

Pre-Project and Mission Trip Planning Guide

How to Use This Directory

The directory contains brief outlines of volunteer service opportunities and projects in the Appalachian Regional Ministry multi-state region. The requests are grouped by state, and according to type. Find the project you or your group would feel led to undertake. Then call or write the contact person listed to see if the request has been filled and to get additional planning information. Projects and service opportunities must be negotiated with the sponsor church, association or missions organization.

Some Things You Should Know

The Appalachian Regional Ministry region is diverse socio-economically and culturally. **ALL** volunteers must be willing to work with all types of people in the community. **All** volunteers must work with the local sponsor leadership to support local ministry goals and development.

ALL VOLUNTEERS are personally responsible for providing their own liability and medical insurance. Both sending and receiving groups, organizations or individuals are responsible for their own planning, risks and liabilities.

Unless otherwise provided, volunteers must provide their own local transportation, housing, meals and materials. If housing is provided, be sure to ask if you need to provide your own bedding. Advance planning, frequent communications and fervent prayer between volunteers and sponsor group are essential to a successful missions experience.

Refer to request description for information on:

- description of what needs to be done
- dates and types of volunteers needed
- availability and type of housing and meals
- openness to accept youth and/or adults only
- type of materials and skills needed

Please review the following guidelines when planning for your missions experience.

Goals for volunteer missions are:

1. Meet the needs of the people in the area
2. Spiritually enrich the life of each volunteer
3. Enlarge the missions vision of the volunteer and of the volunteer's church
4. Serve in such a way that bears a positive witness for Jesus Christ

Other considerations include:

1. Age
The recommended age for all volunteers on a mission trip to another location is 15 or older. Exceptions might include children of sponsors, and unusually mature young people under the age of 15 who do not occupy leadership roles.
2. Ratio of sponsors to youth should be not less than 1 to 8.
3. Daily conduct
Orientation and pre-trip planning should help all volunteers understand conduct requirements. Daily conduct should include the avoidance of the use of tobacco products, drugs, alcoholic drinks, vulgar and lewd language, immodest dress, and reckless behavior, etc. All volunteers should conduct themselves daily so as to present a positive Christian witness to everyone around, including other volunteers.
4. Church membership
It is strongly recommended that all volunteers be active church members. Churches are responsible for the supervision, conduct and liability of all volunteers.
5. Local culture
The project area may be culturally diverse and distinct from that of the volunteers. Volunteers must be as sensitive to and appreciative of that culture as if they were in a foreign country. This means

that all volunteers need to listen and learn, be open to new ideas, and be capable of making adjustments to the local culture.

6. Servanthood

The local churches, associations and missions organization are the primary ministers to their area. Volunteers must cooperate with and follow local leadership. Additionally, volunteers will want to comply and cooperate within their team.

7. Finances

Unless otherwise specified all volunteer groups will be responsible for: travel cost, food and lodging, supplies and equipment, materials for construction projects, and group insurance while in transit and while on site. (Information about travel and accident insurance is available from the ARM national office.)

8. Organization

Each volunteer group will want to organize in an effective and detailed manner. The following type leaders may be needed:

- Project director – usually the pastor, other staff minister or an experienced mature lay person.
- Coordinators – for large projects such as; VBS, surveys, health clinics, sports clinics, construction projects, and overall financial coordinator.
- Drivers – only adults with current license, adequate insurance and good driving record.
- Sponsors – for youth, group leaders, teachers, and persons with any needed specialized skill or certification.

9. Planning

All participants need to work together to develop schedules and activities that are mutually acceptable and workable. A pre-project site visit is recommended if at all possible. Then frequent contact by phone, letter or e-mail with the project sponsor is necessary to assure the project will accomplish the desired results. Pre-project planning will help volunteers know how to adjust their plans and schedules to best meet the local ministry situation. This will also assure the volunteers that good planning is being done in advance of their arrival. (Some sponsor groups require pre-project orientation for volunteer group leaders.) The use of mission site videos in pre-project planning can enhance volunteers' understanding and excitement for the project.

10. Involving Your church

Once your church has selected and adopted a project, several actions should be taken.

- a. Initial contact from the local project leadership should be established.
The church or association that made the request should provide you with additional project information and confirm your visit dates and project details. This should include name, address and phone numbers of your contact person.
- b. Your church and mission team should begin praying for the project.
Team members will want to gather frequently for Bible study and prayer in preparation for the missions experience. The whole church will want to begin praying for the mission team, the project sponsor, and for the physical and spiritual project goals. All team members should be trained in personal witnessing.
- c. You will want to make a pre-project visit to the project location.
This visit should be pre-arranged with the project sponsor and contact person. Expenses for this visit should be included as part of the overall mission trip budget. Church has responsibility for financial support including adequate insurance, dependable transportation, and needed materials. Details about the project including all materials and local housing arrangements should be discussed. You may find the check list below a helpful pre-project planning guide.