



WORK PROFILE ACI-COSTA RICA

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Dear Committees and Volunteers:

To help ensure a positive volunteering experience with ACI-Costa Rica, please read carefully and take into account the following:

1. To be a volunteer in Costa Rica our participants need to get the migratory status as "VOLUNTEER". Please review the chapter "Visa Process in Costa Rica" in this guide and bring the necessary documents with you to Costa Rica.
2. The migratory process can take some months to be completed and therefore volunteers will not be able to leave the country during the first months. Please note that travelling outside of Costa Rica will not be possible until your "Volunteer" status is granted. Remember that you don't come to Costa Rica as a tourist.
3. ACI-CR does its best to find the project that suits you the most. Nonetheless, sometimes assigning you to your first choice type of project will not be possible, so we take into account your secondary or tertiary preferences.
4. None of the volunteer placements offers a salary.
5. Depending on your specific project you are expected to work 30 to 40 hours a week. When you arrive in Costa Rica, you will have to sign an "Agreement on Participation". If you do not comply with the conditions stipulated by the agreement (this includes your work schedule) you will be sanctioned.
6. When there are "tours" or activities your project wants you to participate in, the project itself is responsible for your expenses.
7. Your vacations (1 month if you stay in Costa Rica for 1 year, 2 weeks if you stay six months) have to be coordinated with the project and sometimes are already defined by the project (for example in the case of schools). Volunteers have to adapt to the conditions of their project.
8. Accommodation is mainly with Costa Rican families. However, especially when you chose ecological projects, you may also have to live in the project.
9. You could be living in very different parts of Costa Rica: the capital, big cities, small towns or rural areas, depending on the families' or project's location.
10. Your Host Family and Project Information will be confirmed as soon as possible. The project's detailed information will be provided once in Costa Rica.

Thanks a lot for your attention. We will get back to you with further information as soon as possible!!!

VOLUNTARY WORK PLACEMENTS IN COSTA RICA

General Observations

Please keep in mind that volunteering in Costa Rica might be very different than in your home country. Many projects are just starting to work with volunteers and will often not be sure about which tasks can be assigned to you. Perhaps at first you might get frustrated because you may not have a specific task assigned, or because work seems boring. Earn your superior's and co-worker's trust and soon you will get more responsibilities. Also, the staff of ACI does regular project visits to ensure that your working schedule allows for your stay to be as beneficial as possible both for you and the project.

In Costa Rica, there are several different Volunteer Service Organizations. However, there are many volunteers who want to work in our country, so the organizations generally are able to choose who they will accept. If you do not have special training or qualifications, the tasks assigned to you will depend largely on the current needs of your project. Being patient and avoiding exaggerated expectations will help you to a rich volunteering experience. **Initiative is also very important!**

However, we of course try to satisfy special interests and desires of every individual volunteer - with or without special training – as far as possible.

Types of Voluntary Service Jobs

ACI-Costa Rica offers many different work placements for volunteers. In the following you find a list of general project types.

PROJECTS WITH CHILDREN

There are many projects working with children (for example day care centres for children from low income families, rural schools, shelter for children in social risk etc.). Volunteer work usually includes assisting during classes, taking care of the children, playing with them and organizing activities them. Manual work and help in the kitchen are also frequently part of the tasks. Especially in rural schools, help with office work will also often be appreciated, since access to computer equipment sometimes is still limited.

ELDERLY PEOPLE

Homes for the elderly provide accommodation and special attention. Volunteer tasks are mainly related to keeping company and sharing with the residents, organizing activities, and sometimes assisting in physical therapy. As in the case of projects with children, tasks may also include help in the kitchen or other manual work.

HANDICAPPED PERSONS

ACI-Costa Rica cooperates with several institutions (mainly schools) for persons with physical, mental and visual or auditory handicaps. Volunteers assist during therapies and also fulfil the same tasks as in projects with children or elderly people.

ECOLOGICAL PROJECTS

Ecological projects include and often combine conservation, rural development and sustainable tourism initiatives. Volunteers help in field work (reforestation, species documentation, marking of trails, animal protection), but often also in the office (for example with the translation of information material or the maintenance of web sites) or with environmental education projects for tourists and locals. English or other language classes for people working in the project are also frequently asked for.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CITIZEN DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS

Different organizations work on different areas ranging from human rights in general to group rights or interests (children & youth, migrants, handicapped persons, indigenous people, rural communities etc.) and specific topics (labour rights, health, education etc.). In these kinds of organizations, volunteers mostly help in the office (for example doing translations, assisting in the organization of activities or campaigns, attending the phone), but usually there are also field trips from time to time. Because of the kind of work involved, the organizations in general ask that applicants already possess an advanced Spanish level. Previous experience in the specific work area of the organization is a plus.

CULTURAL PROJECTS

There are different groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations dedicated to promoting and enriching Costa Rica's cultural life. In these projects, you'll need an open mind and the ability to easily connect and communicate with people, which makes previous knowledge of Spanish at least at an intermediate level especially important. Since there are only few placements available at the moment, applicant will be chosen carefully.

ACI COSTA RICA

ACI-Costa Rica also accepts volunteers to work assisting the Long Term Programs Area with different tasks ranging from office work and translations to project visits, preparation of camps and socio-cultural animation, giving you the opportunity of meeting lots of people, visiting different parts of Costa Rica and getting an insight into how the volunteer work is organized. If you are interested, let us know!

OTHERS

There also exist other possibilities of volunteer work, including work in universities or secondary schools, a hospital, with drug/alcohol abusers, teaching English, sports, etc. Please note that we will give the detailed information about projects once in Costa Rica.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN SOME CASES (ESPECIALLY ECOLOGICAL PROJECTS) ACCOMODATION COULD BE WITHIN THE PROJECT.