



## *Friendship Cities Program Policy*

### Purpose

To provide guidelines for the establishment of a friendship city relationship.

### Policy Statement

The Friendship Cities Program is a way for the City to initiate relationships — on a municipal government to municipal government basis — with international cities on a less formal basis than through an official sister city relationship.

Friendship city engagement with foreign municipalities will foster increased global cooperation and communication at the municipal level for the benefit of participating cities.

The program allows the City to form flexible ties with international cities without having to apply the more formal process proscribed under the guidelines of Sister Cities International.

The primary goal of a friendship city relationship is to open lines of communication between the City of Irvine and the friendship city. The Program is designed to establish an informal relationship between the City of Irvine and participating international cities creating an atmosphere of goodwill.

Friendship city relationships may include the exchange of correspondence between Mayors, City Councilmembers and other community leaders regarding areas of mutual interest. While funding limitations may preclude travel or more formal program activities, the Friendship Cities Program provides the opportunity to initiate information exchanges and the ability to generate community interest and support.

### Procedures

1. The Friendship Cities Program is coordinated and managed through the City's Multicultural Affairs Office.
2. The purpose of Irvine's Friendship Cities Program is to create opportunities for the City of Irvine to establish ongoing communication with municipal governments to learn from one another.

3. Selection and adoption of friendship cities shall be based upon, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Careful consideration of Irvine's current and prospective ties to the country; relevant political, cultural and economic issues; and an appraisal of the benefits that would accrue from the friendship relationship.
  - b. Ensuring that the informal friendship relationship does not conflict with the rules of Sister Cities International.
  - c. Support from individuals, groups, or organizations in the Irvine community with a demonstrated interest in the friendship relationship.
  - d. Strong consideration will be given to cities comparable to Irvine in areas such as population, culture, and business.
4. Multicultural organizations are encouraged to bring forward friendship city proposals for City Council consideration. All proposals shall be processed through the Multicultural Affairs Office.
5. A friendship city proposal will require sponsorship and recommendation by a member of the City Council.
6. Proposed friendship city agreements must be approved by City Council action prior to enactment and signature.
7. Any proposed agreement will include a termination clause allowing the City of Irvine to terminate the agreement, in whole or in part, when such action is deemed to be in the City's interest.
8. City of Irvine funding for the Friendship Cities Program shall be limited to the following:
  - a. Visitors' gifts, City staff time to coordinate meetings for visiting dignitaries with City Council and City staff, and securing appropriate City facilities for such meetings.
  - b. Any additional cost beyond that referenced above, including costs for travel by City representatives to friendship cities, shall require separate and formal City Council approval.

9. The City Manager shall have authority to develop and implement administrative policies and practices deemed necessary to support City Council approved friendship city agreements.
10. All friendship city relationships must be documented by a Friendship City Agreement between both cities. The Friendship City Agreement must be approved by City Council and signed by the Mayors of both cities in order to be valid. The proposed Friendship City Agreement shall include the following provisions:
  - a. Adhering to the principle of equality and mutual benefit, both cities will strive to learn from one another through information sharing opportunities to promote prosperity and quality of life.
  - b. City officials, relevant City departments, and interested community members and organizations, may periodically keep in contact for the convenience of discussing topics of mutual interest.
  - c. The Friendship City Agreement may be terminated, in whole or in part, when such action is deemed appropriate by either city to be in its best interest.