

Full-Time and Part-Time Volunteers

Full-Time Volunteers

A full-time volunteer is a person working with international students and their families on a campus as an assistant to the professional campus worker. A full-time volunteer is understood to be a person who works full-time for a term of six months or longer at a given location. The procedure of applying for and obtaining a volunteer described here are those of the **Volunteer Missionary Service**.

“The Volunteer Missionary Service (VMS) is a program of the LCMS World Missions in close cooperation with [districts,] partner churches and mission fields. It matches Christians with service assignments throughout the world. VMS offers adults of all ages a chance to use their talents and skills to help other people and to serve their Lord. It's an invitation to embark on one of the most challenging spiritual experiences of your life.” —FROM THE VMS INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE

Requesting a Volunteer

The requests for a volunteer are submitted on a "Volunteer Request Form" which can be obtained from LCMS World Mission, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63122. The request form enables you to identify the position for which you want a volunteer, the skills that would be necessary and the assistance that you could provide for the person's living, working and medical expenses. Your request is then shared with volunteers as they are recruited and/or interviewed to match their strengths and interests with your request.

Volunteers who are placed by the Volunteer Missionary Service must meet the following five qualifications. (You may add other qualifications as determined by the position which they are to serve).

1. An active member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with a commitment to the Lutheran faith as taught in Luther's Catechism and a strong desire to share that faith.
2. A warm, positive personality that reaches out in love to students, internationals, fellow missionaries and other individuals on the field.
3. A willing and flexible attitude that is ready to adapt to living among people of other cultures.
4. Good physical, emotional, and spiritual health that enables work to be sustained among people of other cultures.
5. Willingness to have or arrange for the financial resources necessary to travel to the field and support necessary living expenses while serving.

Training

Volunteer Missionary Service provides initial training at its expense for all volunteers whom they have helped to process. The training is an intensive pre-field orientation of 10 days to two weeks in company with volunteers and career missionaries serving in all parts of the world. The pre-field training is usually in June. On occasion it might take place in December.

Agreement

An agreement stipulating the responsibilities and obligations of each party is signed by the volunteer, the campus ministry supervisor, the district mission executive and the synodical area secretary. Notice that the campus ministry, the district and the area secretary are all giving their support to the volunteer's position and work.

Accountability

The volunteer is accountable ultimately to the appropriate world area secretary in the LCMS World Missions. For stateside campus ministry this would be to the North America Area Secretary. In the day-to-day performance the volunteer would be responsible to the designated person that would supervise the volunteer's work.

Additional Comments

Do have a job description of what you anticipate the volunteer will be doing. This will help him/her in making a decision.

Do have clearly in mind to what extent, if at all, he or she may be taking university classes.

Do try to shoulder some of the financial burden for the volunteer. The prospect of obtaining a volunteer increases with the amount of responsibility for living and working expenses you can assume.

Persons who have already had cross-cultural experiences either in the U.S. or in other nations are the ones most attracted to volunteer for international ministry. However, it might be that a novice in cross-cultural experience but one with a real heart for internationals and a desire to know them and work with them might also volunteer.

It is possible that the volunteer might get in touch with you personally before the assignment takes place so that both of you might know whether this is a good fit.

It is possible that you might find a volunteer on your own. In that case you might want to suggest to the volunteer that they be processed through the Volunteer Missionary Service in order that they might receive the benefit of the training and the networking with others who are in volunteer missionary positions.

Part-Time Volunteers

Part-time volunteers can be invaluable assets to your ministry with internationals. Part-time volunteers may give as few as one hour and as many as 20 hours per week. Part-time volunteers are usually people from the immediate community who respond to the opportunity to be a friend to internationals and who have specific tasks which they commit to do.

Where Do I Find Part-time Volunteers?

The best source of part-time volunteers is among the membership of your own church (if it is town-gown) or among the membership of other LCMS congregations in your community or area. Let your requests be made known in the form of a bulletin or newsletter paragraph; through a program which you might give to a ladies', men's or senior citizen's groups; through sermons; or through personal contact. Retired people are some of the best volunteers. They find the contact stimulating and the internationals enjoy the contact with age and wisdom.

What Are Some Tasks That Volunteers Can Do?

- . . . be a conversation partner
- . . . teach how to cook or bake American-style
- . . . learn from the international how to cook or bake his/her style
- . . . teach children of internationals Bible stories
- . . . study the Bible with an international student(s)
- . . . invite an international student(s) to your home for a meal
- . . . find opportunities for internationals to tell about their country at schools in the area.
- . . . invite the international to go to church, plays, sports or cultural events with you
- . . . arrange tours to museums, farms, orchards, etc., for internationals

What Kind of Training Is There for Volunteers

Professional church workers who are actively engaged in international student ministry may be contacted to do a training session for your volunteers. Please check this web site for a list of possible workers to contact.