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# Wisconsin Briefs

from the Legislative  
Reference Bureau

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## WISCONSIN'S SISTER STATES AND SISTER CITIES

State governments are finding it advantageous to initiate their own overseas contacts for cultural exchange, humanitarian aid, and trade and investment opportunities.

In Wisconsin's case, the Department of Commerce has developed trade offices in Canada, Germany, Mexico and South Korea, and it contracts with trade representatives in many other countries. In addition to trade connections, Wisconsin has been creating "sister state" relationships with other countries or their political subdivisions for over 30 years. The first sister state relationship was established in 1964 and the most recent was proposed in 1995. These partnerships vary in purpose and scope and encompass business, tourism and media contacts and exchanges in science, the arts, education and sports.

Wisconsin's governors have entered into five sister state agreements, and the legislature has recommended sister state relationships through two separate joint resolutions, one in the 1985 session and the other in the 1995 session. (The legislature also considered a sister state relationship with the Dakar region of Senegal in 1997 Assembly Joint Resolution 19, but the resolution failed to pass.)

### SISTER STATES ESTABLISHED BY GOVERNOR

#### Nicaragua

The sister state relationship with Nicaragua originated in the Partners in Progress Program under the Alliance for Progress, which was established during President Kennedy's administration. Several states, including Wisconsin, "adopted" Latin American countries as sister states. Governor John W. Reynolds first proposed Nicaragua in 1964. Governor Warren P. Knowles appointed a Wisconsin-Nicaragua Task Force in 1965 to visit the country and assess what needs Wisconsin could help meet.

#### Hessen

Governor Patrick J. Lucey signed a sister state agreement with the German State of Hessen on September 20, 1976. Prior to the agreement, the Department of Business Development had opened a trade office in the City of Frankfurt, which is located in Hessen, in 1973.

#### Heilongjiang

Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus signed a sister state agreement with the Province of Heilongjiang, People's Republic of China on October 18, 1982. Subsequently, Governor Anthony S. Earl appointed a Wisconsin-Heilongjiang Coordinating Committee in Executive Order 48, March 19, 1984, to carry out the terms of the agreement.

### **Chiba**

Governor Tommy G. Thompson signed a sister state agreement with Chiba Prefecture, Japan, on May 21, 1990. Trade missions to Japan in 1987 and 1988 preceded the agreement. The relationship was first proposed in a study by the Wisconsin Advisory Council for Japanese Language and Culture.

### **Jalisco**

Governor Tommy G. Thompson signed a sister state agreement with the Mexican State of Jalisco on October 4, 1990. The governor first proposed such an agreement on a trade mission to Mexico in 1989.

## **LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES**

### **Taiwan**

The legislature proposed a sister state relationship with the Province of Taiwan, Republic of China, by adopting 1985 Assembly Joint Resolution 31.

### **Belgorod**

The legislature proposed a sister state relationship with the Province of Belgorod, the Russian Federation, by adopting 1995 Assembly Joint Resolution 59.

## **SISTER CITIES AND COUNTIES**

Like sister states, sister cities date from the Alliance for Progress. More than 950 cities nationally and more than 30 Wisconsin cities and counties now have sister partnerships. These relationships are promoted by Sister Cities International (SCI), founded in 1967. In Wisconsin, the former Department of Development had a sister cities program until 1991. Currently, a private organization, Wisconsin Sister Relationships, Inc., represents Sister Cities International in this state.

Dane County's sister county is Clwyd County, Wales, UK, and Milwaukee County has a sister relationship with Bialystok, Poland, and King William's Town, South Africa. In addition, the 31 Wisconsin cities, listed on page 3, are known to currently have sister cities in Europe, Asia and South America. According to SCI, Cuba City, Marshfield, Port Washington and Wauwatosa have applied, but have not yet received matches.

## WISCONSIN SISTER CITIES

**Appleton**

Kanonji-Kagawa, Japan  
Kurgan, Russia

**Ashland**

Takaisha City, Osaka, Japan

**Beloit**

Masaya, Nicaragua  
Pinerolo, Italy

**Burlington**

Diriamba, Nicaragua

**Fond du Lac**

Waspan, Nicaragua

**Fort Atkinson**

Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua

**Green Bay**

Delft, Netherlands

**Horicon**

Senonches, France

**Janesville**

Leon, Nicaragua

**Kenosha**

Cosenza, Italy  
Douai, France  
Quezon City, Philippines  
Wolfenbuttel, Germany

**La Crosse**

Dubna, Russia  
Epinal, France  
Luoyang, China

**Madison**

Arcatao, El Salvador  
Camaguey, Cuba  
Freiberg, Germany  
Managua, Nicaragua  
Oslo, Norway  
Vilnius, Lithuania

**Manitowoc/Two Rivers**

Hsien Tien City, China  
Kamogawa, Japan

**Menomonie**

Konakovo, Russia  
Minaminasu, Japan

**Middleton**

Laguna De Perlas, Nicaragua

**Milwaukee**

Omsk, Russia  
Schwerin, Germany

**New Berlin**

Jinotega, Nicaragua

**Oconomowoc**

Corinto, Nicaragua

**Racine**

Alborg, Denmark  
Bluefields, Nicaragua  
Fortaleza, Brazil  
Montelimar, France  
Oiso, Japan

**Rice Lake**

Miharu-Machi, Japan  
Sumperk, Czech Republic

**Sheboygan**

Esslingen, Germany  
Rivas, Nicaragua

**Stevens Point**

Gulcz, Poland  
Marragua, Nicaragua  
Rostov-Veliky, Russia

**Stoughton**

Gjovik, Norway

**Superior**

Ami-Machi, Japan

**Viroqua**

Taldom, Russia

**Watertown**

Uhersky Brod, Czech Republic

**Waukesha**

Granada, Nicaragua  
Kokschetau, Kazakstan

**Waupaca**

Rodding, Denmark

**Wausau**

Siping, Jilin, China

**Whitewater**

Rama, Nicaragua

**Wisconsin Dells**

Iwaizumi-Cho, Japan

Source: Compiled from Sister Cities International (SCI) list and newspaper reports.