



Minnesota - China Partnership

明尼苏达州-中国合作关系规划

Introduction

The *Minnesota-China Partnership* is a broad-based, statewide initiative to strengthen Minnesota's longstanding relationship with China. This collaborative venture engages public and private organizations throughout the state in promoting all facets of Minnesota's connections with China including trade and investment, science and academia, arts and culture, and friendship and humanitarian endeavors.

With the state's leadership, the *Minnesota-China Partnership* encourages collaboration and coordination among a broad spectrum of partners to create exciting new opportunities for Minnesota and China.

Objectives

The *Minnesota-China Partnership* has several objectives:

- To promote greater understanding of U.S.-China relations.
- To use the strength of existing relationships and develop new initiatives linking the people of Minnesota and China.
- To raise Minnesota's profile among prominent Chinese government and business leaders.
- To increase economic activity between Minnesota and China.
- To provide extensive training programs and international business development activities to prepare Minnesota companies to conduct business successfully in China.

Strategy

The *Minnesota-China Partnership's* multidimensional strategy includes programs and services related to trade and investment, science and academia, arts and culture, and friendship and humanitarian endeavors.

To help guide the development of the *Minnesota-China Partnership*, the state created an informal association of organizations in Minnesota that currently offer programs and services related to China. Called the **China Partnership Alliance**, this organization meets regularly to share information, coordinate activities, collaborate on projects of common interest, and identify additional opportunities to expand the relationship between Minnesota and China.

The state created a website designed to provide information related to the *Minnesota-China Partnership*. This website (www.minnesota-china.com) includes a calendar of events, links to partner organizations, educational information, research data on China, and more.

The following programs and services are envisioned for the *Minnesota-China Partnership*. Currently, the most robust set of programs focus on “trade and investments.” Additional programs and services for this area and other categories will be added over time.

Trade and Investment Initiatives

Minnesota Trade Office – China

The Minnesota Trade Office joined the Council of Great Lakes Governors Shared China Office in Shanghai in 2005. Commonly referred to as the Minnesota Trade Office – Shanghai, the office provides simple due diligence and general inquiries, market research, agent/distributor searches, one-on-one business matchmaking, trade show support, and special projects. Some services are fee-based.

Technical Assistance

The Minnesota Trade Office and Minnesota Department of Agriculture have staff in St. Paul to help Minnesota companies export their products or services to China. Staff can assist with assessing market potential, accessing market information, determining market entry strategies, identifying potential distributors or partners, providing information on business customs, addressing regulatory issues, leveraging resources, and more.

Trade Missions

The Minnesota Trade Office, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and other alliance partners organize several trade missions annually to promote increased trade with China. While missions primarily will focus on trade development, they also will promote Minnesota’s broader relationship with China, including investment, academia, arts and culture, friendship, and humanitarian endeavors. In addition, Minnesota hosts “reverse” trade missions from China.

China Business Advisory Council

The state will create an advisory council primarily composed of small and medium-sized enterprises to help guide the establishment of trade-related programs and services that meet the needs of Minnesota businesses.

China Practicum

The China Practicum is the keystone of the Minnesota Trade Office’s export education program for China. Offered quarterly, the China Practicum is a daylong immersion course that provides a basic framework for understanding the intricacies of China’s economy, culture and business climate.

China Business Roundtable

The China Business Roundtable is an informal forum for Minnesota companies to share ideas, discuss export problems and solutions, learn from each other, and network with peers. The forum is open for participation to all Minnesota companies interested in sharing their knowledge, experience, and insight in regards to business with China.

China Videoconference Series

In partnership with the U.S. Export Assistance Center (USEAC) – Minneapolis and the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service in China, the Minnesota Trade Office offers videoconferences linking Minnesota companies directly with market experts in China. Using videoconferencing technology, businesses receive first-hand presentations on market opportunities in China and can engage in direct dialogue with in-country trade specialists.

China Legal Series

In coordination with local law firms that specialize in legal issues with China and with university law schools, the state will facilitate a series of presentations on legal matters relevant to conducting business in China.

Hong Kong Business Programs

Hong Kong continues to be a significant gateway to China. The Minnesota Trade Office will partner with the Hong Kong Trade Development Office in Chicago to offer programs on doing business with Hong Kong.

Taiwan Business Programs

In recognition of the unique business environment in Taiwan, the Minnesota Trade Office will arrange programs to address the topic of doing business with Taiwan.

Foreign Direct Investment Program

Chinese entrepreneurs and investors are increasingly turning their attention to international opportunities. With Minnesota's increased interest in attracting foreign investors, coupled with new incentives available through Minnesota's Job Opportunity Building Zones (JOBZ) Program, Minnesota will establish a program to actively seek Chinese investors.

China Business Services Network

Minnesota has an increasing number of business consultants, legal advisers, freight forwarders, and other service providers who have specific expertise in supporting business with China. The China Business Services Network is an initiative to produce a resource list of service providers who are readily available to support Minnesota companies.

MidWest U.S.– China Association

Minnesota recently joined the newly formed Midwest-China Association (MWCA), which is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization that fosters commerce between the Midwestern United States and China. MWCA focuses on government-to-government outreach with corporate and academic support to expand trade and investment. MWCA seeks to increase understanding throughout the Midwest of China's markets and resources, to showcase the Midwest as America's most dynamic region, and to develop knowledge in China of investment opportunities in the Midwest.

China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)

The Minnesota Trade Office established an economic partnership with CCPIT in 1998 to promote the exports of Minnesota products and services to China. Minnesota exporters can benefit from the Minnesota – CCPIT partnership across a broad spectrum: economic intelligence, locating trading partners, Chinese company background information check, distributor search, legal affairs, intellectual property protection, arbitration, etc.

Science and Academia Initiatives

Mandarin Language Training

To better prepare future generations of Minnesotans to effectively interact in a world with China as a global leader, the state established an ambitious objective to expand Mandarin language training throughout K-12 schools. The Commissioner of Education, with seed money from the legislature, is developing a model and curriculum to meet this objective.

Academic Partnerships

The Minnesota Trade Office will coordinate with the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Minnesota Private Colleges to catalogue existing partnerships with Chinese academic institutions. In addition, the state will facilitate encourage the development of additional partnerships and can facilitate introductions with prospective Chinese partners.

Confucius Institute

The University of Minnesota's China Center is negotiating with the Chinese government to open a Confucius Institute in Minnesota. The institute will provide additional resources to enhance the study of Chinese language and culture in Minnesota.

Arts and Culture Initiatives

Cultural Seminar

This new program will offer valuable information and practical hands-on training to help demystify our cultural differences and better prepare Minnesotans to comfortably interact with the Chinese.

Additional programs are being developed and will be added soon.

Friendship and Humanitarian Endeavors

Minnesota-Shaanxi Sister-State Agreement

The State of Minnesota and Province of Shaanxi signed a sister-state agreement in 1982. Each side has committed to strengthening the relationship and establishing a series of activities to acknowledge the 25th anniversary in 2007. The Minnesota Trade Office is the state's contact for the sister-state relationship and has designated the U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association of Minnesota (USCPFA-MN) as the executive agent to manage the relationship.

Sister-City Summit

The State of Minnesota currently has a sister-state agreement with the Province of Shaanxi, and seven Minnesota cities have sister-cities in China. The state will host a summit for the Minnesota parties to share information on their sister-city activities and discuss best practices. The state also will host a joint Minnesota – China Sister-City Summit to promote mutually beneficial opportunities.

Minnesota Ambassador Program

There are a number of Chinese and Minnesotans living in China who can become “ambassadors” to help promote Minnesota’s relationship with China. Between Chinese alumni of Minnesota colleges and universities and Minnesota ex-patriots, there are hundreds of people located throughout China who may be interested in helping Minnesota advance its profile in China. The state will work with its alliance partners to create a list of “ambassadors” and will establish a means for regularly updating them on pertinent developments in Minnesota.

Minnesota Club

The Minnesota-Shanghai Club is a group of Chinese and Americans with connections to Minnesota who meet regularly in Shanghai to share information about life in China and to talk about what’s happening in Minnesota. The state of Minnesota, through the Minnesota Trade Office, will encourage the development of the Minnesota-Shanghai Club and will endeavor to open additional Minnesota Clubs in other Chinese cities with concentrations on Minnesotans.

Additional programs are being developed and will be added soon.

For more information about the *Minnesota-China Partnership* or on scheduled events, contact:

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