



Policy Type: Board

Category: Board Operations **Sub-Category:** Advisory Boards and Commissions

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3.39 SISTER COUNTY COMMISSIONS (Adopted 1-14-03)

It is the policy of the Board to encourage and support the creation of Sister County commissions. Sister County commissions create a unique partnership between county governments, the business community and volunteer community residents. These commissions benefit the County by promoting an intercultural understanding and enhance the knowledge and acceptance of others.

Mission Statement: The County of Santa Clara encourages the creation of Sister-County commissions to promote friendship and understanding and to build bridges with countries of origin for various ethnic populations residing in the County. These relationships enhance the region's international profile; encourage mutual understanding and foster cultural, educational, technological and business exchanges between people of the County of Santa Clara and the people of our Sister communities.

Sister County Commission Program Elements:

- (A) The County Executive's Office of Public Communication and Community Outreach (Office) provides programmatic and administrative support to the Sister County commissions. The Clerk of the Board provides secretarial support and both provide financial management support. County agencies and departments may be



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called on for direct involvement in Sister County commission programs. It is the policy of the Board that a ratio of one staff liaison is assigned to every two Sister County commissions. The Board will examine in consultation with the Clerk of the Board, whether additional clerical support is required.

- (B) The budget of the Sister County commissions will comply with the Board of Supervisors' Policy Manual, Section 3.3. Incidental expenses of a Sister County commission relating to stationery, mailing and refreshments for visiting delegations are paid out of the budget of the Office of the County Executive.
- (C) Sister County commissions are to implement cultural, educational, technological, and economic exchange programs and require raising necessary funds, beyond County funds to support these programs and activities. The local sponsoring committee will secure and the Sister County will provide a significant artifact of indigenous art for public display representing the Sister County.
- (D) The process to evaluate prospective Sister County commissions:
 - (1) A local sponsoring committee submits an Affiliation Application to the County Executive, Office of Public Communication and Community Outreach.
 - (2) The Office will review the Affiliation Application based on the following criteria: community characteristics of the Sister County, the demonstrable commitment of at least 15 residents from a local sponsoring committee, an established United States diplomatic presence, political ease of partnership, an identifiable funding source to support the relationship beyond County funds, a work plan for accomplishing goals and objectives, and consistent with Sister Cities International (SCI)



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guidelines, to limit affiliations with counties that already have partnerships with U.S. jurisdictions. The Office will prepare a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

- (3) If the Board of Supervisors approves the proposed Sister County commission, the Office will obtain official recognition with the SCI documenting the new partnership and send a welcoming letter to the presiding official of the new Sister County.
 - (4) If the Board of Supervisors does not approve a prospective Sister County's Affiliation Application, the local sponsoring committee may re-submit the application one year from the date of denial.
 - (5) The Board may waive any or all criteria during the review and approval process to accommodate underserved populations.
- (E) Before ending a Sister County relationship, the Office must determine whether there is a community-based support for continuing the relationship. If continuing community-based support exists, the Office sends a letter to the presiding official of the Sister County commission stating that the County is prepared to reactivate the relationship. If the Sister County commission agrees, staff will develop an action plan to rejuvenate the link. If the Sister County commission does not respond, has no further interest in continuing the relationship, or if there is insufficient community-based support, the County will inform the Sister County commission and Sister Cities International in writing that the relationship has terminated.

Related Policies

None.



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Related Forms and Information

None.

History

Date	Changes Made
1/29/2014	Policy Uploaded. (John Myers)
1/14/2003	Policy Adopted. View legislative file.