



# Galveston Sister Cities Program

## Policies, Procedures, & Ethics

### **Affiliation Policy**

A Sister City or Sister Cities relationship is formed when the mayor from Galveston and a community in another country or territory sign a formal agreement on behalf of their communities endorsing a “sister city/cities” relationship. Sister relationships may also include counties, municipalities, oblasts, prefectures, provinces, regions, states, territories, towns, villages, or any other subnational administrative distinction.

A new partnership will be considered official only when Galveston Sister Cities Program has received a signed copy of the sister city agreement. The document(s) must be signed by the top elected/appointed official of both communities.

Galveston Sister Cities Program will recognize a new sister cities partnership between Galveston and an international community, even though another partnership may exist between that international community and a different U.S. community.

Galveston Sister Cities Program members may establish more than one sister city partnership in any given country.

Galveston Sister Cities Program shall formally recognize only those relationships by cities/members in good standing with Sister Cities International’s Membership Directory or on its website. However, Galveston Sister Cities Program shall not assert as invalid or otherwise impugn the legitimacy of those relationships formed by non-members prior to the creation of the official Galveston Sister Cities Program.

Galveston Sister Cities Program will recognize sister city partnerships in countries where formal U.S. diplomatic relations have not been established, provided that the U.S. government has an “Interest Section” operating in that country

A Friendship City or Friendship Cities relationship is considered slightly less formal, and is sometimes used as a step towards the development a sister city agreement. Typically, Friendship City agreements are referred to as such in the formal documents that are signed. Galveston Sister

Approved by the Sister Cities Program Committee

March 25, 2019

Cities Program shall recognize Friendship City relationships by members in Sister Cities International Membership Directory and website.

Around the world various terms are sometimes used to describe these partnerships, including twin cities (Russia, United Kingdom), partner cities (Germany- partnerstadt), friendship cities (Japan and China), or twinning (France- jumelage).

Galveston Sister Cities Program will consider a relationship to be active unless notified otherwise.

## **Changing the Status of a Relationship**

If Galveston Sister Cities Program wishes to formally designate a sister city or friendship city as dormant, it may be put into Emeritus status. Otherwise it will follow the procedures set forth in the Sister Cities International guidelines for a dormant Sister City.

To place a relationship into Emeritus status, the mayor of Galveston will write a letter to the mayor of the foreign city indicating that they consider the relationship dormant and wish to change its status, with a copy being kept on file with the Galveston Sister Cities Program. Partnerships that are in Emeritus Status are still considered valid.

To remove a relationship from Emeritus status, the mayor of Galveston will write a letter indicating that they consider the relationship is now active

## **Ethics**

The Galveston Sister Cities Program will be held accountable to follow all applicable laws and requirements for those appointed to a Committee of the City of Galveston including Public Information Act, Open Records Act, as well as those set forth by the City of Galveston, and the Ethics Commission of the State of Texas.

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As a public servant, you owe a responsibility to the people of Texas in the performance of your official duties. This guide sets out laws that govern your conduct as a public servant. As you read this pamphlet, you should bear in mind that ethical conduct involves more than merely following these laws. As a public servant, you should act fairly and honestly and should avoid creating even the appearance of impropriety.

## **General Guidelines of Operation**

The Resolution set forth by the City of Galveston for the Sister Cities Program Committee is the “backbone” of the Policies and Procedures for the Sister Cities Program. This Resolution will be at all times strictly adhered to. Any attempt in usurping said resolution will be dealt with swiftly and may result in the Steering Committee members removal from the committee and the Sister Cities Program Committee.

## **Advisory Team**

The Advisory Team that is listed as the “Sub Committee” in the Sister Cities Committee resolution is governed by the Steering Committee of the Sister Cities Program. This Advisory Committee will strictly follow the guidelines listed in the resolution and hold no power, authority, or “rights” of its own.

## **Continuous Updating of Galveston Sister Cities Program**

These Policies, Procedures and Ethics that are being set forth by this document are fully capable of and expected to be updated as the Mayor of Galveston, the City Council of Galveston or the members of the Steering Committee of the Galveston Sister Cities Program deem needful and appropriate. The changes will be mandated after the Mayor of Galveston or the City Council deem necessary or by a quorum vote of the Galveston Sister Cities Program Steering Committee.