

Landmark Church Short-term Team Policies



A. How is the cost determined?

Each team budget can contain multiple major expense categories. Some of these include: airfare; vehicle rental and gasoline; housing costs; food; communication; visas and work permits; training materials; ministry materials; and much more. Every effort is made to minimize costs without jeopardizing the quality, effectiveness, or safety of the ministry.

B. What is the team member's expected contribution?

We suggest each short term team participant to contribute at least 10% out of his/her own personal finances toward the cost the trip or by working for this 10%. The remaining amount we will assist you in raising through prayer support letters.

C. Do we make every effort to explore "bargains" and "special deals" to minimize airline costs?

Our travel agency is a specialist in working with short term missions groups going to developing countries. Their efforts and expertise have not only saved us money in the long run, but they have given us invaluable help with foreign governments, international banking, passports and visas, and emergency changes in travel itinerary. We do our best to watch airline fares closely and purchase at the most opportune time. However, airfares to developing nations do not regularly have major sale fares.

D. What is NOT included in the cost?

Below are some items that are not covered:

Passports/passport photos (This usually runs about \$140)

Support letters/postage

Vaccinations, travel medications

Souvenirs

Some tourist type events

For souvenirs & tourist type events, we generally recommend team members aim for about \$300 in personal spending cash. Of course you can choose to buy no souvenirs, but this is our ballpark figure for the average worker.

E. Will I need vaccinations?

Landmark recommends typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis B (Hep A & B are usually given in a combined dose), and tetanus regardless of country. In some instances we may go to a country that requires immunization against a particular disease. For malaria prone areas, there is no vaccination, but a preventative is taken during and after your trip. For the most up-to-date information on what is needed for the country you will visit contact Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov).

Your training will walk you through the vaccination process. Landmark works closely with the AUM School of Nursing to provide all needed vaccinations.

If you are active military, you may be able to obtain all your vaccinations on base.

F. What about passports & visas?

If you do not have a passport booklet (not the card), we recommend that you begin the process immediately. Complete passport information can be found on <http://travel.state.gov>

Most countries require that travelers' passports not expire within six months of the end of travel. Please check your passport immediately. If it is set to expire within six months at the end of this trip, please begin

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the process to renew it now. You also need at least four blank pages in your passport. If you do not have that many, you may request (for free) additional pages be added to your passport. Visit <http://travel.state.gov> for more information.

First-time passport applicants must appear in person at either the Federal Courthouse downtown or the Winton Blount Post Office just off Taylor Road. You must be in line no later than 4:30 PM. If you are applying for a child's passport, both parents must be present to sign the form or have proof of sole custody by a court.

A visa is an entry requirement required by a foreign government in addition to your passport. Not all foreign governments require a visa. A visa may be stamped on your passport or a paper visa may be affixed to your passport.

If a visa is required, we'll provide the appropriate visa application forms for you to complete. Most visa applications require 1-2 passport-size photos as well. The visa fees for each team member are included in the team budget. [Note: if you are not a U.S. citizen, please make sure that the team leader and the Short Term Ministry Department know this information. It may mean a different visa process for you.]

G. What about travel insurance?

Basic emergency medical evacuation/transportation; lost baggage, accidental death and dismemberment coverage is included in the team budget. We encourage you to call your current health insurance provider and get the information about what is covered under your plan for overseas care.

H. How are funds raised?

First, we encourage each member to have some level of financial ownership of their trip. You might decide to tithe 10% (or even a third) of the cost of your trip from your personal finances or work for the money. Some team members find yard sales, car washes, or offering other services such as babysitting or yard work as an effective means of raising support.

We encourage people to raise funds primarily through their requests letters to friends, family, co-workers, etc. We find the average person needs to send out about 50 support letters to cover the cost of the trip. Our team training will walk you through this process and assist you with some tools to help. A person who makes a full effort but comes up short financially should immediately make an appointment with the Missions Minister to discuss options. Please see the financial fundraising policy.

I. What about raising funds within the Landmark family?

As a part of our agreement with the church on Mission Sunday, we tell the church that team members will not solicit funds directly from the contribution. Please do not write individual Landmark members and ask for money for your trip. For people outside Landmark (i.e. home churches, family, co-workers, etc.), you are encouraged to write letters to request donations.

You may feel free to offer services such as babysitting, home repair, etc. to earn money for your trip from within Landmark. To advertise, please e-mail your request to Wes who will put it on the church classifieds e-mail that comes out each Tuesday.

Please don't whine or have a pity party in your lifegroup or Sunday School class in order to "guilt" people into giving. Keep your attitude positive about the money you've been asked to raise.

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J. What if a Landmark person specifically wants to give me money?

This is perfectly fine as long as you didn't ask them for it. Place the money in a missions response envelope and turn in. Many church members (such as fellow lifegroup members) want to give beyond their Mission Sunday contribution. Do not solicit a Mission Sunday contribution to go directly to you.

K. How critical are the financial deadlines?

The financial deadlines are firm for each trip. Because of airline ticket purchases (usually 90 days out from the trip) and other trip expenses the church must have adequate funding to move forward with your trip itinerary. Delays in raising funds could mean that you may have additional costs if your plane tickets are not purchased with the group or your trip will be cancelled.

L. Is this trip tax deductible?

Yes, for each person who gives financial support to you, as long as the check is made out to Landmark Church of Christ. Please make sure your financial supporters are aware of this. Donations are only tax deductible when they are made out to the church. Your personal monies that you contribute are also deductible as a charitable donation (this includes your trip deposit). Other personal trip-related expenses paid by participants may be deductible as a charitable contributions. Be sure to consult IRS Publication 526 and/or your tax preparer for more specific information. The church (as regulated by law) will automatically send a receipt for donations over \$250. To request a receipt for a donation in any amount less than this, please have the donor contact the church office.

M. What is the proper way to explain to people how to give money to my ministry?

The explanation should contain the following information:

It should be above and beyond normal tithes and offering commitments they have made.

The check must be made out to Landmark Church of Christ.

Your name should not be noted anywhere on the check, but it should be noted on the "Financial Response" form provided.

Contributions must not be included in the church offering. The provided missions envelopes should be used.

Funds that exceed your individual needs will go to assist others on your team. Excess funds will not carry over to future years.

N. If I decide to cancel my involvement in the trip or the trip itself is canceled, can I get my money back?

In order for a contribution to be deductible, it must also be non-refundable. If you change your mind about participating on a team or something arises that prevents you from going as planned, all monies given for you (both your personal monies and monies contributed by your family/friends), are not refundable.

Should you withdraw from the trip, your funds can be credited towards another team member or used for that particular ministry.

O. What if more money comes in for me than what I need?

Throughout this ministry you will function as part of a team. Your effectiveness is determined not just from an individual standpoint, but also as a team. Also, each person's ability to raise funds varies depending on who they know, how many people they know, their ability to communicate effectively, etc. Therefore, since the goal is to fund the entire team, any monies given beyond what you will need will go to support other team members who are struggling with their funds.

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P. What if less money comes in for me?

Sometimes God uses a serious lack of support as an indicator that a person should not go on a particular project. At other times it could be spiritual opposition. If you are having trouble meeting announced financial deadlines or need additional guidance, please make an appointment with Wes Gunn immediately.

Q. Is it acceptable to pay your own way if you have sufficient funds?

We want to emphasize that one of the critical goals of these projects is to involve as many people as possible in world missions and to help you understand what it is like to be a missionary. If you pay your own way, it eliminates 20-40 people from being involved in missions, and you have not experienced the pleasure and pain of humbly trusting God to provide beyond your ability to provide for yourself. Other benefits of raising support are these:

Learning to trust God to provide for your needs through the Body of Christ, rather than your own means. Having the Body of Christ endorse you in a tangible way. Getting your family and friends interested in missions that might not do so otherwise. Support other team members, instead of only your own needs.

R. Is it possible for individuals to arrange separate itineraries to visit friends, participate in other ministries, sightsee before or after the project?

Making travel arrangements for 70+ people each year is a time consuming process that is very complicated. We prefer each team member to travel with the group itinerary. If you have a special circumstance that needs consideration, please submit it in writing to Wes Gunn.

S. Is it possible to use frequent flyer miles for my trip?

Yes. Although airlines are making it increasingly difficult to redeem miles, it is possible to use miles for your air travel. However, this must be done VERY EARLY in the trip process in conjunction with Wes Gunn. If you use frequent flyer miles, you may deduct the cost of your airline ticket (average team member fare) from the total cost of your trip. It typically takes between 60,000-100,000 miles to redeem a ticket to most of our destinations.