SERVING THE CITY OF DES MOINES AS A GREATER DES MOINES SISTER CITIES COMMISSIONER

If you have any questions, please contact dmsistercitiescommission@gmail.com or if you are interested in serving on the Commission, please complete the Online Board Application Form.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The SCC was created to foster relationships and to make introductions for economic, educational, and cultural cooperation between Des Moines and other communities around the globe; and for the coordination of sister city activities.

The SCC is currently structured under a business model led by a Chair and Vice Chair with committees, subcommittees, chairpersons, and committee members made up of Commission members and volunteers supporting our sister city committees, education, finance and marketing. In addition to receiving a fiscal budget from the City of Des Moines, a separate, nonprofit organization, Friends of Greater Des Moines Sister Cities, has been created for fundraising. The Commission meets monthly on the second Tuesday from 5-6 p.m. with attendance requirements.

APPOINTMENTS

The SCC strives to appoint members who are interested, well-qualified, and free from bias or conflict of interest. Appointments are made without discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability unrelated to ability. Additional standards of selection are based upon how applicants’ skills apply to the commission's mission, functions and current and ongoing projects.

The Commission has up to fifteen members from the city of Des Moines appointed by the City Council. The cities of Norwalk, Windsor Heights, Cumming, Ankeny and Johnston have one member appointed by the city council of each city. The Mayor of Des Moines is honorary Chair of the Commission. Des Moines Commissioners are appointed for (5) year terms, with a maximum of two (2) complete terms. Member cities’ representatives are not subject to term limits.

To properly represent our citizens, members must have ample time to not only attend meetings, but also to participate on committees and support local events. If you find you are unable to fulfill the requirements of a Commissioner, you can still become involved as a volunteer.
TRAVEL EXCHANGES

Ideally, travel to and from each of our sister cities occurs alternately each year – meaning, we visit every other year and they visit the years between. Each visit has a different, specific purpose depending on the relationship.

The Commission funds travel for Des Moines representatives to a sister city for up to two (2) Commissioners. Most often this is the Chairperson of the Commission and the Chair of the City Committee. Member cities are responsible for funding travel for their representatives. Other Commissioners may be able to participate at their own expense depending on the purpose of the delegation.

A visiting sister city delegation may be here from 1 to 7 days. This requires a full schedule of programs and entertainment which can take weeks to plan and prepare. All committee members for the visiting city are expected to participate in planning and participation on arrival. Other Commission members are also expected to assist in some manner with each visiting delegation.

NON-TRAVEL EXCHANGES AND OTHER EVENTS

To keep our city relationships strong, we also participate in exchanges that do not require travel. For example, art students in Stavropol, Russia occasionally send us paintings, which are displayed at the Iowa State Fair.

We also participate in local events, such as manning a booth at the Des Moines Arts Festival and giving scholarships to students traveling to one of our sister cities with whom the Des Moines Public Schools has an exchange program. The Commission will also play a role in assisting the nonprofit organization with its fundraising efforts.

We are working with the Des Moines Public Schools to create non-travel student exchange programs with each of our sister cities.

SPECIFIC SKILLS NEEDED ON THE COMMISSION

Any of the following skills and/or experience are highly desired, but not required.

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SERVICE ON THE COMMISSION

Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commissioners are charged with responsibility for the growth and development of our Sister Cities. As a body, this includes:
• Maintaining continual communication with each sister city
• Advancing economic development of our partner cities
• Fostering and promoting cultural and educational exchange programs
• Creating public awareness of our Des Moines Sister Cities Commission

As a body and individually, this requires:

• Supporting goals of each sister city committee by contributing to and participating in events furthering those goals

• Following through on responsibilities

• Teamwork and team-building, which includes at times taking a leadership role and at others a supportive role

• Understanding of Commissioner roles and expectations, which includes participation in discussions, committees and in planning and carrying out events

• Gaining an understanding and training in protocol on behalf of the Commission and with each sister city

• Basic understanding of government and government regulations

• Making recommendations to City leaders of goals, objectives and programs to best manage the relationships and success of our Sister City relationships

• Understanding the budget, funding and strategies for advancing our Sister Cities’ mission

• Developing a workable budget for our selected cities

• Supporting the Friends organization through promoting, stimulating, facilitating and coordinating fundraising activities

• Exploring and developing future Sister City relationships

The following qualities are representative of an effective Commissioner and should be displayed at all times while engaged in Sister Cities activities:

• Servant leadership approach
• Positive attitude
• Time management
• Self-management
• Articulate and concise communications skills
• Resilience, tolerance and flexibility
• Critical thinking and decision-making skills
• Attention to detail