

TEAM MEMBER TRIP PREPARATION GUIDE



This guide is to help you prepare for your trip to Africa. Please note that this timeline and checklist **do not** replace the necessity for you to review all documentation and to ask questions. Contact Village Care at info@villagecare.com anytime you require more information.

TRIP PREPARATION INFORMATION

Application, Trip Deposit and Fees

Each team member is required to submit a Team Member Application, Medical Treatment and Liability Release Form and a Team Member Agreement, completed and signed. These forms must be sent along with the team member's non-refundable \$300 deposit to:

Village Care International, Inc.
Attention: Logistics Dept.
3240 Professional Drive,
Auburn CA 95602

Please make checks payable to **Village Care** and insure they reach VCI no later than three months prior to departure. Checks made to you personally may be signed over to Village Care by writing "Pay to the order of Village Care" on the back prior to your signing it. Forward all checks to VCI at the address above.

Please note: there are times where VCI must cancel a particular team trip and should this happen, VCI will offer to move you to a different team. Please provide your top three date choices when you apply.

Certificate of Ability May Be Required

Please note: VCI may ask any potential volunteer indicating they are under the care of a physician or health care provider (or if they live in a Care Facility) to present a certificate from the physician or primary caregiver ensuring their ability to safely perform volunteer duties. Volunteers under a course of treatment that might negatively impact volunteer work should provide written verification of suitability from their physician. Any volunteer who, after acceptance and assignment by VCI, enters a course of treatment which might adversely impact volunteer duties should contact Village Care.

These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Four Months Prior to Departure

Fundraising

If you haven't already started your fundraising get started immediately. If you need information and ideas, email your team leader or info@villagecare.com and ask for the Fundraising Information packet.

Start the passport application process if you do not have your passport!

Three Months Prior to Departure

Trip Fee

Due to the fluctuation in airline ticket prices, the overall trip cost including airfare ranges from \$3800 to \$5200 depending on when you travel, where you depart from, and where you are going. This fee covers everything:

- In-country preparation, materials and volunteer training
- American or National Team Leader
- National Team Host
- Experienced driver throughout your stay in Africa
- Air transportation to and from, and **private** ground transportation in Africa
- Meals (breakfast and dinner daily, most lunches) throughout your stay in Africa
- Drinks (with meals) and bottled water throughout your stay in Africa
- Clean and safe lodging/accommodations in Africa
- Three days and two nights at a Kenyan Game Park
- Up to four game drives (minimum of two) while on safari
- Donation to fund the project work in the communities you are visiting

You will have no out of pocket expenses during your stay other than souvenirs, and additional food drinks or other personal items you chose to purchase on your own.

Payments

Your **initial deposit of \$300 (non-refundable)** is due at sign-up or no later than three months prior to your departure date. **Your spot on the team will be held only after your deposit is received.** We cannot guarantee a spot for you after the team is full or if your deposit arrives late. Please include your completed and signed Application, Medical and Liability Release and Team Member Agreement forms with your deposit if they have not been submitted prior. Also include a copy of the photo page of your passport.

Your **second payment of \$1900** is due two months prior to departure.

Your **final payment** will be due one month prior to departure and will be equal to the cost of your airfare. You will be notified of the final, adjusted, balance six to seven weeks prior to departure.

For cancelation/refund information, please see the VCI Refund Policy.

Airline Tickets

VCI Logistics will purchase your airline tickets. Prices can vary from the “low season” to the “high season”, depending on the location your team will travel to, where you depart from and according to current fuel prices. Once you are notified that your tickets have been purchased, you should proceed with purchasing travel insurance immediately.

If you would prefer to purchase your airline tickets, you are welcome to do so provide your purchase is coordinated with VCI Logistics. **DO NOT make an airline ticket purchase** without contacting VCI prior to the purchase!!

Secure Your Passport

Three months prior to departure, your passport should be in your possession. If it is not, there is a risk of being removed from the team. Immediately begin the application process to acquire one. It is recommended to have your new passport expedited if you will be traveling within ten weeks of applying. If you already have a passport, **make sure it is valid for up to six months after your return date**. For more information, visit <http://travel.state.gov/>.

You will need three copies of the photo page of your passport. One copy stays at home with friends/family, **one copy goes to Village Care** along with your other paperwork, and you must have one with you at all times while in Africa.

In the case of a lost or stolen passport, in most African countries you **MUST HAVE A COPY** of your original passport to get a replacement.

Get Immunized

A minimum of twelve weeks prior to your departure, schedule a consultation regarding immunizations. See your doctor, local County Health Department Travel Clinic or independent clinic at least 8 weeks before your trip to allow time for immunizations to take effect and allow the maximum amount of time to get your visa if it is required before departure (VCI Logistics will advise you on this). Your health care provider will have information on which immunizations are necessary for where you will be traveling. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following (as appropriate for age) for most African countries:

- Hepatitis A (Requires two immunizations for adults)
- Hepatitis B (Requires three immunizations for adults)
- Typhoid, particularly since you are visiting a developing country
- Yellow fever, since we will be traveling outside urban areas
- Meningitis (optional, but highly recommended for students and school employees)
- Anti-Malarial medication
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults

(The full hepatitis series, with boosters, requires 7 months, but only the first two immunizations are required for VCI travel.)

Please check with your health insurance provider to see if travel immunizations are a covered benefit under your policy. Your health insurance coverage may reduce your out-of-pocket costs. Some states

provide free immunizations to those 19 years of age and under. Check with your local health department, too. These immunizations are required for travel with Village Care, except where medically prohibitive.

Important: You must bring your yellow International Immunization card, or a doctor's printout, with you on your trip. You may be required to produce your International Immunization card upon entrance to African countries to prove yellow fever immunization. It is very possible that you will be denied entry without your card. Keep the immunization card with your passport at all times during your travels.

Two Months Prior to Departure

Send Your Second Payment

Your second payment (\$1900) is due two months prior to your departure date. Be sure your payments are on time to avoid any service charges.

Obtaining Entry Visas for Foreign Countries, if necessary

A visa is required for entry into all countries VCI will be visiting. For Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, you can obtain your passport upon arrival at the airport when you arrive in those countries. Costs vary – please check with VCI Logistics to determine the cost for the country or countries you will visit.

You can also obtain a visa for these countries ahead of time from their embassy locations throughout the US. If this is not practical or convenient, there are many visa service organizations available to help you (Google “visa services” for many options). Expect a minimum of three weeks to send for and receive your visa back. You must send your passport and a copy of your immunization card when you use these services so be sure to have your shots completed, your passport available before you need your visa and be sure to send it insured for the replacement value. The service can help you with all the requirements that need to be met to obtain your visa.

Evidence of yellow fever immunization will be required to get your visa, so you should make extra copies of your yellow immunization card or printout when you've completed your immunizations.

Note for travelers to Nigeria: you must obtain your Nigerian visa prior to arrival in Nigeria.

Purchase Travel Insurance

Within approximately one month of travel and once your airline tickets are purchased, we strongly advise you purchase travel insurance. Coverage for canceled flights and emergency evacuation and medical care are recommended. Insurance can be purchased as soon as you have your flight itinerary, but it cannot be purchased later than 14 days prior to departure. We recommend www.insuremytrip.com for multiple insurance choices, but you may use any service you choose. Team members will need to supply a copy of their insurance policy cover sheet to VCI Logistics prior to their departure.

Review All VCI Documents

Take time to review all written materials you've received from VCI, specifically the **Village Care Impact Team Member Guide**.

One Month Prior to Departure

Send your final payment

Your final payment is now due – be sure it is on time (no later than one month prior to your departure date) to avoid any additional charges.

Personal Money Matters

Two weeks prior to the trip, **secure crisp, new bills** from the bank for all your personal expenditures. If you are bringing spending money, your exchange rate will be better if you have “clean” \$50 or \$100 bills that are no older than 2003 and are in good shape. **\$20 bills may not be accepted** at exchange locations. **Any bills issued before 2003 will not be accepted** at most exchange locations. Be sure to double check your money before you leave the country – getting stranded with funds that are not usable is no fun!

If you will be purchasing your visa at the immigration desk of the country you are visiting, be aware that they will **NOT** accept any bills issued before 2003 or bills that appear damaged or partially destroyed. It is recommended you have the exact amount to pay for your visa.

Before departure, and if you plan on using your debit or credit card during your travel, call your bank or credit card company to explain that there may be activity on your card from the countries you are traveling to. It is good to have back up plan in the event your credit card is not accepted while traveling. Make copies of your credit cards to carry with you, separate from the cards.

Continue reviewing VCI Documents

You should be studying all VCI documents and learning about the Village Care Outcomes, Practices and Open Space program. Additionally, if your team tasks have been assigned by VCI and relative information provided to you, that information should also be studied to allow you optimum time for learning what you might teach in the field. Review the following documents until your departure time:

Preparation Checklist and Guide Outcomes and Practices List Team Member Agreement
VC Impact Team Member Guide Basic Home Health Care Guide Swahili Phrases & Language

Two Weeks Prior to Departure

Travel and health insurance proof

If not yet submitted, send proof of travel insurance or other overseas health coverage to Village Care.

One Week Prior to Departure

What to Pack

Here is a great, general guideline for what to pack: One pairs of comfortable walking shoes (and wear a second pair on the plane), sunscreen, insect repellent, a camera, windbreaker, three wash-and-wear

outfits, and one “church” outfit. Shorts or jeans/khaki’s are best for game parks, but remember that Africans are very modest: **long pants for men** are the “norm.” and in many communities, long skirts for women (below the knee) are required. We suggest women bring at least two skirts or dresses.

Pack lightly and leave your valuables at home. Rule of thumb: **if you can’t bear to lose it, leave it at home.** Despite the best precautions, things get lost, broken and could possibly get stolen.

You must pack all your personal items in your **carry-on bags** so pack lightly and pack well. Do not put personal items in checked bags/boxes. Checked bags/boxes can weigh up to 50 lbs each maximum. See **“Acceptable Donations from Team Members”** in your **VC Impact Team Member Guide** for items you can bring in your checked bags.

Remember to leave room in your return bags for souvenirs or consider purchasing a bag for them. You might consider packing clothing that can be left behind in the communities you visit or with African hosts; they will appreciate it and you will have room for more mementos. On your return flights, you may check up to two bags, weighing up to 50 pounds each.

Tips for Successful Packing:

1. Your team should coordinate on items like shampoo, conditioner, sunscreen, bug spray, etc. This will help the team as a whole pack more lightly. Much of this could be purchased when you arrive in Africa if you would rather not carry it, so bring extra funds if you will do this.
2. Tightly secure any items that may come open while traveling.
3. Pack liquids/gels/aerosols in containers that hold 3 ounces or less, and fit into one (1) one-quart zip lock bag. **The limit is one one-quart zip-top bag per traveler**, but you can pack as many 3-ounce containers in it as will fit. Visit <http://www.tsa.gov/311/> for more information.
4. **DO NOT bring perfume or scented lotions** which can irritate fellow travelers with allergies, and which attract insects. If you use scents, you will be asked to wash them off – please leave all scented lotions and perfumes at home. **Be aware** – some brightly colored clothing may attract insects so pack accordingly.
5. Long-sleeved shirts may be worn to reduce sunburn and insect bites, although short-sleeved shirts are acceptable wear (and much more comfortable on hot days). In villages and schools, no tank tops for men or women unless they are covered by an over-shirt.
6. For protection against insects, bring insect repellent containing DEET. You can purchase a self-standing, fold up bed net impregnated with insecticide in camping or military supply stores. (Note: VCI has a limited number of nets available for use. Please check with us before purchasing.)
7. Bring your prescription medications in the original containers whenever possible. Make sure you have enough to last throughout your trip. Carry a copy of the written prescriptions so you can replace any prescriptions that may get lost.

General Dress Code

Sensible, modest clothing you typically wear at home would be appropriate dress while visiting the larger cities, for the most part. Tank tops, shorts, short skirts, tight clothes etc. are unacceptable, as they may draw unwanted attention which affects the entire team. Pants for women are fine in the city and in some village settings, but skirts or dresses should be brought for the more reserved communities you may visit. Skirts must be long enough to fall below the knee when seated. **Women should avoid tight fitting clothing, loose or low necklines and sleeveless tops**, especially in community settings. Slacks/jeans and casual shirts for men are appropriate in most communities.

Note: As a general rule while traveling with VCI, your overall dress should be **very modest**. Limited make-up is okay for women. We ask all of our team members to do their best at keeping a neat appearance and to refrain from smoking whenever possible. **No perfumes, please!!!!**

There is no smoking permitted in any VCI vehicle or home.

Accommodations

On your trip, you will spend time in both the city and the outlying, rural areas. While in the city you may stay the night in hotels, guest houses or VCI leaders' homes where you can expect to find most of the accommodations that you are used to, such as private or semi-private rooms, bathrooms, showers, electricity, etc. Most hotels provide mosquito nets over the beds.

Your up-country (rural) accommodations may be similar to camping in the US: pit toilets, no running water, no electricity, no showers, and no shopping available. Water for washing is not readily available in many areas and limited where it is. Therefore, hair washing and bathing with water may not be possible in some up-country settings. Some rural homes have generators available for night use. Team members should bring mosquito nets for up-country visits.

Note: VCI Logistics will inform you about your specific accommodations and how they might affect your personal packing.

Travel – What to Expect

Here is a **sample** itinerary for a VCI trip to Kenya, East Africa:

Day 1	Sat	Depart USA in morning; arrive Washington DC afternoon; meet up with other team members; depart DC early evening
Day 2	Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Day – arrive in European layover city in morning; depart either mid-morning or early evening for Nairobi. Mid-morning flights will arrive in Nairobi on the evening of Day 2.
Day 3	Mon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team arrives in Nairobi in morning (after evening flight from Europe) • Travel to guesthouse to settle in, then venture out to exchange funds and do shopping for forgotten or needed items • Team Africa Orientation after lunch
Day 4	Tue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depart Nairobi for rural village or orphanage visit • Activity: Spending time with children, playing, speaking English, tutoring, loving, etc. • Have first of daily de-brief meetings
Day 5	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit and work in local community/orphanages • Activity: Teaching, assisting community with small projects, spending time with children, playing, speaking English, tutoring, assisting staff with documenting children, etc. • Daily debrief
Day 6	Thu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue village or orphanage work • Daily debrief
Day 7	Fri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue village or orphanage work • Daily debrief
Day 8	Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue village or orphanage work • Daily debrief
Day 9	Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend church (optional) • Visit with children and guardians, afternoon rest time • Daily debrief
Day 10	Mon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue village or orphanage work • Farewell dinner with local community leaders • Daily debrief
Day 11	Tue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel from village to game park • Afternoon game drive
Day 12	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safari day with morning and afternoon game drives • Daily debrief
Day 13	Thu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning game drive • Travel from safari location to Nairobi
Day 14	Fri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final team debrief; Trip Survey turned in • Spend day in Nairobi souvenir shopping, final packing, etc. • Depart late evening

Day 15	Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel through connecting city • Arrive US late afternoon or early evening
--------	-----	---

Every trip to Africa is unique and the schedules of each volunteer team will vary. Teams typically spend 12 days on the ground in Africa. Each day, you are provided with water, most meals, lodging, and private transportation. You will be traveling from cities to rural villages to a game park throughout your two week travels, so be prepared for variety and usually, rough roads.

You will be provided with more specific details for your trip as the time draws close to departure. Team conference calls will take place in the weeks prior to team departure.

If you have questions before then, please email Village Care International at info@villagecare.com or call 530-217-4555, X308.

Our Vision

is to see every child safe, living in a loving home and doing well.

Our Mission

is to mobilize communities to care for their own children with their own resources.

Our Purpose

is to serve the poor on the ground, in the field, and in real ways that attack the root causes of poverty, disease and abuse.