

Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board - Board Member Description

Are you considering applying to be appointed to the Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board?

Lawrence is blessed with a citizenry interested in participating in its civic affairs. The **Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board** is a board created and appointed by the city commission that works closely with the Sister Cities programs. It works much like many other charitable non-profit boards in accomplishing its work.

The **City of Lawrence** and the **Sister Cities Advisory Board** encourage individuals interested in its work to promote the goals and objectives of the Sister Cities program.

What are Sister Cities?

Sister city, county and state affiliations between the United States and similar jurisdictions around the world began shortly after World War II.

In part, they developed as a national initiative following a conference convened by President Eisenhower in 1956 to combat East-West tensions and promote better understanding between nations. A result of the conference was the creation of his People to People organization, and within it a town-to-town affiliation program modeled after a then-existing program of the National League of Cities.

Eventually, the sister city program grew and broke away from People to People to become its own organization known as Sister Cities International. The network of this organization includes more than 2,300 communities in 135 countries.

Sister Cities in Lawrence

The nature of these city-to-city Sister Cities relationships varies widely. In Lawrence, they have been focused on 1) educational exchanges and 2) general city-to-city cultural exchanges.

The Lawrence community has always indirectly benefited from long-term international relationships developed through programs at the University of Kansas.

In the 1980s, some involved with these existing KU relationships sought to extend and broaden them to include larger segments of the Lawrence community. As these notions developed, a number of city

commissioners and community leaders decided to adopt the Sister Cities model to promote the creation and broadening of these relationships.

The outcome of these efforts culminated in the Lawrence City Commission adopting an ordinance establishing the Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board to foster these efforts.

Early outcomes of these interests resulted in the formalizing of relationships with Eutin, Germany, in 1989 and Hiratsuka, Japan, in 1990. In 2009, a new relationship was established with Iniades, Greece.

Am I a good candidate to become an Advisory Board Member?

Experience has demonstrated that some considering to apply to become a Lawrence Sister City Advisory Board member may not have full understanding of the nature of the organization, its work, the time commitment and what might be expected from them as a board member. This document is intended to provide guidance to those considering applying to become involved or appointed to the Advisory Board.

Questions for a potential appointee to the Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board Member to consider:

The Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory board, although being a city-created function, exists as a “**working board.**” Although the board receives some city staff guidance and support, **the basic work of the organization is accomplished only through the efforts of its board members and other volunteers.**

The following are suggested for a potential appointment to the Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board to consider:

- **Belief in the mission:** A core central value held by those involved in Lawrence Sister Cities is that there is worth in supporting and promoting city-to-city and person-to-person international relationships. This is not simply an interest in “touring” other countries. It is about developing ongoing relationships and resources to assist Lawrence youth to have a potentially life-changing international experience.
- **Knowledge of the organization.** What do you know about Lawrence Sister Cities? Have you had involvement with a Sister Cities exchange before? Do you have an interest in international relationships? Have you ever attended one of the monthly public advisory board meetings? Have you ever made a membership contribution to the organization? (Members of the public are encouraged and invited to attend these monthly meetings.)
- **Time commitments required to serve on the organization:** *At the very minimum, advisory board members are expected to normally attend monthly meetings of the Sister Cities Advisory Board. (Currently held on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30-7 p.m.) Missing three consecutive meetings can result in your removal from the board.*

In addition, board members are expected to serve on, and meet as needed, in smaller committees between the monthly board meetings to accomplish much of the work of the board (examples: public relations, scholarship fundraiser planning, scholarship award committee, 5-year anniversary planning committees, membership development).

Board members are also highly encouraged to participate in meetings of the associated “Friends Groups” which exist for each city, and to become more familiar with the student exchanges by participating in meetings and interviews with those applying to participate.

There is a learning period for any new board member, but after a year or two, every board member is expected to take a leadership role in chairing a committee, serving as an officer of the board or leading a particular task. Any of these requires additional time.

- **Fundraising:** Lawrence Sister Cities receives a modest annual appropriation from the City of Lawrence, but its work would not be possible without additional amounts raised through the collecting of annual “dues” (contributions) from interested individuals and organizations. In addition, the board raises funds for need-based financial aid (scholarships) for students applying to participate in the exchange programs. Dues are a minimum of \$35 per year, and membership is required by all Board Members. Board Members should be comfortable encouraging friends and associates in becoming annual dues paying members, and participating and encouraging others to participate in fund-raising events (typically \$50 and up) for these scholarships.
- **Do you have special skills:** Like any organization, we are looking for those with special skills such as computer applications, graphic, accounting and public relations. Make sure to mention these in your application on the city website.

In Conclusion

Service on the Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board can be highly rewarding and worthwhile. Interested individuals are highly encouraged to consider application to become a member.

For more Information:

Contact: <https://lawrenceks.org/boards/sister-cities-advisory-board/>

Indicate your interest to city staff by applying online: <https://lawrenceks.org/boards/>