



The bonds between Iowa and the Republic of Kosovo first formed during the military service of several hundred Iowa service men and women that were stationed in Kosovo over the last decade. Building on that, the Iowa National Guard and the Kosovo Security Force were joined via the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program in 2011.

General Tim Orr of the Iowa National Guard had a vision of a whole of Kosovo to whole of Iowa that would allow for Iowans and Kosovars to fully interact with each other in all areas of life. In order to fulfill this vision, the Iowa National Guard turned to Iowa Sister States to consider Kosovo as a potential sister state partner.

ISS is a volunteer-driven organization dedicated to connecting Iowans with the world community. Our Mission is to develop and implement international partnerships and programs that promote cultural, economic, and other interests of the State of Iowa and its citizens through volunteer, public, and private action.

In 2013, Governor Branstad and Kosovo's President Jahjaga signed Iowa's 9<sup>th</sup> sister state agreement. Since the signing, there have been a total of 70+ engagements between both the Iowa National Guard and Iowa Sister States' activities. It has clearly become one of Iowa's most active international relationships.

Due to the high volume of exchanges and the trust that has been built between Iowa and Kosovo, Kosovo will be opening a Consulate in Des Moines, Iowa in the near future-the first of its kind in the State of Iowa.

Each exchange and program that occurs between Iowan-based organizations and individuals and a Kosovo partner is yet another way to strengthen this bond. This relationship is important not only for its exchange of culture and other opportunities, but also because of where Kosovo is located. It is of strategic importance that the US helps to maintain peace in the region, and the Iowa/Kosovo relationship does just that.

Want to know how to  
get involved?

Check out our website

[www.iowasisterstates.org](http://www.iowasisterstates.org)

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or follow us on Twitter @IASisterStates  
#IamCitizenDiplomat

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## What is Iowa Sister States?

Iowa Sister States (ISS) is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization that was founded in 1985 to manage Iowa's official relationships with foreign states, as established by the Governor of Iowa. There are nine of these relationships: Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan (1960); Yucatán, Mexico (1965); Hebei Province, China (1983); Terengganu, Malaysia (1987); Stavropol Krai, Russia (1988); Taiwan (1989); Cherkasy Oblast, Ukraine (1996); Veneto Region, Italy (1997); and Kosovo (2013).

## Our Mission:

ISS is dedicated to connecting Iowans with the world community. Our mission is to develop and implement international partnerships and programs that promote the cultural, economic, and other interests of Iowa and its friends around the world.

## How do we benefit Iowa?

We provide Iowans (in all sectors) with opportunities statewide to connect with the international community via the sister state relationships. We host themed programs in various areas including: agriculture, law, business, culture, education, and many others. We facilitate exchange programs to host incoming delegations as well as out-bound. ISS has specific scholarship opportunities for Iowans to study in Iowa's sister states as well as host students to attend Iowa-based colleges and universities.

## What is a Citizen Diplomat?

That's YOU when you get involved with Iowa Sister States. A citizen diplomat can be anybody that is motivated by a responsibility to engage with the rest of the world in a meaningful, mutually beneficial dialogue. These People to People exchanges change the world by changing one person at a time. Citizen Diplomats are the foundation of Iowa Sister States and are the reason that ISS is a leader in this field.

**I am a Citizen Diplomat!**