



**Sister Cities and Economic
Development:
*Assessing Resources and
Gathering Partners***





Agenda

- I. Why Economic Development?
- II. Community Inventory
 1. Resources
 2. Organizations
 3. Programs/Plans
 4. Events
- III. Outreach
- IV. Setting a Meeting
- V. Next Steps
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Why Economic Development?

- **Business promotes the mission of Sister Cities**
 - Building personal relationships for business is standard practice in most of world
 - Businesses favors longer-term, more sustainable relationships
 - Trade results in more delegations and more cultural exchange

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Why Economic Development?

- **Civic role of sister city programs**
 - To convene different sectors of community, such as government, academia, nonprofits, everyday citizens—and business
 - Facilitating economic development builds support from government and the community at large

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Community Inventory

Resources

Organizations

Projects/Plans

Events

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Resources

- **Natural Resources:** parks, waterways, climate, geographic features
- **Landmarks/Manmade Structures:** monuments, historical neighborhoods, ports, sports fields
- **Institutions:** libraries, museums, cultural centers, sports teams, schools, universities, restaurants



Organizations

Organizations which have an explicit interest in promoting economic development

- **Chambers of Commerce:** association of local businesses that promotes business activities and commercial interests
- **Convention and Visitors Bureau:** draw visitors and events to city and provide information about your community



Organizations

- **Economic Development Office:** municipal office which sets city's goals and plans for economic development
- **Manufacturer/Trade Associations:** networks of similar businesses
- **Small Business Development Centers:** organizations designed specifically to give tools to small businesses
- **Business Incubators:** initiatives aimed at supporting new businesses

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Projects and Plans

- **Municipal Economic Development Plans:** multi-year development plans with specific goals, metrics, partners, and strategies
- **University Initiatives:** plans for expanding courses, partnerships, opportunities, visiting professorships, etc.
- **Exchange Programs:** both high school and university exchange programs



Projects and Plans

- **International Visitor Programs:** World Affairs Councils or Centers for International Visitors host State Dept. sponsored visitors
- **Hospitals:** some have plans for international partnerships or medical missions

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Events

- **Festivals:** Music, art, film, food, or cultural festivals, as well as those sponsored by faith-based groups or sector-specific organizations
- **Holidays:** Special events associated with federal or state holidays, as well as dates with local significance



Events

- **Sports Events and Tournaments:** both professional and amateur events
- **Conventions:** Consult your convention and visitors bureau for conferences or conventions
- **University Events:** fairs for various organizations, as well as events aimed specifically at international students



Outreach

Gather information about Institutions
and organizations:

- Contact name(s)
- Title
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- Website
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Plans?
- Events?
- Date contacted
- Notes

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Outreach

Gather information about Projects/Plans and Events:

- Name of Event/Plan
- Organizer
- Date(s)/Timeline
- Stated goal(s)
- Website/Link
- Facebook
- Repeating/One-off?
- Contact Name(s)
- Title
- Phone
- Email
- Other participating organizations



Outreach

- Initial outreach to Potential Partners
 - Inform them about your sister city program
 - Find an appropriate contact for future
 - Start a conversation

Do **NOT** ask for a commitment or immediately request a space/role for your organization, or participation by theirs



Outreach

- After doing initial research online, prepare:
 - List of current sister cities
 - Mission Statement/brief description of goals
 - Highlights from recent programs
 - Contact information



Outreach

You can provide most information over the phone, but you will want to provide electronic/printed documents they can circulate/which present your organization accurately

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Outreach

- Script/Talking points
 - Brief (1-2 min) overview of what sister cities are and what your local program does
 - Mention that you are just doing initial outreach to local organizations to inform them about partnerships and make contact
 - Ask about any activities, programs, or goals with international focus



Outreach

- Script/Talking points
 - Ask about community/public events
 - Let them know that you may follow up with them in the future about opportunities to collaborate
 - Make sure you confirm who should be appropriate contact, and get details
 - Send follow up email thanking them for time and providing soft copies of docs



Setting Up A Meeting

- Start with organizations with clear economic focus
- Make it a stand-alone meeting, not a part of a regular sister city meeting
- Limit speaking roles to leadership; you don't need every member contributing to meeting



Setting Up a Meeting

- Propose a time you think people can meet; either during lunch or after working hours
- Try to provide opportunity to call-in
- Clear agenda: start and end time, list of invited attendees, order of discussion topics, planned time for open discussion



Setting Up A Meeting

Basic Discussion Topics

- Current activities that other organizations/individuals can participate in and/or incorporate economic development
- Invitees' programs/plans which may have international focus
- Ways attendees think that you can incorporate economic development into your activities/partnerships



Setting Up a Meeting

- Main goal is to begin conversation, build relationships, help spread word about sister city program, and find out who is excited about sister cities
- Meeting should be hour and a half at the most



Setting Up a Meeting

Remember: goal is not to pitch them ideas about economic development, it is to facilitate the conversation

When presented with sister city model, most people will immediately think "What type of exchange would I do?"



Setting Up a Meeting

- Designate a meeting facilitator
 - Not necessarily a sister city member, but should be someone that knows the sister cities model
 - Background in business or municipal government
- Record the meeting or have a secretary take minutes



Next Steps

- Thank attendees/distribute minutes in follow up email
- Brief sister city members/municipal contacts about meeting
- Determine which organizations or institutions are enthusiastic about sister cities model
- Answer questions from local organizations about your sister city partners, contacts abroad, goals



Next Steps

- Identify existing events where your organization can be integrated quickly or easily, or where you can promote your organization to the community
- Develop a permanent or ad hoc committee from interested attendees to help incorporate economic development into sister city activities, whether for a particular partnership or across sister cities

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Next Steps

- Invite attendees to sister city events/meetings
- Determine general goals for your sister city's economic development activities
- Some organizations may not be as interested as others; focus on the ones that *are* interested
- Arrange one-on-one meetings with organizations where there are possible areas for collaboration



Next Steps

- Maintain flexibility for attendees' involvement, you may want to offer them advisory roles rather than trying to get them to be regular volunteers/members
- As with any organization/individual, remember to acknowledge their contributions in communications materials or reports



Questions and Answers?

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