



# Vacation Volunteer Guide



A volunteer vacation is not just a trip; it is a dynamic and rewarding way to change yourself and the world. Use this guide to find the perfect volunteer vacation that will allow the opportunity to serve while exploring a unique destination.

Metro Volunteers can also help you connect to your community through our **Impact Program**, with service projects that are scheduled during the evenings and on the weekends. Sign up is easy through the Project Calendar on our website!

Our **TeamWorks Program** brings together community volunteers to participate in service projects that focus on particular issues, neighborhoods or organizations. Each TeamWorks session is about 8 weeks long and involves volunteers in 5 or 6 volunteer activities.

You can search for the perfect volunteer activity on the Metro Volunteers website. Our searchable database lists over 500 volunteer opportunities throughout the Denver metro-area.

The Metro Volunteers **Board Leadership Connection Program** trains and places talented, committed people on the Boards of Directors of nonprofit organizations.

**For more information about any of our programs, please call 303-282-1234 or visit our website at [www.metrovolunteers.org](http://www.metrovolunteers.org).**

## Quick Tips

***Vacation projects cover a broad range – from teaching English in a village in Mekong Delta, to clearing sanitation ditches in Mexico; from building trails in Colorado, to restoring medieval buildings in Provence. Most last a week or two, some run for a month or longer. Accommodations may be a room in a fashionable villa or a hammock strung from rafters; food can be sublime cuisine of local cooks or student-level make-do.***<sup>1</sup>

***You should begin planning your trip no less than three months prior to the planned start of your volunteer experience.***<sup>2</sup>

***Few programs require special skills. Most participants must be 18 years old.***<sup>3</sup>

***If you have found a company with a project that interests you, consider the caveats and other pertinent considerations. You should have access to program alumni, and you should not have to pay for program information.***<sup>4</sup>

***You will be responsible for all of your expenses including purchase of your own airline ticket. Trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended. To secure your reservation, a deposit is required once you have chosen a project. The costs of any visas and immunizations or other pre-trip medical costs to prepare for your vacation are also your responsibility. If you are browsing an organization's website or brochure you should see a detailed breakdown of how program fees are used; a reputable organization will use 90 to 100 percent received towards the various costs of the program.***<sup>5</sup>

***Program fees and travel expenses are usually tax deductible but you need to check with the respective volunteer agency to confirm the details.***<sup>6</sup>

***Not every trip is right for every person. The comfort level of accommodations and the physical stamina required vary widely, so it's worth researching as much as possible in advance. The amount of free time also differs from trip to trip. Sometimes work is done only in mornings, leaving afternoons free; other times, two long work sessions are separated by a short break for lunch.***<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yohay; <sup>2</sup> IndependentTraveler.com; <sup>3</sup> Yohay; <sup>4</sup> IndependentTraveler.com;

<sup>5</sup> IndependentTraveler.com; <sup>6</sup> Heelan; <sup>7</sup> Yohay

## International Vacations



### Cross-Cultural Solutions

Cross-Cultural Solutions provide placement services for volunteer opportunities in Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Peru, Russia, Tanzania, and Thailand. The duration of volunteer vacations is 1-12 weeks.

[www.crossculturalsolutions.org](http://www.crossculturalsolutions.org)

### Explorations in Travel

Explorations in Travel offer volunteers the chance to work in animal shelters, wildlife rehabilitation centers and rainforests around the world.

[www.volunteertravel.com](http://www.volunteertravel.com)

### Foundation for Sustainable Development

Foundation for Sustainable Development offers volunteer and intern opportunities, focused on sustainable development, with their partner organizations abroad.

[www.fsdinternational.org](http://www.fsdinternational.org)

### Global Service Corps

Global Service Corps sends volunteers to Costa Rica, Thailand and Tanzania. Short- and long-term volunteer opportunities and a college internship program are offered.

[www.globalservicecorps.org](http://www.globalservicecorps.org)

### Globe Aware

Globe Aware offers volunteer vacations in Peru, Costa Rica, Thailand, Cuba, Nepal, Brazil, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Jamaica, Romania, Ghana, and Mexico. Globe Aware's week-long volunteer vacations have been compared to being a "mini Peace Corps."

[www.globeaware.org](http://www.globeaware.org)

### Himalayan Dental Relief Project

Himalayan Dental Relief Project brings free dental care to impoverished children and families of Nepal, northern India, Vietnam and Guatemala.

[www.himalayandental.com](http://www.himalayandental.com)

## International Vacations (cont.)

### Projects Abroad

Projects abroad offers volunteer placement services in 100 locations throughout the world.

[www.projectsabroad.org](http://www.projectsabroad.org)

### SCI International Voluntary Service

SCI International Voluntary Service is affiliated with UNESCO. Each year SCI-IVS sends 5,000 volunteers to 50 countries for short- and long-term programs to help reconstruct historical sites.

[www.sci-ivs.org](http://www.sci-ivs.org)

### United Nations Volunteers

In the past 36 years, the United Nations has provided more than 30,000 volunteers to work in over 160 countries. UNV Volunteers are professionals that play key roles in development efforts.

[www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)

### Volunteers for Peace

Volunteers for Peace have international work camps, which bring together volunteers from around the world to live and work in one of 80 countries.

[www.vfp.org](http://www.vfp.org)

### World Teach

World Teach specializes in international volunteer teaching opportunities.

[www.worldteach.org](http://www.worldteach.org)

“Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds.”

- Bill Clinton

## Domestic Vacations



### American Hiking Society

The American Hiking Society offers 70 trail building volunteer vacation opportunities throughout the country.

[www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)

### Hands On New Orleans

Hands On New Orleans offers accommodations and volunteer placement within New Orleans. Projects vary in duration and focus.

[www.handsonneworleans.org](http://www.handsonneworleans.org)

### Landmark Volunteers

Landmark Volunteers offer volunteer vacations preserving historic landmarks and cultural institutions at 19 sites in the United States. Weeklong programs are available for adults and high school students.

[www.volunteers.com](http://www.volunteers.com)

### Points of Light & Hands On Network

Contact the local volunteer center in your travel destination for volunteer opportunities.

[www.handsonnetwork.org](http://www.handsonnetwork.org)



# International and Domestic Vacations



## Break Away

Break Away works with a network of 100 schools and 400 nonprofit organizations to provide access to alternative breaks.

[www.alternativebreaks.org](http://www.alternativebreaks.org)

## Earth Corps

Earth Corps offers domestic and international volunteer vacation opportunities restoring parks and open spaces.

[www.earthcorps.org](http://www.earthcorps.org)

## Earthwatch Institute

Earthwatch Institute engages people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment. [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)

## Global Citizens Network

Global Citizens Network offers short-term volunteer projects in the United States and around the world. The volunteer projects give volunteers an understanding of local issues by pairing them with community organizations at their destination.

[www.globalcitizens.org](http://www.globalcitizens.org)

## Global Humanitarian Expeditions

Global Humanitarian Expeditions is a nonprofit organization that connects volunteers with organizations around the world to provide humanitarian assistance.

[www.humanitariantours.com](http://www.humanitariantours.com)

## Global Volunteers

Global Volunteers offers volunteer vacations in the US and abroad. The vacations range from 1-3 weeks, with an extended stay option for 24 weeks. Projects are located in 20 countries around the world.

[www.globalvolunteers.org](http://www.globalvolunteers.org)

## Idealist

Idealist offers a searchable database of volunteer, internship and job opportunities throughout the world.

<http://www.idealists.org/if/as/vol>

## I-to-I

I-to-I provides a wide array of volunteer travel, meaningful tours, and volunteer teaching opportunities. In addition, I-to-I offers Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) courses.

[www.i-to-i.com](http://www.i-to-i.com)

## Network for Good: VolunteerAbroad

Network for Good offers a searchable database of volunteer vacation opportunities. The search options include: location, type of volunteer work and project duration.

<http://www.networkforgood.org/OffsiteFrame/?PageID=100208>

## Sierra Club

Sierra Club offers over 350 volunteer vacations a year with an environmental focus.

[www.outings.sierraclub.org](http://www.outings.sierraclub.org)

## United Planet

United Planet provides volunteer opportunities for both skilled and unskilled volunteers of all ages to participate in projects ranging from 1-52 weeks in 50 countries worldwide. [www.unitedplanet.org](http://www.unitedplanet.org)

## The Volunteer Family

The Volunteer Family provides a guide of family-friendly volunteer vacation opportunities.

[www.thevolunteerfamily.org](http://www.thevolunteerfamily.org)

“In every community there is work to be done. In every nation there are wounds to heal. In every heart is the power to do it.”

- Marianne Larned

## Resources

### **Collins, Joseph, Stefano Dezerega & Zahara Heckscher. How to Live Your Dream of Volunteering Overseas**

- This book is a resource to plan your volunteer vacation from start to finish.

### **Heelan, Charis Atlas. Frommer's "Get More From Your Vacation by Volunteering"**

- Informational article with tips on vacation volunteering.

### **McMillon, Bill. Volunteer Vacations: Short-Term Adventures That Will Benefit You and Others**

- This book has regularly updated it's volunteer project listing, since 1987.

### **Yohay, Jo Broyles. New York Times, "Practical Traveler; Volunteering on Vacation"**

- This article outlines several vacation programs that have a specific focus.

### **IndependentTraveler.com "Volunteer Vacations: On Your Next Trip, Give of Yourself"**

- This article outlines specific details to consider when planning a volunteer vacation.

### **Transitions Abroad**

This website provides an extensive list of resources for individuals looking to volunteer or work overseas.

[www.transitionsabroad.com](http://www.transitionsabroad.com)

### **Lonely Planet**

Lonely Planet guidebooks and website offers travel advice, detailed maps, travel news, popular message boards and health information.

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)

### **Let's Go**

In addition to its guidebooks, Let's Go created *Beyond Tourism*, a resource which helps travelers research and plan trips to volunteer, study, or work abroad.

[www.letsgo.com](http://www.letsgo.com)

### **U.S. Department of State**

Detailed information for U.S. Citizens traveling abroad; includes information about safety for Americans abroad and how to obtain passports and visas.

<http://travel.state.gov/>



## Agency Spotlight: Hands On New Orleans



Hands On  
NEW ORLEANS

When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast, Hands On Network made an immediate and serious commitment to address the devastation and support Gulf recovery efforts through targeted volunteer action. Thus, Hands On New Orleans was founded.

Since Katrina and Rita, Hands On New Orleans has mobilized over 5,000 volunteers



to provide over 400,000 hours of service, deploying about 100 volunteers a day, on average. Hands On volunteers execute home reconstruction and community revitalization projects, including: supporting the reopening and ongoing needs of schools, facilitating mural art projects throughout the city, building capacity in other nonprofits, and addressing the special needs of marginalized communities.



Though the hurricanes and flood were over 2 years ago, New Orleans needs as much help as ever. For more information on how to volunteer with Hands On New Orleans, visit [www.handsonneworleans.org](http://www.handsonneworleans.org).