

# Guidelines for Teams – Seeking a Host Church and/or Mission work within the USA.

## Preparing to Send Volunteer Teams

Select locations and potential projects.

- Projects in churches within the Baltimore-Washington Conference, contact Rev. Joan Carter-Rimbach, email: [PastorJoanCR@verizon.net](mailto:PastorJoanCR@verizon.net), Phone (301) 854-2324 ext 11 or (410) 206-8737 (cell)
- Projects outside the Baltimore-Washington Conference:
  - United Methodist Volunteers in Mission USA Project List: [http://umvimnej.org/what\\_you\\_can\\_do/send-a-team/usa-mission-opportunities.html](http://umvimnej.org/what_you_can_do/send-a-team/usa-mission-opportunities.html)
  - Organized Teams in 2016: [http://umvimnej.org/what\\_you\\_can\\_do/send-a-team/departing-teams.html](http://umvimnej.org/what_you_can_do/send-a-team/departing-teams.html)
  - Purchase UMVIM insurance: <http://umvimnej.org/mission-insurance/insurance-faqs.html>

### Selection is a project.

- It is essential to contact appropriate local host to verify that the project is needed, and is a priority to the local church.
- Ensure that project fits talents and skills of team.
- Agree on possible dates (consider pre-site visit, special celebrations).
- Note any special considerations for team members.

### Identify a team Leader for your VIM Trip

#### Essential qualities of a team leader:

- Christ-focused
- Commitment to mission work of the church
- Previous experience as team member or co-leader
- Flexibility and openness
- Interpersonal skills
- Able to make decisions and include team in process
- Able to organize and delegate responsibilities
- Caring, culturally sensitive, and patient

## Prepare for the VIM Trip:

### Maintain clear communication with host.

- Establish the best form of communication between host and sending mission (consider and plan for additional cost to host).

- Make every effort to ensure communication occurs in a timely manner.
- Receive formal letter of invitation for the purpose of securing travel documents.

**Request the following information:**

- Anticipated costs of housing, meal/food arrangements, & transportation
- Maximum number of team members which can be accommodated by host
- Working environment
- Inquiry regarding appropriate gifts to be offered to community

**Hold Fundraising events or give each member of the team a total amount needed per person for the VIM trip (cost includes, cost of materials/tools for the job, housing costs, meals and transportation.**

**Promote mission trip.**

- Share excitement with sponsoring group(s).
- Publicize for recruitment of team members and project funds.

**Identify potential team members and recruit.**

- Be Christ-focused and committed to mission work of the church.
- Distribute application forms (may include personal skills survey, talents, hobbies, and letter of reference from pastor).
- Set deadline and interview dates (if necessary - some Conferences use a selection committee).

**Covenant with team members.**

- Flexibility and openness to other cultures and ways of worship
- Willingness to serve in friendship and mutuality with host and host church
- Commitment to orientation and training
- Willingness to follow the guidance of the team leader

**Coordinate and plan.**

- Inform team members of recommended immunizations
- Clear, itemized budget
- Insurance - VIM approved (e.g. GBGM, SEJ)
- Fund-raising activities/events

**Emergency preparation (team leader)**

- Be aware of medical facilities in the area.
- Know health needs of team members (allergies, chronic conditions, etc), and person to contact in case of emergency.
- Be educated regarding medical system in host locale.
- Secure Embassy and Consulate locations and phone numbers.

- Have an evacuation plan in case of severe weather, social upheaval, or medical emergency, etc.

### **Continue communication with host.**

- Determine tool and supply needs (consider tool bank for local community).
- Determine appropriate gifts for and methods of distribution in the community.
- Check on labor relations and building codes.
- Determine means, timing, and accountability of disbursement of contributions to project.
- Discuss safety and security issues.
- Share copies of publicity with host.

### **Begin orientation and training of team.**

#### **"Know Before You Go"**

- Communicate purpose of mission, proper attitude/approach to mission. Note: We are all participants in God's mission
- Communicate Volunteers In Mission philosophy
- Emphasize mission experience and relationships - not meeting goals
- Flexibility
- Guests... accepting an invitation to help/serve others
- Encourage journaling.

### **Discuss safety and health issues.**

- Immunizations required
- Work-site safety

### **Emphasize cultural sensitivity/awareness, customs of host location.**

*Note: if possible, invite a national or previous missionary to share with team.*

- Approach to religion, church, and Methodism in country
- Values, traditions
- Acceptable dress, behavior reflective of host community
- Meals, food, eating customs
- Country background, geography, economics

## **Before Team Leaves**

### **Communicate with host to verify all arrangements.**

- Send demographics of team to host (including number, age, and gender - noting those traveling with spouse).
- Discuss site preparation upon arrival and projected tools/equipment needed.
- Confirm transportation plans and reservations with host.

- Confirm lodging/meals (identify special dietary requests and health needs).
- Have clear understanding of host expectations.
- Discuss and agree upon transmittal of project funds.
- Confirm with host joint worship opportunities.

**Continue team orientation and training.**

**Provide spiritual growth and fellowship experiences.**

- Devotionals, Bible study (groups use various approaches: designated chaplain, devotions prepared in advance, spontaneous worship, etc.)
- Team-building exercises
- Plan dedication and sending forth service for team

**Prepare to relate to host church and community.**

- Show Christian witness and sensitivity.
- Do appropriate distribution of gifts, clothing, money, supplies.
- Discuss appropriate etiquette for photography.
- Be careful of making promises or offering invitations without clearance from officials in home conference.

**Involve sending/sponsoring congregation(s) in the mission.**

- Keeping sending congregation(s) informed of all team plans
- Prayer needs
- Financial and in-kind needs
- Inclusion in service of Sending Forth and Return

## 2-3 Weeks Before Team Leaves

**BEFORE TEAM LEAVES**

**Finalize travel plan.**

- Confirm all airline reservations.
- Set reunion date for team.
- Distribute a team list with phone numbers and addresses with copies to Jurisdictional/Conference/District Coordinators.

**In final communication with host confirm:**

- Travel and meeting arrangements
- Exact nature of work to be done (any changes)
- Materials accessible as planned (use local merchants when possible) housing arrangements
- Currency exchange

## **Arrange to pack all non-personal items.**

- Tools, team supplies, Bible school materials (if appropriate), gifts, medicine (if appropriate)
- Send copy of packing list to host for customs clearance (as communication permits)

## **As Team Travels**

### **Team leader reminders**

- Have team leader travel with list of participants.
- Have appropriate travel documents for minor participants.
- Carry letter of invitation to be used at customs.
- Include first-aid kit.
- Continue team building, especially if team arrives from various geographical locations.
- Remind team of their role as servants in God's mission and as guests in host locale.

### **Individual reminders**

- Remind team members to carry Bibles
- Keep medications in original containers
- Carry identification card (include: host information, personal & medical information)

## **When Team Arrives**

- Greet hosts at port of entry.
- Assist with loading of luggage to transportation vehicle(s).
- Attend pre-arranged on-site orientation for team presented by host Celebrate new possibilities for Christian community.
- Notify embassy / consulate that team is in country as appropriate (if directed).

## **During Team's Visit**

### **Communication**

#### **Team leader with host leader**

- Communicate frequently with host that all plans/arrangements are working.
- Transfer project funds, and funds for in-country expenses, if not previously sent. Note: remember to request receipts for monies spent.

#### **Team with community**

- Ensure that team is relating spiritually and positively with host church and community.

- Work with host to include team with local Christian community in worship and witness to celebrate the joy of mission and the joy of diversity (note: alternate service may be developed in areas where religion cannot be openly practiced).
- Be prepared to share faith experience(s) if requested.
- Pastors be prepared to preach.
- Include host and locals in some devotionals.

### **Being a team**

- Provide time for daily devotionals and team meetings.
- Begin each day at work site with prayer.
- Include a time for team processing at the end of each day.
- Encourage reflection upon own culture in light of new experience.
- Continue to encourage patience and flexibility.
- Team members should be informed and involved as changes evolve.

### **Ensure a quality mission (in all fields).**

- If construction, adhere to local construction codes; or if medical, adhere to World Health Organization to refrain from shipping medical supplies near or beyond expiration date.
- Daily work-safety reminders.
- Work assignments to team members based on skill, knowledge, willingness to learn.

Coordinate cultural opportunities with host.

- Set apart time for cultural, historical sharing, and local sites (if appropriate). Remember, building relationships are as significant as completion of "task."

### **Confirm transportation arrangements.**

## **Before Departure of Team from Host Site**

### **Plan a time for sharing with host and local coordinator(s).**

- Include a time of mutual assessment of experience.
- Invite the host to share a written assessment of mission.

### **Finances**

- Review expenditures and receipts with host.
- Settle incidental expenses that have occurred during mission.

### **Plan with host a time for good-byes.**

- Include a time of celebration and/or worship according to cultural norms.
- Accept gifts graciously as this is a time of mutual celebration.
- Establish ways to stay in touch with host community.