

# TEAM MEMBER TRIP CHECKLIST AND PREPARATION GUIDE



This checklist and guide are to help you prepare for your trip to Africa. Please note that this **does not** replace the necessity for you to review all documentation and to ask questions.

Contact Village Care at [info@villagecare.com](mailto:info@villagecare.com) anytime you require more information.

## Four months prior to departure

- If you do not have your passport, **start the passport process now**. Visit your local post office or go to [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html) for information on how to obtain your passport.
- If you have your passport, check to insure it is valid at least 6 months AFTER you will return from Africa.
- Start your fundraising now if you haven't started it already. If you need information or ideas on how to do this, email [info@villagecare.com](mailto:info@villagecare.com) and ask for our Fundraising Information packet.

## Three months prior to departure

- \$500 (non-refundable) deposit is due to Village Care.
- Send all required documents to the VCI office at:  
3240 Professional Drive, Auburn, CA 95602
  - **Team Member Application**
  - **Copy of photo page of your passport (when available)**
- If you have not started the passport process, **apply for one now**
- Schedule an appointment with your local travel or health clinic
- Obtain the necessary visa, if needed

## Two months prior to departure

- \$1700 payment is due to Village Care. Late payments will incur a \$50 fee

## 30 days prior to departure

- Final payment (airfare cost) is due to Village Care. Late payments will incur a \$50 fee.
- Purchase travel insurance

## 2 weeks prior to departure

- If not done, submit proof of travel insurance or other travel/overseas health insurance coverage to Village Care, as well as proof of completion of immunizations.

## 1 week prior to departure

- Pack your bags in a trial run
- Attach VCI-supplied luggage tags to each of your carry-on bags
- Ensure you have your passport, visa (if necessary), missionary letters, and updated immunization card or printout
- Contact your bank/credit card provider
- Print and pack your trip itinerary and copies of your passport, credit and debit cards
- Provide family or close friends with copies of the following: passport, banking/credit card information, flight itinerary, trip itinerary and Emergency Phone Numbers List
- Arrange for transportation to and from the airport for your trip

## Day of departure

- Arrive at the airport at least two to three hours prior to departure time
- Carry team leaders phone number for use in emergencies
- Wear your VCI nametag no or near your collar
- Have your **airline ticket confirmation, passport, Missionary letter and Affidavit of Purpose, visa** (if needed) **and updated immunization card** with you when you leave for the airport!

## **TRIP PREPARATION INFORMATION**

### **Application, Trip Deposit and Fees**

Each team member is required to submit a Team Member Application, completed and signed, to Village Care. These forms must be sent along with the team member's non-refundable \$500 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.

Team members are added to teams on the date of deposit receipt, so you will not be "guaranteed" a spot until we've received both your application and your deposit. You can mail your application and passport page at anytime with no obligation to join a team. Should the team of your choice fill prior to our receiving your deposit and application, you will be placed on a waiting list for that team or you may choose to join a different team that has openings.

**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, counselor or health care provider (or, if they live in a Care Facility) to present a certificate from the physician, counselor 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**

**Start the passport application process** if you do not have your passport! You should consider paying the expedite fee to insure you will have your passport in time. Without a passport, you cannot participate on a Village Care team.

If you have a current passport, check to insure it is valid at least six months after you will return from Africa. Passports that are about to expire may be rejected when you attempt to enter a country.

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](mailto:info@villagecare.com) and ask for the Fundraising Information packet.

## **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 \$5000 depending on when you travel, where you depart from, and where you are going. This fee covers everything:

- In-country preparation, materials and seven session volunteer training (via conference calls)
- American Team Leader
- National Team Host
- Air transportation to and from the US
- **Private** ground transportation for travel while in Africa
- Experienced driver for private transportation
- Meals (breakfast and dinner daily, some 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 on safari (game park) for East Africa team members
- Two to four game drives while on safari (or one two-hour and one all-day game drive)
- 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 your visa, souvenirs, and additional food, drinks or other personal items you choose to purchase on your own.

### **Payments**

Your **initial deposit of \$500 (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 and application are received.** Also **include a copy of the photo page of your passport**. We cannot guarantee a spot for you after the team is full or if your deposit arrives late.

Your **second payment of \$1700** 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 cancellation/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”, and 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. It is imperative your flights be coordinated with the team in order for you to avoid extra transportation charges.

## 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. Keep the copy in a place separate from your passport while you travel.

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. If a visa for travel is required prior to departure from the US (VCI Logistics will advise you on this), allow time to complete your immunizations prior to submitting your visa application. Your travel clinic will have information on which immunizations are necessary for where you will be traveling.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends and Village Care International requires 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 (**required**), 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 to see if your state or country provides this benefit.

Listed 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 will be required to produce your International Immunization card upon entrance to most 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.

### **Team Conference Calls**

Team training will be done via conference call during the twelve weeks prior to your team's departure. There will be one call three months prior to departure, one call two months prior and one call each week of the last month before you leave, with two calls in the final week before you depart. You will be provided with a conference call schedule, phone number and entry code prior to the calls. Please be sure to have your VCI Team Member Training Guide with you at all times throughout your conference calls, and to have all discussion question completed prior to the calls. Larger teams may require answers to be in writing.

### **Two Months Prior to Departure**

Your second payment (\$1700) is due two months prior to your departure date. Be sure your payments are on time to avoid the \$50 late fee.

### **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** there. 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. Be sure to mail or email a scanned copy of your immunization card to Village Care.

**Note for travelers to Nigeria: you must obtain your Nigerian visa prior to arrival in Nigeria.** Please submit a copy of your Nigerian visa to VCI no later than two weeks prior to departure.

## **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, 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](http://www.insuremytrip.com) for multiple insurance choices, or [www.volunteercard.com](http://www.volunteercard.com) for low cost insurance, 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 departure.

## **One Month Prior to Departure**

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

### **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 2006** and are in good shape. **\$20 bills may not be accepted** at exchange locations.

**Any bills issued before 2006 will not be accepted** at most exchange locations. Be sure to double check your money before you leave the country – don’t get stranded with funds that are not usable.

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 2006 or bills that appear damaged (including writing on them) 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 a back-up plan in the event your credit card is not accepted while traveling. Make copies of your credit cards to carry with you, and keep the copy separate from the cards.

## **Two Weeks Prior to Departure**

If not yet submitted, send proof of travel insurance or other overseas health coverage to Village Care, along with a copy of your immunization card.

## **One Week Prior to Departure**

### **What to Pack**

See the VCI Team Member Training Guide for more information on packing, as well as the **VCI Packing List for Travelers** for a guideline on what to bring.

Remember to leave room in your return bags for souvenirs or consider bringing or 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 typically may check up to two pieces, weighing up to 50 pounds each, and you can have souvenirs packed for flights at the airport for a reasonable fee.

### **Tips for Successful Packing:**

1. Your team can coordinate on items like shampoo, conditioner, sunscreen, bug spray, etc, if desired. 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-lock 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.
5. **Be aware** – some brightly colored clothing may attract insects so if this will be an issue for you, pack accordingly.
6. 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.
7. For protection against insects, bring insect repellent containing 30% DEET.
8. 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, for the most part, modest clothing you might typically wear at home would be appropriate dress while visiting the larger cities. 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 many 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. Please see the VCI Team Member Training Guide for more clothing information or ask your team leader.

**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. **Remember, no perfumes, please!!!!**

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

### **Accommodations**

On your trip, you may 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, toilets, showers, electricity,

etc. Many have water but not all have hot water. 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 may need mosquito nets for up-country visits (check with VCI or your team leader before purchase).

**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 typical VCI trip to Kenya, East Africa:

Day 1	Sat	Depart USA in morning or afternoon (depending on starting point); arrive Washington DC afternoon; meet up with other team members; depart DC early evening
Day 2	Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Travel to guesthouse to settle in, then venture out to exchange funds and do shopping for forgotten or needed items, snacks</li> </ul>
Day 3	Mon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teams on evening flights from Europe arrive in Nairobi in morning</li> <li>• Eat breakfast, exchange funds and do shopping for forgotten or needed items, and for snacks</li> <li>• Begin travel to field location (either by air or van)</li> </ul>
Day 4	Tue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities begin: Visit schools or orphanages, do child assessments, meet with small groups, etc.</li> <li>• Have first of daily debrief meetings</li> </ul>
Day 5	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit and work in local community/orphanages</li> <li>• Activities possible: Teaching, assisting community with projects, spending time with children, playing, assessments, etc.</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>
Day 6	Thu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue village or orphanage work</li> <li>• Perform assessments on registered children</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>
Day 7	Fri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue village or orphanage work, assessments</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>
Day 8	Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue village or orphanage work, assessments</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>
Day 9	Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend church (optional)</li> <li>• Visit with children and guardians, afternoon rest time</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>
Day 10	Mon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue village or orphanage work</li> <li>• Farewell to local community leaders</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>

Day 11	Tue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel from village to game park (by air or van)</li> <li>• Afternoon game drive</li> </ul>
Day 12	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safari day with morning and afternoon or all-day game drives</li> <li>• Daily debrief</li> </ul>
Day 13	Thu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning game drive (time permitting)</li> <li>• Turn in Trip Survey to team leader</li> <li>• Travel from safari location to Nairobi</li> </ul>
Day 14	Fri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final team debrief</li> <li>• Spend day in Nairobi; visit orphanage, souvenir shopping, sightseeing, final packing, etc.</li> <li>• Depart late evening</li> </ul>
Day 15	Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel through connecting European city</li> <li>• Arrive US late afternoon or early evening</li> </ul>

**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, 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 typically, some rough roads.

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

**If you have questions before then, please email Village Care International at [info@villagecare.com](mailto:info@villagecare.com) or call 530-217-4538.**

### **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.