



Service. Healing. Transformation.

General Volunteer Packet

Dominican Republic

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The Role of the General Volunteer

We cannot keep a medical mission running smoothly without the help of our general volunteers! General volunteers contribute to our mission by supporting the work in the surgery center, primary care clinic(s), at NPH, and out at the Community Health Projects. By cleaning the ORs between cases, helping to wash scrubs and scanning patient charts (amongst other jobs), they help the surgery center run efficiently. At NPH, general volunteers can work in the kitchen to cook fresh bread, help on the farm and support in the special needs home for children. In our primary care clinics and community health projects, volunteers may capture patient vitals in a community clinic or help with construction projects.

Why Are General Volunteers Important to the Success of Medical Missions?

During non-medical mission weeks, the local staff is able to fill the general volunteer roles and keep the surgery center functioning smoothly. However, during medical mission weeks, the local staff is unable to keep up with the extra volume of work that comes with greater surgical cases and 45+ extra people in the surgery center/visitor center! For this reason, general volunteers are essential to filling key gaps during medical mission weeks: there are more scrubs to wash, more ORs to turnover, more meals to serve, and more cleaning that is needed. There are also certain necessary activities that only take place during medical missions that general volunteers are needed for such as serving volunteer/staff meals and cleaning meal containers. General volunteers may also have special skills or added time to complete projects the full-time staff do not have time for such as uploading old patient charts into the electronic medical record system, collecting patient/staff stories, fixing the sidewalk to the surgery center, and more! Just like the clinical volunteers on a mission, each general volunteer is an important and valuable member of the medical mission team.

Our Approach

One World Surgery adheres to best practices for international volunteering and short-term missions. Among these best practices is allowing the community to identify its own needs and priorities. The role of international volunteers should be to empower and support the local community in carrying out its own solutions. Since international volunteers have limited

information about the dynamics of a local community and the cultural context, they risk creating projects that will not be useful and at worst, may inadvertently harm the community. Even with the best intentions, volunteers may disrupt local power dynamics, take away paying jobs, or create dependence.

To avoid these pitfalls and make a sustainable impact, our approach is to collaborate with our NPH partners and our local staff in Honduras, to determine the jobs and projects that will best meet their needs. Whenever possible, we work alongside local people who lead our volunteers in these projects instead of trying to do the job for them.

Another best practice requires that only skilled volunteers perform skilled jobs. Again, this practice ensures that volunteers do not cause harm in the communities in which they serve. This is why volunteers in the surgery center are only allowed to perform duties within their training and experience. Similarly, this is why volunteers are generally not permitted to serve in caregiver or teacher roles at the NPH home. These types of projects and assignments are only available when a volunteer has the required skills and when it is appropriate for a short-term volunteer to fill the role, instead of a paid local person.

Attending a Medical Mission as a Family

Part of One World Surgery's mission is to ignite the spirit of service and attending a medical mission as a family can be a great way to instill a lifelong commitment to service in your child(ren).

Requirements for Minors on Medical Missions

- **For primary care and community health project missions:** Due to the off-site activity component of these trips, Children ages 16 and up are welcome to attend; *exceptions may be made on case-by-case basis. Please email medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org if seeking an exception.*
- **For surgical care missions:** The minimum recommended age is 5 years old. We have found that the ideal minimum age for a child and supervising adult to fully experience this trip is 10 years old.
- Children under 18 must attend the mission with a parent or adult guardian who will assume responsibility for the child and accompany them for the entire duration of travel, including all domestic and international flights.
- If you or your child are under 21 and **not** traveling with a parent or legal guardian, please see the informational packet on our website for travel requirements.
- Children under 13 must be accompanied by a nonclinical adult at all times during the mission. One World Surgery staff and other volunteers cannot provide child supervision.
- One World Surgery allows children 13 and over to walk around the ranch and participate in general volunteer activities on their own. If you are not comfortable with this, you should bring a nonclinical adult to accompany them.

On-Site Assignments

Rather than being assigned to a single role for the entire mission, general volunteers will usually rotate among various jobs in the surgery center, primary care clinic, and at NPH Casa Santa Ana. Each day, non-clinical volunteers will sign up for the next day's shifts (morning and afternoon) with the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator.

We will encourage all general volunteers to work in the surgery center, primary care clinic and at NPH Casa Santa Ana. For patient safety, we need to limit the number of general volunteers in the surgery center at any given time. We may ask you to take a turn at an NPH workstation to give another volunteer an opportunity to work in the surgery center. We may ask you to serve in a role that really needs to be filled to keep the mission running smoothly. Come willing to help whenever needed and fully participate in the service aspect of the trip. **It will not be possible to spend the entire trip observing, shadowing, or scrubbing into cases.**

Special Projects

Adult general volunteers may be assigned to special projects within the surgery center, primary care clinic, or community health project according to their unique skill sets. Some special skills used in the past include carpentry, mechanics, or photography. Please complete the special skills survey included in your registration follow-up forms. If we find a match between your skills and a current need at the surgery center or NPH, our local team will contact you with further information about potential projects either prior to or during your trip. **Please keep in mind that there may not always be a match between the skill set you would like to use and the projects available at the time of the mission.** Additionally, our interpreters are prioritized to the surgery center, and often, we do not have the resources to enable non-Spanish-speaking volunteers to provide specialized services on NPH (i.e. teaching, counseling).

If the One World Surgery team does not reach out to you about a special project prior to your trip, you should assume that you will be participating in the typical general volunteer assignments described in the rest of this packet.

The Surgery Center Experience

While we love exposing young people and those considering a career change to the medical field, our primary goal is to provide high-quality surgical care to the under-resourced. Patient safety and quality of care always come first. If you do not have the training or education required to perform a specific skill in the U.S., you will not be permitted to perform that skill in our surgery center in the Dominican.

General volunteer jobs in the surgery center will include tasks that help keep the surgery center running efficiently and can also be learned quickly during the on-site orientation. All general volunteers, including students of health professions, must assist with these jobs. If they would like to observe surgical cases (age-permitting), general volunteers will be assigned to observation shifts to ensure that everyone is contributing to the mission of the week. Additionally, the number of observers in each surgery will be limited due to patient safety.

Observation and Scrubbing Policies

Volunteers must be at least 15 years old in order to observe a case in an OR and at least 18 years old to scrub in on a case in an OR. Only 2 general volunteer observers are allowed

per OR. For total joint cases, general volunteers will not be allowed to scrub into surgery unless they have previous medical experience, such as an MA or CNA, and should plan to stay in the room from draping to closure to prevent infections. Any exception must be approved by the DR Medical Director, Chief Medical Officer, or Director of Clinical Operations. Clinical volunteers in the OR are responsible for following best practice guidelines and keeping patient safety and dignity a priority. Please do not allow any volunteers to perform tasks outside their scope of practice. Volunteers who violate observation policies may be banned from the surgery center for the duration of the mission, sent home at their own expense, or prohibited from attending a future mission.

Scrubbing In (18+)

Permitted

- Holding an extremity
- Holding an instrument
- Applying suction
- Applying gauze
- Cutting stitches
- Helping to tear down after a case

Not Permitted

- Placing blocks or placing IVs
- Using an instrument
- Suturing
- Making incisions
- Preparing/administering injections
- Cleaning wounds

Surgery Center General Volunteer Roles

All jobs and activities will be discussed during the Sunday Clinical orientation. The surgery center orientation will start with a session for all volunteers. Then, we'll break off into groups of clinical and general volunteers. During the general volunteer orientation, we'll review the volunteer workstation roles in the surgery center, primary care clinic, community service projects, and NPH including what to wear, what to expect, and where to meet for your shifts.

Please note that when we have small missions or only a few general volunteers, we may combine surgery center roles to best utilize volunteers. For example, turnover crew may be asked to help with instrument cleaning during down time, or the trash helpers may be asked to keep the kitchen clean. The below roles are not comprehensive of all general volunteer roles that may be available during the week of your mission:

Role	Activities	Requirements
OR Turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and sanitize ORs after each case to prepare for the next case • In between cases, perform general upkeep by removing trash and laundry throughout the surgery center and replacing supplies (i.e. paper towels) 	<p>Change into scrubs.</p> <p>You will see blood and other bodily fluids; please take note if you are squeamish.</p> <p>Age Requirement: 13 and up, under 13 with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>

<p>Instrument Helper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with cleaning, sterilizing, and preparing surgical instruments • Wrap sterilized instrument sets • Fold towels and surgical gowns 	<p>Change into scrubs.</p> <p>Will work with at least 1 trained sterile processing specialist.</p> <p>You will see blood and other bodily fluids; please take note if you are squeamish.</p> <p>Age Requirement: 18 and up</p>
<p>Surgery Observer</p>	<p>Observe a surgery in the OR</p>	<p>See above “observation and scrubbing policies”</p> <p>Wear scrubs, a mask, and other proper attire</p> <p>No cell phones allowed</p> <p>At any time, a clinical volunteer may ask you to leave the OR.</p> <p>Age Requirement: 15 and up</p>
<p>Scrub into surgery</p>	<p>Scrub into a surgery in the OR</p>	<p>See above “observation and scrubbing policies”.</p> <p>Wear scrubs, a mask, and other proper attire for scrubbing in</p> <p>No acrylic / painted nails or permanent jewelry allowed</p> <p>No cell phones allowed.</p> <p>At any time, a clinical volunteer may ask you to leave the OR.</p> <p>You must observe a case before you can scrub in and a physician or OR staff members must watch you scrub and pass you before scrubbing into surgery.</p> <p>Age Requirement: 18 and up</p>

Primary Care Onsite Clinic Experience

Our primary care clinic provides acute medical care to patients receiving surgeries in our surgery center and primary care check-ups. All medical consultations are by appointment and led by our local clinical physician manager. Our primary care clinic consists of 12 examination beds, a procedure room, two optometry rooms, a full-scale pharmacy, an x-ray room, a physiotherapy room, and a laboratory for analyses.

Primary Care Onsite Clinic Volunteer Roles

General volunteer workstations will focus on helping the primary care clinic run efficiently. All general volunteers, including students of health professions, can assist with these jobs. To honor patient safety and privacy, some primary care consultations will not be possible to observe.

Volunteers, even if certified and have training in laboratory analyses, will not be allowed to perform certain tests using the primary care clinic equipment. However, volunteers can support the microbiologist with recording and inputting patient data.

Role	Activities	Age	# of Volunteers
Pharmacy Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize medications. Dispense medications with the pharmacist. Input medications dispensed into the inventory spreadsheet 	16+	2-3
Clinic Cleaner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean the exam rooms and beds between patients. Clean the clinic bathrooms. 	13+	2-3
Reception Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure waiting patients are sitting in the correct area. Support the receptionist with patient flow by directing patients. Ensure the reception area is clean and organized. 	13+	2-3
Chart Searcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find patient charts and history for doctors. Re-file patient charts after use/scanning. 	16+	1-2
Chart Scanner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scan charts from patient visits. Scan any analyses patients brought with them. Ensure patient data is organized correctly. Distribute necessary data to doctors. 	16+	1-2

Data Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input patient data from EMR into Excel for data tracking. • Ensure data is correct and up to date. 	16+	1
Vital Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take patient vital signs before medical consult. • Volunteers must have knowledge and be certified to take patient vitals. 	16+	3-5
Patient Flow Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the waiting area in front of the pharmacy is not over-occupied. • Direct overflow patients to the overflow area in the main reception area. • Seek patients in the overflow area when spaces open in the clinic waiting area. 	13+	2-4
Laboratory Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the microbiologist with inputting data onto patient data sheets. 	18+	1-2

Community (Batey) Primary Care Clinic Experience

Community primary care missions are characterized by volunteers going out into the community and setting up temporary pop-up clinics in community spaces (e.g. churches, schools, and community centers). These community ‘bateys’ historically housed Haitian immigrants who worked in the sugar cane fields. The bateys are now home to both Dominicans and Haitians, and many community members have jobs outside of the sugar cane industry. However, these communities are made up of mostly low-income populations with limited access to healthcare. During these medical missions, primary care providers examine and assess patients, establish a plan for care, and conduct follow-ups. Volunteers address acute and chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, upper respiratory infection, musculoskeletal pain, allergies, type 2 diabetes, urinary tract infection, anemia, and skin infections. Providers also assess patients for surgical conditions that may be treated at One World Surgery’s surgery center. These pop-up clinics also include a temporary pharmacy for patients to receive medications and vitamins. General volunteers will work in various roles which support the overall efficiency and operations of these community clinics.

Community (Batey) Primary Care Clinic Volunteer Roles

General volunteers play a critical role during primary care medical missions helping at administration and clinical stations. Non-clinical volunteers will be assigned to a station by the outreach clinic physician manager and rotate between patient registration, vitals, optometry, patient education, and pharmacy stations.

Role	Activities	# of Volunteers
Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register patients into EMR system for consult 	3-4

Vitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take and record patient basic health statistics including, height, weight, blood pressure, oxygen level, blood sugar (if diabetic), temperature, hemoglobin levels, regular medications, and allergies to medications 	2-4
Pharmacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather medications prescribed by the provider. Dispense medications to patients. 	2-4
Optometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform vision checks using optometry machine. Distribute eyeglasses to patients if necessary. 	2
Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach patients using educational material including handwashing, toothbrushing, and correct shoe size. 	1-2

Community Health Project Experience

Community Health Projects (CHP) is a new program One World Surgery piloted in the Dominican Republic in 2023. The goal of this program is to address social determinants of health in the communities we currently serve and focus on improving the living conditions of community members and patients through home improvements and community development. Examples of these social determinants of health include poor sanitation, improper flooring, poor hygiene, garbage pollution, unsafe housing conditions for disabled patients, and more. These projects are completed in the same way as all other construction projects in the Dominican Republic, through manual labor. The CHPs complement the healthcare we are currently providing in the community and beneficiaries of community health projects are often current or prior One World Surgery patients. Our team is currently conducting a needs assessment to develop a community health project beneficiary waiting list.

Community Health Project Volunteer Roles

General volunteers are essential to the success of Community Health Projects (CHP) and will contribute their strength and knowledge to help complete these projects alongside the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator and a local construction foreman. General volunteers with special skills, like masonry and carpentry can participate and even help guide other volunteers in project tasks, however, volunteers do not need any prior construction experience to participate. The most important attributes of CHP volunteers are patience, and the ability to listen, observe, and learn from the construction foreman. Volunteers will help construct homes, community spaces, athletic courts, wheelchair ramps, community gardens, mini recycling centers, and more! Volunteers will help mix concrete by hand, lay cinder blocks, paint, and complete other necessary construction tasks! The Volunteer Engagement Coordinator will select the project in advance of volunteers' arrival onsite. CHP volunteers must be 16 years or older to participate. Below is merely a sample of the kinds of projects you may participate in:

Projects	Activities
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix concrete • Lay concrete bricks • Clear away debris • Dig latrines, foundation, and more
Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint homes, murals, or walls • Artists are welcome, but no experience is necessary!
Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed and tend to a community garden • Plant seeds • Harvest crops
Accessibility projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use concrete to build wheelchair ramps • Install shower handles in bathrooms
Garbage/Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities with garbage clean ups • Install and paint trash/recycling cans • Up-cycle garbage into something new! (e.g. eco-bricks, kites, and more) • Lead a workshop on recycling
Education Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers with a special skill/knowledge encouraged! • Lead a workshop on a specific health topic (e.g. hand washing, maternal health) • Learn from community members and exchange knowledge (e.g. dance lessons)

Hospitality Volunteer Roles

The hospitality department is a core pillar of One World Surgery’s program team. The hospitality teammates fuel volunteers with delicious food, provide comfortable and modern accommodations, and ensure volunteers have a memorable service experience. Volunteering with the hospitality department allows you to see the ‘inner workings’ of One World Surgery and learn what it takes to host 45+ volunteers each week!

Role	Activities	# of Volunteers
Cleaning Team Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fold sheets • Take inventory of supplies • Organize supply closet 	4
Kitchen Team Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut vegetables and fruit • Organize pantry and take inventory • Clean fridge and kitchen • Wash dishes 	3-4

The NPH Experience

Safeguarding and upholding the rights of NPH children are of utmost importance, and we will never neglect these duties in order to provide a volunteer with a “feel-good” experience. Please keep in mind that NPH frequently hosts visiting groups (medical missions and NPH specific groups) and we want to integrate ourselves into the daily lives of NPH by respecting NPH’s and the pequenos daily schedule. We want to minimize the disruption of our groups on the pequenos routines, and all NPH employees. Children who have experienced a traumatic or unstable upbringing before coming to NPH, following a strict routine helps create a feeling of security. NPH has a school which provides schooling to over 200 children every day, including children from the local community. One World Surgery will always respect the needs and boundaries set out by NPH and its school so as not to disrupt the learning or development of all the children and its staff.

We are also sensitive to the fact that creating bonds with many short-term volunteers may lead to or exacerbate attachment issues in the children, and we recognize that many jobs working with children are better suited for individuals who are trained, speak the local language, and understand the local culture. For all these reasons, there are limited opportunities to volunteer with the children, and the following activities are not available to our volunteers:

- Serving as a caregiver (tio or tia)
- Observing or teaching classes at the school
- Participating in activities at the school, during school hours
- Activities with school-aged children after school during designated homework and chore time
- Waking children up or putting children to bed

We also strive to respect the privacy of the children who live at NPH. If you would like to visit an hogar (children’s home), the school, or workshops outside of a scheduled workstation or activity, you should first check with the Hospitality team or Volunteer Engagement Coordinator to ensure it’s an appropriate time.

You should expect that at least one of your ranch assignments during the week won’t go as planned. Perhaps the NPH worker will be late or the opportunity will suddenly become unavailable at that time. There are many reasons why this might happen.

The way of life on the ranch will likely be different than what you’re used to back home. Your medical mission week will present many great opportunities to practice patience and flexibility! Our team will help you find another assignment if your original one doesn’t go as planned; please make them aware.

You should also expect that there will not be interpreters at the ranch workstations. We concentrate our resources on providing interpreters for our patients and clinical volunteers in the surgery center, where understanding one another is critical to providing safe care. If you don’t speak much Spanish, use this as an opportunity to practice, and there’s a lot that can be communicated with gestures. Time and time again, we see our volunteers form relationships with local staff despite language barriers. Don’t let the fact that you don’t speak Spanish deter you.

NPH General Volunteer Roles

You should expect to be assigned to at least one NPH volunteer role during your medical mission week. As a general volunteer, you will not be permitted to spend your entire time in the surgery center.

Role	Activities	# of Volunteers
Support in Special Needs Homes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the tías when going for walks• Entertain kids during their free time outside the home	2-4
Farm Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist with weeding, raking, picking vegetables	5-10
Kitchen Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help make bread• Help cut vegetables and meats• Prepare dishes for NPH employees and kids	5
Art Room Clean-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean up art room organization etc.• Play with younger kids in the art room	5
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education sessions prepared by volunteers and Volunteer Engagement Coordinator prior to trip	1-2

Meals

Breakfast is available at the One World Surgery visitor center kitchen starting at 7:30 AM. Lunch is delivered to the OWS Visitor Center at 12:30 PM. All participants will meet at the OWS Visitor Center between 6 and 7 PM every night for dinner. All volunteers – not only general volunteers – are expected to help serve dinner, wipe down tables, and clean the serving dishes at least one night during the medical mission. Volunteers are expected to wash their own dishes after mealtime.