

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the deadline for applying? Is there an advantage to applying early?

We are in a rolling application process. Contact our office as soon as you decide to apply so that we can start your file as soon as possible. You can send in parts of your application as you complete them, so you do not need to have everything finished at once. References can email their letters of recommendation.

2. Can I apply for or request a specific placement site, or do you place the volunteers?

We ask that you check the sites that you are interested in on your application, and we discern together what would be a “best fit” for you. Depending on how soon you apply for a given year, some placements are more open than others. Each site has a limited number of volunteer slots available.

3. If I am interested in international placement, is it required that I’ve studied abroad or had other previous international experience like a short service trip?

No, but it helps – whether you are an international or domestic volunteer, there are still elements of culture shock you will experience during your year. It is helpful to assess when you have experienced this in previous experiences, such as study abroad programs or alternative spring breaks.

4. Am I allowed to travel home during the service year?

Yes, after the first three months of service. Many of our volunteers have family events (e.g.- weddings, funerals, Thanksgiving) when they can go home, but these travel expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer. With all travel plans, volunteers must give their communities ample notice and take care of their ministry schedules with their placement sites.

5. Am I allowed to have visitors during the service year?

Yes. We encourage this, as it offers volunteers time to share their lives on mission with those who are closest to them. Depending on the housing situation, some guests may stay at the community houses if there is room. Volunteers must give their communities ample notice so everyone is aware that visitors will be present.

6. Do you ask applicants if they are applying to other service programs? Does this affect their app with your program positively, negatively, or neutral?

Yes. We ask applicants to list if they are applying to other service programs so we can see the type of service programs they are drawn to. It does not affect their application to AMA in a positive, or negative, way. Once an applicant has been accepted to the AMA program and then accepts a placement with us, she/he has made a serious commitment to follow through with the orientation program and the year. If one decides to terminate their acceptance, we ask that you

inform the AMA office immediately. Letting the AMA office know your change of plans is a professional courtesy and allows us to contact other applicants on our waiting list.

7. Do you require volunteers to fundraise for any portion of their expenses/how much?

No, we do not require volunteers to fundraise a specific amount, but they must provide their transportation to/from Orientation in August (Worcester, MA), and to/from their placement site. This also includes any visa/international health fees.

8. Do volunteers need to have fluency in a second language? Is there language training?

At least an intermediate level and willingness to practice Spanish is necessary for our Chaparral placement. Spanish is also helpful in Worcester, but not necessary. In the Philippines, English is spoken, but there is a local dialect training during the local orientation upon arrival in the Philippines.

9. Is there any advice you would give a potential applicant?

Be open, ask many questions, and talk to current and former volunteers. Also, do not get so attached to a location that you limit yourself and the experiences that you could have. (For example, some of our volunteers find what they originally wanted in an international program but then find that the diverse neighborhood of Worcester offered more internationality among the immigrant populations we serve than they would have had to cross the US border.)