

VINEYARD CINCINNATI WORLD MISSIONS

FAQs for Short Term Mission Trips

FAQ: How Do I Get Started?

First, pick up the following documents from Connections or online at vineyardcincinnati.com/missions:

1. Short Term Trip Overview – what is currently scheduled
2. FAQs sheet – this one right here!
3. Application – Every first-time short term trip participant must fill one out and turn this in by the first due date for the trip you're interested in, along with the deposit for that trip.
4. Sample Contributor Card – You can make copies of this if you're raising support.

FAQ: I found a Trip That Interests Me – What's Next?

The best next step for you is to fill out an application to turn in with a \$50 deposit and, if you are 18 or over, complete the required background check found at my.vineyardcincinnati.com/background-check so the trip leader can contact you about what to do next. If you have questions before taking that first step, contact the trip leader directly to get the conversation going (see Short Term Trip Overview document for contact info).

FAQ: What are the Fees and Deadlines?

We understand that for many, the cost of the trip feels overwhelming. Yet we have seen time and again that if God is calling you to a trip, he will provide the resources to send you. Don't let money concerns alone stand in your way.

The cost of a mission trip includes airfare, in-country transportation, outreach projects, traveler's insurance, as well as food and lodging. Fees do not cover passport, country visa, necessary vaccinations or meals in the airport. We do recommend that if you would like any souvenirs or personal items during travel that you bring along cash for this.

Payment for short term mission trips through Vineyard Cincinnati cannot be made by credit card. Checks should be made payable to Vineyard Cincinnati and sent to the following address.

Vineyard Cincinnati
Attn: Missions Coordinator
11340 Century Circle
Cincinnati, OH 45246

If you are raising support, please have your Senders write **Short Term Missions – (the name of the trip)** in the memo line. **For tax reasons, instruct donors NOT to put your name on the check.** Instead, use a Contributor Card to accompany their check (see Sample Contributor Card).

FAQ: How do I Raise Financial Support?

When raising support it is important to follow IRS and church guidelines that are designed to maintain moral, legal, and ethical standards of giving. These are outlined below. With any questions, please contact the World Missions Department before beginning to raise support for your trip.

GO vs. SEND

There are people in your family, circle of friends, even your church who want to play a role in helping someone across the ocean from them but they aren't able to physically go. They would be more than happy to support you financially or prayerfully and fill the role of SENDER. Then there are those who GO - that's you! There must be a combination of those who GO and those who SEND. Remember, you probably know people in the SEND category who would love to support you to GO. Ask them for their support and allow them the opportunity to "play" in this pool. Samples of support letters from other successful "GOers" are available through the World Missions ministry of Vineyard Cincinnati.

The following guidelines regarding contributions for short-term mission trips sponsored by Vineyard Cincinnati are intended to help participants as they seek to fund or raise financial support for the cost of their trip while at the same time helping participants, donors, and Vineyard Cincinnati operate within the published IRS regulations for charitable contributions.

Please note that the following guidelines reflect Vineyard Cincinnati's understanding of current IRS regulations regarding charitable contributions and how these regulations may apply to the funding of short-term mission trips; however, as with all tax issues, please consult with your tax advisor if you have questions regarding tax deductibility of charitable gifts.

1. Tax-Deductible Gifts

Contributions to Vineyard Cincinnati to help fund the costs of your own or another participant's mission trip are tax-deductible and Vineyard Cincinnati will issue a contribution statement/receipt based on the following criteria:

- The trip's primary purpose is mission work and is sponsored by Vineyard Cincinnati, including determining the timing and nature of the trip, qualifications for participants, and trip costs.
- Vineyard Cincinnati retains control of all funds and is responsible for the disbursement of all trip expenses.
- Donations are made by check and payable to *Vineyard Cincinnati*. (Please note: contributions directly made payable to a participant are not tax-deductible.)

2. Refunds and Cancellations

If a participant cancels or fails to meet pre-established trip guidelines for payment

If a participant is unable to go on their scheduled trip for any reason or fails to make payment by the established trip guidelines, contributions given toward their trip are *not refundable*. However, all contributions, less any administrative and/or other costs incurred (e.g., air ticket cancellation fees, visa fees, etc.), will be placed into Vineyard Cincinnati's *Short Term Missions* account. If, in the future, the participant chooses to go on another ministry trip, they will then have the right to apply to receive funding from the *Short Term Missions* account.

If a trip is cancelled by the church

If a trip is cancelled for any reason by Vineyard Cincinnati, confirmed contributors to that trip will be notified and given the option to either have their contribution returned to them; or have their

contribution be retained by Vineyard Cincinnati to be used in support of Short Term Missions in another capacity at Vineyard Cincinnati's discretion.

3. Overpayments

Any amounts contributed over the published cost of the trip cannot be refunded; instead these contributions will be applied towards general and/or common expenses of the particular trip or be used in another manner in support of *Short Term Missions* at the discretion of Vineyard Cincinnati.

FAQ: What happens after I've applied?

After your application, deposit, and background check are received, you will be contacted by the mission trip leader to schedule an interview. It is required that the team leader or World Mission office interview each applicant to ensure the best possible dynamics for the team. After the application and interview process have been completed, someone will notify you about whether or not your participation on this team has been approved.

Several weeks prior to your trip, your team leader will schedule gatherings for your entire team.

Attendance to these gatherings is required of every participant, as this time is critical for preparation and will include a pre-trip outreach, prayer, cross-cultural ministry orientation, and team development.

FAQ: What about Travel Arrangements?

Passports are required for international trips, and each individual is responsible for securing his or her own passport. The earlier you apply for your passport, the better. You can expedite an application, but a rush application significantly adds to the cost involved. If this is your first time getting a passport, you must apply in person, but you can fill out all the forms in advance and get them online. Check out the US state department to find the passport facility nearest you and to learn the ins-and-outs of the process: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html>.

Airfare will be purchased as a block for the team in order to capitalize on group discounts. For this and several other reasons, accommodating individual requests for redeeming frequent flyer miles is not feasible. Much of the mission experience has to do with being part of a team and seeing what God can do when we all work together, so it enhances the team's experience when we begin and end the trip together as a group. Also, attempts at making individual travel arrangements increases the demand on our host ministry teams, as they are typically needed to pick us up at the airport. Once in our host country, we will continue to travel as a group by bus or van. Because we will stay together as a group during our trip, you should not plan on being able to break away to go exploring on your own.

The group will arrange to either carpool to the airport together or to make arrangements to meet there at least 2 hours before departure to ensure that our group is ready to depart.

Luggage

Luggage restrictions change from airline to airline. Your trip leader will cover specifics with you but expect that you may be asked to bring a bag to transport donations.

Pictures and Videos

We recommend bringing a still and/or video camera to capture your experience. At times, cultural and religious beliefs may limit or prohibit the taking of photos or video. Please respect and adhere to any policies and instructions given by partner agencies on the ground.

Traveling Money

The amount and kind of spending money for each trip varies, but you should plan on bringing some personal cash with you for food or snacks in the airports during travel or for souvenirs. Trip coordinators will guide you through suggested amounts and currency exchange.

Documents Needed to Travel

Documents needed for each trip vary, but all trips outside the US require a valid US passport with at least 6 months remaining before expiration. Additional documents (some of which require a notary seal of your signature to be valid) may include:

- Visa Application with one valid passport photo
- Emergency Form
- Health Form
- Liability Release Form
- Vaccination Card with the Yellow Fever Seal (Received at vaccination site)

FAQ: Will I Need Vaccinations or Insurance?

Not all trips require vaccinations, so this is something your trip coordinator will provide for you once you have declared your intent to join a team. We highly recommend that you seek medical advice pertaining to vaccinations and medicine required by law, before you travel. You can contact your family doctor to see if he/she is able to administer these vaccinations. However, many of them do not carry all of the vaccinations. Many counties have health departments that offer these vaccinations at reduced rates. Travelers' vaccination centers are another easy way to receive all necessary vaccinations in one location and usually provide more travel-related information than you will receive from most family physicians. They are typically more expensive and operate on a cash-only system. Please make these arrangements soon, as some of the vaccinations require a series of shots.

Please visit <http://www.cdc.gov> for a complete and updated list of vaccinations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as up-to-date travelers' guides. You may also get this information through your county's health department.

Trip fees include health and evacuation insurance provided through a specialty risk insurance company in the event of an emergency during the trip. You will be asked to provide information on any health insurance you carry on the mission trip application.

FAQ: How Can I Communicate Back Home?

Communication to the United States is limited. The group leader can purchase a phone card once you arrive. It is possible to use specific types of cell phones while traveling but you must first check with your provider to see if your phone and service provides access. Many phones have to be unlocked before they can work in other countries. Regular access for each individual to call or report back home should not be expected. Please advise loved ones that this is one occasion where no news really is good news! To aid in communication with loved ones, we have set up a blog, allowing family members to check for updates – you can check out previous trip blog entries at <http://vineyardworldmission.com/>. Our group will travel with a phone to be used in emergencies. Methods for your family to get in touch with you during travel in the event of an emergency back home that needs your attention will vary depending on the destination. Please get this information from your trip leader.

FAQ: Who Is Eligible To Go?

Check specific trip details for age requirements as they vary from trip to trip. Other than that, the number one qualification for every team member is a desire to serve, the ability to be flexible with how God might be leading the ministry time, and an eagerness to be part of a true team effort. You know best your physical or energy-level limitations and we ask that you weigh those against the work projects we will be doing. With specific questions about eligibility or participation recommendations, contact the team leader for the trip you are considering.

FAQ: What Happens When We Get Home?

Within a month of returning from a trip, team leaders will schedule a time for the team to come back together. Cross-cultural ministry mission experiences very often have a significant impact on those who participate, and many times team members have conflicting feelings about how to process through what they've experienced while assimilating back into their pre-trip lifestyle. We strongly encourage everyone to engage in this time of reflection, prayer, training, and discernment of what the trip experience may reveal about your future personal ministry and purpose.