

One Step at a Time: How to Have a Successful Teaching or Volunteering Experience Abroad

Step 1: Reflect on Why You Are Seeking a Volunteer/Teaching Opportunity Abroad

- Why do you want to volunteer or teach?
- Why do you want to volunteer abroad or teach abroad?
- What type of volunteer/teaching opportunities are you seeking?
- What skills do you already have that will assist you in your volunteer/teaching efforts?
- What skills are you seeking to gain through your volunteer/teaching efforts?
- How will you bring your volunteer/teaching experience back to campus?

Step 2: Research Volunteer/Teaching Opportunities

- Decide on the country or countries in which you would like to volunteer.
- Assess each volunteer program critically. Take note of the program's mission, purpose, and fees (see page 2 for more information on this).
- Ask to speak with program alums and read student evaluations to obtain feedback about their experience in the program.
- Determine if the amount of cultural immersion you will have as a member of the program meets your expectations.
- Request application materials and other pertinent information from programs that interest you.

Step 3: Choose a Volunteer/Teaching program

- Apply to the program.
- Identify the visa requirements for working/volunteering in the country you've chosen to go to.
- After you have been accepted into a program research the country and the environment in which you will be living. Check with the Office of Study Abroad and International Students to see if there are students at CC who traveled to the country or are from the country you are seeking to travel to. Use these students as resources prior to departure.

Step 4: Funding to Volunteer/Teach

- Prepare a budget that accounts for the expenses of the program, travel costs, and touring time outside the structured program.
- Identify and apply for scholarships and grants.
- Seek financial aid and resources both on and off campus.
- Ask the program sponsor if there are financial aid awards for participants.

Step 5: Volunteer & Teach

- Go abroad and have a great time!
- Keep a journal in order to reflect on your experiences.

Step 6: Return to Campus

- Share your experience with the CC community (i.e. become a Study Abroad Peer Advisor, join the International Student Organization, talk to a career advisor about internships and jobs abroad, join the language table discussions, conduct study abroad presentations).

What to Consider When Assessing Teach & Volunteer Abroad Programs

Cost

Determine whether the cost of the program adequately matches what the program offers you. If there is a fee for participation, what is included in the fee? How will you pay for your transportation to the host site? Housing and meals?

Intercultural Experience

What is the level of cultural immersion? Think about your length of stay in the country, your language development, and interaction with foreign nationals.

Language

Is it necessary to speak a language other than English? If so, do you already know how to speak the language or will you have to learn?

Accommodations

What is the living situation like? Will you live with a host family, in a dorm, or at the volunteer work site? Will you be living in a city or in a rural community? How will you get from your housing to the work site?

Personal Safety

How safe is the region/country/city in which you will live? Do other Americans live or work in the area? Will your volunteer responsibilities put your health or safety at risk? (One source of health and safety information is the U.S. State Department. Visit www.travel.state.gov.)

Volunteer Responsibilities

What will be your responsibilities? Are they clearly defined? Are the expectations reasonable for someone with your skills and level of education? To whom will you report?

Other questions to consider

From what aspects of the program will you benefit the most? What is it about this program that appeals to you? What can you bring back to your community once you have returned?