

How to Use a Finding Aid

The Austin History Center has a vast number of archival collections, and we use finding aids to describe materials within them to help users access them. This guide explains what a finding aid is, the information it covers, and how it helps with research.

An Introduction to Finding Aids

Finding aids are common tools used in archives to describe collections they have into a coherent summary for public use. There is a lot of information contained in a finding aid, but don't worry — it's nowhere near as overwhelming as it may seem. This guide will walk you through finding aids step by step, breaking down each section into clear definitions so you will feel more comfortable using one, be it at the Austin History Center or in another archival repository.

What Is an "Inventory" of a Collection?

At the top of each finding aid is the title of the collection, underneath which is the phrase "An Inventory of the Collection." In the most basic sense, an inventory is simply an organized list of what can be found in the collection, from textual materials like reports and personal correspondence to photographs, posters, ledgers, and more.

Collection Overview

The Overview is a quick synopsis of the collection. It includes several identifying elements to give the user as much introductory information as possible. The creator, for example, is the person, organization, or other entity that created and collected the materials that make up the collection. "Inclusive Dates" indicates the earliest and latest dates included in the collection. Sometimes, there will be a "Bulk Dates" listed as well, which means a large portion of the materials covers this more specific span of time. If present, this will be found under the inclusive dates.



Austin (Tex.). Economic Development Department. Sister and Friendship Cities Program Records

An Inventory of the Collection

Collection Summary

Creator:	Austin (Tex.). Sister and Friendship Cities Program
Title:	Austin (Tex.). Economic Development Department. Sister and Friendship Cities Program Records
Dates:	1963-2004
Dates (Bulk):	1980s-1990s
Abstract:	The Austin Sister Cities Program fosters friendly relations and understanding between the citizens of Austin and its sister cities around the world. The program promotes Austin's educational, cultural, and economic presence in the international community. The collection, dating from 1963 to 2004, contains meeting minutes, festival and event fliers, certificates, travel itineraries, correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports, memorabilia and photographs documenting the activities of the Austin Sister Cities Executive Committee and the individual committees of each sister city.
Accession number:	AR.1992.014
Quantity:	5.6 linear feet (14 boxes)
Location:	Archives stacks, qAR, Outer Vault, Microform Room
Language:	English, German, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese
Repository:	Austin History Center, Austin Public Library , 810 Guadalupe, PO Box 2287, Austin, TX 78768

The Abstract is a brief summary of the scope and content of the collection, and can contain some biographical information about the creator. This is a fast and easy way to determine if the collection is relevant to your research.

“Accession Number” refers to the unique identifier given to the collection. Rather than using the collection title, this number is how we find and keep track of the collection.

The Quantity gives the amount of space the collection takes up in the History Center, measured in linear feet, followed by the number of boxes or other means of storage it uses.

Collections may be stored in several different areas in the Austin History Center, so the “Location” tag is used to identify where the materials are kept. Sometimes, it may list one location, such as the Archive Stacks; other times, a collection may be split into several sections, such as qAR (which means oversized items that don’t fit in a regular box), Outer Vault (where cold storage items are kept), or Digital Storage (stored on our servers).

A collection may feature materials in more than one Language. As indicated in red in the image above, the Collection Summary will list all the languages included in the collection. Note, however, that not all materials in different languages will have translations.

The “Repository” section gives the physical address of where the collection is housed. More often than not, it will list the Austin History Center, but it could list other institutions located around Austin, like the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History or the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. A collection may also be

housed outside the city, such as the Robert E. Nail, Jr. Archives in Albany, Texas, or the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Library in La Porte, Texas.

This snapshot of information allows users to quickly determine the relevance of the collection to their research.

Administrative History

Information about the individual or organization that produced the collection can be found in the Biographical Sketch or Administrative History, respectively. This discusses historical background, significant events or contributions, current incarnations, etc. In rare cases, "Creator Note" may be seen — this is often used when a collection is created artificially at the receiving institution (e.g., the Austin History Center).

Administrative History

All Sister City programs take place under the auspices of Sister Cities International, a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network that creates and strengthens partnerships between United States and international communities. Sister Cities International was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 and is a 501(c) (3) non-profit which serves as a national membership organization for the individual sister cities across the United States. According to the Sister Cities International website (www.sister-cities.org) "Sister Cities International advances peace and prosperity through cultural, educational, humanitarian, and economic development exchanges. It serves as a hub for institutional knowledge and best practices in the field of citizen diplomacy." The network connects thousands of citizens and volunteers across 140 countries in 6 continents.

The City of Austin's involvement in the Sister Cities Program began in 1965 with the establishment a formal relationship with Belo Horizonte, Brazil as its Sister City (deactivated in 1991). Several years later a relationship with Saltillo, Mexico was established. Additional sister cities added in the 1970s and 1980s were Maseru, Lesotho, South Africa (1978); followed by Lima, Peru (1981); Adelaide, South Australia (1983); and Taichung, Taiwan (1986). In the late 1980s the City recognized that the Sister Cities program was operating without specific missions, goals, objectives, work plans and fiscal guidelines and it was determined (Resolution 19900111-44) that the Austin City Council would create and maintain an International Sister Cities Executive Committee and a set of policies and procedures were created to guide the Committee. In the 1990s and 2000s the sister cities of Oita City, Japan (1990); Koblenz, Germany (1992); Xishuangbanna, Yunan Province of China (1997); Old Orlu, Nigeria (2000); Gwangmyeong, Korea (2000); City of Antalya, Turkey (2008); Angers, France (2011); London Borough of Hackney, United Kingdom (2014) were added. Through the years the City of Austin has participated in educational exchanges at every grade level; building career skills for Austinites through apprenticeships; humanitarian aid projects; and cultural, sustainable development and business/economic development exchanges with its Sister Cities. In addition to Sister Cities, Austin has three Friendship Cities: Siem Reap, Cambodia, Tehuacán, Mexico and Villefranche-sur-mer, France.

Scope and Contents

The Scope and Contents describes the types, nature, and dates of materials in the collection. This is where the substance of a collection is written out, either broken up into multiple series (for larger collections) or as a general overview (for smaller collections). Gaps in documentation, if any, will be listed here as well.

Scope and Contents

The materials in the collection document the work and governance of the Austin Sister City program including engaging in economic development, humanitarian and cultural visits; arranging school and vocational exchange programs; planning special projects and events to celebrate and promote the relationship between the sister cities; fundraising; and creating City of Austin policies and procedures regarding the Sister Cities Program. These activities are represented in meeting minutes, festival and event fliers, souvenir certificates, travel itineraries, correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports and photographs that span the years 1963 through 2004.

As there wasn't a formal program for the transfer of Austin Sister Cities Program records in the past not all of the Sister Cities are represented in the collection, and of those represented, the amount of documentation varies depending upon how proactive the individual Sister City committee was in donating materials.

The **Austin Sister Cities General Materials series** (1980-2000) documents the organization of the program as a whole and relationship with Sister Cities International. Included are articles of incorporation and bylaws of the Austin Sister Cities Foundation; Executive Committee meeting minutes and working papers; reports from the individual Sister Cities committees to the Executive Committee; annual meeting programs, certificates and correspondence from Sister Cities International; and reports, correspondence and newsletters from the Institute of Policy Studies. Of interest are the various drafts of policies and procedures and correspondence regarding the effort in the late 1980s and early 1990s to clarify the goals, objectives, work plans and fiscal guidelines of the program.

Materials in the **Adelaide, Australia series** (1983-2004) documents the visits of Adelaide government officials to Austin and the Mayor Bruce Todd led trade mission to Adelaide as well as other economic development and cultural exchanges that took place in the 1980s and 1990s. These trip documents include correspondence, itineraries, travel details, memorabilia and programs. Also included are Austin-Adelaide Sister City Committee meeting minutes, brochures, proposals and press releases; reports; and newspaper clippings that highlight the activities of the Committee.

The **Belo Horizonte, Brazil series** (1963-1967) series includes a copy of the resolution documenting the establishment of the first Austin Sister City relationship between Belo Horizonte and Austin (now defunct); correspondence from Austin Mayor Lester Palmer to Mayor Oswaldo Pierucetti of the City of Belo Horizonte, Brazil; and newspaper clippings and memorabilia.

The **Gwangmyeong, Korea series** (2000-2001) series contains a limited amount of materials including Austin-Gwangmyeong (Kwangmyong) Sister City proposal, Committee member list, a newspaper clipping and booklet about the first visit the Gwangmyeong delegation made to Austin.

The majority of the **Koblenz, Germany series** (1986-2001) is comprised of materials concerning the logistics and activities of the trade, business, cultural and educational exchanges between the Koblenz and Austin in the 1990s. Included are correspondence, draft and final itineraries, newspaper clippings, photographs and memorabilia. In addition, there are several Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee annual reports, materials documenting the German American Association of Austin's involvement with the Sister City Program and two recordings of Koblenz exchange students receiving honorary citizenship certificates during Austin City Council meetings on March 1, 2001 and April 8, 1999.

Arrangement and Restrictions

Larger collections are usually arranged into categories, or "series," to better organize the information they contain. The number and

names of these categories can be found in the Arrangement section. Smaller collections generally do not have this section in their finding aids.

If there are any procedures or prohibitions placed on the collection, they will be listed in the Restrictions section. Most collections are open to all users, but some require extra steps, such as advanced notice or a special appointment be made before accessing them, or that gloves be worn if fragile objects are contained in the collection. Restrictions on use of materials clarify how or if archival material can be published, who owns the copyright, etc.

Arrangement

Collection arranged into twelve series:

- Austin Sister Cities General Materials
- Adelaide, Australia
- Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- Gwangmyeong, Korea
- Koblenz, Germany
- Lima, Peru
- Maseru, Lesotho
- Oita, Japan
- Old Orlu, Nigeria
- Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Saltillo, Mexico
- Taichung, Taiwan
- Xishuangbanna, China

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Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Open to all users.

Restrictions on Use

The Austin History Center (AHC) is the owner of the physical materials in the AHC collections and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the AHC before any publication use. The AHC does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners. Consult repository for more details.

Index Terms

To provide access points to the collection, we list Index Terms to indicate people, organizations, places, and subjects that feature prominently in the collection. These terms can be Library of Congress subject headings or local terms.

Index Terms

This record series is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Bustamante, Cecilia.
Cooke, Lee.
Cooksey, Frank C.
Todd, Bruce.

Organizations:

Austin (Tex.). Economic Development Department.
Austin Sister Cities Foundation.
Austin Sister Cities Executive Committee.
Sister Cities International.

Places:

Adelaide (S.A.).
Belo Horizonte (Brazil).
Koblenz (Germany)
Lima (Peru).
Maseru (Lesotho).
Oita (Japan)
Old Orlu (Nigeria).
Saltillo (Coahuila, Mexico).
Taichung Hsien (Taiwan).
Xishuangbanna (China).

Subjects:

Cities and towns--International cooperation.
International relations.
Sister cities.

Related Material

Sometimes, there are materials in other collection units of the repository that relate to the materials in the collection. If our repository houses anything that shares a common provenance, creator, or subject matter with the described materials, it will show

up in the Related Material section of the finding aid, categorized by collection.

Related Material

Austin Files

AF Biograph - Bustamante, Cecilia
AF Subject- Sister City Program S2550
AF Subject - International Relations - General I1230 (1)
AF Subject - International Relations - Austin Committee on Foreign Relations TI1230 (10)
AF Subject - International Relations - Friendship International Club TI1230 (15)
AF Subject - International Relations - International Good Neighbor Council TI1230 (19)
AF Subject - International Relations - International Hospitality Council of Austin TI1230 (25)

Manuscript Collections

AR.S.006 Nettie Moore Papers

General Collection

A 303.482 PE Pennington, Gloria Mata. *Austin-Salttillo Sister Cities Association History*. 2001.
A 303.482519 AU Austin-Kwangmyong Sister City Committee. *Austin-Kwangmyong Sister City Proposal*. 2000.

Separated Material

Donated materials can sometimes be removed from their original collection. If so, these items will be moved to another collection (such as putting a printed newspaper into our Periodicals collection), returned to the original donor, or destroyed. This movement, if such occurs, will be found in the Separated Material section.

Separated Material

Deaccessioned - Checks with visible account numbers were removed from the collection.

The majority of the gifts and memorabilia collected during visits were returned to the International Program Coordinator at the COA Economic Development Department.

Administrative Information

Information about appraisal, custodial history, administrative interventions, restrictions, and reformatting is contained within the Administrative Information section. Here, users will find donor numbers, donation dates, proper citation formatting, changes of ownership, and other related information.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Austin (Tex.). Economic Development Department. Sister and Friendship Cities Program Records (AR.1992.014). Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.

Acquisition Information

Donor #: DO/2002/010

Donation Date: 2001-2007

Donor #: DO/1992/058

Donation Date: 1992-2005

Donor #: DO/1995/018

Donation Date: 1995-2006

Processing Information

Final Processing and Finding Aid By: Ali Dzienkowski, Lauren Stealey, Evelyn Veasey, December 2014. Updated by Molly Hults in 2015.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The Detailed Description is where the collection's arrangement is fully expanded. Each series (if the collection has any) is bolded and given a date range, followed by a list of all the collection materials within that series, associated dates, and the locations of the items. Most collections will show a box and folder number, but some materials are kept in separate areas for various reasons, such as size or temperature requirements.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Austin Sister Cities General Materials, 1980-2000

Box	Folder	
1	1	Austin Sister Cities Foundation, Inc. articles of incorporation, 1991-1999
	2	Austin Sister Cities Foundation, Inc. bylaws, 1991, undated
	3	City of Austin Sister Cities program policies and procedures, 1989-1998
	4	Sister Cities Executive Committee meeting minutes and working papers, 1990-2001
Location	COACabinet	
Microform	Drawer 4	
Drawer		Sister Cities Executive Committee meeting minutes (microfilm), 1990-1993
Box	Folder	
1	5	Reports to the Executive Committee, 1991, 2000
	6	Mayor's Task Force on Sister Cities, 1993-1993
	7	Sister Cities International Texas Annual Meeting, 1999
	8	Sister City International - general, 1994-1997, undated
	9	Sister Cities International certificates, 1980-1992
	10	Institute for Policy Studies/Washington, 1992-1994
	11	Medical insurance for visitors/regulations, 1989-1992

Although we try to keep this section in numerical order, this won't always be the case, especially if additions are integrated into the collection. Sometimes, a finding aid will have series with boxes listed out of order, then they return to proper numbering for the rest of the listing.

Box 14			Documentary of Oita-Austin Sister City agreement (video recording), undated
Box 12	Folder		
	3		Membership lists, 1993, 1996
	4		Austin-Oita Sister City Committee, 1991-1992
	5		Austin-Oita Sister City Committee, 1996-1998
	6		Mayoral correspondence, 1990-1997
	7		Honorary citizen certificate, 1999
	8		Pre-Sister City agreement Japan delegation speeches, 1986-1987
	9		Oita delegation visit Austin in 1990, 1990
	10		Oita delegation to Austin in 1991, 1991
	11		Austin delegation to Oita in 1995, 1995-1996
	12		Oita delegation to Austin in 1997, 1997
	13		Oita student exchanges, 1991-1997
	14		Cultural and economic exchanges, 1988-1997
Location	BoxItem		
qAR	049/093		Sister Cities International certificate, undated
Box 14			City Council meeting ceremonies, 2000, undated

Conclusion

Each finding aid is unique to the collection it describes, so there may be little quirks here and there that differ from this guide. But all of our finding aids follow this basic structure to make research manageable for all users.