

Amigos



**Family
Preparation Guide
2024 Summer Programs**



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In the event of an emergency and you need to reach AMIGOS On-Call, please call 713-782- 5290 x150. You will be prompted to leave a voicemail and a member of the On-Call team will return your call as soon as possible.

For non-urgent matters, please email oncall@amigosinternational.org.

Letter from Sara Nathan, President & CEO

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well.

For over 59 years, AMIGOS has been an industry leader in international cross-cultural exchange, leadership development, and community service for young people. We believe that youth have the power to be extraordinary leaders and a positive force for change.

We believe that preparing young people for an interconnected world is where change begins and sets them on their path to becoming a global citizen.

AMIGOS was born out of a commitment made by young people to take action. Our programs are meant to spark curiosity, leadership, growth and push boundaries. Overall, 92% of students rated their experience as good or excellent. A 2021 volunteer in Nicaragua shared their thoughts on their experience- "This experience in Nicaragua has changed me so much, it changed how I think and live. It motivated me to do something better and bigger. I don't want to just go home and waste this experience. I want to change the world and community."

The AMIGOS model teaches invaluable skills for young people and allows youth to connect with themselves and to the world at large. AMIGOS applies the principles of positive youth development theory, asset-based community development theory, and social and emotional learning theory to create transformational programs.

For 2-9 weeks, volunteers will be given time to explore their passions and unplug from the day-to-day all while they live, work, and learn together. They will be assigned rotating roles and responsibilities where they will facilitate activities, lead daily self-guided reflections, build new relationships, and more as they develop crucial life skills. This will be an opportunity for students to experience the importance of interdependence and human connection.

As the parent/guardian of an AMIGOS volunteer, you will play an important role in preparing your volunteer for this program. This guide is intended to inform and prepare you for this role, answering many of the questions you may have about AMIGOS programs, policies, and procedures.

During this experience, AMIGOS is here for you and your family, so please feel free to reach out at any time with any questions or concerns.

Congratulations on joining AMIGOS and welcome to the family!

All the best,



Sara Nathan
President & CEO
Amigos de las Américas

Meet The Programs Team

Katherine Conway, Managing Director of Programs (she/her/ella)



Katherine re-joined AMIGOS from her position as a Program Manager at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) where she managed a portfolio of democracy, governance, human rights, and youth leadership programs across Latin America. Katherine is a long time Amiga, participating as a volunteer in Paraguay in 2002, Supervisor in Honduras in 2004, and Project Director in Honduras in 2009/2010 and Peru in 2011. Katherine also worked at the AMIGOS headquarters in Houston helping to envision the initial Youth Ambassadors Program, and most recently served as a Training Director for the Washington, DC Chapter from 2016–2018. Additionally, Katherine holds a BA in International Relations from Tufts University and a Masters in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at the same university. Katherine is a lover of all things rock climbing, cats, and coffee.

Elizabeth Spruell, Director of Health and Safety (she/her/ella)



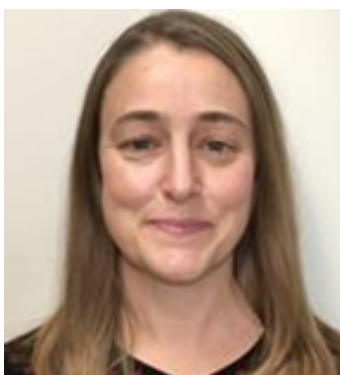
Elizabeth began her AMIGOS experience serving as a volunteer in Intibucá, Honduras in 1999 and then in Dajabon, Dominican Republic in 2000. During the summers of 2001 and 2002 she worked as a full-time staff member of the On-Call System and from 2004–2005 served as the correspondent volunteer administrator. She also worked part-time in the summers of 2003–2019 with the On-Call System. Elizabeth received her Bachelor's of Arts at the University of Mary Washington and is currently enrolled at the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work. She is certified as a Mental Health First Aid Trainer by the National Council of Behavioral Health and Contact Tracer for COVID-19 through John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. In her free time she enjoys hanging out with her three daughters, one a two-time AMIGOS alum and exploring new trails and cuisine in her hometown of Houston.

Margaret Laliberte, Mental Health Coordinator (she/her/ella)



Margaret Laliberte is a child and adolescent Psychiatric Nurse Specialist with an extensive history of clinical work with adolescents & families in a variety of mental health settings. In her 30 years of clinical practice, she has worked in residential, day treatment, & out patient programs as well as participated in evaluating adolescent programs and their development across the country. She currently maintains a private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area and does individual and group consultation to Child & Adolescent therapists. Margaret has coordinated the Mental Health program for the AMIGOS organization for the last 15 years. She does the mental health screening of all applicants where necessary, provides senior staff training, and takes the lead on providing summer consultation to staff in the field. Margaret's own daughter, Amy, was a long term AMIGOS participant, from Chapter Volunteer to a two-time Project Director!

Laura Grubb, MD, Medical Director (she/her/ella)



Laura has enjoyed working with Amigos since 1989, as a volunteer with the Houston Chapter she participated in community sanitation programs in Bolivar, Ecuador (1990) and Oaxaca, Mexico (1991). From 1991 to 2005, she was in school and training as a physician. In 2003–2005, she helped start the San Diego AMIGOS Chapter. From 2000–2007, she also served as a medical officer in the United States Navy, including two years aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD6). In 2008, she returned to Houston and started volunteering as a physician with the AMIGOS On-Call Health and Safety team. Laura also is board certified in Adolescent Medicine and Pediatrics and holds a Master's Degree in Public Health. She is an associate professor of pediatrics and public health and community medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, MA, and a happy clinician. She is super excited to continue her work with AMIGOS and provide health guidance for adolescents and young adults!

Marvin Sarkar Bynoe, Health & Safety Coordinator (he/him/él)



Marvin Sarkar Bynoe has been active in AMIGOS for over 6 years as a volunteer, chapter trainer, Project Supervisor in Costa Rica, and Health & Wellness Coordinator in Santa Elena, Ecuador. He received his Bachelors in Spanish Literature from Claremont McKenna College with a focus in decolonization and Afrolatinidad and received a fellowship to study sustainable agriculture and traditional medicine in Dominica.

He lived and studied for many years in Bolivia and Panama, worked as an educator in New Orleans, and is now based in San Diego, California. In his free time, he plays and coaches soccer.

Melisa Tenorio, Health & Safety Coordinator (she/her/ella)



I'm Melissa: Born and raised in beautiful Costa Rica, proud mom of 2, Amalia and Santiago (my 2 stars!). After living all my life in the same city and country, I moved to Houston last year-yeah quite a change! AMIGOS gave me the opportunity to live new experiences on a personal and professional level, and I am very grateful to be a part of it this summer. The best part: I get to serve a program that has definitely marked a before and after in my life. I start my day with a grateful thinking, some deep breathing and of course...Costa Rican coffee!

Fun fact: I am a professional singer and radio and TV presenter. Oh, and I make THE BEST banana and pineapple cakes... ask me for the recipe!

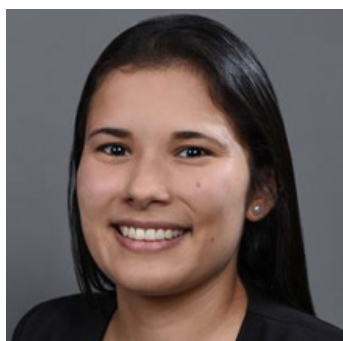
Vanessa Fiedler, Latin American Programs Director (she/her/ella)



Vanessa started her adventure with AMIGOS in 2013 as the Program Coordinator for Gap Year in Nicaragua. She continues loving her job in that role and has also twice served as Project Director for AMIGOS summer programs. Vanessa attended the University of Oregon Clark Honors College, double majoring in International Studies and Political Science. She is passionate about international development, environmental education, and youth leadership. Before joining the AMIGOS team, Vanessa worked for Global Glimpse, designing and leading group experiential learning trips to Nicaragua for young leaders.

Top of her bucket list: Hike through Patagonia and experience the astonishing beauty of the untarnished terrain.

Nicol Chinchilla, Costa Rica Country Director (she/her/ella)



Originally from Perez Zeledon, Costa Rica, Nicol considers herself a change-maker, passionate about contributing to the development of rural communities while also helping to preserve their essence of traditional living. In 2016, Nicol received her B.A. in Environmental Studies and Business & Nonprofit Management from Earlham College, with focuses in Environmental Politics and Women's Empowerment. Nicol began with AMIGOS as a Project Supervisor in Chimborazo, Ecuador and in 2017 Nicol was the Project Director for the Matagalpa, Nicaragua Project. In Spring 2021, Nicol led the first pod-based Gap Program in Costa Rica. For the last two years, Nicol has worked with indigenous and farming community-based organizations in Central America providing capacity building training.

Nicol is also committed to social entrepreneurship and during her free time enjoys working with women entrepreneurs guiding them towards their own paths of leadership.

Zyro Honty, Training Manager (he/him/él)



Born and raised in Uruguay, Zyro got to know AMIGOS while working for a partner agency back at home, where he had been managing several programs for youth and children since he was 19. In 2016 he served as Project Supervisor in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, and came back to AMIGOS in 2020 to work with the Community Impact Project. After working as Program Coordinator for a few months, Zyro served as Project Director for the 2021 Monteverde & Costa Atlantica project in Costa Rica. He assumed the role of Training Manager in September 2021.

He has also lived in New Zealand, Paraguay, and Mexico, where he developed different hobbies like snowboarding, scuba diving, salsa dancing, photography, and videography.

Carmen Gamboa, Costa Rica Program Coordinator (she/her/ella)



Carmen is re-joining the AMIGOS team after serving as a Project Director in 2022. Carmen is a trained sociologist, who has been working with youth for more than 10 years. She has worked with Girl Guides and Scouts, the Red Cross, and TECHO. Carmen is from the coffee producing mountains of Costa Rica and is proud of her culture.





Overview of AMIGOS

Vision, Mission, & History

Vision

A world where all people are lifelong leaders sharing responsibility for our global community.

Mission

Amigos de las Américas inspires leaders through authentic service and immersion experiences.

History

AMIGOS was founded on the principle that young people can change the world.

In 1965, a 29-year-old from Houston, Texas named Guy Bevil led a team of teens into rural Honduras to fight a growing polio epidemic. Serving communities in remote areas of the country, this group of 181 high school students and 36 adults helped protect thousands of people from the disease and established friendships that crossed borders.

This service had a bold impact on the lives of these young people and, as a result, they returned more mature, culturally aware, and inspired to continue serving communities at home and abroad.

Since then, AMIGOS programs have evolved to be more responsive to the needs of the current climate and our host communities. Today, our projects focus on sustainable service and building skills in youth from both the United States and Latin America. More than 30,000 alumni have carried on the passion and commitment that started more than 55 years ago, showing that young people have the power to rise to any challenge and make meaningful change.

2020 was an historic year for AMIGOS, as we had to close all in-person programs due to COVID-19. AMIGOS has continued to innovate and adapt our programs to the needs of our community and many families it serves during this time. We are excited to offer a variety of programs to our families and volunteers.



Program Pillars:

Leadership

Students on our summer programs will meet volunteers from around the U.S. and Latin America who want to be young leaders for themselves, their communities, and the world. Built on the AMIGOS values of intercultural awareness and inclusivity, these diverse cohorts will allow space for creative solutions, critical thinking, and language practice.

Mentorship and feedback are two important pieces of the leadership experience. Students will have weekly 1:1 check-in meetings with staff. This structure is an excellent opportunity for volunteers to receive support, ask questions, and advocate for their needs.

Additionally, students will engage with the iterative and deeply collaborative process of service project planning and execution. Exploring different models of leadership and designing community initiatives will give students opportunities to develop their decision-making, time management, and creativity.

Working together with their peers, Latin American youth, and other stakeholders, students will learn intercultural communication and conflict resolution in the development of their leadership skills. The success of the program greatly depends on the ability of each member to effectively communicate, resolve conflict, and build relationships and rapport with one another. Over the course of the summer, students will build powerful, and often lasting, relationships with each other, staff, host families, and community partners.

On group-based programs, the mini college dorm-like ecosystem provides ample opportunities for our students to take a leadership role and contribute to the success of the group. All students will be assigned to rotating committees where they will either cook, clean, or plan activities. This is an excellent opportunity for students to take an active role and be a contributing member of the pod, learning how to communicate and co-live effectively and peacefully. In the evenings, students will have free time to play games, listen to music, watch movies, and have fun!

Similarly, on homestay programs, students will be challenged to get involved in their host communities. In addition to integrating themselves into the everyday rhythms of their host families, they will facilitate daily activities with local youth and work with partner agencies and local leaders to carry out service projects. Living in host communities is an authentic cultural and language immersion experience that builds confidence in Spanish and prepares them for their future by learning to thrive in an unfamiliar environment.

Ultimately, these experiences will result in lasting friendships, incredible memories, and concrete leadership lessons that students can carry home to their own communities.

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is a humble and respectful attitude toward individuals of other cultures that pushes one to challenge their own cultural biases. One person can never truly know everything, but rather should approach learning about other cultures as a lifelong goal and process.[1]

We value the inclusion and integration of youth from our Latin American host countries in our programming. This is an excellent opportunity for students to spend time with youth from cultures, learn more about the country, and practice Spanish. Language acquisition is another key part of learning about a new culture. And our bilingual staff members are ready to practice Spanish with your volunteer and share their culture.

Our program model includes Latin American youth, partner organizations, and communities. By collaborating across cultural contexts, AMIGOS volunteers develop tools they need in order to thrive in an increasingly global and connected world.

Service

At AMIGOS, we believe youth can make an impact on the world. Service at AMIGOS means deep listening, curiosity, collaboration, respect, and partnership with others seeking to make change in their community.

Under this umbrella of service, AMIGOS programs focus on civic engagement and ethical community engagement. We have selected communities and partner organizations who are truly committed to youth leadership and positive change within their communities. They are excited to welcome in volunteers and get them involved in a variety of hands-on work projects that range such as beautifying a local park, painting a mural, or organizing a beach cleanup.

Our hope is the program will inspire students to become catalysts for positive change within their own communities.

[1] https://ovsjg.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ovsjg/page_content/attachments/Cultural%20humility%20presentation.pdf





AMIGOS Terminology

AMIGOS uses many acronyms and terms that assume unique meaning within the organization. Here is a list of common terms and acronyms:

Project Director:

Will oversee all aspects of the program from planning to implementation to evaluation. They will serve as a mentor and supervisor for students and staff.

Associate Project Director:

Shares responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the program, supervising Project Staff, and enhancing relationships with partner agencies.

Project Supervisor:

Serve as a mentor and supervisor for students. They will also support with facilitation of programming and logistics management.

United States Youth (USY):

Volunteers participating from across the United States.

Volunteer/Student/Participant:

Individuals enrolled in AMIGOS programs.

Headquarters (HQ):

The AMIGOS headquarters is located in Houston, Texas and is the home of our professional staff and On-Call.

Local Chapter System:

AMIGOS has 14 chapters throughout the United States. Each individual chapter has a board of directors comprised of both adult and youth volunteers. Chapter activities are coordinated in consultation with the AMIGOS Headquarters in Houston, which provides training, publicity materials, resources and advice about legal and financial matters, as well as standards for the organization. Volunteers involved in AMIGOS chapter training fundraise and participate in community service projects to prepare for their summer with AMIGOS.

National Office Volunteer:

Instead of training with a local chapter, National Office Volunteers are supported by professional staff members at the AMIGOS HQ.

Host Community:

Community in which AMIGOS volunteers live and work during the program.

Partner Agency:

Local or national agency with which AMIGOS collaborates. Examples are Plan International, Ministerios de Salud, and CARE.



Program Elements

AMIGOS offers an increasingly diverse slate of programs to meet the evolving needs of volunteers, partner agencies, and host communities. The section below will give an overview of the core features of our summer programs; however, not all descriptions will apply directly to your volunteer's experience. Volunteers and families will receive a Project Information Packet (PIP) with the specifics of their program closer to the departure date.

Briefing and Debriefing

Upon arrival at their projects, all AMIGOS will have a 1–3-day orientation. Volunteers will learn about the specific history, culture, and demographics of the project area while the group gets to know each other. They will also receive training on AMIGOS policies, risk prevention, health and safety, and cultural humility. During this time, volunteers will be encouraged to bond with each other and ask burning questions before program activities officially start.

The last days in-country are spent at debriefing, which is a period of closure and evaluation for the entire group. Activities include reflection on the project, suggestions for the following year, volunteer and Project Staff evaluations and preparation for their return home. Time for relaxation and recreation is also included.

Education: Talks, Workshops, and Curriculum

In addition to having varying structures and lengths, AMIGOS programs also have different themes that the volunteers explore over the course of the summer. These themes, designed to address critical issues and make volunteers more informed global citizens, range from community-driven conservation and climate Justice to community entrepreneurship. Talks and workshops facilitated by partner agency contacts, local leaders, and Project Staff will help volunteers to contextualize their service activities within these themes.

Service and Volunteering

Volunteers make an impact by supporting local partner agencies dedicated to addressing critical issues in their community. AMIGOS gives young people the chance to gain life experience that is impossible to get in a classroom. Together with U.S. and Latin American peers, volunteers live in a new country and work on community service projects. This creates an opportunity for youth to grow and develop their leadership skills.

Excursions

AMIGOS volunteers travel to must-see spots in their host country as a group. These excursions give them an opportunity to visit unique destinations like volcanoes, ancient ruins, national parks, and historical sites. They'll get to see these places from the distinct perspective of someone who has lived in the country and learned about the culture firsthand. Plus, they'll bond with their fellow volunteers and have fun. On homestay programs, excursions are typically scheduled to happen at the halfway point and during debriefing.

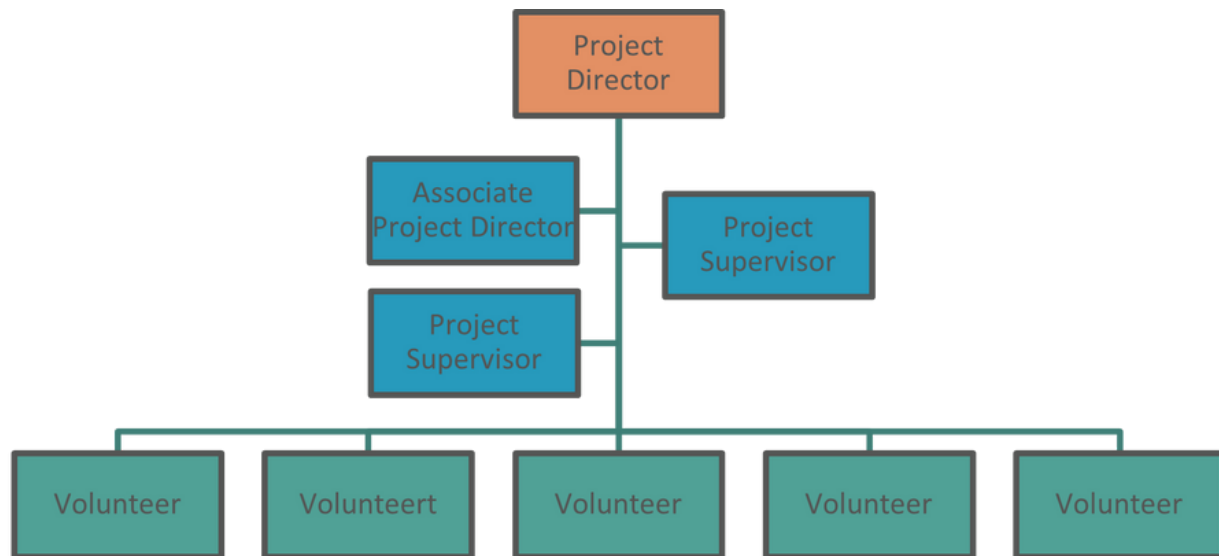
Program Elements

Homestays

AMIGOS volunteers do more than just travel — they live with a host family, sharing in their day-to-day life. Volunteers become part of their host community, making friends with and working alongside community members. They share holidays, celebrations, and everyday life in a way you can only experience through authentic cultural immersion. Host families are vetted and trained before volunteers arrive. AMIGOS volunteers and their host families build long-lasting relationships and often stay in touch after their project ends.

Support and Mentorship

A key aspect of the AMIGOS experience is our dedicated Project Staff. Our bilingual staff members will be the primary support system for volunteers, promoting safety, health, and fun. Each program will have at least 3 full-time staff members who arrive in country before to prepare for volunteers and steward them throughout their experience. These staff teams include a project director, an associate project director, and 1-3 project coordinators (as displayed below). Staff members also have access to AMIGOS' 24/7 On-Call Safety System to provide guidance and help them address any concerns that may arise.



Partner Agencies

AMIGOS works in partnership with local organizations and collaborates with their already-existing programs. This framework helps AMIGOS summer programs be relevant to the Latin American communities AMIGOS works with, as they amplify the year-round programs of our partner agencies. Our partner agencies provide expert knowledge and program structure while our volunteers support and assist well-developed community-driven projects. Our partner agencies assist AMIGOS in identifying host communities and host families for our projects.

The Group Program Model:

(2 and 3-Week Programs) with NO Homestays

The group program model is committed to building trust, independence and camaraderie. The program is made up of 15-20 US volunteers and 3-4 full time staff members. For the entirety of the group program, volunteers and Project Staff will live, work, play and grow together as a unit; there will be no homestay element. Apart from the exciting excursions mentioned above, volunteers will have a rotating schedule of activities such as volunteering with the partner agency in community environmental activities, Spanish classes, workshops, and other cultural activities.

Day in the Life:

Below is an example of how each day may look. There may be changes to the itinerary depending on project location and excursions.

- 6:00 Wake up
- 7:00 Delicious Costa Rican Breakfast
- 7:30 Service work
- 11:00 Free time, freshen up
- 12:30 Enjoy lunch with your peers
- 13:30 Briefing activities
- 16:00 Workshop time and dinamicas
- 18:30 Dinner time
- 19:30 Asamblea!

All group gets together to debrief about the day and learn about next day agenda

- 21:30 Lights out



The Group Program Model

(2 and 3-Week Programs) with Homestays

The group program model is committed to building trust, independence and camaraderie. The program is made up of 15-20 US volunteers and 3-4 full time staff members. On this program, volunteers and Project Staff will live, work, play and grow together as a unit while also experiencing the joy of a homestay component. Volunteers will live with a host family and 1-2 other volunteers in a community where other volunteers and project staff will also be placed. Homestays will last anywhere from 8-14 days, depending on the project.

Apart from the exciting excursions mentioned above, volunteers will have a rotating schedule of activities such as volunteering with the partner agency in community environmental activities, Spanish classes, workshops, and other cultural activities.

Sample Calendar of Activities:

Below is an example of how each day may look. There may be changes to the itinerary depending on project location and excursions.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Day 1 | Arrival at Site 1 |
| Day 2-3 | Briefing Activities |
| Day 3-5 | Community service, curriculum activities, conservation workshops, free time, and an excursion. |
| Day 5 | Travel to Site 2 and settle in with your host family. Community tour. |
| Day 6-18 | Site 2 - BIOLLEY: Learn about coffee production and processing, gender issues in coffee, and about conservation initiatives in the buffer zones of the largest national park in Costa Rica. Volunteering in the mornings, spend time with host families during the afternoons and evenings. There will be a couple of half-day excursions in the communities near Biolley. Curriculum and workshops throughout the afternoons or evenings. |
| Day 18 | Travel back to site 1, get settled at the lodge, take a walk in the trails, and start debriefing |
| Day 18-20 | Debriefing activities. |
| Day 20 | Travel back to San José in the afternoon and spend 1 night at a hostel before flying out the next day. |
| Day 21 | Fly out of the San José airport! Hasta Luego! |



Homestay Model for 4, 6, and 9-Week Programs

In the AMIGOS homestay model programs, volunteers will be placed with 1-2 other volunteers in a host community where they will live with a host family. Volunteers will be assigned to a supervisor who will visit the volunteer and community on a weekly basis.

Pre-Program Host Community & Host Family Selection

Project Staff members work directly with partner agencies to select host communities. This process begins long before the Volunteer's arrival. Partner agencies select host communities that have an interest in hosting AMIGOS volunteers. During this time, the Project Supervisor spends at least one night in each community with a host family and sets up a meal plan, meets key contacts, and confirms emergency procedures.

Host communities are located within four hours of travel time from the Project Staff headquarter city with access to public and private transportation. Host communities must express an interest in collaborating with AMIGOS volunteers and be in a safe area approved by the partner agency staff. The communities selected for AMIGOS have a strong and active relationship with our partnering agency. Additionally, the host families and community will sign a contract agreeing to adhere to AMIGOS health and safety protocols.

All host communities must have accessible communication. As a guideline, volunteers should be able to access communication within a 30-minute walk from their host family home. Most host families have access to a telephone.

Host families are recommended by representatives of partner agencies and/or community leaders in communities identified by partner agency representatives. Typically, the heads of host families are active community leaders, such as health workers, teachers, mayors, or partner agency representatives. AMIGOS provides a small stipend to cover the cost of feeding a Volunteer. Host families are required to agree to the "AMIGOS Host Family Contract*," which Project Staff review with the head(s) of household. This contract stipulates the following requirements to host Volunteers:

- Host family members demonstrate a real interest in hosting Volunteers
- The home has gender- and age-specific space for sleeping at night
- The host family is able to feed the Volunteer OR the Project Supervisor has arranged a rotating meal schedule
- If the family is not at home during the day, there is a way to contact them in case of emergency

- The family agrees to support the Volunteers in abiding by the standards of conduct
- The home is within 20 minutes walking distance from the home of their partner's host family OR 30-minute walking distance from partner's host family, if a buddy system for walking home at night has been established
- There are no signs of potential problems, such as excessive use of alcohol or domestic violence
- No household members have criminal records
- Female Volunteers should be placed in a home where other females are present (a host sister or mother)
- The host family does not plan to leave the community for extended periods during the program
- A head of household has agreed to the "Host Family Contract"

If at any time during the program the host family is not abiding by the points in this contract, Volunteers should immediately contact a member of the Project Staff.

Partnership Selection and Placements

The Interview Process:

During briefing, each Volunteer is interviewed by at least one Project Staff member to assess their Spanish ability and experience level. Based on this interview and information in the Volunteer application, Project Staff place Volunteers in partnerships of 2 or 3. Oftentimes, communities request Volunteers with specific skills and host families request specific genders based on housing arrangements.

Role of Gender in Placements:

Same gender partnerships are most appropriate in terms of promoting the highest degree of cultural sensitivity, given that mixed-gender friendships can easily be misinterpreted. In some cases, due to the nature of the program or community logistics, mixed-gender partnerships may be the most feasible option. Project Leadership may not place one female Volunteer in a partnership with one male Volunteer. Instead, one male may be placed with two female Volunteers. Volunteers in mixed gender partnerships must have separate sleeping quarters. Whenever possible, female Volunteers should share sleeping quarters with another female, either a family member or another AMIGOS Volunteer. Female and male Volunteers may not sleep in the same room with individuals of the opposite gender, be they AMIGOS Volunteers, host family members or guests.

Sleeping arrangements:

Volunteers may sleep on a bed, a cot or a hammock; due to the host family housing arrangements, a choice of one or the other may not be possible.

Housing:

AMIGOS partners do not necessarily live in the same house. Not all host families can accommodate multiple Volunteers.

Solo Placements:

No Volunteer may be placed in a community alone without another AMIGOS Volunteer. If a Volunteer departs prior to the conclusion of the project, authorization from AMIGOS management and parents of minor Volunteers is needed for the partner to remain alone in their community.



Accommodations, Transportation, and Food

Rooming Assignments

During an AMIGOS program, volunteers and Project Staff Team members stay at various lodging sites and facilities, depending on the program. This may include hostels, farms/cooperatives, university dorms, hotels, partner agencies, and host family houses.

At each site where the group stays together, volunteers are assigned to a room where they will sleep and store personal items. Options for room assignments include 1) a room designated for women or 2) a room designated for men.

All programmatic activities take place in common areas. All participants are given privacy when changing clothes, using the restroom, and showering. Volunteers and Project Staff Team members are encouraged to choose the restroom which makes them feel most comfortable throughout the program.

We recognize that Volunteers and Project Staff Team members may identify with one gender or another or neither. For the purpose of rooming assignments only, volunteers should select the room designation where they will feel most comfortable. We ask each volunteer to indicate their rooming preference in advance, during the paperwork process, in order to plan for trip logistics.

Transportation

All transportation is selected and vetted against our safety standards. AMIGOS contracts with private transportation companies and will never use public transportation unless in emergencies. Prior to transporting volunteers, Project Staff will check that the vehicle or bus is in proper order and the driver is in good condition to operate the vehicle. Additionally, transportation is limited to daytime hours and with good road conditions, unless it is an emergency.

On occasion, volunteers will use boats as modes of transportation. Life jackets are required to be worn at all times and volunteers must follow all safety guidelines set forth by the operator. In the event a volunteer needs to be transported to a clinic, the volunteer will be accompanied by a member of the Project Staff in private transportation. Volunteers and Project Staff are prohibited from driving vehicles in Latin America.

Experiencing a New Diet

Volunteers will be experimenting with new flavors and foods and are expected to be flexible and open-minded when approaching mealtimes. AMIGOS will provide three full meals and snacks to volunteers each day. If a Volunteer is not receiving enough food, they are required to call their Project Supervisor or another member of the Project Staff immediately. Volunteers should not be purchasing food to feed themselves, unless it is for extra snacks or treats outside of their regular meal plan. Special dietary requests and allergies are evaluated during the health screening process and Project Staff are made known of any foods to be avoided for those volunteers.

A Note on Dieting

Volunteers will likely be living in conditions more physically and mentally demanding than they've previously experienced. They may also be exposed to various new challenges to their immune system. Considering this, it is imperative that they consume enough calories to maintain their health throughout the program. The intentional restriction of calories or food groups, including any type of voluntary diet, is strictly prohibited. Volunteers and Project Staff are allowed to express dietary restrictions such as vegetarianism (project dependent) or religious restrictions, so long as they consume sufficient nutrients. Veganism is not allowed as it places an undue burden on host families and/or food providers. During the weekly check in, Project Staff will check in to make sure that each volunteer is getting enough food to eat.

Accommodations and Rooming Assignments

During an AMIGOS program, volunteers and project staff team members may stay in a variety of shared accommodations, including hostels, farms, university dorms, hotels, partner agency facilities, and/or others, depending on the program structure. Group lodging sites may include larger dorms or smaller rooms. AMIGOS aims to ensure that every volunteer understands the available rooming options and feels comfortable and valued in their living arrangements.

In general, at each site where the group stays together, volunteers are assigned to shared rooms where they will sleep and store personal items, separate from project staff. Volunteers who are minors will not be placed alone with volunteers who are over 18 years old. Each volunteer will have their own bed or cot.

Room Assignment Options Related to Gender Identity

AMIGOS strives to create supportive and inclusive spaces for all volunteers as they explore different cultures and cultivate their leadership abilities. We embrace diversity and are committed to protecting the gender expression and identity of all volunteers. This policy outlines the options available for rooming assignments as relates to gender.

We acknowledge that individuals may identify with a specific gender, a combination of genders, or none at all, and that identities may be fluid for some individuals. For rooming assignments, volunteers are encouraged to select the option that aligns most with their personal comfort. We request that each volunteer indicates their rooming preference in advance on the Dashboard during the application and paperwork process. This information helps us plan logistics and ensure that everyone's needs are met.

- *Gender-Designated Rooms: We offer rooms designated for women and rooms designated for men.*
- *Gender-Neutral Rooms: In some projects, at some lodging sites, we may provide gender-neutral rooming options.*

Rooming assignments are made by project staff, and assignments will rotate so that volunteers have the opportunity to meet others on their program. For this reason, volunteers cannot request specific roommates. If you do not communicate your rooming preference during the paperwork process, you will be placed according to the gender indicated on your application.

Privacy and Respect

During group travel, all program activities occur in common areas, and we respect the privacy of all volunteers during personal activities such as changing clothes, using restrooms, and showering. Private facilities are always provided for changing clothes, bathing, and using the restroom. We encourage volunteers and project staff team members to use the restroom facilities that are most consistent with their gender identity.

Staff will be onsite and available 24/7 to assist volunteers. When selecting accommodations, AMIGOS checks that the sites are secure with good safety record, have adequate ventilation, identified exits in the event of a fire or natural disaster and are aligned with AMIGOS values. In most cases, AMIGOS follows the recommendations and guidance of our local partnering agencies when selecting accommodations. Project staff will be lodged onsite and share all meals with the volunteers during group days.



Meals and Diet during Homestays:

Many volunteers will eat primarily with their host family while others may have a meal plan in which they spend mealtimes with various community members. In the latter, Project Supervisors work with the host community to develop a rotating meal schedule for Volunteers. This is so that the host community shares the responsibility of feeding the Volunteers, rather than the host family being solely responsible. Typically, families in the host community will volunteer to provide a meal (or several) to the AMIGOS Volunteer partnership. Then, a schedule will be devised of who is providing which meal each day. If more than one problem with a meal plan arises, Volunteers will be assigned to eat with one family for the duration of the program.

Please keep in mind that some host families may be financially limited in the types or variety of food that they can provide. It is the Volunteer's duty to accept and eat it graciously, even if the food is not part of their normal diet or is a dish they do not like. Being a grateful guest is part of the leadership role for the summer. This does not mean Volunteers should consume things that may jeopardize their health and safety. They need to be sure all fresh produce has been properly cleaned, cooked or peeled. They cannot drink the water, ice or juice unless their Project Staff tells them that it is okay in their host community. Volunteers will NOT become immune to the microbes during their summer, so they MUST NOT start consuming these items at any time. If they do, they could be at a high risk of infection, be it worms, parasites, bacteria or viruses.



Standards of Conduct

AMIGOS Standards of Conduct for 2024 Summer Programs

The AMIGOS Standards of Conduct are an integral part of building and growing leadership skills. Their primary purpose is to help keep volunteers and program staff safe. The volunteer's adherence to the Standards of Conduct is the primary way that AMIGOS works towards ensuring their health and well-being during the program. The Standards of Conduct come from many years of volunteer experiences and recommendations. In addition to the Standards of Conduct, the group will develop their own, internal set of guiding principles for community living with the completion of a values contract.

Upholding the Standards of Conduct is crucial for:

Development of Leadership

A primary focus of the AMIGOS mission statement is the development of youth leadership. As an AMIGOS student, they should lead with positive examples, be the first to uphold the Standards of Conduct, and be stronger than any pressure to act otherwise. We expect our volunteers to take initiative, be responsible, and to do great things.

Accountability to all AMIGOS Stakeholders

As an AMIGOS volunteer, they are the face of AMIGOS – the leaders of our vast organization. This makes them accountable to all the AMIGOS stakeholders and their actions will impact all the stakeholders and individuals who make their participation in AMIGOS programs possible.

Preserving the Legacy of Both AMIGOS Outreach and Your Involvement

They are now a part of the AMIGOS legacy. It is up to them how their actions will be remembered and connected with our organizations. They are ambassadors of the organization in their home country and abroad.

Personal Health & Safety

AMIGOS has been conducting programs in Latin America since 1965. The Standards of Conduct help to ensure that the health and safety of AMIGOS volunteers is a top priority. AMIGOS takes a restorative approach when volunteers exhibit discouraging behaviors or when they have violated one of our standards. We recognize that adolescence is an important time for self-reflection and growth, and we believe in empowering youth to self-reflect on their behavior. AMIGOS has a zero-tolerance policy on illegal activity, serious forms of bullying, and sexual harassment/assault.

The Standards of Conduct

The AMIGOS volunteer will:

- 1. Be thoughtful and self-reflective when interacting with others. Be self-accountable for their decisions, behaviors, and actions and communicate their needs in a healthy manner. Take*

ownership for their health and safety and will avoid activities and/or behaviors that may be detrimental to themselves, others, or to the program. This includes but is not limited to abiding by the laws of the country in which the volunteer is located, avoiding touching all animals, avoiding body modifications (tattoos and piercings), adventure sports outside of organized events by AMIGOS and adhering to infectious disease mitigation protocols.

2. Follow the laws of the host country, county, and state and country, county, and state of residence of the volunteer and in line with these laws will not use or possess any drugs that are illegal in the host country, county, or state, your country, county, or state of residence, or the United States.

3. Be conscientious of their surroundings and assigned work area. Only leave their assigned work area and/or group once they have been granted prior permission from AMIGOS Program Staff.

4. Excluding travel to or from a Service Program activity in the United States, not be a passenger on or operate motorcycles, ATVs, electric scooters, electric bikes and the like, and only be a passenger on motorized vehicles such as cars, trucks, and buses.

5. Recognize the dangers of firearms, fireworks, or explosives and avoid any contact with such thing.

6. Be respectful, courteous, and kind. Avoid any acts of harassment, aggression, or bullying, as defined by AMIGOS.

7. Not consume alcohol during the duration of the program.

8. Avoid the use or possession of all tobacco or cannabis products including vaping, E-Cigarettes, cigarettes, edibles, or anything containing nicotine, cannabis, CBD, or hemp derived oil or distillate.

9. Maintain platonic friendships and avoid any intimate or amorous relationships. This includes, but is not limited to, a relationship with any of the following: community member, Program Staff, or another volunteer.

Potential Consequences for Violations of Standards of Conduct

We understand that adolescence is an extraordinary period of growth and development and that mistakes often provide the best opportunities for growth and development. As a youth organization, we do NOT expect perfection from our volunteers, but rather perseverance and positivity when tackling new challenges and situations. AMIGOS follows a restorative justice approach balanced with protecting the health and safety of volunteers when handling behavior.

The following disciplinary actions are guidelines for what happens when there is an infraction against one of our standards. If a volunteer violates the standard of conduct, the project staff and AMIGOS work directly with the individual to understand, discuss, and work to change the behavior. The Standards of Conduct are in place to protect all our volunteers and constituents. In certain situations when the health and safety of a volunteer and or group is compromised, AMIGOS reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer at any point during the AMIGOS experience.

As an organization, these the Standards of Conduct are taken very seriously, and all volunteers are

required to sign an agreement as a part of their application process to uphold these standards prior to acceptance into our programs. AMIGOS Standards of Conduct apply during all phases of AMIGOS participation, including training and travel to and from the project.

Standards Violation Warning:

This will be administered for minor, first-time violations that do not represent a threat to the health and safety of the individual, their partner(s), fellow pod members or the reputation of the partner agency/AMIGOS organization. Standards violation warnings are typically given for inadvertent violations or minor incidents in which there was no premeditated intent or in which there were extenuating circumstances. In the event the volunteer has been given several verbal warnings and there has been no change to correct behavior, an official warning will be given, and parents will be notified.

Examples of offenses: isolated incident of culturally insensitive behavior, or unknowingly being disruptive to group dynamics after several verbal warnings have been given by staff.

Standards Violation Incident:

These are given for more serious and/or intentional violations that could be potentially damaging to the individual, their fellow volunteers, community, partner agency, or the organization. If a volunteer is issued an incident and wishes to return as a volunteer to project staff in subsequent years, their application will be subject to additional review.

Examples of offenses: intentionally leaving the assigned area without prior permission, taking medications without prior approval, repeatedly rude and/or culturally insensitive behavior despite a warning given from staff.

Standards Violation Dismissal from the Program:

Volunteers will most likely be dismissed from the program in situations of repeated or severe violations that are potentially dangerous or harmful to the individual, their partner(s), or the organization. Individuals who are sent home will also be charged for actual costs of flight changes and other costs related to travel, food, and lodging to accommodate an early return in addition to a \$350 administrative fee to AMIGOS. The total cost for an early return can sometimes be well over \$1,000. AMIGOS has a zero tolerance of serious forms of bullying, harassment, violence, and illicit activities which include the use of drugs and alcohol consumed while on the program. Volunteers who engage in these activities will be sent home.

Examples of offenses: violations involving illegal drugs, the consumption of alcohol, making violent threats, serious derogatory or harassing language or action, serious forms of bullying, amorous or intimate sexual relationships, driving motorized vehicles, repeated leaving of project area without prior approval from the project staff, repeatedly failing to make improvements after a behavior contract was implemented and/or other standard of conduct violations or handling firearms.

Individuals can also be dismissed for non-disclosure related to medical, mental, or behavioral health issues. For example: A volunteer did not disclose an active eating disorder or active case of depression for which they take daily medications. See the Consent and Release and General Health Criteria for more information on health-related issues.

After Care

At the end of the project, volunteers and families will be emailed a copy of their Standard of Conduct Violation which includes a reflection statement written by the volunteer and the final recommendation from AMIGOS for any incidents and early dismissals.

If a volunteer has been given a Standard of Violation dismissal and/or serious incident, there will be after care and follow up with the family and/or volunteer to provide the opportunity to reflect, process, and discuss the situation. After care will occur as a phone conversation after the volunteer has returned home. We value the partnership with our families in this process and believe that by working together we can provide more opportunities for growth and self-reflection and learn as an organization how we can continue to better support and assist our many constituents.



Managing Group Dynamics and Behavior

AMIGOS believes in the extraordinary potential and abilities of young people. We understand that adolescents can be challenging at times, pushing boundaries as they exert their power and independence. AMIGOS uses a positive approach when managing and correcting behavior. We believe that all young people are capable of making good decisions and have well-meaning intentions. Project Staff are prohibited from yelling, screaming, making any type of derogatory comments or language, hitting or using any type of corporal punishment when addressing behavior issues. This includes but not limited to withholding food, restraining a person, unnecessarily isolating them from the larger group for long periods of time and public shaming. Any Project Staff who is found to have engaged in said discipline approach is subject to immediate dismissal. The job of our Project Staff is to set clear and transparent expectations and guidelines for what is acceptable and not acceptable during their time with AMIGOS. Additionally, it is important for staff to seek the input and buy in of all the volunteers. This important feedback session occurs during their weekly group processing meeting.

Group process meetings are intentionally set times where volunteers and Project Staff can come together to discuss group dynamics, challenges and successes of the group, and collectively problem solve on pending group issues. We have seen that regular group process meetings are integral in maintaining structure, support, community, and cooperation. Adolescents thrive in safe and positive peer settings and learn crucial leadership and interpersonal communication skills by participating in process groups. We encourage volunteers to tell staff what they think they need for everyone to be successful and respectful during their time on the project. Staff will invite open ended conversations about establishing community norms for living and for behavior and will ask them what the consequences are if someone violates or goes against the community norms.

On occasion, when a volunteer is not responding to other outlined interventions to modify or improve behavior, a behavior contract is warranted under the recommendation of the mental health consultant. The Health and Safety Team will instruct the staff in its use and notify parents that it has been implemented, as well as share the contract with parents of minor volunteers. Please note that the overwhelming majority of our volunteers successfully complete their AMIGOS program without major behavior interventions.



Health and Safety at AMIGOS

A Note from the AMIGOS Medical Director

Dear AMIGOS Parent/Guardian:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an overview of the organization's commitment to health and safety and to briefly outline the various mechanisms, processes, and personnel in place pursuant to that goal.

As the AMIGOS Medical Director, I work closely with the Director of Health and Safety and key AMIGOS constituents to promote the highest level of health and safety, to the extent possible, in the following areas:

- Health Screening pre-departure
- Disease prevention and health maintenance
- COVID-19 policies and procedures
- Safety protocols in program area
- Approval of volunteer medical treatments during the Program, when necessary

Volunteers will receive important training on issues of health and safety during their initial days on the program. In addition, prior to the volunteer's departure, you will be invited to attend a health and safety parent training which accompanies this AMIGOS Family Preparation Guide. The training and guide cover information about general health practices, protocols for communication during the program, and specific information on disease prevention. It is important to understand that most AMIGOS volunteers have no major health issues during their time with AMIGOS. However, because of our commitment to health and safety from a preventive perspective, we provide substantive information on these issues in order to better prepare and train the volunteer to approach their personal health matters proactively.

When traveling, especially in an environment where conditions are different than what one is used to, it is common to experience some environmental challenges. It is important that your volunteer understands how to be proactive in taking personal responsibility for their own health. This can be done by reviewing and making good use of the information and practices outlined in AMIGOS health-related materials. Encouraging your volunteer to take all the health and safety information to heart will make the overall AMIGOS experience much more enriching, enjoyable, and rewarding.

As mentioned previously, AMIGOS places the highest possible priority on issues of health and safety. We believe our 58-year track record speaks for itself. We wish you and your volunteer the best of luck as you prepare for what will be an enriching and rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Laura Grubb, MPH, MD
AMIGOS Medical Director



Health and Safety Procedures

Safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of our volunteers is our top priority. For over 59 years, AMIGOS has operated from the lens of risk management, taking a proactive and multilayered approach to managing health and safety.

All Project Staff have been thoroughly vetted and will complete extensive training to serve in a leadership capacity. All volunteers and Project Staff over the age of 18 will complete a comprehensive background check prior to acceptance. In addition to rigorous training, our Project Staff are certified in First Aid/CPR and trained in knowing how to recognize anaphylaxis and how to properly use an EpiPen in the event it becomes necessary. All our project staff will become certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid giving them additional tools and resources to successfully support and navigate group dynamics and individual emotional wellbeing and health.

In addition to our robust pre-departure screening and education process, AMIGOS maintains strong partnerships in efforts to monitor, mitigate, and respond to any health, safety, or risk concern(s). AMIGOS utilizes recognized organizations and groups to monitor health and safety in each designated project locations which include but are not limited to OSAC, local NGOs, Peace Corps and other key contacts. Whenever possible, AMIGOS follows the guidance of the Ministry of Health and U.S. State Department in project areas and consider information from the CDC, WHO and U.S. Embassy for program design and implementation. Volunteers will be registered with the US Embassy upon arrival through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Much of the success of AMIGOS' health and safety efforts are the relationships built and maintained over time in our project areas. AMIGOS projects are by invitation only and are developed and executed in partnership with local partnering agencies. These local organizations are our eyes, ears and feet on the ground who support our health and safety policies and design. This alliance equips our projects to have the best access to private clinics, doctors and infrastructure related to local political, environmental, health and safety risks.

Throughout the year, the Health and Safety Team at AMIGOS monitors the political, security, environmental and health climate and state of each project area, identifying areas for risk and developing appropriate response plans to mitigate and assuage concerns. In the event of any health, safety or risk concerns, parents will be notified immediately via On-Call with detailed information and next steps, if applicable. AMIGOS believes in the spirit of transparency and being proactive when situations arise.

AMIGOS believes that the best preventive mechanism to promote health and safety lies in self-awareness and self-advocacy. Volunteers are empowered to take ownership and be accountable for their own mental and physical health and well-being as much as possible. Upon arrival, volunteers will be matched with a member of the Project Staff who will serve as a mentor during the duration of the project.

Each week, the volunteer will complete a Weekly Self-Assessment, a self-monitoring tool that assesses their health, emotional wellbeing, project goals, group dynamics and more. This tool serves as a springboard to facilitate dialogue between the volunteer and their assigned Project Supervisor and provides a safe space to field concerns, applaud their successes and provide feedback. The self-assessments are submitted to the Health and Safety Team and are reviewed weekly, flagging any concerns which may need additional follow-up. Volunteers will also complete a Health Log recording any over-the-counter medications or prescriptions which will then be reviewed by their mentor during their weekly self-assessment and shared with the Health and Safety Team for review.

In the event that a volunteer becomes ill or is struggling with their mental health or for any health, safety or risk concern, AMIGOS operates a 24-hour on-call system ready to respond and support.

Youth Prevention and Protection Policies

The aim of youth protection and prevention policies are to keep young people safe from abuse and vulnerable situations. Training Directors, chapter leaders, project staff and volunteers over the age of 18 are required to undergo criminal background checks.

Please note that all Project Staff are required to attend a two-hour live session on Child Abuse and Safeguarding Youth from Plan International every spring.

In addition, an AMIGOS associate (chapter leader, training director and/or staff member) who interact with volunteers must adhere to the following principles and policies:

Interactions with Volunteers

It is important to treat volunteers in a way that is respectful and honors their personhood and dignity. Interactions should contribute to their personal growth and development regardless of their age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, color, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socioeconomic status, cultural background or class.

Additionally, training directors, chapter leaders, AMIGOS staff and project staff are expected to create and maintain an environment that prevents abuse and exploitation of volunteers, paying close attention to their own behavior and interactions and to take the appropriate measures to minimize risks to participants. They must always show high standards of professionalism and conduct, providing a positive role model to volunteers and others. This includes, but is not limited to:

- *Addressing volunteers by their name and proper pronouns and avoid using nicknames and/or diminutives (ex: little girl, little boy, kid, chubby, skinny...).*
- *Prevented from requesting contact information from volunteers, including their social network handles.*
- *Prevented from requesting or sending photos, sexually illicit material, derogatory content or any other content that is not in line with the mission of AMIGOS.*
- *Prevented from inviting or accepting invitations to events or meetings that violate the Standards of Conduct and/or put the safety of volunteers at risk.*

- *Adopting appropriate practices and behaviors with volunteers and avoiding inappropriate, offensive, sexually provocative, degrading or culturally inappropriate behavior and language. This includes, but is not limited to:*
 - *Avoiding physical contact, including practices that may be socially accepted culturally: greetings with a kiss on the cheek or hugs, caresses, patting the back or legs, holding or touching the volunteers.*
- *Avoid making comments about another person's body (telling a person that they are fat, thin, that they look attractive, pretty, ugly, etc.)*
- *Respecting volunteer's physical and personal spaces.*
- *Avoiding doing dynamics/games where volunteers have lots of physical contact with each other and/or others.*
- *The use of smartphones, cameras, mirrors, drones, etc., in places or situations where privacy is expected is prohibited.*
- *All forms of bullying and harassment including verbal, physical, and cyberbullying are prohibited. Inappropriate public displays of affection are prohibited. Sexual activity is prohibited.*
- *Appropriate attire is required for all activities.*
- *In the case of taking photos of volunteers, the following parameters must be followed:*
 - *Ensure that the context and aim of the photo is appropriate and adheres to the overall mission.*
 - *If a person does not wish to be photographed, respect their decision to say no, clarifying that there will be no negative repercussions for said decision.*
 - *Take photographs that are respectful and do not show a person in a negative or undignified light.*
 - *Do not upload or share photographs of volunteers on social media external to the program, such as personal social networks, without the prior consent of the project team or AMIGOS staff.*
- *Inform AMIGOS HQ immediately if you suspect an incident or hear allegations of abuse involving a volunteer.*
- *Training directors, chapter leaders and project staff are prohibited from sharing a bed with a volunteer.*
- *Discipline must be constructive and positive. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are also prohibited.*
- *Training directors, chapter leaders and project staff are prohibited from embarrassing, belittling, humiliating or engaging in acts of hazing volunteer.*
- *Under no circumstances may a staff member or AMIGOS associate discriminate or show differential or preferential treatment towards volunteers, project staff and others.*
- *Training directors, chapter leaders, AMIGOS associates and project staff are prohibited from engaging in romantic and sexual relationships or any type of sexual-emotional relationship with volunteers.*



Mandated Reporter Policy

AMIGOS has committed to acting as a mandated reporter of allegations of child abuse and neglect.

AMIGOS complies with US state* and federal child abuse and neglect reporting laws as well as the Latin American host countries' applicable laws by notifying the correct authorities in the case of any reported abuse of any participant** in or during the AMIGOS program (while in the United States or Latin America). AMIGOS acts as a mandated reporter for the protection of all participants in our programs.

**For the purposes of this policy, AMIGOS defines participant as anyone who is enrolled in our program and assigned to a host community with a family other than their own.

In addition to the above, it is imperative that volunteers know how to report any abuse that may have been incurred during their time with AMIGOS. This includes interactions during chapter training and chapter events, while on their AMIGOS project, with fellow volunteers, Project Staff, community members, partner agencies and others.

To make a report of abuse, volunteers may report via email or phone to a member of the Emergency Management Team:

- Via email: ncall@amigosinternational.com
- Phone Call: Elizabeth Spruell, Director of Health and Safety at +1 713-782-5290 ext.115

Two Deep Leadership Policy

AMIGOS is committed to protecting the health and safety of all of its volunteers. As a youth-focused organization, we are committed to practicing "Two Deep Leadership" throughout our training and AMIGOS events. This practice is intended to avoid any one-on-one interactions to protect the young people who participate in AMIGOS as well as staff, and adult volunteers from accusations.

Five common high-risk situations to avoid when working with young people:

- Unsupervised interactions outside of the group events, especially at a personal residence
- Locker rooms, changing areas, and other private spaces
- Social events involving alcohol
- Vehicles during local travel
- Vehicles or hotels during overnight trips

In any circumstance requiring a one-on-one discussion between an adult and volunteer, that discussion is to take place in full view of other adults and youths. Under no circumstances should a youth share sleeping quarters with any adult. Privacy of youth when changing or showering must be respected at all times. In most instances, separate bathroom and shower facilities will be available for males and females, but if this is not an option, such as times during a homestay component or other times, there will be separate scheduled times for males and females to utilize these facilities. For our volunteers who self-identify as non-binary or transgendered, they will be asked if they need private bathroom accommodations for showering.

Use of Technology:

- The policy of Two Deep Leadership includes use of technology, meaning that another adult should

be copied on every electronic communication with a volunteer.

- When sending a minor volunteer an email, their parent(s) and/or legal guardians should be copied.
- Inappropriate use of camera, digital, or recording devices is strictly prohibited.

AMIGOS requires all constituents who will be spending significant amounts of time with the volunteers to pass a criminal background check. All AMIGOS office and Project Staff members are also required to pass a criminal background check.

NOTE: AMIGOS does have a mandated reporting policy. Any allegation of abuse must be reported to the appropriate authorities and AMIGOS leadership.

Swimming and Water Policy

AMIGOS requires a certified lifeguard to be on hand at all major AMIGOS swimming events. If volunteers are swimming in a large body of water where the shoreline is farther away than what they can safely swim, they must use a personal flotation device.

Volunteers are permitted to wade up to their knees in bodies of water so long as there are no currents present and an adult is supervising. Volunteers are not permitted to jump or dive off any rocks or structures regardless of if a lifeguard is present or not. Diving off rocks is considered detrimental behavior, and volunteers can become seriously injured from diving and not practicing safe water practices.

To help mitigate drowning risks, AMIGOS will follow these preventative measures:

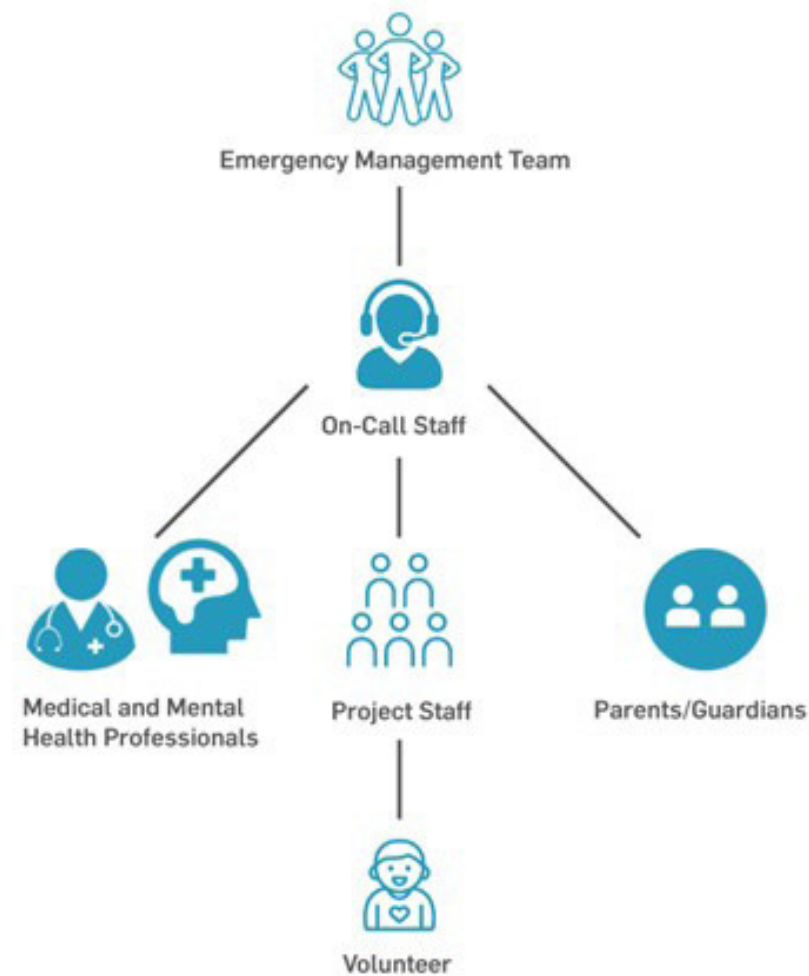
- Volunteers self-report their swimming ability during the application process. Volunteers who report that they cannot swim will only be permitted to wade up to their knees in calm water.
- At least one certified lifeguard must be present during full-body swimming activities.
- Project Staff and certified lifeguards will always closely watch volunteers when they are in the water. Volunteers who have previously disclosed seizure disorders or heart conditions will be monitored especially closely while they are swimming.
- Volunteers are not permitted to swim by themselves.
- Volunteers should be discouraged from diving deeply or holding their breaths for a long amount of time underwater.

For any activities which involve water transportation such as a boat, canoe, kayak, etc., volunteers must remain seated at all times and always wear a properly fitted life jacket or flotation device. If life jackets or personal flotation devices are not available, you must seek an alternative mode of transportation or search for another activity. The only exception is for an emergency or when riding on a ferry.



On-Call System: Supporting our Volunteers and Connecting our Families

The On-Call System is the AMIGOS preparation and response system and infrastructure to respond to any health and or safety issue which may arise during an AMIGOS program. It is the chain of command and communication channels which connect volunteers and program staff to AMIGOS HQ, families, and medical and mental health professionals.



AMIGOS On-Call Safety System or “On-Call” is operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during project operation and is managed by AMIGOS Headquarters staff. This system is designed to support our project staff in dealing with emergent and crisis situations that arise during our programs.

On-Call also communicates with families/parents on a limited basis to keep them informed of emergencies in the field.

AMIGOS understands that communication regarding emergency issues may be particularly stressful and worrisome. The AMIGOS On-Call staff team is committed to contacting all appropriate parties during an emergency as outlined in this policy and to passing along information in as timely a manner as possible. More routine cases are not communicated to families until the end of the summer.

Please note that many families will never hear from On-Call during their AMIGOS experience and that means that everything is going well.

Most medical situations and ailments that arise each summer are easily treated, and few require extensive medical follow-up.

For families with volunteers under the age of 18, communication will occur within 24 hours in the following situations:

- *A Volunteer visits a medical clinic*
- *A volunteer must spend the night in a medical facility.*
- *A volunteer is released from an inpatient setting.*
- *A volunteer requires extensive medical procedures or care.*
 - *Examples include surgery, post-exposure rabies prophylaxis, etc.*
- *A Volunteer tests positive for COVID-19*
- *A volunteer is being sent home due to a Standards of Conduct violation.*
- *A volunteer is choosing to go home due to homesickness, health concerns, or other reasons.*
- *A volunteer is struggling with a mental health crisis*
- *A volunteer has been assaulted.*
 - *Any incident is handled with the utmost confidentiality. Parents/guardians of volunteers under 18 years of age will be notified directly. Volunteers over 18 will have control over who is notified but will be actively urged to seek the support and guidance of their parents/guardians.*

On-Call phone lines may appear as “blocked” or “private caller” on caller-I.D. During your volunteer’s time abroad, we encourage you to answer these phone calls, as it may be an AMIGOS representative trying to contact you. If we cannot reach you by phone, On-Call will generally contact you via email.

For our students who are over the age of 18, information regarding their medical and/or mental health will be shared with parents or guardians in extreme situations or by a case-by-case basis as determined by the AMIGOS Health and Safety Team or with the consent of the adult Volunteer.

The best place to follow their experience through the lens of the project is on the country Instagram accounts and through the live stream of Google Photos. The Instagram page will highlight some excursions, activities and host photos of volunteers and their group. Due to the nature of our programs, AMIGOS is not able to provide individual volunteer reports/updates/photos via email or facilitate check-in calls unless for emergent or urgent situations.

On-Call Health and Safety Team

On-Call is staffed by the Director of Health and Safety and On-Call Team Members who manage calls during normal, weekday business hours (8:30am–5:00pm Central Time). During non-business hours, AMIGOS has a team of select staff trained to manage emergency call situations that take shifts throughout the time of program operation. On-Call is overseen by a team of managers at headquarters including the Managing Director of Programs.

ON-CALL OPERATIONS ON AMIGOS PROGRAMS

Project Staff manage On-Call communications and responsibilities while programs are ongoing and maintain regular communication with headquarters staff. All Project Staff member training covers AMIGOS protocols and procedures and learning how to respond to health or safety incidents. It is important to note that the communication infrastructure in Latin America is subject to outages, which is why we have multiple means of contacting volunteers and Project Staff.

ON-CALL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ROLE

On-Call is supported by a team of health professionals led by the organization's Medical Director and Mental Health consultant. These professionals serve in an on-call support capacity to provide advice and oversight on complicated medical and mental health cases. They also are active throughout the year, overseeing the development of procedures and policies for health and safety management in all programs. This team oversees the:

- *Immunization and prophylaxis requirements*
- *List of preferred medications to be used in treating all program volunteers*
- *Weekly review of health and safety incidents*
- *Management of any major health related case*
- *Management of mental health situations, difficult group dynamics, cultural adjustment, etc.*
- *Disease or illness specific support*

VOLUNTEER ROLE

Though project staff and On-Call support all health and safety incidents, it is each volunteer's role and responsibility to:

- *Proactively maintain their own health,*
- *Know and follow the AMIGOS health protocol*
- *Communicate their needs to a member of project staff AND whenever they need support.*

ON-CALL REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

While on the program, Volunteers will be given a CALM plan, which will provide information on who to contact in the case of an urgent medical or safety situation. They must activate the CALM plan if:

- *They have an acute health or safety concern*
- *If they are unsure about a health or safety situation and would like additional support in determining the next best step.*

Volunteers should NOT simply wait for someone on the project staff to notice their ailment or concern. It is their role and responsibility to request additional support. Volunteers should follow all instructions given by Project Staff members and/or treating medical or mental health professionals regarding next steps in managing their care.

ON-CALL PROJECT STAFF ROLE

The project staff manage on-call duties. The in-country staff will submit project management reports on a weekly basis to the AMIGOS On-Call database system.

The project staff are always required to have at least one member of staff available to answer the phones. Any incoming calls or messages must be returned within one hour. In addition, the project staff is required to notify On-Call anytime there is a medical, mental health, travel, or safety situation. Project Staff are guided and aided in their decisions and management of situations by the full-time, professional AMIGOS On-Call staff.

Examples of instances in which On-Call will be notified on an incident include but are not limited to: illnesses requiring a clinic visit or follow-up care, mental health concerns, local or national security concerns, natural disasters, standards of conduct violations, or general questions regarding the physical or mental wellbeing of volunteers.

ON-CALL PROJECT STAFF ROLE

The majority of AMIGOS volunteers complete their experience with no major situation arising, and most parents will not hear from On-Call. In the case of a major emergency or safety threat, you will be notified immediately. Additionally, parents/guardians will be notified of clinic visits, positive COVID-19 test, serious mental health situation and others as outlined above.

Please refrain from contacting the Project Staff teams. (This includes “friending” staff on Facebook, sending messages on Instagram, calling staff, and emailing staff). Our project staff must be focused on running a quality program and protecting the health and safety of the volunteers.

For volunteers over 18 years of age, information will be shared in extreme situations or by a case-by-case basis. For general questions or concerns during the project, please email the On-Call team at oncall@amigosinternational.org.

For urgent or immediate requests, please contact the Parent line at 713-782-5290 x150. The parent line will go straight to voicemail. Please leave a message with the name of your volunteer, the name of their project/country, your name and best number to reach you. On-Call strives to return all calls within one hour or sooner.

Health and Safety Protocols on AMIGOS Programs

AMIGOS volunteers are trained on basic health and safety protocols before departure for their project. Upon arrival in the field, they are given specific health and safety information for their work area. Prevention and self-care are key components to a healthy, safe, and positive experience. Volunteers are provided with all the tools and information to stay healthy. However, it is the volunteer’s responsibility to understand and utilize the information provided and report any incident and/or question.

MEDICAL CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

If an AMIGOS volunteer requires medical attention and consultation, they will be accompanied by a member of the Project Staff. Staff members and volunteers are trained on how to respond to a wide variety of health and safety issues. Once at a medical facility, the project staff member will work with local doctors and On-Call to select the best care possible.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROTOCOL

All volunteers undergoing a physical medical examination should be accompanied by a same-sex companion (e.g. fellow volunteer or staff member). A volunteer may refuse the assistance of a companion, except in cases where physical examination of the anal, genital, and/or breast area is required. In these cases, every attempt will be made to honor patient confidentiality and privacy. Under no circumstances will emergency medical care for life-threatening situations be delayed if an appropriate companion is not readily available.

MAJOR MEDICAL INCIDENTS/OVERNIGHTS IN MEDICAL FACILITIES

In major medical cases, the response depends on the situation and seriousness of the problem. AMIGOS may transport volunteers from their program location immediately by private car, ambulance, or even helicopter to a major hospital. In cases of extreme emergency when adequate treatment may not be available in the volunteer's assigned country, the short-term medical insurance carrier will help AMIGOS facilitate medical evacuation to an appropriate medical facility and/or air transport the volunteer to their home city as specified by the insurance company (please see the Short-Term Supplemental Health Insurance section on Preparing Your Volunteer for a Healthy Experience for more details).

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The AMIGOS technology policy limits your volunteer's access to technology as they unplug and detox from the digital world. We understand that limited communication can be difficult at first, but please note that you will hear from us if there is a concerning situation, medical clinic visit or emergency. We encourage our families to follow the AMIGOS Instagram accounts by country and follow along the live stream of photos uploaded on Google Photos. Volunteers will have the opportunity to take photos and videos.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND FAMILIES

The priority of project staff is to provide a safe and healthy summer experience for your volunteer. To maximize their time and make sure that correct emergency channels are always utilized, Project Staff have been instructed not to reply to communication from parents or guardians directly.

In the event of an emergency, including travel concerns, you would be notified directly. Please treat the blog updates as fun snapshots into the experience. We will keep you in the loop about anything more important.



Technology Policy: Disconnect to Reconnect

AMIGOS believes in the extraordinary power of human connection to build communities. As humans, we are wired for connection and social interaction. Through our relationships and interactions, we discover more about ourselves. Part of the AMIGOS experience is developing powerful personal coping skills, making lifelong friendships, and learning the skills to become better communicators. Many youth are digitized out and will greatly benefit from the opportunity to disconnect for a few weeks. This experience allows them to be fully present. The leadership experience allows them to engage more deeply with themselves, in-person friendships, and their surroundings.

Over the years we have seen that volunteers who made the decision to embark on a complete digital detox, report overall higher satisfaction rates and deeper connections with their communities and peers. Additionally, volunteers who disconnected reported less instances of being homesick and fewer challenges with mental health. Coupled with emerging research on technology, and our anecdotal experience, AMIGOS has developed the following technology policy:

TECHNOLOGY POLICY FOR SUMMER PROGRAMS

- Volunteers are not permitted to bring Wi-Fi enabled devices to the program, except for a cell phone* to be used only during approved travel days. This includes laptops, iPods, iPads, apple/smart watches, tablets, kindles, and any other electronic device. If it can connect to the internet, please leave it at home. We will allow and encourage volunteers to use their personal cell phones during days of arrival and departure from the program for travel purposes only. All other devices are NOT permitted.
- Volunteers who chose to bring their personal cell phones or other Wi-Fi enabled devices (smart watches, etc.) will be required to turn in their devices once they have arrived to the project.
- Volunteers will not have access to their phones or any other electronic communications device during their project. Expect no communication from your child unless it is an emergency. No news is good news. Volunteers assigned to a 4–9-week program will have the opportunity to call home mid-way through the program, if desired.



- Volunteers will have the opportunity to use the program laptop and camera at designated times to take photos and videos to upload on the live stream of Google Photos. This enables our families and friends to follow the group's adventure back at home.
- Volunteers will not be permitted to use their phones to listen to music. A music player and speaker will be provided for volunteers to play their favorite tunes with others during group activities.
- Volunteers who wish to listen to music independently during free time are permitted to use a MP3 player and headphones as long as it cannot connect to Wi-Fi and is not disruptive.
- Volunteers will not be permitted to use their smart phones as cameras, and as such are encouraged to bring their own camera, if desired.

We understand this technology policy may be a challenge, but we believe that volunteers chose AMIGOS because of their drive and desire to connect. AMIGOS is confident that by disconnecting, volunteers will connect with others and themselves in meaningful ways!

**NOTE: Volunteers assume sole responsibility for any device they choose to bring with them in-country and AMIGOS is not responsible for replacement or reimbursement of any lost, stolen or damaged items.*

Safeguarding Volunteer Mental Health

In addition to the physical health concerns your volunteer may encounter, AMIGOS recognizes that some of our volunteer will struggle with their mental health. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 5 teenagers between the ages of 13-18 has a diagnosed mental health condition. Moreover, it is estimated that 60-80% of teens who suffer from anxiety and depression do not have a diagnosis. Mental health issues are common occurrences and should be given the time and attention they deserve.

The most common mental health concern that presents during our projects is cultural adjustment and/or homesickness. For some volunteers, this will be their first time away from their family, friends and social support networks. For 2-6 weeks, depending on their assigned project, volunteers will learn how to live and work with different personalities, temperaments, and work styles all in a different culture, language, and country. Additionally, they are eating new foods, in a new place, speaking a new language, with new people. This experience can be challenging for many Volunteers and may cause symptoms of cultural adjustment. Overcoming this challenge is part of what makes the AMIGOS experience so rewarding. These symptoms are completely normal, even if the Volunteer has not previously dealt with culture shock or homesickness in the past.

Volunteers are encouraged to become self-advocates and to learn how to identify when they are feeling overwhelmed and/or struggling with their mental health. At briefing, volunteers will undergo an exercise where they complete a Personal Coping Inventory as part of their training on safeguarding mental health. The Personal Coping Inventory explores different mechanism that can be helpful and beneficial when facing a difficult or stressful situation. Some of these coping mechanisms may include talking to a fellow volunteer, Project Staff member, journaling, taking a walk, listening to music, or resting. Parents are encouraged to discuss possible coping mechanisms with their Volunteer prior to their departure for the program. During the program, volunteers will spend time throughout the week in self-reflection, journaling, practicing brain healthy activities like mindfulness, affirmation circles, yoga and others to help support their overall mental and emotional wellbeing. Volunteers will meet one-on-one with their assigned mentor each week to review how their mental health is and how the staff can better support, if needed.

During times of group travel, if applicable, Volunteers will be part of a weekly group process meeting where the entire group comes together to share their experiences, difficulties and problem solves any situations that may have come up during the week. AMIGOS takes a human centered approach to managing and resolving conflict, and we encourage volunteers to engage in thoughtful reflection. The group process meeting teaches volunteers essential skills in leadership, on giving and receiving feedback, effective communication and more. Every voice and opinion is recognized so as to create a group culture of respect, inclusivity and value for diverse opinions and experiences. Project Staff take an active role in ensuring that the volunteers communicate their concerns and needs effectively and empathetically.

Project Staff receive substantial pre-project training on how to recognize and respond to mental health challenges from the AMIGOS Mental Health Consultant. When mental health challenges arise, AMIGOS is connected with trained mental health consultants 24 hours a day to support any situation.

In a more urgent or severe mental health situation, parents will be notified and often three-way calls between the volunteer and their parent will be facilitated as an additional support mechanism. On occasion, when there is a serious mental health crisis that cannot be properly addressed in country, a volunteer will need to return home. The Health and Safety Team in consultation with the Mental Health Consultant will determine if the volunteer can travel alone or if they need to be accompanied by another adult or guardian.

Physical Health Concerns

It is important to note that many volunteers will complete an AMIGOS experience with no illnesses or major situations. On occasion, volunteers will become ill and require medical attention. The most commonly reported illness is gastrointestinal upset and upper respiratory infections (colds). In 2022, 44 out of 355 volunteers were taken to the clinic to be evaluated. Most illnesses can be managed with over-the-counter medication, rest and extra fluids. Volunteers who present with more serious or persistent symptoms visits will be taken to the clinic and accompanied by a member of the Project staff for further evaluation.

Some of the more common health concerns volunteers face during an AMIGOS project are:

- *Gastrointestinal upset and/or traveler's diarrhea*
- *Upper respiratory infections (the common cold)*
- *Dehydration*
- *Sunburns*
- *Orthopedic injury*
- *COVID-19 exposure*
- *Mosquito borne illness*

AMIGOS Approach to COVID-19

The COVID-19 recommendations and policies for AMIGOS are developed by our Medical Director and with a review of policies by the CDC, WHO, and various health departments. The Health and Safety team at AMIGOS continues to diligently monitor the situation in each program site while adapting programs and policies as necessary.

COVID-19 Face Masks

We strongly recommend that volunteers wear high quality face masks when traveling from their home city to their project location.

COVID-19 Vaccination

It is strongly recommended that all staff and volunteers who will be in close contact with each other receive the most recent bivalent booster.

COVID-19 vaccinations are no longer required for participation in programs this summer.

Volunteers who are assigned to a project with a homestay component will take a rapid COVID-19 test 24 hours prior to arrival to their community. Volunteers who test positive will undergo an isolation period in a separate location.

Self-Monitoring Symptoms

Volunteers will be instructed to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or any other infectious illness. Volunteers must report any of the following symptoms to their project staff:

- *Cough*
- *Runny nose*
- *Congestion*
- *Sore throat*
- *Fever and/or chills*
- *Fatigue*
- *Upset stomach*
- *Body aches*
- *Headache*
- *Sudden loss of taste and/or smell*

Depending on the symptom(s), a rapid COVID-19 test may be administered. If a volunteer tests positive for COVID-19 they will begin an isolation period, as determined and directed by the On-Call team and AMIGOS medical director. Parents will be notified if their volunteer tests positive.

The above guidelines may be modified by our AMIGOS Headquarters Health and Safety Team as conditions evolve.

As the pandemic continues to evolve and change, AMIGOS COVID-19 policies are subject to change and restrictions on masks and social distancing will follow the guidelines of the CDC, medical director, and country requirements where our programs operate. Any changes to our policies will be communicated directly to our families.

Medical Insurance Requirements

All volunteers are required to have comprehensive primary health insurance that provides coverage while traveling outside of the U.S. for the duration of their involvement with AMIGOS. If the volunteer's existing medical health insurance does not include enough coverage beyond U.S. borders, AMIGOS advises volunteers and/or their parents/guardians to contact an insurance agent and purchase the appropriate short-term supplemental policy.

AMIGOS does not officially endorse or recommend any particular supplemental health insurance provider. Here are a few providers which offer these sorts of plans.

- Atlas Travel: <https://www.worldtrips.com/atlas-travel-insurance#/atq>
- International Medical Group: <https://www.imglobal.com/travel-medical-insurance>
- Insure My Trip: <https://www.insuremytrip.com/travel-insurance-plans/travel-medical/>

Please contact On-Call at healthandsafety@amigosinternational.org with questions.

AMIGOS SHORT-TERM EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE

AMIGOS provides short-term, out-of-country health insurance for all volunteers and project staff members. The primary purpose of this short-term health insurance is to supplement existing health insurance coverage when a volunteer is out of the United States in emergency situations. This policy covers volunteers while they are in Latin America, subject to the conditions and stipulations set forth by the policy.

Generally, the policy covers medical evacuations, extensive surgical procedures, and medical emergencies that are not related to pre-existing medical conditions or COVID-19. (If your volunteer is not a U.S. citizen or resident, the coverage differs, so please ask if you have any questions). In the event of a surgery or major medical situation, the volunteer's primary insurance will be billed first. It is the sole responsibility of the volunteer and/or their parent/guardian to pay for any remaining medical expenses or outstanding balances that are not covered by their primary insurance or the AMIGOS supplemental plan.

PROCESS OF CLAIMS FILING

- If an injury or illness is serious enough to anticipate extended hospitalization or specialized treatment, parents/guardians should first contact their volunteer's primary insurance provider to determine what is covered.
- Then, they should authorize AMIGOS (in writing) to be able to communicate with the primary insurance carrier.
- Once AMIGOS has been recognized by the volunteer's primary insurance provider, AMIGOS will submit a claim on the patient's behalf and be reimbursed directly.
- Volunteers and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) have the responsibility to endorse any and all benefits received from a primary insurance carrier to the supplemental insurance carrier if the supplemental carrier has paid for or managed the care of the volunteer.
- If AMIGOS project staff pays for a volunteer's medical care in Latin America, parents/guardians should be prepared to reimburse AMIGOS Headquarters for the payment and contact their primary insurance carrier who will then directly reimburse parents/guardians.

THE COVERAGE PERIOD

Individual coverage is effective upon the volunteer's departure from the United States and terminates upon return to the United States. Coverage may be extended after returning to the United States based on the diagnosed health problem and whether or not it originated while in Latin America.

WHAT IS NOT COVERED?

- *Pre-existing conditions*
- *Services, supplies, or treatment not approved and certified by a physician*
- *Declared or undeclared war*
- *Injury sustained while participating in professional athletics*
- *Sickness resulting from pregnancy, childbirth, or miscarriage*
- *Routine physicals*
- *Cosmetic or plastic surgery, except as resulting from an accident*
- *Elective surgery which can be postponed until U.S. return*
- *Dental care, except as resulting from an accident and affecting one's own natural teeth*
- *Motorcycle driving, mountain climbing, or skiing*
- *Anything that occurs while breaking local or U.S. laws*

AMIGOS MEDICAL FUND

AMIGOS covers minor medical expenses up to \$300 for each volunteer and does not request that families seek reimbursement for these minor medical expenses. In the event costs incurred exceed \$300, parents will be notified for additional payment and options to file a claim with their insurance company. It is the responsibility of the family to complete any necessary forms or claims for insurance reimbursement. The Health and Safety Team will provide any and all necessary documents reasonable to assist with the claim process but holds no liability for reimbursements or denials from the volunteer's individual insurance plan.

General Health Criteria

AMIGOS places the highest priority on keeping our volunteers safe and healthy while involved in our programs. Program policy and guidelines on health and safety are rigorously enforced.

In order to best support our volunteers, it is essential that volunteers be candid in disclosing health history and any current conditions for which they may have been treated within the last two years in their health forms.

- Disclosure of chronic medical or psychological diagnoses does not automatically disqualify applicants but will necessitate careful screening to assess whether the applicant can be adequately supported in AMIGOS programs.
- The intentional non-disclosure or minimization of important health history (physical or psychological) is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, even if the volunteer is already on the project. Volunteers and/or their families will be responsible for fees associated with a re-issued plane ticket home plus an additional \$250 administrative fee.

- If an AMIGOS volunteer under age 18 needs to return home from the program due to a mental health issue, AMIGOS reserves the right to determine that the volunteer is not safe traveling alone and may request that a parent/legal guardian accompany the volunteer on their travel home. Further screening will be performed when a new issue or change in physical or mental health status arises.

Any questions about how the confidential health screening process works can be addressed directly to the AMIGOS Director of Health and Safety at healthandsafety@amigosinternational.org.

During the application process your volunteer was screened to meet the following health criteria:

PHYSICAL HEALTH CRITERIA

In order to participate safely in the AMIGOS program, a volunteer must be able to perform the following “major life activities” as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:

- *Caring for one's self*
- *Performing manual tasks*
- *Walking*
- *Seeing*
- *Hearing*
- *Breathing*
- *Speaking*
- *Learning*
- *Working*

All volunteers must have received all AMIGOS required immunizations and prophylaxes for their respective project prior to departure. Given that our volunteers are working and living in more remote areas where they may face increased exposure to certain diseases and illnesses, we cannot take any risks with volunteer health and safety. We do not make exceptions to this rule.

MENTAL HEALTH CRITERIA

- No acute psychiatric diagnosis or episode or psychiatric hospitalization within the past year prior to the current application to AMIGOS.
- No new psychotropic medication(s)* within six months of departure for country assignment.
- No major changes of existing psychotropic medication(s), including sudden stoppage, within three months of departure.
- Relative stability (verified by the treating clinician) over the last year if a history of chronic depression, anxiety, or other psychological or behavioral diagnoses exists. Some diagnostic categories will be ruled out depending on AMIGOS assessment as to whether these volunteers constitute more risk for health and safety than the project staff can manage.
- Willingness by the volunteer to sign a Self-Care Agreement which holds them accountable for administering their own prescribed medication(s) (antidepressant, stimulant, anti-anxiety agent, etc.) and monitoring their mental health, reporting immediately any new or unfamiliar symptoms.

If an AMIGOS volunteer under age 18 needs to return home from the program due to a mental health issue, AMIGOS reserves the right to determine that the volunteer is not safe traveling alone and may request that a parent/legal guardian accompany the volunteer on their travel home.

Further screening will be performed when a new issue or change in physical or mental health status arises.

UPDATING HEALTH INFORMATION

It is imperative that AMIGOS has the most up-to-date health information for all. If your volunteer's health information has changed (e.g. new medication and/or diagnosis) since submission of the Health Update, Headquarters should be notified immediately. Please send an email to healthandsafety@amigosinternational.org. If you prefer to call this information to the Director of Health and Safety, you may do so by calling 713-782-5290 x115.

**A psychotropic medication is any medication capable of affecting the mind, emotions, and behavior such as antidepressant/anti-anxiety agents, antipsychotic drugs, mood stabilizers, anticonvulsant medication, stimulants for the treatment of ADHD, etc.*

Self-Care Agreements

During the screening process, volunteer's health forms are thoroughly reviewed and checked against our health criteria. On occasion, the AMIGOS medical director and/or mental health consultant will determine that a Self-Care Agreement is necessary for participation. The Self-Care Agreement is an additional tool to monitor the physical and mental health of our volunteers.

SCAs are normally required when volunteers take certain prescription medications, have a history of asthma, severe allergies or other diseases which may put them at greater risk if they were to get sick during the program. Certain conditions, such as asthma or severe allergies, may also require an Action Plan in addition to the Self-Care Agreement. The Action Plan must be completed and signed by the volunteer's treating physician.

Additionally, volunteers who have a mental health diagnosis and take prescribed psychotropic medications for conditions such as ADHD, depression or anxiety will also be asked to complete a Self-Care Agreement. The SCA emphasizes the volunteer's obligation to monitor their own physical and/or mental health and serves as a commitment that they will take their medications as prescribed, if necessary and alert the Project Staff of any worsening symptoms.

If a Self-Care Agreement is required, a member of the health screening team will contact a parent/guardian and/or volunteer directly to complete the steps necessary to complete a self-care agreement.

The Self-Care Agreement is completed and signed by the volunteer, their parents if under 18 and is kept in their private, confidential health record accessible only to the Project Director and Associate Project Director. It is the responsibility of the Staff and the volunteer to jointly monitor compliance with the SCA during the weekly supervisory meetings or as needed.

Project Staff must bring any breaches of the agreement to the volunteer's attention to work out a solution in the form of an action plan. An AMIGOS Mental Health Consultant is available to provide guidance and support to the Project Staff to promote the success of the SCA process for mental health issues. Failure to adhere to the SCA may be grounds for dismissal.

Immunizations & prophylaxis

AMIGOS requires that Volunteers receive a number of required immunizations. A full list of the Required Immunizations & Medications can be found in the Appendix of this guide. Volunteers must submit a complete record of all required immunizations prior to being disbursed their airline ticket. Failure to receive all required immunizations may be grounds for program cancellation.

First Aid Kit: Volunteers assigned to 4-9 week programs only

We ask that volunteers bring the following items in their first aid. Volunteers may self-administer over-the-counter medications. However, they must report these medications in their Health Log and alert their Project Supervisor if their condition worsens, their symptoms are severe, or their symptoms do not respond to over-the-counter medications. The first aid kit is not a substitute for medical care.

- Several small bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Face masks (3-4 high quality masks (K95 or N95))
- At-home COVID-19 test kit (2 COVID tests included in the pack)
- Band-aids
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Antacid (ex. Mylanta, Maalox, etc.)
- Cream-based insect repellent with 30-50% DEET (Recommended: Ultrathon cream 33% DEET – made by 3M and designed for the U.S. Military)
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Antibiotic cream
- 1% Hydrocortisone cream
- Decongestant (ex. Sudafed)
- Antihistamine (ex. Benadryl)
- Digital Thermometer
- Sunscreen (SPF 35 or greater)
- Imodium (loperamide)
- Oral rehydration salt or electrolyte powder
- Feminine products (tampons, pads, etc.) if applicable

First Aid Kit: Volunteers assigned to 2-3 week programs only

- Several small bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Face masks (3-4 high quality masks (K95 or N95))

- Several small bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Face masks (3-4 high quality masks (K95 or N95))
- At-home COVID-19 test kit (2 COVID tests included in the pack)
- Sunscreen (SPF 35 or greater)
- Cream-based insect repellent with 30-50% DEET (Recommended: Ultrathon cream 33% DEET – made by 3M and designed for the U.S. Military)
- Oral rehydration salt or electrolyte powder
- Feminine products (tampons, pads, etc) if applicable

**For the full packing list, please see the Project-specific Information Packet distributed to volunteers.*

Prescription Medications

Volunteers may not take prescription medications with them unless the medication is for a pre-existing condition that has been declared in the health forms during the application process or it is the one-course antibiotic regimen or high-altitude sickness medication. This is to ensure that AMIGOS volunteers will avoid harmful drug interactions with medications that may be prescribed during the project. Volunteers should always alert Project Staff when they are ill even if they feel they have the medication necessary to deal with the situation. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep their medication in a safe and secure place away from others. Staff are prohibited from administering prescription medications to volunteers.

When traveling with a prescription medication, Volunteers should do the following:

- Make sure to write down a translation in Spanish of the prescription's name, its indication, and dosage.
 - It is the volunteer's responsibility to know how to explain their condition and medication regimen in Spanish.
 - If you have allergies to food or medications, be sure to write down the explanation of food/medication allergies in Spanish as well.
- Carry a physician's note on official letterhead for all controlled substances and injectable medications.
- Confirm the use of medication with AMIGOS staff upon arrival to the project area
- Confirm that the volunteer has enough medication supply to last for the duration of their project .

Preventing Illness

There are many ways that volunteers can prevent different illnesses or exposure to potential harms. Self-awareness and accountability are crucial.

WATER PURIFICATION

Most project locations have potable water which is safe for drinking and consumption. There are some communities and locations where access to purified water is limited and as such, all volunteers are required to bring one [LifeStraw](#) bottle and one Nalgene water bottle.

FOOD PREPARATION

Food preparation and selection is carefully screened and monitored by our Project Staff. AMIGOS works to select food vendors and restaurants with good reviews, excellent sanitation and proper hygiene practices.

Volunteers on projects with homestay components will be eating the majority of their meals with their host family. Our host families have been vetted by AMIGOS and our partner agency to provide adequate nutrition and meals. We ask that our volunteers are self-aware of the importance to eat whatever is being served, unless there is a food allergy.

We discourage volunteers from consuming unpasteurized milk products, undercooked meat and seafood, cooked food that has been allowed to cool to room temperature, raw vegetables, uncooked or unpeeled fruits, juices or food from street vendors.

ONE-COURSE ANTIBIOTIC PROTOCOL

On occasion, volunteers may experience “traveler’s diarrhea” and stomach upset as they adjust to a new diet. In anticipation for the potential experience of traveler’s diarrhea, volunteers can bring a prescription medication from their doctor to take should they meet the following guidelines:

- Four or more unformed stools in 24 hours plus a symptom such as abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, or chills. Diarrhea alone does not meet criteria.
- Volunteers must notify a member of the project staff within 24 hours of deciding to start the course of antibiotics. Additionally, volunteers must indicate that they have taken the medication in their Health Log.
- Treatment should consist of one course of one of the following antibiotics: ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin, or azithromycin. Please note: a single course of these medications may consist of taking several pills over several days or it may be a single pill in for one dose. Follow the instructions exactly as provided to you by your physician.
- Volunteers may also take loperamide (Imodium) in conjunction with the aforementioned antibiotics to relieve diarrhea symptoms. However, volunteers may only take one tablet of Imodium prior to consulting Project Staff.
- If the symptoms worsen or do not improve, the volunteer will be taken to a local physician for consultation and further evaluation.

PREVENTION OF MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES AND OTHER ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Mosquitos and other insects can be of concern in our project areas as they have the potential to transmit serious diseases. Volunteers must take adequate steps for protection against insects and bats, especially to prevent against mosquito borne illnesses and other diseases. These prevention measures include the use of a mosquito net, using recommended repellent and wearing appropriate clothing. For more information, visit:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2020/noninfectious-health-risks/mosquitoes-ticks-and-other-arthropods>

MOSQUITO NETS

All volunteers are required to purchase a mosquito net.

Mosquito nets should have between 120-200 holes per square inch. Nets with 200+ holes per square inch are safe but may be warmer to sleep under. Per CDC recommendation, volunteers may pre-treat their

mosquito net with permethrin, if it was not pre-treated by the manufacturer, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Please note that due to possible adverse reactions, do not use other pyrethroid chemicals. This includes pre-washing your net, if recommended. Volunteers will need to bring sufficient supplies to hang their mosquito net in a variety of locations. This includes duct tape, lots of string/dental floss and anything else the model of mosquito net will need to work effectively.

Any outdoor store will have a plethora of mosquito net options. However, popular options with Volunteers include the Mombasa Outback Travel Net – Single, Mombasa Nimbus Mosquito Net, Sansbug Mosquito Tent or an Insect Shield brand hanging net.

INSECT REPELLANT

We encourage volunteers to use cream-based insect repellent with a 30-50% concentration of DEET. A brand that works well is Ultrathon cream made by 3M and designed for the US military. Volunteers who have skin sensitivity or an allergy to DEET can also use Picardin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, PMD or 2-undecanone.

When using an insect repellent, it is important to follow the directions on the label and to reapply if they are getting bitten and after sweating, bathing or swimming. Volunteers will want to apply mosquito repellent after sunscreen for maximum efficacy.

In addition to sleeping under mosquito nets and using insect repellent, volunteers are strongly encouraged to wear long pants and long sleeves whenever they are outside during peak times of mosquito and insect activity (dawn and dusk).

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS AND RABIES PREVENTION

AMIGOS has a strict policy that prohibits volunteers from touching animals. This includes dogs, cats, monkeys, farm animals, and bats. In the event a volunteer comes in contact with an animal and is bitten, scratched or licked, the animal must immediately be quarantined and monitored for 10 days. If the animal is unable to be located, such as a bat, the volunteer must begin post-exposure shots. Bats present the biggest risk for rabies in our project areas, and another reason why mosquito netting is required. Project Staff will coordinate an animal observation period, if required.

Rabies pre-exposure immunization is recommended as many of our project sites are located in heavily forested areas or remote sites where bats may be present.

A Note on Packing

Volunteers should always pack light to adhere to airline baggage weight specifications. A project-specific packing list will be distributed approximately one month prior to project departure in the Project Information Packet (PIP). Project-specific Packing Guidelines will also be reviewed at the pre-departure PIP Webinar. Please read over the packing list carefully and prepare your volunteer to pack accordingly. It is imperative that your volunteer bring a fully equipped first aid kit and mosquito netting, following the item guidelines laid out previously.



Travel Instructions

PASSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

AMIGOS requires that all volunteers upload a clear, unmarred copy of the first page of their passport with their application. This copy will be needed in the event of a lost or stolen passport. AMIGOS recommends that volunteers scan and email a copy of their passport to themselves and their parents as well.

Volunteers' passports must be valid at least six months after their return date. For example, a volunteer whose project ends on August 1st, 2024, must have a passport valid through February 1st, 2025

TRAVELING WITH A NON-U.S. PASSPORT

Volunteers with non-U.S. passports may require a visa to travel to the assigned project area. These volunteers should indicate that they do not have a U.S. passport on their application. They are required to research their own visa requirements for entry into host countries and reentry to their home country.

If a volunteer is planning to reenter the U.S. on a non-U.S. passport, they must have a valid re-entry permit, such as a green card. Volunteers should remember to pack their green cards with them to re-enter the U.S.

LOST OR FORGOTTEN PASSPORTS

All volunteers are responsible for traveling with their passport. If they lose or forget their passport, the Volunteer and/or their parents/guardians will be held responsible for any expenses related to either helping them get to Latin America or to return home.

OTHER LOST ITEMS

Apart from passports, AMIGOS does not take responsibility for recovering any personal items lost

during the trip. Project Staff will regularly remind volunteers to keep track of their possessions; however, if something is forgotten at a project site, it will not be returned.

AIRLINE TICKET INSTRUCTIONS

AMIGOS headquarters arranges all domestic and international airfare for volunteers. Volunteers should list the closest major airport to them that they would like to fly out of and back into on their passport information form.

Airline tickets will not be issued until all paperwork has been submitted and the volunteer is cleared by the health and safety team. This is especially important for health information paperwork. The delay in paperwork submission can result in the price of airline tickets being higher at the time of purchase than the provided estimates. If we cannot purchase a volunteer's airfare due to late paperwork submission, you will be charged a \$500 administrative fee.

PARENT PERMISSION TO TRAVEL AND MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY FORMS

The Parent Permission to Travel Form must be completed for any volunteer who is under the age of 18, and the original document must accompany the volunteer while traveling.* This document must be signed and notarized. A copy must be submitted to headquarters by the deadline.

The Medical Power of Attorney Form is used if there is a medical emergency that requires immediate treatment and 1) there is insufficient time to get written or verbal authorization from a parent/guardian or 2) AMIGOS staff cannot reach a parent/guardian for authorization. This form will allow AMIGOS staff, working in conjunction with our consulting physicians, to authorize medical treatment. This Medical Power of Attorney does not change the fact that AMIGOS staff will make all reasonable efforts to notify parents or guardians about the medical emergency as soon as possible.

**NOTE: These forms must be notarized and signed by either the custodial parents or legal guardians if the volunteer is under 18 years of age. If one parent is unable to sign the document, it must be accompanied by a Single Parent Affidavit, along with a copy of a death certificate, divorce decree, or other legal document that verifies that the signing parent is the sole custodial parent. Guardianship papers should be attached when applicable. If both custodial parents are unable to sign the same form, each parent can submit a separate signed and notarized form.*



Travel Procedures

Most AMIGOS volunteers flying to Latin America pass through Miami or Houston—the AMIGOS gateway cities. Upon arrival at the gateway city airport, volunteers should continue to their next departure flight's gate.

Travel instructions will be distributed by email within 2 weeks of departure. Volunteers should review these thoroughly and carry a copy with them. For any travel issues, please have your volunteer contact the travel team at 1-888-AMIGOS.

BAGGAGE FEES

Most airlines have significant surcharges for luggage. Airlines will collect these fees during the check-in process for both out-bound and in-bound flights. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to inquire with each airline they will be traveling with as to what these charges are and to have the necessary funds to pay these charges. Volunteers may pay the baggage fees for their in-bound flights during their out-bound flight check-in. If this is done, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep their receipt present at check-in for their in-bound flight to avoid additional charges.

LOST LUGGAGE PROTOCOL

If your volunteer's luggage is lost in transit to Latin America, Project Staff will follow-up with the airline directly. If the luggage is lost for more than 5 days, parents/guardians will be notified. AMIGOS cannot assume responsibility for any luggage lost by airlines. Volunteers have the sole responsibility of ensuring luggage is checked through to their destination, including picking up luggage and re-checking it for a connecting flight when necessary.

NOTE: Volunteers must remember to keep their luggage claim ticket until after they retrieve their luggage and clear customs and immigration in case the luggage is lost or there is a question of ownership.

EARLY RETURNS

Volunteers may return home early due to standards violations, medical conditions, personal reasons, etc. If your volunteer needs to return from their project for unforeseen reasons, such as a family emergency, please contact On-Call.

Volunteers who return early of their own volition or who return due to a violation of the AMIGOS Standards of Conduct will be responsible for paying all fees associated with changing their ticket as well as a \$350 service fee to cover all expenses (transportation, lodging, food, etc.). If they return due to a standards violation and would like to participate in AMIGOS again, their application will be subject to additional review. In both cases, headquarters staff will consult with the project staff team for the relevant project before the final acceptance decision is made.

CHANGE OF TICKET FEES

In all circumstances, the costs of changing the return flights of a volunteer's domestic and international tickets are the sole responsibility of the volunteer and/or their parent/guardian. The AMIGOS On-Call staff members will arrange all flights for volunteers and either pass the payment to the family to be made or collect credit card information for the family to make the purchase.

ACCOMPANIMENT SERVICES

Under special circumstances, there may be a need for an AMIGOS volunteer returning from Latin America to be met at the Miami or Houston airport by a professional accompaniment service. When hired, professional accompaniment services will be at the arrival gate to help transfer the volunteer to their domestic flight back home.

In all cases, the cost of a professional escort service is the sole responsibility of the volunteer and/or the volunteer's family. It typically costs upwards of \$100 and must be pre-paid prior to confirmation of the escort service. Arrangements for professional escort services can be made via the AMIGOS On-Call System directly.



Post-Program

AMIGOS will be reaching out to you and your volunteer after completion of the program. You will receive a certificate signed by the CEO and President of AMIGOS recognizing the year and location of service and a letter on cultural readjustment. The latter provides parents/guardians with guidance on how best to support volunteers with these changes.

Networking Opportunities:

Follow AMIGOS on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and connect to the AMIGOS professional network on LinkedIn!

Young Alumni Council:

The Young Alumni Council is a group of recent alumni committed to representing AMIGOS by speaking with prospective applicants, spearheading creative outreach activities, and providing feedback to help shape the future of AMIGOS. It is a competitive application process in which 10-15 students are selected to serve as youth advisors to AMIGOS and outreach ambassadors to their community. AMIGOS provides additional mentorship, professional development support, branded swag, and the opportunity to connect directly with other alumni and staff members.

POST-PROGRAM HEALTH STEPS

Health Summary Email: Each volunteer will be sent a "Volunteer Health Summary Information" following the end of their program. This form will include a list of all medical conditions treated by a doctor as well as any medications prescribed during the program. A health summary email will also be sent for any mental health situations that required the consultant of the mental health consultant or Standards of Conduct Violations that received an "Incident" or "Dismissal" outcome. This information can be given to the volunteer's treating physician(s) upon return home if needed. For volunteers under the age of 18, it will also be sent to their parent/guardian(s).

Medical Check-Up: All volunteers are strongly encouraged to see their primary care physician upon return home. This is particularly important if they have experienced any illnesses during the program and/or continue to experience symptoms of an illness contracted prior to returning home.



Appendix

Required Immunizations and Medications 2024

The following immunizations and medications are required or strongly recommended for AMIGOS volunteers. AMIGOS consults our Medical Director, in-country Peace Corps offices, and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines in establishing volunteer vaccine and medication requirements.

Note: The [CDC highly recommends all international travelers](#) make an appointment to get recommended vaccines at least 4-6 weeks in advance.

Chicken Pox	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	All volunteers are required to have proof of immunization against chickenpox, documentation of immunity to chickenpox (Varicella IgG positive status), or a physician's attestation of varicella infection. For persons without evidence of immunity, administer two doses of varicella vaccine if not previously vaccinated or the second dose if only one dose has been administered. The minimum interval between doses is 28 days.
Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	All volunteers must have had the DTaP and Tdap series. All volunteers must also have a booster Tdap (Adacel) within 10 years before travel. Please see the following link for more information: Tetanus Vaccination CDC
Hepatitis A	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	The Hep A vaccine should be given at least two weeks before departure to the field. We recommend, when possible, that volunteers complete the 2-dose series before travel. A booster shot of Hep A should be given 6-12 months following the initial injection (this may be administered after the summer program).
Malaria	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers assigned to certain areas of Panama. Please refer to your Project Information Packet (PIP)	Required for all volunteers in the Chiriquí and Veraguas provinces. Recommended regimens include: Atovaquone-proguanil: start 1 to 2 days prior to entering a malaria-endemic area, continue throughout the stay and for 7 days after returning. Chloroquine: begin 1 to 2 weeks prior to exposure; continue while in endemic area and for 4 weeks after leaving endemic area, weekly on the same day each week. Doxycycline: initiate 1 to 2 days prior to travel to endemic area; continue daily during travel and for 4 weeks after leaving endemic area. Mefloquine: Begin ≥2 weeks before arrival in endemic area, administer on the same day each week, and continue weekly during travel and for 4 weeks after leaving endemic area. Primaquine: Start 1 to 2 days prior to travel, once daily and continue while in the malaria-endemic area and for 7 days after departure from the area. Tafenoquine: Start 3 days prior to travel and take once a day for total of 10 days, then once weekly, and one dose 7 days after departure from the area. Yellow Fever Vaccine & Malaria Prophylaxis Information, by Country - Chapter 2 - 2020 Yellow Book Travelers' Health CDC
Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	Volunteers are required to have had two doses of the measles vaccine. This may be either the initial MMR and one measles vaccination or two MMR vaccinations.
Polio	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	Volunteers are required to have completed a full series of polio vaccination. Normally, a full series is completed by entry into kindergarten/1st grade. If records of vaccination cannot be found, a booster shot of IPV is sufficient.
Tuberculosis (TB) Screening Questionnaire	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	Volunteers should inform their physician(s) that they will be living in a rural area in Latin America and will complete the TB Questionnaire BEFORE and <u>an IGRA blood test 2 months</u> AFTER participating in the program. Please report a positive TB test (along with chest x-ray results) to oncall@amigosinternational.org . Negative results do not need to be reported to AMIGOS.
Typhoid Fever	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	Volunteers can receive either an oral vaccine (4 capsules taken over 8 days) or an injection (to be received at least three weeks before departure). It is each volunteer's decision which method of administration to receive. Please note that these vaccines are good for up to two years, after which time repeat vaccination is required.

Appendix

Required Immunizations and Medications 2024

<p>COVID-19</p>	<p><u>Strongly Recommended</u> for Volunteers</p>	<p>AMIGOS strongly recommends volunteers to receive the most recent COVID-19 booster released after September 2023 if they have received the primary series. For those who have never received a COVID vaccination, the CDC recommends 1 dose of an updated (2023–2024 Formula) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech) OR 2 doses of updated (2023–2024 Formula) Novavax vaccine.</p> <p>The COVID-19 vaccination and booster help to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to our partner organizations, communities, and host families, and reduces the risk of developing more serious infection for those who receive the vaccine. All volunteers will be tested for COVID-19 twenty-four hours prior to leaving for homestays, if applicable to their project.</p>
<p>Hepatitis B</p>	<p>Recommended for Volunteers</p>	<p>The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends all adolescents be vaccinated for Hepatitis B. Volunteers should discuss the Hepatitis B vaccine with their physician.</p>
<p>Influenza (Flu shot)</p>	<p>Recommended for Volunteers</p>	<p>Vaccination should be valid for current 2023-2024 flu season.</p>
<p>Meningitis (Menactra)</p>	<p>Recommended for all volunteers</p>	<p>Please see the following link for more information: http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/ucm176044.htm</p>
<p>Rabies</p>	<p>Recommended for all volunteers</p>	<p><i>Pre-Exposure:</i> There are three vaccinations available: Human Diploid Cell Vaccine (HDVC), Rabies Vaccine Adsorbed (RVA), and Purified Chick Embryo Cell Vaccine (PCEC). Please, consider the time necessary to complete vaccination and plan accordingly. <i>Three injections are administered over a series of days (0, 7, and 21 or 28)</i> as an intramuscular injection. HDVC may be administered an intradermal injection as well.</p> <p><i>Post-Exposure:</i> If volunteers have been potentially exposed to rabies and did not receive the vaccinations pre-exposure, they will need to have human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) administered promptly in addition to the vaccinations administered over a series of days (Days 0, 3, 7, and 14).</p> <p>Post-exposure prevention of rabies for those who have received pre-exposure vaccines will not require use of HRIG but does require vaccinations over a shortened series of days (Days 0 and 3 only).</p> <p><i>*Human Rabies Immune globulin (HRIG) and the vaccines may be difficult to obtain in the field and if the prophylaxis <u>are</u> not available the volunteer will be flown home or to Houston to receive them.</i></p> <p><i>*For these reasons, rabies pre-exposure immunization is recommended for all volunteers.</i></p> <p>Volunteers should discuss this vaccine with their physician and check with their health insurance providers about coverage of the pre-exposure shots.</p>

Health & Safety FAQ

How is my volunteer's health and safety monitored while they are on an AMIGOS program?

The AMIGOS On-Call System operates 24/7 throughout the year. While projects are running, the On-Call System is supported by additional staff members to respond to all inquiries and cases. While participating in the program, every volunteer receives a weekly check-in from a member of the project staff. Project Staff members go through a thorough feedback process with them to check they are doing well, which is documented in the weekly self-assessment forms and sent to our Health and Safety team for review. Any illness and/or mental health situation is reported to the On-Call System is stored in our confidential database and reviewed when appropriate by our Medical Director and/or Mental Health Consultant. These reports are available as support documentation to aid in any follow-up of a volunteer's care post-program.

*NOTE: All volunteers are registered under the AMIGOS name with the U.S. consulate upon arrival in-country. If a volunteer is a non-U.S. citizen, they should research the requirements for registering in a foreign country with their consulate if they wish to do so.

What happens if my volunteer gets sick? How is this dealt with?

Project staff members utilize protocol set by the AMIGOS Medical, Health, and Safety team comprised of health professionals to assess the seriousness of the issue at hand and determine what the appropriate steps are for managing it. In the case of emergency or for routine medical care, Project Staff member will accompany a volunteer to a healthcare facility. If a volunteer visits a clinic and is prescribed a medication(s), those medication(s) are reviewed by our On-Call medical provider for approval if not on our preferred medication list. In addition, if the clinic or hospital requests invasive tests and/or treatments, approval must be made by the AMIGOS On-Call medical provider.

Will I hear from AMIGOS if my volunteer gets sick?

Minor episodes of diarrhea, colds, etc. will not be relayed to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians will be contacted in the instance of a positive COVID-19, any medical emergency, clinic visit and hospitalization, A volunteer will be allowed to call home once they have received necessary treatment following an incident of illness if they request to do so. Note that some volunteers choose to call home, while others refrain from talking to their family until they return from AMIGOS, as it can worsen any homesickness.

My volunteer was/is sick while on an AMIGOS program. Can I have a list of the medications they were prescribed?

All volunteers who receive health care treatment will receive a "Health Summary" email after completion of the program. This will include a list of all major and minor medical conditions treated by a health professional as well as any medications prescribed during the program. For minors, this email will also be sent to their parent/guardians at the email addresses listed on the volunteer's application. For more information about the Post-Program Medical Check-up, please refer to the Post-Program Health Steps section.

My volunteer's health information has changed (e.g. new medication) since I submitted their health forms. How do I notify AMIGOS of this change?

Please send an email to healthandsafety@amigosinternational.org. In the body of the email, include the volunteer's date of birth and a thorough description of change in any health information. Please include name of medication, indication, dosage, date the medication was first taken, and frequency if applicable.

Communication FAQ

When can I expect to hear from AMIGOS about my volunteer's project?

You will receive the above emails directly from our on-call team when volunteers arrive in country. Additionally, each project area will post occasional updates on the AMIGOS Instagram accounts. Follow along the live stream of photos uploaded by project on Google Photos.

**NOTE: Access, speed, and use of the internet varies greatly depending on location; updates may be less frequent on some projects.*

When will I hear from my volunteer?

Volunteers will not have access to cell phones during the program per AMIGOS technology policy. Parents/guardians should not expect to hear from their volunteer for the duration of the program with exception of one mid-term call for volunteers on 4-9 week projects.

How is my volunteer doing? I haven't heard from anyone in a while and I'm concerned.

You will be informed immediately if our On-Call staff is made aware of any major medical issues or other emergencies. Specific reports on volunteers are only documented if a volunteer is involved in a situation that requires the support of our On-Call Safety Team. Please keep in mind that On-Call is in place for urgent and emergency cases and our priority is to promote the health and safety of all volunteers. During the program, volunteers' well-being is closely tracked every week. All volunteers complete self-assessments and review these documents during regular check-ins with their project staff.

My volunteer contacted me from Latin America and told me that they are sick, homesick, etc. What can I do and who do I contact?

Please instruct your volunteer to get in touch with their project staff team immediately. It is imperative that volunteers inform our project staff first of illnesses or other issues as they are physically present and available to support, whereas parents/guardians in the U.S. will not be able to provide direct assistance.

There has been a family emergency, and I need to get in touch with my volunteer. What do I do? Please call AMIGOS Headquarters and ask to speak to the Health and Safety Manager. An On-Call staff member will be able to get information to your volunteer and/or coordinate a phone call between you and your volunteer. For more information, please refer to the section regarding Communication Procedures.

Travel and Logistics FAQ

What should my volunteer pack?

Prior to the program, your volunteer will receive project-specific information, which will include a packing list.

My volunteer's flight is delayed, my volunteer's flight was cancelled, or my volunteer is having travel issues. What do I do?

Instruct your volunteer to contact our Travel Coordinators at 1-888-AMIGOSL (1-888-264-4675). The AMIGOS Travel Coordinator phone line is available when AMIGOS volunteers are traveling to and from Latin America. For more information about travel, please refer to the Travel Instructions section.

How can I get money to my volunteer?

It is too time-consuming and difficult for our project staff in Latin America to accommodate money wiring or transfers. We do not suggest that you mail cash to your volunteer as mailing time is typically lengthy and the money may be stolen while in transit. In addition to the recommended amount of traveling cash (see the project-specific packets for more info), you may choose to send a debit card with your volunteer so that they can access funds as needed while traveling. They will likely only be given the opportunity to use their card during briefing, excursions, debriefing, and during international travel days. Please consult with your bank to determine international transaction fees if applicable and activate the card for international use.

What are community assignments?

For volunteers participating in homestays, the community assignments document, which is sent to parents via email at the start of the homestay, outlines which community volunteers are assigned to, along with the Project Supervisor and region/municipality in which the community is located.

Where is my volunteer's community? I cannot find it on a map.

For those trying to find a volunteer's community on Google Earth, please keep in mind that there are many communities with the same or similar name. It is also difficult to obtain exact locations of communities as they are most often very small and rural. AMIGOS Headquarters will not provide maps with community locations. AMIGOS encourages volunteers to share exact location of their community with family and friends up their return to the states.

Host Family FAQ

Who can be a host family?

AMIGOS Host Families are households identified in AMIGOS communities who have an interested in hosting a volunteer for a period of one to six weeks, depending on the project. Many families host AMIGOS volunteers year after year and love the opportunity to get to know care for a new volunteer each summer. Other host families may be new to AMIGOS, but all share the same excitement and love of cultural exchange. Any family that will host a volunteer must meet certain criteria. These include:

- A real interest in hosting a volunteer
- Gender-specific sleeping space with an individual bed or space for a cot
- Host family has the means and agrees to feed the volunteer or AMIGOS has set up an alternative feeding arrangement
- No signs of domestic concerns such as violence, alcohol abuse, or neglect
- Living and cooking spaces that meet adequate hygiene standards
- No signs of animal infestations including bats
- At least two members living in the household full-time (similar age host siblings are preferred)
- For female volunteers, at least one woman must live in the household full-time
- Host home is located within a reasonable distance of another volunteer's host home
- Reliable access to a phone in the household or with a neighbor in case of emergency
- Head of household attests that no member of the household has a criminal conviction
- Head of household attests that no member of the household has tuberculosis or signs of tuberculosis such as a persistent cough

How are host families selected?

Before volunteers arrive, Project Staff work closely with AMIGOS Partner Agencies and community leaders to select host families. A member of the Senior Staff team visits each host community to vet potential host families accompanied by a trusted local or Partner Agency contact. Then, the Project Supervisor working in the community will visit the community again, sign Host Family Contracts with each household, affirm that the Host Family meets AMIGOS criteria, and spend the night in one of the host homes.

What training do host families receive?

Before volunteers arrive, at least one member from each host family must attend an AMIGOS-led Host Family Training. Here, Project Staff set expectations, review AMIGOS health and safety policies, teach host families what to do in case something goes wrong (such as an illness), and share best practices for cultural exchange.

What happens if something goes wrong during a volunteer's stay with a host family?

Each volunteer is provided with an emergency contact plan that they can use should any incident arise during their time in the host community. AMIGOS Project Staff are on-call 24/7 to respond to incidents or concerns. Should a concern arise, Project Staff will respond quickly to address it. Depending on the nature of the situation, possible responses include speaking with the host family to resolve the issue, re-assigning the volunteer to a new host family, or re-assigning the volunteer to a new host community. Historically, the rate of serious incidents related to the volunteer's host family is extremely low.

Why should I choose an AMIGOS project that includes a host family stay?

The host family is a cornerstone of the AMIGOS experience. Since 1965, thousands of volunteers have lived with host families in communities across Latin America, and it has been the highlight of the summer for generations of volunteers. Living with a host family is the best way to immerse yourself in a new culture, language, and community. Additionally, living with a host family affords volunteers increased independence and opportunities to engage in unique activities, from milking the host cow each morning to lending a hand on the family farm. Our host families are passionate about the mission of AMIGOS, and it is not uncommon for host siblings to one day become AMIGOS volunteers themselves.

How can host families help to mitigate risk?

No one knows the local community, culture and climate quite like a host family. Our host families are our eyes and ears on the ground and are a great way to help identify and mitigate risks. AMIGOS host families act much like families anywhere in the world, imposing curfews, implementing household rules and looking after the volunteer's well-being. Host mothers, especially, can be quite protective and are always looking out for their volunteers as if they were their own child. It's not uncommon to hear about a host mother making a special meal or soup when their volunteer is sick or not feeling well. Host families know the standards of conduct and are trained to promptly notify staff if they are not being followed.

In the event of an emergency and you need to reach AMIGOS On-Call, please call 713-782-5290 x150. You will be prompted to leave a voicemail and a member of the On-Call team will return your call as soon as possible.

For non-urgent matters, please email oncall@amigosinternational.org

