

GEORGETOWN CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Short-term Missions Trip Policy

Purpose Statement

This policy provides the process for overseeing short-term missions trips and projects of Georgetown Christian Reformed Church (GCRC). Short-term missions work can take many forms, but it will always connect back to the mission of the church.

When we participate in short-term missions projects, we show love and care for others and commit ourselves to fulfill the Great Commission to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and advance the Kingdom of God in word and deed for the transformation of lives and communities.

Engaging in short-term missions trips is in keeping with our church's vision statement: "Equipped to Love and Serve" and our theme Bible verse "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works..." Ephesians 2:10

Project Approval Process

All short-term missions trips of the church must be approved by GCRC Council prior to leaving on the trip and before fundraising commences. Proposals will be considered in the context of the church's overall short-term missions strategy.

A proposal for the short-term missions trip must be submitted to GCRC Council and should include the following:

- an overview of the mission as well as the goals and activities to be carried out
- the project approximate start and end date
- the location of the project and responsible contact person at project location
- an evaluation of risk and health & safety considerations. See the Government of Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories by destination <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- the estimated number of participants
- the required travel documentation and immunizations
- the estimated total budget for the trip
- an outline of possible fundraising plans

Short-term missions trips may be planned in partnership with organizations like EduDeo who work with teams throughout the whole process – from team formation to post-trip debriefing. They work closely with the team to take care of all flight booking, accommodations, transportation, and other logistics. EduDeo also offers cross-cultural learning resources, presentations for the supporting community, fundraising ideas, and encouragement.

Fundraising

All participants will be required to assist in raising funds for the trip.

All fundraising activities/events are coordinated through the trip team leader and approved in advance by GCRC Council.

In the event that sufficient funds are not raised, the Team leader can recommend to Council as to whether or not the trip will proceed.

Typically, team members are informed from the outset that they are personally responsible for covering any shortfall equally.

Participant Requirements

The team leader and Children and Youth Discipleship Director (CYDD) will approve those who will form part of the short-term missions team, subject to appropriate funding being in place.

If the short-term missions trip is planned in partnership with an organization like EduDeo, the partner organization manages the application forms.

If not, each person participating in a short-term missions trip must complete application form(s) which will include:

- personal and emergency contact information
- a list of experience and skills
- expectations of Short-term Missions Trip participants
- parent or guardian certification - consent if under the age of majority
- applicant certification
- passport and date of birth

References and/or an interview may also be requested.

Adult participants aged 18 and over must provide a security check (police check) that includes vulnerable sector screening.

Participants must check with their family physician to discuss/receive recommended and/or mandatory immunizations for destination(s) and confirm that their medical history and/or pre-existing medical conditions do not prevent them from safely travelling to or from their destinations, while at those destinations, and while participating in proposed travel activities. Recommended and/or mandatory inoculations/medication for the destination(s) may be provided at a travel immunization clinic.

An International Volunteer Informed Consent and Release of Liability Waiver form, customized for the trip, will be reviewed with and signed by each participant and participant's parent/guardian (for youth team members are 17 years of age and younger) by the missions trip team leader.

Each participant is required to have international travel health insurance with no exclusions for travel destination(s) or for known pre-existing medical conditions.

Team Training and Orientation

Effective trips require preparation, both spiritually and in practical terms. All team leaders will receive mandatory training. Participants must make every effort to attend all team training and orientation sessions. If a team member is unable to attend all sessions, the missions trip team leader will determine if the team member can be permitted to participate in the project.

Reporting and Debriefing

The missions trip team leader may either complete a written report to the GCRC Council on the missions trip activities within one month of returning home and/or the team may choose to share their experience to the congregation via a presentation.

When partnering with organizations like EduDeo, the partner organization manages the finances. If not, log books and receipts to support expenditures must be submitted to the church bookkeeper within two weeks of returning home.

The missions trip team leader and/or CYDD will also debrief with the team as soon as possible after returning home.