight attendees and day attendees), list of board of directors and affiliation with other local organizations such as chambers of commerce, rotaries, educational institutions, cultural institutions, consuls and government entities such as economic development and convention and visitors bureau)

- Hotel and meeting facilities
 - Must comply with Americans with Disabilities Act regulations
 - Prefer a downtown location within walking distance of events, restaurants, shopping and local attractions
- And other criteria deemed necessary by the conference committee

Host City Responsibilities

The Host Committee and Host City would be fully responsible for:

- Welcome reception attended by Mayor and local officials (Friday evening – 550ppx); Estimated cost \$25,000
- Hosting and planning a VIP reception (Thursday evening – 100ppx); Estimated cost \$5,000
- Securing a public event space for the Opening Ceremony and Parade of Flags; city wide event (Friday morning – 600 ppx)
- Transportation to any off-property events
- Volunteers for the registration area, information desk, workshops, and events (approx. 50 volunteers)
- Conference attendee bags with local area information (maps, restaurant guides, etc.)
- Assistance with coordinating any optional tours
- Timeline for action items agreed upon by Sister cities International and host committee with scheduled conference calls for updates
- Input and ideas into the program theme, session topics and recruitment
- Suggestions for local resources, as required (i.e. photographer, off-site locations, etc.)
- Minimum conference budget of \$30,000 from local, private sector and/or public sources, whether through direct contributions or in-kind services will be required. These funds are for the city to host the attendees for a mayor's welcome reception and any other agreed upon activities. Once the Host Committee reaches \$30,000 through a combination of sponsorships and donations, a 50/50 split of all sponsorship revenue above and beyond the \$30,000 will commence between the host committee and SCI.

Site Selection Process

- Sister Cities International's policies for selecting the site of future conferences allow participation from all of the membership in submitting a proposal from eligible and available options. An outline of the present process is as follows:
- The SCI Conference Committee requests interest bids from the eligible cities approximately two years in advance.
- Once all full proposals are received, they are reviewed by the SCI Conference Committee. A select number of cities will be invited to present their proposal in-person during the SCI Conference Committee Meeting during the 2015 Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Thursday, July 16 beginning at 7:30 am. After the conclusion of the presentations, committee members will select a city location and this recommendation will go to the Board of Directors for approval. After receiving approval on the location from the Board of Directors of Sister Cities International, SCI staff works with HelmsBriscoe for its venue/hotel evaluation and selection process and both will partner extensively with the local community on recommendation and process.
- Venue/Hotel Request for Proposals will be sent by HelmsBriscoe to the selected city's Convention & Visitors Bureau and eligible venues/hotels, and all bids must be sent to Vickie Corder, vcorder@helmsbriscoe.com and Meghan Schmidt, mschmidt@sistercities.org for initial review. The reviewed and selected bids will be evaluated by the SCI Conference Committee for review and approval by the Board of Directors.
- On-site inspection of the hotel(s) under consideration is made by SCI Staff to determine if criteria is met for accessibility, and that location and meeting space is appropriate for the membership.

- With the site selected, HelmsBriscoe will handle the contract negotiations on behalf of SCI and upon approval and agreement of the contract, SCI will then sign the final contract with the Conference hotel and proceed with the detailed planning of the conference.

Meeting Space Requirements

- **Preferred Dates:** July 13-15, 2017 or July 20-22, 2017
- **Anticipated Attendance:** 550 people total
- **Room Block:** Monday: 10 rooms; Tuesday: 20 rooms; Wednesday: 80 rooms; Thursday: 200 rooms; Friday: 200 rooms; Saturday: 175 rooms; TOTAL ROOM NIGHTS: ~685

Proposal Process and Timeline:

Below are the steps of the process for bidding on the 2017 Annual Conference.

1. Send a letter of intent via email to Sister Cities International's Conference and Events Manager, Meghan Schmidt (mschmidt@sistercities.org)
2. Complete the enclosed application with any supporting documents.
3. Completed applications should be sent via email to Meghan Schmidt (mschmidt@sistercities.org) at Sister Cities International offices by: ~~May 15, 2015~~ **May 29, 2015 (Two week extension!)**

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2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE BID APPLICATION

Please complete the following application and submit electronically to mschmidt@sistercities.org by **May 29, 2015**.

A. Summary

- In 500 words or less, highlight the benefits of hosting the conference in your city.

B. Community Profile

- Describe your community and the unique sites that may be of interest to our conference delegates, including a list of venues that may be appropriate for special off-site events throughout the conference.
 - In particular, please describe the events that surround international affairs and the city's Sister City organization/program.
- Please list all activities and attractions that will be taking place in your city before during and after the conference dates.
- Please list any local personalities or celebrities in your community that may be invited to speak or perform to enhance the overall conference program or to attract delegates.

C. The Sister Cities organization(s) in the host city

- Please include the following information:
 - List of the activities of your local sister cities organization over the past two years
 - Copies of any newsletters
 - List of the Board of Directors of the local sister city organization
- Describe involvement with other Sister Cities programs in your state and participation in any state wide functions.
- Involvement and support of state and local government officials, especially the Mayor, local economic development and community groups, educational institutions and cultural organizations.

D. Fundraising

The registration fees are established to cover only Sister Cities International's cost of basic conference activities. All events organized in conjunction with the Annual Conference must be approved by Sister Cities International in advance.

Preliminary budgets for the annual conference have shown that a minimum conference budget of \$30,000 from local, private sector and/or public sources, whether through *direct contributions* or *in-kind services* will be required. These funds are for the city to host the attendees for a mayor's welcome reception, VIP reception, and any other agreed upon activities. Past host committees have leveraged city space to host the reception and greatly decreased these costs. The bid submission must note any possible direct contributions or in-kind services it can commit to help offset any of these costs.

- Provide a list of city activities that have involved international affairs and a list of proven local sponsors that have supported these activities in the past.
- Provide list of proposed local sponsors (please note cash vs. in kind contributions)
- Description of how the city will promote the conference to local sponsors

E. Host City Contact

Please provide the following information:

- List the name of your sister city or cities and pertinent contact information



SisterCities

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Connect globally. Thrive locally.

**2017 Annual Conference & Leadership Meeting
Request for Proposals**

- Provide the following contact information for your organization's bid for the 2017 Annual Conference: primary contact name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- Provide a preliminary list of organizations and people that will be part of or supporting the city's efforts and host committee.

F. Letters of Support

It is favorable that the Host City has the support of its Sister Cities Program, elected officials and community leaders. Please include letters of support from city leadership. This should include diplomatic, municipal, state, civic and/or business representatives.

Contacting Sister Cities International

Please submit all letters of intent, bids, and questions regarding the RFP electronically to Meghan Schmidt at mschmidt@sistercities.org.

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