



Maryland Sister States Program

The Maryland Sister States Program, a program in the International Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, was established to provide a forum for the promotion of international cooperation and understanding. Through broad-based citizen participation in a wide variety of exchanges in areas of mutual interest, the Sister States Program offers countless opportunities to develop partnerships around the world. The Maryland Sister States Program was established in 1980 and currently includes 20 relationships in 17 countries.

The Maryland Sister States Program partners with the Sister States of Maryland, Inc., a private, not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of Maryland. The Maryland Sister States Program relies on the Sister States of Maryland, Inc.'s extensive network of representative volunteer committees for development of the Maryland's Sister State relationships. Together with the Sister States of Maryland, Inc., the Maryland Sister States Program draws upon the expertise and experience of individuals from institutions, businesses, and organizations across Maryland to support these important subnational partnerships. When added to their overseas counterparts, these committees form a powerful network both at home and abroad for fostering public/private cross-fertilization and social and economic growth.

Sister States relationships are significant in an age in which state and regional governments have an increasingly greater role in events. By giving access to policy makers, the people-to-people contacts of the Sister States Program add a human dimension to governmental interaction. They help to create a friendly and receptive climate for developing multi-faceted ties in today's closely integrated but highly competitive environment.

For questions or information, <http://www.marylandsisterstates.org/>, or please contact Mary E. Nitsch, Director of International Affairs by phone: 410-260-3865 or e-mail: mary.nitsch@maryland.gov. For programs and fundraising, please contact Bob Zhang, Executive Director, Maryland Sister States Inc. at bob@marylandsisterstates.org

Maryland's Sister State Relationships:

Anhui Province, China 1980
Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan 1981
Nord-Pas de Calais, France 1981
Walloon Region, Belgium 1989
Gyeongsangnam-Do, Korea 1991
Lodz Region, Poland 1993
Leningrad Oblast, Russia 1993
State of Jalisco, Mexico 1993
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1999

Bong and Maryland Counties, Liberia 2007
Harju County, Estonia 2009
Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam 2011
Kocaeli Municipality, Turkey 2012
County Cork, Ireland- 2013
Ondo and Cross River States, Nigeria 2013
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa 2015
Negev Administrative District, Israel, 2016
Jeollanam-Do, Korea 2017
Piura, Peru anticipated 2019