

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL
REGULAR MEETING**

NOVEMBER 12, 2024

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND SMALL
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Governmental Center Annex

115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room A680 • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • 954-357-6400

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 6, 2024

TO: Mayor, Vice-Mayor, and Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Sandy-Michael McDonald, Director 

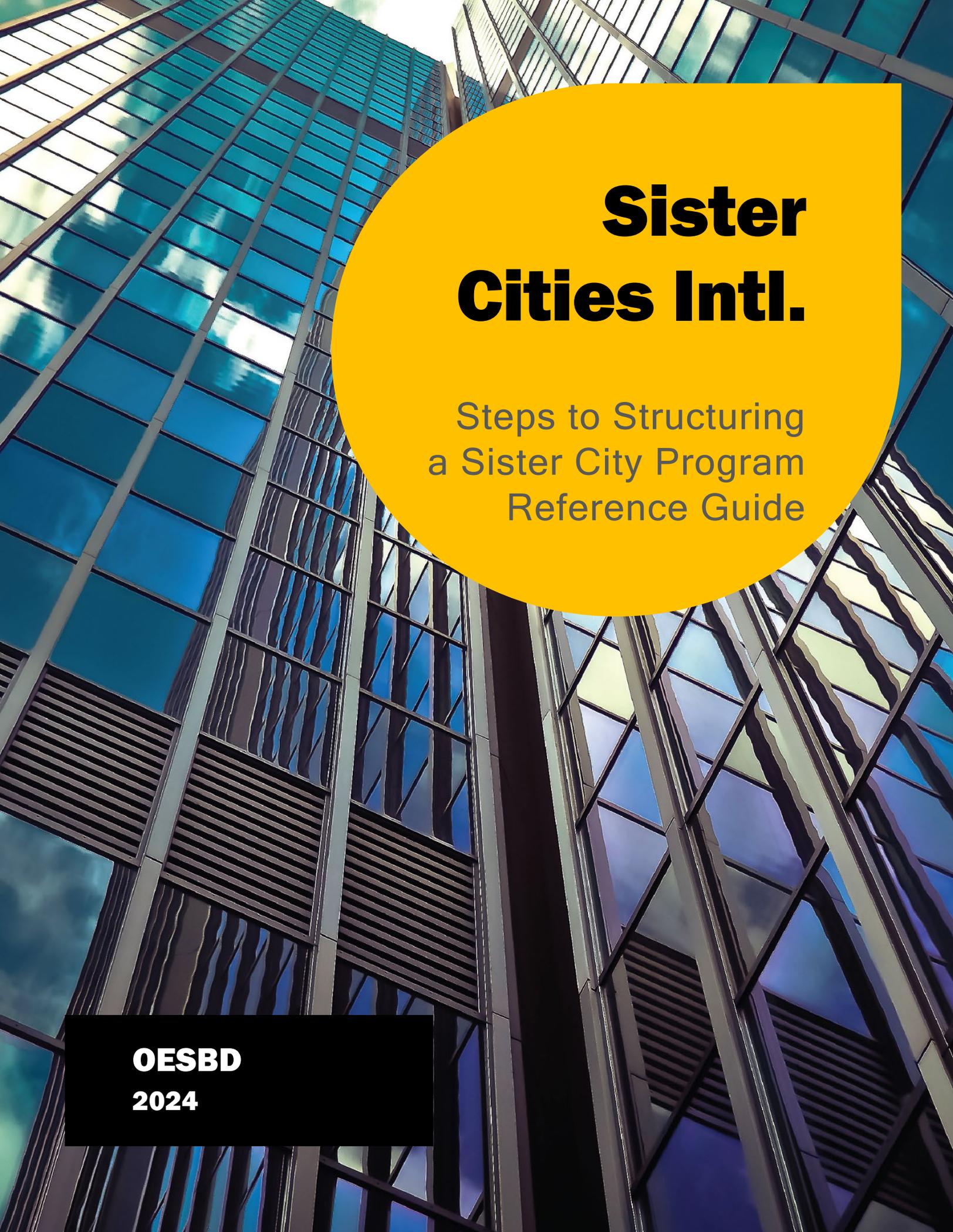
SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL MATERIAL – Agenda Item #66, November 12, 2024, Commission Agenda

Agenda Item #66 on the November 12, 2024, Broward County Commission agenda relates to the protocol for participation in Sister Cities International.

The attached Sister Cities International (SCI) Reference Guide is a framework for implementation of the Sister Cities program and is hereby included for consideration. Also attached is the SCI Membership Renewal Letter (email) dated June 16, 2024.

Attachment: as noted above

cc: Monica Cepero, County Administrator
Dr. Kimm Campbell, Deputy County Administrator
Andrew J. Meyers, County Attorney



Sister Cities Intl.

Steps to Structuring
a Sister City Program
Reference Guide

**OESBD
2024**

Sister Cities Intl.

On September 19, 2023, Broward County Agenda Item #45 passed authorizing Broward County to join Sister Cities International

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What is Sister Cities Intl. & Why is it important?

P.2

Taking the first steps to structure a Sister City Program

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10 Steps to Sister City Selection & Twinning Process

What is a Sister Cities Intl.?

Founded in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower after the second world war with the vision to foster peace between cities around the world, SCI is the national, nonprofit, volunteer membership organization representing the sister city programs of more than 1,100 U.S. cities and their 2,000 partners in more than 120 countries worldwide. As the premier organization for citizen diplomacy in the United States, SCI leads the national movement for local community development and volunteer action in the global arena. SCI motivates and empowers municipal officials, volunteers and youth to conduct long-term programs of mutual benefit and interest with their sister city counterparts abroad. Sister Cities International (SCI) is based in Washington D.C. and is the entity that officially links municipalities/counties from the United States with foreign cities through sister city agreements signed by the respective mayor of each city/county and ratified by each city/county council, commission or its equivalent. To be official, a sister city/county relationship must have the endorsement of the local authorities, who support the efforts of community volunteers. This dynamic process empowers all sectors of a community to participate constructively in the global arena, thus unleashing citizen diplomacy at the grassroots level.

Why it's important and benefits of a Sister City Program

A sister city program is one of the most important programs a community can have. Sister city programs lead their communities toward global integration, fostering any types of mutually beneficial exchanges including economic development, cultural, environmental, tourism, humanitarian to name a few. Sister city programs are at the forefront of community development, working at the grassroots level to assist their partners abroad. The sister city program is a community's international salutation.



First Steps to Structuring a Sister City Program

Joining the sister cities network as a member is the first step to establishing a sister-city or sister county program. Membership in the SCI network benefits the local sister city program in several ways. SCI is the clearinghouse for local programs nationwide, providing services to its members, compiling statistics, promoting the SCI mission, publicizing the efforts of excellent sister city programs, projects and volunteers, recognizing young artists and international scholars and offering various grant programs to its members each year.

The Coordinating Body:

The entity that is responsible for structuring and coordinating the sister city program for Broward County is the Broward County Office of Economic and Small Business Development (OESBD) and as the sister city program is international in nature, the Economic Development Specialist for International Trade will be the primary coordinator for the program. In addition to overseeing and administering the program, the coordinating body will be one of the entities to propose potential sister cities to twin with Broward County and once a sister city has been selected and approved by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, the body will follow the steps to formalize the sister city agreement between the two geographical areas. Finally, the coordinating body will also propose and initiate approved exchanges that are mutually beneficial to both parties to keep the relationship active.

Designing Supporting Documentation & Materials

In addition to this document, which serves as a quick reference guide to how the Broward County sister city program will form itself in its first years as well as the steps to proposing and selecting a sister city for twinning, other supporting documents will be developed to facilitate formalizing sister city agreements. Such documents include but are not limited to justification paper to determine a sister city, sister city selection criteria checklist, sister city solicitation form, sister city agreement template and yearly report to record exchange programs and success or economic impact of these exchange programs.

The Evolution of the Sister City Program:

Initially the Broward County sister program will be structured, coordinated and implemented by the coordinating body, with approvals by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, but as the program grows, there will be the exploration of forming an advisory committee or recruiting volunteers as country chairs.



Sister City Selection Process & Twinning

Step 1. Selecting a Sister City - Sister cities find each other in different ways:

- Broward County OESBD has been establishing and strengthening bilateral trade ties with different countries around the world as well as with their embassies and consulates through inbound/outbound trade missions as well as workshops and seminars and FITCE. Requests have been coming from cities or regions located in these countries.
- Other county agencies or office sections such as Port Everglades, Broward County Aviation Department, Visit Lauderdale, Film Lauderdale and the Cultural Division have as well-established bilateral ties with numerous countries. Port Everglades also has a sister port program.
- Foreign Embassies and Consulates or other Foreign Government Trade Agencies sometimes play a role in facilitating finding a sister city in their country.
- County Commissioners can identify or recommend participation of forming relationships with other cities internationally.
- Two mayors or city officials meet and discuss common interests.
- SCI introduces cities to each other through requests that come directly to the national SCI headquarters through individuals or organizations with which SCI works (the staffs of SCI's counterpart organizations in foreign countries, Peace Corps Volunteers, and U.S. embassies)
- U.S. Department of State officers, U.S. government representatives, colleagues in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) introduce cities to each other SCI requests U.S. cities looking for a sister city abroad to fill out a Community Profile Form to provide as much information as possible to share with prospective partner cities. Cities are encouraged to send SCI copies of excellent brochures, books or videos that promote the U.S. city. SCI puts U.S. and international cities into a database and lists these cities in the "City Connection Marketplace" on its website.

SCI strongly advises cities to have at least one official delegation from each city visit their prospective sister city/county. Ideally, the delegation should consist of at least one senior city official (the mayor or a commissioner), the international trade / international relations staff and key representatives from the community.

Step 2. Examples of Criteria that are Determine for Selection of Sister City:

Sister City relationships are strategic long-term partnerships that should be mutually beneficial, and identifying potential partners is the foundation to developing a successful relationship. If you don't already have a potential sister city in mind, below is a list of criteria that communities should look for similarities when identifying potential partners:

- Genuine interest on both sides and infrastructure in place to support the affiliation.
- Long-term commitment for a comprehensive relationship.
- Comparative economic analysis of the relationship.
- Adequate financial support for exchanges and maintenance of the sister city relationship.
- Realistic assessment of what makes a successful sister city relationship.
- Look for best results which will capitalize on existing strengths.
- Separate emotional and political issues for political, economic, commercial and cultural realities.

General:

1. Population: some variance in city sizes is natural, but choosing a sister city of a similar size usually ensures good symmetry between municipal governments, community groups, private organizations, as well as similar challenges/opportunities

2. Similar geographic location (mountains, lakes, ports): similar geographic qualities, whether it's ports, deserts, lakes, mountains, climate, etc. often means that cities will be able to share valuable knowledge related to the respective challenge or opportunity associated with each quality - Industries

3. Comparison of key industries

4. Local ethnic population

5. Investment climate/present investment levels
6. Branches of banks, factories, airlines present locally
7. Number of foreign residents locally

Economics:

1. Similar economic conditions
2. Level of government bureaucracy
3. Language/cultural patterns not treating barriers
4. Market analysis of industries
5. Investment climate/present investment levels
6. Branches of banks, factories, airlines present locally
7. Number of foreign residents locally

Commercial:

1. Trade exchange potential
2. Presence of foreign businesses/factories locally
3. Local businesses engaged in international activity
4. Liberal/restrictive trade climate
5. If a port city - port connections
6. Invisible trade (education, high tech, service, exports)
7. Active Chamber of Commerce in both cities
8. Airlinks
9. Diplomatic presence
10. Honorary consuls
11. Number of tourists

Cultural/Civic/Educational: Presence of the following:

1. Museums
2. Theatres
3. Symphony/Orchestra
4. Libraries
5. Civic organizations
6. Newspapers/TV 7. Sport teams (amateur, pro)
8. Hospitals
9. Schools (prim/second)
10. Colleges, universities

Step 3. Consideration Points for Discussion For a Partnership Relationship:

- State the source of the potential relationship - who made the suggestion?
- What are the reasons that have been offered for entering into the partnership?
- What exchanges are expected (be specific)? Trade, Economic Development, Cultural, Sports, Youth, etc..
- Identify exchange projects or ideas to keep the relationship active and not dormant
- Complete a questionnaire for criteria for selection of a sister city and include any further information about the proposed partner, including press clippings.

- Who is going to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the partnership?
- What are the expectations of the overseas partner?

Step 4. Form for Sister City Request:

Broward County OESBD will be creating a form to complete requests for a Sister City Twinning. The form will also request that additional documentation and information is provided pertaining to the foreign city/region/county that will act as supporting documentation and source for the analysis and justification phase.

Step 5. Research, Analysis and Justification:

The information provided with the form and additional documentation will be reviewed by Broward County OESBD and further research will be conducted to develop a justification paper that will outline the reasons why the sister city twinning should be formalized including potential exchange initiatives or projects that could be developed between Broward County and the City/Region/Province/County to maintain an active relationship. The justification paper would then be approved by OESBD Director which will then present it to the County Administration to express intention and the justification for exploring a relationship with this sister city.

Step 6. Develop Line of Communication:

The next step in the process is to develop a line of communication with the prospective community by sending a letter of introduction from one mayor to the other. This letter should introduce your community, identify why you are interested in developing a sister city relationship, identify potential program/exchange opportunities, and identify a point of contact for this initiative. This is when international protocol should be followed in order to ensure a positive experience. Broward County OESBD will assist in drafting the letter following sister cities protocols as well as international protocols and provide a draft letter for final review and approval. Once the Mayor signs the letter, OESBD will assist in the delivery of the letter to the international sister city.

Step 7. Correspondence Phase:

Once the letter has been received by the international community and a line of communication has been established, the next several months should be focused on learning more about each other's communities, identifying program/exchange opportunities, discussing local involvement, and developing a work plan that establishes short and long-term goals for the partnership. Many cultures will recommend a physical exchange during this phase, but often various means of technology is used to effectively communicate. This period is also a great opportunity to implement a program to "test the waters." This program could include an economic development exchange, government best practices exchange, or other knowledge-sharing exchange, among many other opportunities. Many communities may send non-mayoral delegations during the correspondence and planning stages-whether that be the city manager, council members, local business professionals, or volunteers.

Step 9. Broward County Approval to Adopt a Resolution for the Twinning:

Broward County OESBD will provide assistance in formalizing this document which will be reviewed by the County Attorney's office. A Commission Agenda will be drafted along with a draft for the Resolution to be reviewed and approved by OESBD Director followed by County Administration. Once County Administration approves, The Board of County Commissioners will receive the proposed documentation and be briefed about the Resolution. The resolution needs to be approved at a County Commission Meeting in order to move forward with the next step for the Twinning.

Step 8. Develop a Partnership Agreement:

Both communities have decided to move forward and formalize the relationship. In order for a sister city, county, or state partnership to be recognized by Sister Cities International, the two communities must sign formal documents which clearly endorse the link. The partnership agreement can range from the ceremonial, with language focusing on each city's commitment to fostering understanding, cooperation, and mutual benefit to the precise, with particular areas of interest, specific programs/activities, or more concrete goals related to anything from numbers of exchanges to economic development. Sister Cities International has developed a toolkit and template that will assist in creating this document and can be found under the toolkits and templates section of the SCI Member Area here: [http://www.sistercities.org/toolkits\[1\]templates](http://www.sistercities.org/toolkits[1]templates). Broward County OESBD will provide assistance in formalizing this document which will be reviewed by the County Attorney's office.

Step 9. Signing Ceremony:

Once the partnership agreement has been developed and both communities have approved the document, the two highest ranking officials will sign the document, which is often done during a formal signing ceremony. Broward County OESBD will assist in the coordination of the Signing Ceremony. In the past, Sister Cities Signing Ceremonies have occurred during a Commission Meeting or can be planned at another occasion. While it is important to tailor these ceremonies to fit your specific communities, Sister Cities International has developed a guide to this process and can be found under the toolkits and templates section of the SCI Member Area here: <http://www.sistercities.org/toolkits-templates>. Once the agreement has been signed, Broward County OESBD will send an electronic copy of that agreement to Sister Cities International at membership@sistercities.org. The partnership will then be added to your community's profile on SCI website and a certificate will be issued recognizing the partnership.

Step 10. Implementation and Evaluation:

Sign, sealed, delivered. It is time to implement programs and plan exchanges outlined in the work plan developed during the early months of this process. It is good practice to set a date, whether within the next six months to two years, to evaluate the partnership and make adjustments if needed.

From: Ashleigh Manuel <amanuel@sistercities.org>

Date: June 16, 2024 at 7:38:49 PM EDT

To: "Isaac, Paola" <pisaac@broward.org>

Subject: SCI Membership Renewal

Paola,

Thank you for your continued investment in the work of Sister Cities International (SCI)! We are pleased to count you in our membership and are here to provide you with the best tools for success. Below are some highlights of member benefits and resources as well as news of upcoming programs and events. Our **2024 Membership Directory** is now in print, and I will soon mail you a copy along with a few other membership materials, including a member decal for display.

ACCESS TO SCI'S MEMBER PORTAL

Your account profile will grant access to the member portal, where you will find important information and resource materials. From the [SCI homepage](#), click on Member's Access in the upper right corner, where you will be asked for your username: **BrowEconDev**, followed by your password. Through this portal, you will be able to view information, most of which is exclusive to SCI members, including the Membership Directory and member-only [Digital Toolkits](#), both valuable resources for your program. In addition, you will see current SCI announcements and find networking opportunities with other SCI members.

Your membership is current through **June 30, 2025**, and you will receive an invoice for membership renewal dues well in advance of the term end.

OTHER MEMBER BENEFITS

1. For promotion on social media, we recognize our members on platforms including LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter/X. We also invite you to share our partnership with your constituents through your social media channels.
2. Please find your **SCI Member Badge** embedded below, an official mark of your membership, for use on your materials. SCI's Member Badge, Logo and Tagline Usage Policy can be found attached.
3. Official certificates recognizing your sister city partnership, including one copy to present to your sister city. We also celebrate milestone anniversaries with certificates.
4. Monthly Roundtables are held, and you will receive an invite to each as they are announced.
5. Your State Representatives are **Donna Scantlebury** and **Carolina Rendeiro**. Donna may be reached by email at donna.gflsci@hotmail.com or by phone at 754-204-3710. You may reach Carolina by email at rendeirocarolina@gmail.com or by phone at 305-542-0299.

NEXT STEPS!

1. To keep communication as smooth as possible, please respond with a **primary contact** and, if available, a **secondary contact**. This information should include first and last name, title, email, and phone number. Future emails, invites and newsletters will be sent to these email addresses. Additionally, we will need contact information for your organization's **voting delegate** who should receive any Board of Director election ballots or bylaw changes each year. Only one person can be the voting delegate for your organization. If you have already shared this information, please disregard.
2. We want to keep our members as engaged as possible and would like to set up a call to discuss your organization's current initiatives and goals and learn how we can best serve you. We encourage regular contact and invite you to regularly share updates. Information on leadership changes and sister city partnerships are especially important and useful.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The **SCI Annual Business and Leadership Meetings** and **US-China Summit** will be held July 17-19 in Tacoma, WA. To learn more and to register, please click on the icons above.

Our [2024 Youth Leadership Summit \(YLS\)](#) will be held August 4-10 in Washington, DC, in-person for the **first time in four years!** During this event, we will celebrate the winners of our [Young Artists and Authors Summit \(YAAS\)](#). We encourage you to visit our website and learn how your community can participate in future youth programs.

Please contact me at your convenience and let me know of your availability for a call to go over any of this information. I look forward to connecting soon and learning how we can help you get the most out of your membership with SCI.

Best,

Ashleigh Manuel | Membership Coordinator

For more information about the US-China Summit, click [here](#).

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