



Bakersfield Sister City Project Corporation

PROTOCOL FOR ACQUIRING A SISTER CITY

INTRODUCTION:

A Sister City is an official Bakersfield City affiliation established with an international city to develop long-term civic and people-to-people relationships, promote global cooperation and cultural understanding, and stimulate economic development.

The relationship requires approval by the City Council, a signed formal agreement between the Mayor and the top official of the proposed sister city, and recognition by Sister Cities International, the non-profit organization that registers and coordinates Sister City affiliations between cities in the U.S. and cities worldwide.

While a Sister City relationship involves official recognition by the City of Bakersfield, Sister City activities are promoted and managed by the Board of Directors of the Bakersfield Sister City Project Corporation, a non-profit, all volunteer organization that receives no funding from the City of Bakersfield.

The following guidelines govern the management of Sister City programs, including the criteria for selection and the proposal process for establishing a new Sister City relationship.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:

The City of Bakersfield and Bakersfield Sister City Project Corporation will consider the following criteria, suggested by Sister Cities International, when determining the appropriateness of a proposed Sister City relationship:

1. Compatibility of the proposed Sister City with regard to population, colleges and universities, arts and culture institutions, community organizations, and economic base.
2. Opportunity for mutually beneficial cultural and educational exchanges and program activities between community-based organizations.
3. Demonstrated interest and commitment by a broad-based Bakersfield community group to develop cultural, educational, and community exchanges, and to raise funds to ensure long-term program support.
4. A civic or official group/committee organized in the prospective Sister City with the intent to plan and develop ongoing Sister City programs with the Bakersfield group.
5. Support by the municipal government of the proposed city for developing a Sister City relationship with the City of Bakersfield.
6. If the proposed city already has a Sister City in the U.S., Sister Cities International requires a cooperative agreement with both the proposed Sister City and any of its Sister City affiliates.

**Bakersfield Sister City
c/o Office of the Mayor
1600 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301**

INITIAL STEPS:

1. **FORM A SISTER CITY COMMITTEE:** Form a committee of citizens from Bakersfield to explore the idea of finding a Sister City in the nation of your choice. Remember: the committee must be formed first before approaching the BSCPC board of directors. The committee must be able to show:
 - a. Broad community support for the proposed relationship.
 - b. Committed members who will be available to plan and host exchanges with the Sister City.
 - c. Financial support for the proposed relationship.
 - d. A clear understanding of the mission and goals of the Bakersfield Sister City program.
 - e. A detailed plan for your Sister City Committee that will include:
 - i. Names of all members of your committee, including the name and contact information for the committee chair.
 - ii. A mission statement for your committee.
 - iii. Specific objectives for this relationship (e.g.: cultural exchanges, economic development, health services, etc.)
 - iv. Proposed budget.
2. **CONTACT BAKERSFIELD SISTER CITY PROJECT CORPORATION:** Once the committee has been formed, your committee chair or his/her designee will be invited to attend the meetings of the BSCPC board of directors. The board will serve in an advisory capacity, but your committee must contact the country's consulate and/or Sister City's International for advice/recommendations for a possible Sister City.

THE PROPOSAL PROCESS: This process can be quite lengthy and varies from city to city, but generally it includes the following steps:

1. Paying an exploratory visit to the potential Sister City. You should carry with you documents that designate your group as an official delegation from the City of Bakersfield.
2. Contacting the officials in the potential Sister City and inviting them to visit Bakersfield. (This invitation should be proffered through the Office of the Mayor of Bakersfield.)
3. If both cities are interested in forming a Sister City relationship, then they must work together to formulate and write an affiliation agreement (Memorandum of Understanding or MOU). This process also takes time and generally includes:
 - a. Verification that the proposed city has a viable Sister City Committee in place, including who will serve on this committee and what its relationship to the city will be.
 - b. Approval of this relationship by the Bakersfield City Council (and possibly by a counterpart in the proposed city).
 - c. Signing of a letter of intent to form a Sister City relationship by Sister City Committee members and/or government officials from both cities.
 - d. Formal delegation visits to and from the proposed Sister City. These delegations should include Sister City committee members, BSCPC board members, and city officials.
 - e. Writing of the final MOU to be reviewed and approved by the committees of both cities, and to be signed by government officials of each city. (The mayor of Bakersfield has signed all MOUs in the past. Generally these signings are done at ceremonies. Often the letter of intent is signed in one city, and the MOU in the other.)
4. Once the MOU has been signed, the Sister City Committee may appoint a member to the BSCPC board of directors. This member will have all the rights and privileges of any elected member of the board.

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