

PARTNER STATE PROGRAM



The Partner State Program connects Iowans to the world by supporting eight official international partnerships through cultural, governmental and economic ties.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Iowa's partner states are foreign regions whose leaders sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Iowa's governor to pursue shared goals. Partnerships often begin with citizen diplomacy and expand to official collaborations in business, education, culture and more. MOUs may be renewed or updated to reaffirm leaders' commitment and reflect current priorities.

Government leaders and engaged citizens share responsibility for sustaining each partnership.



M/Sgt. Richard S. Thomas (in cap) was the "go-between for Iowa-Yamanashi and Des Moines-Kofu sister affiliations," according to the photo caption in a scrapbook kept by Thomas. Here he poses in front of the Air Force plane that carried the hogs. With him (from left) are Japanese dignitaries Juji Kasai (former National Diet member), Seichi Natori (Speaker of Yamanashi Prefectural Assembly), Ryogo Matsuura (Economic Director of Yamanashi Government), and Mayor Keijiro Takano of Kofu.

In 1960, a gift of hogs and corn for disaster relief led to Iowa's first partner state relationship with Yamanashi, Japan.



PROGRAM COORDINATION

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Global Business team manages the governmental and economic aspects:

- Helping Iowa small businesses pursue exports through trade specialists, grants and resources.
- Supporting Iowa communities in attracting international companies by facilitating inquiries and exploring state incentives.

The Iowa International Center (IIC) oversees the citizen diplomacy side of the program. Volunteer committees design cultural exchanges and projects with partner regions, with IIC serving as a liaison to IEDA.

IAWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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IAWA'S PARTNER STATES

- Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan (1960)
- Yucatán State, Mexico (1965)
- Hebei Province, China (1983)
- Taiwan (1989)
- Cherkasy Oblast, Ukraine (1996)
- Veneto Region, Italy (1997)
- Kosovo (2013)
- Maharashtra, India (2025)

AREAS OF PARTNERSHIP

- Agriculture
- Business and Investment
- Education
- Professional Training
- Science
- Sport
- Tourism

GET INVOLVED!

All Iowans can participate — from volunteering to building international business connections to receiving e-newsletter updates.



LEARN MORE

For more information on the Partner State Program, visit iowaeda.com/partner-state-program or email partnerstateprogram@iowaeda.com.