

TEACHER FAQ'S

Why do I need to pay to volunteer?

You may wonder why you are being asked to *pay* to volunteer. The following is a breakdown of all the expenses your trip fee will cover;

1. \$10.00 a day paid to your host family. Though this doesn't seem like much, it is equal to most Ghanaians' weekly salary. Providing a local family with this amount of income will be a much-needed boost to lift them out of poverty.
2. Part of your fee will go to covering our school programs and office costs such as web-hosting, phone services, and all informational print-outs.
3. Transportation from the airport in Accra to your host family's village.
4. Salary to the local worker who will be overseeing your stay.
5. All arrangements will be made for you to begin teaching in a schooling situation that meets your needs within the first few days of your arrival.
6. Peace of mind knowing you are travelling with a reputable and caring program that has your best interest in mind!

What will I eat while I'm in Ghana?

Almost all Ghanaian food is extremely spicy. If you do not like spicy food be sure to let your host mother know. She will do her best to satisfy your tastes. Here are a few staples of Ghanaian food;

A favorite dish in Ghana is fufu. Fufu consists of yams, cassava and/or plantain. All types of Fufu are pounded with a huge wooden mortar and pestle until the foodstuffs gluttonize into a big ball of, well, fufu.

The staple food for most people in Northern Ghana is TZ. It is a thickened porridge ball made from millet or corn flour. It is served with a stew. There are many different types of stews including okra, bean leaf, and alayfu (a coarse green leafy vegetable).

Starches, carbohydrates, and vegetables are usually readily available. Protein, however, is more scarce (unless you do not mind eating smoked, unrefrigerated fish). We suggest bringing along a supply of protein bars, peanut butter, beef jerky, canned tuna, etc if you are concerned about getting enough protein in your diet during your stay.

Clean drinking water is also readily available in the way of “bagged” satchels. These bags take the place of our bottled water. The water within them is sanitary and pure. You will learn fast how to bite off the corner of the bag and suck out the delicious water!

How much will this trip cost me?

Trip Length	Trip Fee
2 weeks	\$500.00
3 weeks	\$550.00
4 weeks	\$600.00
5 weeks	\$650.00
6 weeks	\$700.00
7 weeks	\$750.00
8 weeks	\$800.00

The full balance of the program fees must be paid at least 30 days before the program start date. If the full balance is not paid within 30 days of the program start date, your trip may be canceled.

Will I be safe?

Safety is a top priority in our choice of volunteer locations. Ghana is considered one of the most peaceful countries in Africa. We maintain a toll-free 800-number in the US, for friends and family to contact us for any urgent matters. Our local in-country staff and home office monitor news reports to stay informed of any safety concerns. We will also monitor the travel advice and safety warnings issued by the U.S. State Department and the U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

What will I teach?

What you teach depends completely on you. If you prefer to teach a certain age group or specific subject we will do our best to find a placement that meets your specifications. You may choose to focus just on teaching English or teaching a specific subject area you are well versed in. Some volunteers choose to spend their time running classes that consist of only singing and dancing! Whatever you decide to teach will undoubtedly be welcomed with gracious smiles by your students.

Will there be teaching supplies available?

Supplies in Ghana are scarce. We recommend you bring with you any specific supplies you think you will need for the subject you will be teaching. If you are placed at a school, you will most likely have teacher’s manuals available though the students may not have their own copy. Any supplies you can gather before your trip will be helpful ~ even if they are not used by you they can be left at the school for later use. The Future Leaders of Ghana does get some donations of notebooks, pencils, crayons, etc. and will most likely send you with some of these when you go.

Can I still volunteer even if I'm not a teacher?

Definitely! No matter what you do in your daily life, chances are you have something to offer the children of Ghana. Can you paint, plant, build, sing, dance, coach, organize, use computers, love, sew, heal, photograph, film? Then you make a great candidate to volunteer!

How long can I stay?

Since this program is geared towards teachers, a typical stay is anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months. We would be happy to set up a more long-term placement if you are interested, however trips shorter than 2 weeks are not advised. *Please note that the trip fee increases as your trip length increases.

Will I be able to contact my family?

Although we cannot guarantee it, cell phone reception throughout the country is quite good. You may choose to bring your own phone and purchase inexpensive calling cards when you get to Ghana. There are also countless internet café's available throughout the country. Keep in mind that though there is internet access in Ghana, it may not be close at hand and is not always reliable.

Do I need any immunizations? The only vaccination required for entry into our host countries is Yellow Fever for Ghana. We urge participants to consult with a travel doctor at least two months before arriving in the host country, to discuss any necessary immunizations and for advice on staying healthy while traveling. We also suggest that you visit the Centers For Disease Control website for traveler's health information

Can I arrange my own accommodations and meals? Yes -- You are free to do so. However, you must still pay the full program fees due for your program.

Is the program fee tax-deductible? The program fees and all expenses related to your volunteer program, including airfare, are tax-deductible for US taxpayers. However, any monies given by donors for your specific volunteer program are NOT tax-deductible for the donors. Please consult a tax professional regarding your individual tax situation. Cosmic Volunteers is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

How old do I need to be? Participants must be at least 18 years of age on their program start date, or 17 with parental consent.

How much is the deposit? We will start to process your application only when we receive the deposit, which is due within seven (7) calendar days of the date you submit the online application. After seven days, we will notify you by email that your application has been canceled. The deposit is non-refundable, unless we are unable to find a placement for you. Deposits for all trip lengths are \$200.00. The deposit counts toward the total balance of your program fees.

Who will I live with?

In most cases you will be living with a local host family. This will not only be a family you have never met before, but a family that comes from a cultural background entirely different from yours, with vastly different practices, attitudes, approaches to life, and language(s).

Am I ready to volunteer abroad?

Take a minute to ask yourself if you would be able to handle these situations...

Being approached by a group of needy children begging you for help.

Being the only westerner among a village of 1,500 people in rural Ghana.

Taking a 2-hour walk to reach the nearest Internet café.

Riding from the airport in Accra with our Coordinator late at night and seeing thousands of homeless people sleeping on sidewalks, under bridges, and on trash heaps.

Sightseeing in Ghana on the weekends, and having the bus passenger seated next to you ask intimate questions about your job, salary, romantic life, and family?

Squatting to urinate in a ditch by the road

Volunteering abroad is not for everybody. It can be a very stressful, difficult undertaking for even the most seasoned travelers, psychologically, physically, and financially.

We do not accept everyone who applies to our programs. Our volunteers need to be creative, enthusiastic and resourceful self-starters.

We simply must be selective due to the nature of our host country and program, which – while safe – can be very difficult to handle because of the culture shock as well as the relatively unstructured nature of many of the programs.