

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2026 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 3, 2025

Question:

What is the financial cost to provide support for two additional sister cities, as asked for in VM Jackson and Councilman Chapman's memo to council in November 2024?

Response:

The Sister Cities program has an annual general fund budget of \$17,789, with \$10,000 allocated to RPCA for Alexandria Pipes and Drums rehearsals at the Durant Center and sound for Market Square performances. The remaining funds cover dignitary hosting (hotel, meals, and event tickets) catering, and event supplies for programs like the D-Day Commemoration and student exchange visits.

The program is supported by two active committees: one for Dundee, Scotland, and Helsingborg, Sweden, and another for Caen, France. A third committee for Gyumri, Armenia, is currently inactive. These committees fundraise to cover event and program costs beyond City funding. OHA staff serve as staff liaisons for the committees and provide logistical and administrative support for monthly meetings and numerous committee programs and events at OHA sites. While these events contribute to cultural engagement, they require a significant amount of staff time and reduce site rental availability.

The primary cost of expanding the Sister Cities program would be additional staff support. A 0.5 FTE Program Coordinator could:

- Manage and promote Sister City relationships.
- Participate in state and national Sister City associations.
- Assess the current committee structure and explore potential consolidation.
- Develop a system for evaluating and selecting new Sister Cities.

This part-time position (20 hours per week) would cost approximately \$38,322 annually, including salary and benefits. An additional \$5,000 would be needed to support operating costs and expenses related to hosting dignitaries from two additional Sister Cities.