

Foster Garvey Attorneys Help Establish Portland-Lviv Sister City Association, Strengthening Cultural Ties

Pro Bono Highlight
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Foster Garvey attorneys [John Knab](#) (Principal, Washington, D.C.) and [Chelsea Glynn](#), (Principal, Portland), played an instrumental role in the formation of the [Portland-Lviv Sister City Association \(P-LSCA\)](#). Working closely with the association's founder, [Tatiana Terdal](#), John and Chelsea provided crucial legal support, drafting the governing documents, including by-laws and guiding the organization through the process of obtaining nonprofit tax status. They also advised on securing the necessary approval from the Mayor's Office, a requirement for any new sister city designation in Portland.

In 2022, the Portland City Council took a significant step in promoting global unity by designating Lviv, Ukraine, as a sister city. This decision added to Portland's network of sister and friendship cities, which now includes nine such partnerships, the oldest being with Sapporo, Japan.

Lviv is the sixth-largest city in the country and the largest city in western Ukraine. Known for its architecture and blends of Central and Eastern European styles, Lviv is home to many institutions of higher education and culture, including the Lviv Theatre of Opera and Ballet.

Becoming a sister city is no small feat. To achieve this status, organizations must meet specific guidelines, including maintaining a nonprofit structure managed by Portland citizens, securing a consistent financial base of at least \$10,000 and conducting regular cultural events and meetings in Portland. These organizations are solely funded by donors and grants, not by the city itself. Once these requirements are met and sustained for a year, the City Council can vote to elevate a "friendship" city to "sister" city status.

The International Relations program, which oversees these partnerships, aims to strengthen Portland's global diplomatic, economic, cultural and educational ties through collaborations with government entities, nonprofits and businesses. P-LSCA's mission is to enhance cultural understanding between the people of Portland and Lviv, particularly through various cultural exchanges and events. With the ongoing conflict in Ukraine following Russia's invasion in 2022, the significance of sharing and preserving Ukraine's vibrant history has grown even more urgent.

For John, the opportunity to assist P-LSCA was deeply personal. His interest in Eastern Europe began as an exchange student in the then-Soviet Union during the 1980s. John has since maintained a strong passion for the culture and political landscape of the region. He firmly believes in Ukraine's right to defend its sovereignty and unique cultural identity against external aggression. John sees organizations like P-LSCA as vital in building and maintaining connections between the United States and Ukraine.

Chelsea saw this project as an opportunity to deepen her skillset in assisting nonprofits with incorporation and governance. Having lived in Portland for over a decade, Chelsea was excited to contribute to a cause that fosters community and cultural exchange in her adopted city.

Looking ahead, P-LSCA plans to bring the rich cultural heritage of Lviv to Portland through various exchanges. These will include artists, musicians, dancers and other cultural expressions, like the two cities' mutual passion for coffee. Given that both Lviv and Portland are vibrant, youth-oriented cities in the western regions of their respective countries, there is much they can learn from each other.

Through their pro bono efforts, Foster Garvey attorneys have helped lay the foundation for a lasting relationship between Portland and Lviv, one that will promote understanding and cultural appreciation for years to come.