

# Choosing a Project and Sponsoring Organization

Finding a service site for your group's trip can be challenging, but in the months following the hurricanes, national relief agencies, their local chapters, and other institutions have become well organized. Many have developed consistent projects for volunteers. Nevertheless, you will want to match your group's needs and abilities with the work that group members will be engaged in.

Questions to ask about the organization and the relief work:

- Nature of the proposed project: What tasks will be available?
- What might be completed in a week: How does group fit into the project?
- What sorts of facilities/living/meal arrangements are available, e.g., group housed together, with community members, camping in a park or facility, primitive camping?
- How many students can be accommodated for living arrangements and for volunteer purposes?
- What skills are required/useful?
- What tools or protection will participants need? Who will supply them? (If your institution will need to supply the tools, such as shovels or hammers, or protection, such as hard hats, safety glasses or mold respirators, you will need to factor these into your planning and expenses.)
- What training should the groups members complete before arriving at the site?
- Is there a possibility for cultural/informational exchanges on issues involved at the site?

- Will a supervisor or consultant be available?
- Does the organization have experience working with students or a group program?
- Will community people work alongside the group team?
- What potential problems might there be?

You will need to develop criteria for choosing one site over another. Here are some important questions to consider when choosing the site for your project.

- Does the site match your group's goals? For example, if your group is focused on service to children and youth, does the location give your group this opportunity?
- Will the site supply your group's individual needs? How important is location? Are there certain issues around which the service should be organized (environment, social, health care)?
- Does your project fit with the host site's needs? Can your group provide the service that will help the community being served? If your group consists of medical students, for example, will healthcare be what the community needs at the time of the trip?
- Finally, are conditions at the site compatible with the group's expectations and ability to endure hardships?

See Appendices A-E for national, regional, and community partners in the Gulf states that support volunteer groups and provide opportunities for donations.

# INFORMATION CHECKLIST FOR GULF COAST VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Use this form to record information about the project and agency or organization for which you propose to volunteer.

Contact date \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up \_\_\_\_\_

Organization name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or organization description:

- Grassroots    Religious    Federal/state/local government    National/regional nonprofit    Other

Project description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Team size \_\_\_\_\_ Group or individual \_\_\_\_\_

- Physical labor    Social services    Educational    Advocacy    Logistics    Other

Special needs or preparation necessary for group members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Immunizations required \_\_\_\_\_

Tools or equipment required \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations (check one):    Group housing    Community/family placement    Camping    Other   Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Food (check one):    Food/meals provided    Group provides/prepares food   Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Projected costs:

Student contribution \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation \_\_\_\_\_ Lodging \_\_\_\_\_ Food \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Ability of agency to handle volunteer group size: (circle one)   1-5   6-1   10-15   16-19   20 or more

- Community living conditions:    Massive destruction, minimal services, rebuilding beginning, little community restoration  
 Some destruction, services returning, rebuilding under way, community restoration ongoing  
 Some destruction, community rebuilding nearing finish, community restoration nearly complete  
 Utilities and communication services fully restored

Resources of agency (financial ability to help with travel, housing, food, meals, supplies):

- Educational opportunities:    Contact with local population, schools, colleges, culture  
 Educational speakers and resources  
 Tours, observation, orientation

Recreational opportunities:   Access to hiking, parks, entertainment

Local transportation:   Type \_\_\_\_\_ Availability \_\_\_\_\_

Requirements of agency:   Agency provides \_\_\_\_\_ Need coverage by university/college \_\_\_\_\_

Access to medical facilities:   Type \_\_\_\_\_ Availability \_\_\_\_\_

Liability and risk coverage:   Agency provides \_\_\_\_\_ Need coverage by university/college \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency communications access:   Type \_\_\_\_\_ Availability \_\_\_\_\_

Closest commercial airport: \_\_\_\_\_