



INFORMATION FOR VOH MISSION TEAMS

POLICY & PROCEDURES

WHETHER THIS IS YOUR FIRST TRIP OR ONE OF MANY TO HAITI PLEASE REVIEW THIS FOR UPDATES AND CHANGES.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Village of Hope, Inc. is to enhance the educational, health and spiritual development in the community of Ganthier, Haiti through financial support to ministries dedicated to meeting these needs. Additionally, we foster compassion and support for these ministries by providing logistical support to short term missionary teams willing to serve in Haiti.

The Village of Hope, Inc welcomes mission teams to visit Village of Hope (VOH) in Haiti. To enhance the experience, teams are encouraged to incorporate devotional and fellowship time into their planning for their mission trip. Also, there will be time for individual and group devotions while in Haiti. A primary goal of a mission team is to demonstrate to the Haitian people Christ's love for them through us.

Preparation: Once a group of individuals decides that they want to participate in a short term mission trip to VOH, the group identifies a team leader. The team leader will serve as the contact person who will schedule the trip with the VOH Director and Assistant Directors/Team Coordinators (TC).. When team members are coming from different areas, there needs to be one person assigned as the team leader for the trip. The team leader will receive the documents required for registration from the VOH staff Additional responsibilities of the team leader are at the end of this document in the section *Team Leader Responsibilities*

Effective for teams scheduled in 2016, a \$300 non-refundable reservation fee is required within 30 days of making the reservation. Upon receipt of the reservation fee, the team leader and the VOH TC and VOH Director will begin the registration process. The reservation fee must be mailed to VOH, Inc. 300 East Yamato Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431. At that time, the dates will be secured for the team.

The team meetings prior to the trip will provide a forum for discussion of trip details and fund raising efforts while strengthening personal relationships. The connections that are fostered through these initial meetings will grow as the mission experience progresses.

In preparation, please research information about the history of Haiti. This will enrich your experience here. The VOH staff enjoys sharing their knowledge and experience. Team members are encouraged to engage in conversations with them. We are guests in Haiti. The customs, values, and priorities here are different in many ways, some very subtle. Be flexible and tolerant of the differences; recognize and validate the similarities with the Haitians in whom you will be interacting.

In collaboration with team leaders, the --- Haiti directors determines what the team will do during their visit. Unfortunately, VOH can no longer fulfill special requests for visits to programs outside of our ministries.

There are certain teams that come for specific projects or events, such as Mobile Medical teams, the Enrichment team (a team that provides unique classes for the students during their summer vacation, and the Christmas team (prepares and distributes Christmas gifts for students and staff).

Some teams will require additional fund raising efforts in addition to the travel costs to cover the expenses of the focus of their mission experience. If a mission team requires additional funding, we will discuss this with the team leader in advance to determine their interest in raising support for any activities. Such activities are usually those tasks or jobs that go beyond the scope of our routine maintenance and are not necessarily funded in the current budget. Or, there may be activities that a team wishes to do, such as conduct a “visiting Bible school” or provide a week of evangelism and community outreach. [Click to read the VBS Guidelines](#)

Mobile Medical teams require significant advance preparation. *The Mobile Medical Team Guidebook* is sent to team leaders who are interested in bringing a mobile medical team. The team consists of doctors, other prescribers (physician asst’s, nurse practitioners), dentists, dental hygienists, nurses as well as lay people who will provide primary care in areas served by the VOH Health Center. Team leaders are asked to distribute that booklet along with this one to mobile medical team members.

When and how long: Trips are scheduled through the VOH Director in Haiti via e-mail to villageofhopehaiti.com with a cc to vohteamcoordinator@gmail.com. The average length of stay is five days. Some teams come for three to five days just to explore the ministries supported by VOH.

Team Size: The optimum size for a mission team is from 8-20 participants, with a maximum of 20. Team members are often formed from the same organization or geographical area but it is possible to have members join together from different churches or geographical areas.

Age: Age of team members has ranged from 12 years to 82. Physical health and emotional maturity are more critical factors than age. For youth groups, the minimum age is 12 and there must be one adult per three youth.

General Health Considerations: Team members with chronic health conditions (i.e., high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, major dietary restrictions, etc.) or pregnant women should consult their physician prior to committing to the team. Team members must be in relatively good health to ensure their safety. The heat, humidity and rugged travel conditions in Haiti demand agility and stamina. Medical care consistent with American standards or expectations is not readily accessible.

Team members taking prescription medications should bring enough medications for their time in Haiti **plus enough additional supplies to last 7-10 days more than the expected length of the trip**. Medications must be labeled with the patient’s name, drug name, dosing information (either on the packaging itself or on a piece of paper). Do not pack personal medications in checked luggage in case luggage is lost or delayed.

Any special health issues a team member may have must be communicated to the Field Director through the team leader prior to committing to the team.

Vaccinations: Special vaccinations are not required in order to travel to Haiti. However, current tetanus and Hepatitis A&B are highly recommended. Contact your local health department or personal physician for their recommendations.

Malaria Prevention: Malaria prophylaxis, such as chloroquine, is strongly recommended. Team members should consult with their physicians for a prescription for the antimalarial drug of their choice. Use of insect repellent while in country is strongly recommended.

Financial Information: Team members and/or the team's organization are responsible for the following:

- Ground transportation in the USAir travel to and from Haiti. Trip Insurance is \$30.00 per person for coverage up to thirty days. Room and board at Hope House is **\$70.00** per person per night in Haiti (beginning Jan 2017). This includes all ground transportation in Haiti, lodging, and meals. Each person must pay a \$10.00 tourist fee in cash in Haiti prior to going through customs. Cash will be needed for luggage carts if needed (In Haiti, the fee is \$2.00 USD each cart). Teams are offered the opportunity to eat at a local Haitian restaurant during their stay. The approximate cost is \$30.00 USD per person. This includes tip and non-alcoholic beverages. Extra cash for miscellaneous items and souvenirs. (some small bills 1, 5, 10 are recommended)
- Some teams like to leave a tip for the Hope House staff. The staff works hard to make you as comfortable as possible during your stay in Haiti. We have six employees at Hope House.
- In determining how much cash to bring, please note that there are no reliable ATM machines in Haiti at this time.
- A mobile medical team fee is assessed based on the number of prescribers/providers (will be prescribing medications) on the team. Please refer to *The Mobile Medical Guidebook* for more information.
- Certain activities may require additional funding. These activities are not mandatory for mission teams. However, many teams look forward to supporting a specific endeavor both financially and through providing labor to complete the task. These activities will be discussed with the team leader.

The team leader is responsible for submitting the reservation fee within thirty days of confirming the date with the VOH Field Director. Also, the team leader is responsible for submitting fees for the trip insurance and room and board 90 days prior to arrival in Haiti.

Trip Insurance: Major medical insurance is required by VOH for teams coming to Haiti. The insurance covers medical emergencies and emergency evacuations from Haiti if it becomes necessary. Each team member is financially responsible for the travel insurance expense. The team leader will collect the \$30.00 fee along with the room and board fee. This does *not* cover flight or trip cancellations or flight delays.

Passports: Passports are required. It can take 6-8 weeks to obtain a new passport. Passport information is available at: <http://travel.state.gov/> Make sure passport is current, has two pages for visa stamps, and does not expire three to six months prior to your trip.

Each person should make two copies of his/her passport. Leave one copy at home with someone who has access to it. Bring the second copy but carry it separately from the passport.

US Embassy: Team members are requested to register their visit to Haiti with the US embassy. This can be done online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. Each person registers individually.

Arrival: The Port Au Prince (PAP) airport has been renovated. Arriving flights are directed to Immigrations and Customs with a stop at baggage claim before proceeding through Customs. Prior to Immigration, a tourist fee of \$10.00 will be collected. It is recommended that travelers provide exactly

\$10.00. You will be given a receipt and a stamp that is affixed to your Immigration form. The lower portion of the immigration form must be completed and signed before approaching the Tourism Window

It is preferable that all team members arrive and depart on the same flight. As we are all aware, life in Haiti can change from day to day due to the less than stable government, weather conditions, etc. You may wish to consider purchasing flight cancellation insurance when booking your flights in the event that it becomes necessary to cancel your mission trip at the last minute.

Immigration: Currently, a visa is not required to enter Haiti. At <http://www.haiti.org/> you can check visa requirements. Each person will be given a customs/immigration form to complete while in flight. Occasionally, the airlines run out, in which case, the forms are available in the arrivals hall at the Port Au Prince (PAP) airport. The form must be completed before proceeding through immigration.

When completing the form, indicate the purpose of your trip by checking pleasure, recreation or personal. The local address in Haiti will also be required on the form and will be provided by your team leader.

Retain the lower portion of the form as you will need to submit it to an immigration officer as you depart from Haiti.

Customs: It is best to be sure the team is together before you proceed through the customs area. There is space to congregate away from the baggage claim area but before customs area. Have your passport and customs declaration form ready for the agent\inspector.

Baggage Claim: Luggage carts costs \$2.00 USD in the PAP airport. Determine the number of carts based on the amount baggage. Have exact change. As of this writing, the luggage goes around the carousel once and then is moved to the floor area to the left of the carousel.

If luggage is lost, the person whose name is on the airline luggage tag will need to fill out a form before leaving the customs area. The team should wait together and exit the building together. VOH will make arrangements to return to the airport to pick up the luggage after it arrives. Be sure people know which bag is theirs and be prepared to describe it.

Be prepared to surrender baggage claim tickets as you leave the baggage claim area. Airport personnel do check that the baggage matches the claim tickets.

VOH will arrange to have a porter meet the team after you exit the building. There will be many porters wanting to help. Just tell them no thank you. You will need to be firm and repetitive. The porter will have a large card with the VOH logo and team's or team leader's name on it. He will identify other porters to assist him and he will pay those he hires. The tip is determined by the amount of baggage and will be paid by VOH. When others offer to assist, remember to just say "No, thank you" or "No, merci".

Email: The email address for the Team Coordinator TC is vohteamcoordinator@gmail.com
The email address for the Field Director is: villageofhopehaiti@gmail.com

Internet: There is limited Wi-Fi available at Hope House. The bandwidth is limited.

Telephones: Cellular phones are the primary means of telephone communication on the ground in Haiti. International calling code 011 is required to call Haiti from outside of the country. The cell

phone number for the Field Director is **509-3-919-7915**. Alternate phone numbers for the Field staff are 509-3-893-8061 and **509-4-759-1690**. Some team members have brought cell phones from home with international roaming service and have been able to use them from Haiti. Check with your carrier for additional charges.

Emergency Contact: Each team member must provide the team leader with emergency contact information.

Ground Transportation: VOH utilizes two vehicles for transporting teams. One is an extended passenger van, used for transporting people; the other is a large truck used for transporting luggage, supplies, and occasionally, people. Team members should have the physical ability to climb in and out of the van or truck and be able to tolerate rough road conditions.

Accommodations: Hope House is the residence for the Haiti field staff and guest house for visiting mission teams. Each guest room has bunk beds and/or single beds with linens, towels, toilet, shower facilities with hot water, and air conditioning when there is electricity. Electricity is not always available. A diesel generator provides back-up power as needed. When power is available, it is the same current\voltage\etc. as in the United States.

Rooms are shared with two to five people to a room. If space permits, married couples may room together. However, if the number of men and women on the team are such that we need the extra space, they will not be able to room together.

Water is from a well. It is safe to drink the water. We do provide bottled water for convenience and comfort of the team.

Laundry facilities are limited. If team members need laundry done, they may ask the Field Director to make arrangements with the staff. There are facilities for hand laundering available.

Meals: The Hope House staff will prepare all meals according to a pre-determined menu and availability of products. Efforts will be made to accommodate special diets. Please ensure to complete the dietary information section of the Team Profile. If cross contamination is a concern for individuals with severe dietary restrictions, they must discuss their needs with the team leader and VOH prior to committing to the team.

Picnic lunches are prepared by the team when they will be away from Hope House for the day. Breakfast and dinner are served buffet style with everyone sharing the meal at dinnertime. Breakfast times are announced daily as the time is influenced by the day's activities. Many of the dinner meals are Haitian meals, all of them delicious. The team is requested to assist with clean up after the dinner meal.

Security: VOH will do its utmost to ensure the security of the team while they are in Haiti. The country is known for its instability. Consequently, VOH monitors the security situation on a routine basis and will keep the team informed of any potential problems. The teams should be prepared to accept that their trip could be cancelled at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances. VOH recommends that individuals invest in flight insurance.

The Hope House is surrounded by walls as is common in Haiti. The entrance is secured at all times. The gate is opened by staff only. It is not opened after dark. To insure the security, VOH requires team members to obtain prior approval before inviting anyone to the Hope House. VOH cannot honor requests for team members to go somewhere with someone not affiliated with VOH. While traveling in Haiti, additional security personnel will be present as deemed necessary by the Field Director.

VOH asks that while in route and in Haiti team members refrain from giving out personal information about themselves and the specific address location of the guest house to strangers. It is difficult to stop unsolicited contact once addresses and telephone numbers are distributed. What sounds and feels appropriate while here changes once you have returned home. This is for your safety as well as for the safety of the guest house.

VOH recommends that you use social media wisely relative to your mission trip. Weigh the benefits (a great way to raise awareness and funds) against the risks (everyone and anyone will know your home may be vacant while you are gone or uninvited guests may show up at Hope House looking for you).

What to bring: Bring clothes suitable for the type of work your team plans to do. Bring one outfit appropriate for church (dresses or skirts with blouses that cover the shoulders for ladies; slacks and collared shirts for men). Outfits should be conservative (avoid camisoles, plunging necklines, short-shorts) when going outside the Hope House area.

Items things to bring:

- Your Bible
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen / hat / sunglasses
- Alarm Clock
- Closed toe shoes for work activities (sneakers, boots)
- Personal care items (shampoo, toothpaste, etc.)
- Camera / extra batteries
- Flashlight

Some teams like to bring snack items to share with the team, if desired. We ask that snack items be left in the dining area in the space provided to avoid problems with ants and mice in the rooms.

Occasionally, teams are asked to provide additional support to the ministry by bringing needed supplies and materials in their checked baggage. Often team members carry their personal items in a carry-on bag and use their checked bag to carry items requested by VOH. Upon presentation of receipts, VOH will reimburse the team for any requested supplies.

Keep in mind airline restrictions when packing. Weight limit is 50 pound per checked bag. If you are bringing something other than a suitcase, check with your airline carrier for restrictions. Certain times of the year there are bans on boxes and containers. Check with the airlines to know how many bags can be carried free of charge.

Please do not bring expensive jewelry or prized possessions. As with any travel, it is easy to lose such items. While traveling, keep all cash on you, not in your checked bag or your carry on (if your bag goes under the plane you are taking a risk). Your belongings will be safe in your rooms.

Devotions: Many teams plan daily devotions for the evenings. There are extra Bibles and song books at Hope House. A guitar is also available. . The devotional time provides an opportunity for the team members to process their experiences and strengthen their relationships.

Gifts for students: We will make every effort to arrange a personal visit with the student you sponsor. Sponsors often desire to bring gifts for “their” child/children. However, this is not allowed in order to avoid problems among the students and/or their families. Unless gifts are brought for the whole student body (over 600 children ages 3- 18), it becomes problematic when certain children are

singled out. At times when some have received gifts and others not, staff members have been accused of keeping the items for themselves instead of giving them to the children who received nothing. In no case should team members give money to the students. Your compliance with this is appreciated.

Staff relationships: Over the years, many team members have developed strong connections with staff members. This is natural. However, as VOH grows, we strive to maintain professional relationships with the staff. This is increasingly difficult when supporters are in contact with and are providing personal assistance to individuals. It creates feelings of resentment amongst the staff and it creates staff management issues. The most appropriate way to help is through donations to the organization. This way VOH is able to provide employment, offer decent salaries while maintaining a fair and equitable workplace.

Miscellaneous: Organizations/churches and other teams who are returning to Haiti are always encouraged to invite new participants. Sharing the mission experience by introducing others to the ministries of Village of Hope in Haiti will help to further the mission of VOH.

As representatives of the body of Christ, all participants are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times, respecting the values and mission of the Village of Hope. This includes proper dress and behavior. There is no smoking permitted in the guest rooms, common areas of Hope House or any of the locations we visit. Public use of alcohol and tobacco are to be avoided.

Language: French and Creole are the official languages of Haiti.

Currency: Haitian Gourdes are the currency of Haiti. The current rate is approximately 46 gourdes to 1 US dollar. The situation is confused as many people also refer to the Haitian dollar, although there are no Haitian dollar bills. There are five gourdes to a Haitian dollar or \$9.00 Haitian dollars to a US dollar.

Books about Haiti

Haiti - The Aftershocks of History – Laurent Dubois

The Rainy Season – Amy Wilenz

Mountains beyond Mountains – Tracy Kidder

Farming of the Bones- Edwidge Danticat (fiction)

Haiti Noir --- a collection of short stories by Haitian authors edited by Edwidge Danticat

Bonjour Blanc – Ian Thomas

The Uses of Haiti – Paul Farmer

When Helping Hurts- Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

Village of Hope has been blessed by many, many short term mission teams over the years. Many started as members of the Lazarus Project, a group of dedicated people committed to helping those who are in need in Haiti. We look forward to sharing their passion for the ministries here with you. May God bless your plans and your preparation for this life-changing experience!

Team Leader Responsibilities

The following is an overview of the team leader responsibilities.

- Maintains communication with VOH TC at vohteamcoordinator@gmail.com and VOH Director via email at villageofhopehaiti@gmail.com

- Oversees team preparation for the mission experience.
- Submits \$300 reservation fee within 30 days of requesting specific dates for the trip.
- Many team leaders conduct or delegate the leadership of meetings designed to prepare the team members for the mission experience. Each team approaches this aspect in a way that best meets the needs of its members.
- Distributes and reviews *Information VOH Mission Teams – Policy and Procedures* to each team member.
- Discusses activities with the Field Director.
- Oversees fund raising\donations for the team.
- Collects fees (room and board and insurance) from each team member. Each team member may submit a check payable to Village of Hope, Inc. or the team leader can send one check to cover the entire team or any combination which totals the amount due by the team.
- When booking flights for security and other reasons we ask that teams to do not book on flights that arrive after 5:00 PM (ie Delta airlines arriving at 7:30 PM).
- Submits fees with the required documents in preparation for the trip:
 - The [Team Profile](#) which includes contact and information for insurance registration is due 90 days prior to departure date. Copies are to be sent electronically to the Field Director in Haiti villageofhopehaiti@gmail.com; vohteamcoordinator@gmail.com and vohlpdonations@gmail.com
 - **The team leader is responsible for submitting the fees for the trip insurance and room and board 90 days prior to arrival in Haiti via US postal service along with a printed copy of the completed [team profile](#).**
 - Payment made payable to Village of Hope, Inc. All room and board payment and insurance payment must be mailed by the team leader to:

Village of Hope, Inc.
300 Yamato Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431

- Provides (or delegates a team member) a brief summary, including photographs, describing their experience for use in the VOH website\newsletter.

FOR MOBILE MEDICAL TEAM LEADER: in addition to the above responsibilities

- Submits medical team documents (current license, diploma, photos) due 120 days prior to departure
- Distributes and reviews the [Mobile Medical Manual](#) and *Formulary for Mobile Medical Team* with each mobile medical team member.
- Reviews the drug formulary with the Field Director to determine needs