

VOLUNTEER IN LATIN AMERICA

"Here is what I know now—parts of this world challenge us, push us to quit, but I can meet them. And I will find friends who will help me. I am not meant to defeat whatever I encounter; I am, though, capable of meeting it and learning from it." -Steve C.



- **Who:** Volunteers in good physical health between the ages of 18 to 70, or under 18 with parental consent.
- **When:** First & third Monday of any month, minimum stay 1 week and maximum stay 1 year.
- **Where:** Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru
- **What:** Volunteer at an orphanage or school, participate in an environmental conservation project or help at a hospital or health center.
- **How:** First submit your Volunteer Application, interview, then submit payment for the program. Fees vary per country so please find the list on page 8 of these program details.

"The real reward is the Latin American spirit. There is as much music as there are adventures to be had. Samba spices up the sandy streets of Brazilian beach towns, panpipes liven Andean markets, Argentine folklórica (folk music) trickles out of truck radios in the pampas, and the jolting rhythm of cumbia makes those Andean bus rides even more absurd. Latin America is a continent that engulfs you and changes you – your state of mind, your outlook on life. As soon as you step foot on Latin American soil, the transformation begins." - Lonely Planet

Discover the *Similarities*...Share the *Differences*...



PERKS

- Guaranteed volunteer placement.
- Airport pick-up and transfer.
- Basic and safe accommodations with a host family or at volunteer guest housing.
- Orientation & Training.
- International Medical Insurance.
- Full-time pre-departure and local support.



Join Our Community to ask questions:



Read blogs from current participants or email us: info@culturalembrace.com

PROGRAM DETAILS & FAQs

Volunteer in Latin America Offers:

- First-hand experience helping the local community
- An opportunity to broaden your perspective and worldview
- An opportunity to participate in and learn local cultural activities (e.g.: sports, music, cooking)
- Memorable travel experiences with the chance to see exotic sites you have always dreamed about
- The ability to make lifelong friends from around the globe
- A valuable work experience that strengthens your resume, exhibiting your diligence, independence, and intercultural experiences
- A great way to develop and support your self-confidence and interpersonal skills

Cultural Embrace Includes:

✓ **Guaranteed Volunteer Placement Prior to Departure**

Cultural Embrace pre-arranges your volunteer project before you leave home to ensure an easy and hassle-free transition into your new life abroad.

✓ **Housing and Board**

Basic, clean & comfortable accommodations in a volunteer guest house or with a host family. Depending upon the destination, 1-3 meals are included.

✓ **Visa Assistance**

All volunteers to Latin America travel on the tourist visa. Please contact your local Latin America or Latin America Embassy or Consulate to check details, or ask your *CE* coordinator. Please note that any visa fees are the responsibility of the applicant. And, while we can assist you during the process, ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained the appropriate visa for your work experience. *Cultural Embrace* has no control over the visa process and cannot guarantee that your visa application will be accepted.



✓ **Arrival Pick-Up and Orientation**

All volunteers are picked up at the airport by our local coordinator who will then help them settle into the guest house or host family. The first week includes introductions and orientation to help you settle into your project.

✓ **International Traveler's Insurance with Basic Major Medical Coverage**

Our policy provides basic medical coverage. Additional policies and premium plans are available at extra cost.

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PROGRAM DETAILS & FAQs CONTINUED

✓ *Cultural Embrace* “Culture Kit”

Before your departure, we will send you a cultural kit that is filled with useful tips, advice, information, and your insurance card to prepare you for your amazing adventure of living and working abroad.

✓ **Full-time Representation**

Cultural Embrace provides English-speaking representation in the United States and Latin America prior to, during, and after your placement.



Requirements:

In order to participate in this volunteer program, *Cultural Embrace* requires that you:

- Be between the ages of 18 to 70. Or, if younger than 18, you must have parental or guardian consent
- Have good physical health
- Be open to foreign cultures and living abroad
- Have a high level of responsibility
- Be dedicated to the full term of commitment
- Be a team player
- Enjoy providing a service and working with others in a challenging environment

Project Options:

Orphanage Assistance/Street Children

Work in local orphanage homes or shelter for abandoned children. All of these children have come from poor families and suffer from malnutrition and neglect. Assist the limited staff to care for these children. Organize recreational activities, educational activities, sports, arts, crafts, and be the nurturing heart and helping hand that can encourage the children and local staff.

Teach/Tutor

Assist the local teachers at public schools and community centers with their English classes and other subjects, and provide an inspirational native tongue to the students. Or, act as a role model for struggling teenagers and adults through informal education classes. Most of these students have dropped out of school, but want to look at alternate opportunities to continue their education.

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PROGRAM DETAILS & FAQs CONTINUED

Social Welfare Development

Work in facilities that help the poor communities of an area. Provide support to at-risk and at-need women and children to learn values, manner, and life skills to become self-sufficient and obtain a higher level of education. Past projects range from tutoring, cleaning, carpentry, program development, sewing, cooking, childcare, business skills training, administrative, data entering,

Health/Medical Clinics

Work alongside community health and medical clinics. Be a friend to patients, assist medical staff, and organize health/nutrition classes. Knowledge of nutrition, health and medical field are preferred for these projects.

Wildlife Conservation

Participate in wildlife conservation projects to help preserve natural habitats of the local area. Sample projects include sea turtle and bird conservation in Costa Rica, marine conservation in Ecuador.

Environment/Ecology Conservation

Learn and practice how to be a living example of nature conservation. Work on a private nature reserve and crop experimentation site. Duties include restoring and improving the grounds, plantations and facilities.

Building/Construction Maintenance

Lend an extra hand with a variety of laborious jobs. Assistance for building, painting, gardening, and wiring are needed for a variety of projects.

How to Apply:

1. Obtain the **Volunteer Abroad Application Forms & Procedures** documents in one of two ways:

(a) Download the forms from our website at www.culturalembrace.com

(b) Call *Cultural Embrace* at 1-512-469-9089 or Skype: Cultural.Embrace to have the forms mailed to you within 3-4 days.

2. Read the instructions carefully and *complete all forms*.

3. Submit your completed application packet to:

Cultural Embrace
7201 Bill Hughes Road
Austin, TX 78745 USA



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PROGRAM DETAILS & FAQs CONTINUED

Completed packets should include the following:

- Volunteer Program Application
- Signed Volunteer Agreement
- Copy of your passport (information page only)
- Cover Letter in English explaining why you want to Volunteer in Latin America
- Two References: preferably professional and/or character references
- Doctor's note verifying that you are in excellent mental and physical health
- Copy of Police Clearance (obtainable from your community's local police station)
- Two 1½" x 2" official passport-size photos, with your name printed on each photo
- One smiling full-length photo of yourself (for local coordinator to identify you)
- US\$250 non-refundable deposit (credited towards your program fee)



Upon receipt of your application, a *Cultural Embrace* coordinator will contact you for a 20-30 minute phone interview. Once we accept you in to our program, you will receive an invoice for the remainder of your program fee. In order for us to contact our local partners to start your placement process, we require at least 50% of your program costs. We recommend submitting your application and program fee at least 3-4 months prior to your desired start date in order for us to organize and arrange your volunteer placement.

**Cultural Embrace* requires an expedited application fee for those applying 16 weeks or less before the desired date of departure. Applications received 12-16 weeks prior to desired departure date will be charged \$150. Applications received fewer than 12 weeks before the desired departure date will be charged \$250.



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Program Fees:

Prices are customized per project and destination:

S- Social Welfare

O- Orphanage/Street Children Assistance

W- Wildlife Conservation

M- Medical/Health

T- Teaching/Tutoring

E- Environment/Ecology

C- Construction



Country/City	Projects	Costs (US\$)	Benefits Included
ARGENTINA			
Buenos Aires & Cordoba (Min. 1 week; Max. 12 months) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S, M, E	1 week - \$1,840 Each add'l week - \$175 Spanish Lessons - \$205 per week	-Private room in host family. -Meals: 1-2/day, 6 days/week -International Medical Ins. -20 hours Spanish lessons
BRAZIL			
Rio de Janeiro (8 week program) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S	8 weeks - \$2,890 Each add'l week - \$175 Portuguese Lessons - \$305 per week	Private room in host family. -Meals: 1-2/day, 6 days/week -International Medical Ins. -20 hours Portuguese lessons
CHILE			
Santiago (Min. 2 weeks; Max. 12 months) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S, M, E, C	2 weeks- \$1,880 Each add'l week - \$285 Spanish Lessons - \$381 per week	-Private room in host family. -Meals: 1-2/day, 6 days/week -International Medical Ins. -20 hours Spanish lessons
COSTA RICA			
San Jose, Manuel Antonio (Min. 1 week Max. 1 year) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S, M, W, E, C	1 week - \$1,755 San Jose & MA Each add'l week - \$305 Spanish lessons- \$350	-Private room in host family. - Meals: 1-2/day, 6 days/week -Comprehensive Health Insurance -20 hours Spanish lessons

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<i>Country/City</i>	<i>Projects</i>	<i>Costs (US\$)</i>	<i>Benefits Included</i>
ECUADOR			
Amazon, Andes, Coastal, Galapagos* (Min. 2 weeks Max. 1 year-varies/project) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S, M, W, E, C	2 weeks - \$2,140 Each add'l week - \$265 Spanish lessons - \$295 *add \$585 for the first 2 weeks in the Galapagos and add \$105 to each add'l week or Spanish lessons.	-Housing at volunteer center with 2 meals a day -International Medical Insurance -20 hours Spanish lessons
GUATEMALA			
Antigua (Min. 1 week Max. 1 year) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S, M, E, C	1 week - \$1160 Each add'l week - \$315 (with 20 hrs Spanish) Each add'l week - \$215 (without Spanish)	-1 st week 20 hours Spanish -Private room in host family. - Meals: 2 or 3/day, 6 days/week -International Medical Insurance
MEXICO			
Oaxaca (Min. 1 weeks Max. 1 year) -Starts every Monday	O, T, S, M, C	1 week - \$1275 Each add'l week - \$380 (with 15 hrs Spanish) Each add'l week - \$275 (without Spanish)	-1 wk 15 hours Spanish -Private room in host family. -Meals: 2/day, 6 days/week -International Medical Insurance
PERU			
Lima, Chiclayo, Cusco, Puerto Maldonado*, Trujillo (Min. 2 weeks, Max. 1 year) Starts every 2 nd & 4 th Thursday of each month	O, T, S, M, E, C	2 weeks - \$1750 Each add'l week - \$335 Spanish lessons: \$160/week (10 hrs/wk in Lima or Cusco only)	-Housing with host family or volunteer site -Meals: 2/day, 6 days/week -International Medical Insurance

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Frequently Asked Questions:

1) *Why should I pay to volunteer abroad, and where does my money go to with Cultural Embrace?*

Cultural Embrace and our local partners in Latin America specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your volunteer project and living abroad. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

You will be assigned an experienced Program Coordinator from our Austin, Texas office. He/She will provide personalized attention to help pre-arrange your volunteer placement, housing and travel needs. Our Program Coordinator will work with our in-country representative to match your requests and background skills with the availability and needs of the local employer. Once you go abroad, you will be assisted by our in-country representative, and will typically have a direct supervisor for your project, as well.

Your program fee includes your customized volunteer placement, housing and meals, airport transfer, orientation, basic international traveler's insurance, and all of the administrative and logistical costs to set up your placement in the States and Latin America. *Cultural Embrace* also prorates the expenses for marketing, advertising, and site visits/communication among all of our programs within our fees.

2) *What are the living conditions like?*

While on your volunteer placement, you will stay in a clean, simple volunteer facility. All accommodations are shared, 2-4 people per room with modern amenities like a hostel. Social activities are planned so volunteers will get to know each other and enjoy working on projects together.

3) *What type of meals are included?*

Typical meals are enjoyed by all, especially for those who have a knack for spicy and flavorful dishes. Vegetarian and dietary meals may be met, however, if you have specific allergies, you may need to provide your own food. Please list any special dietary requirement on your application.



4) *What is the application process like, and when will I have confirmation about my volunteer project?*

After C.E. receives your completed application, you will be assigned a personal Program Coordinator who will work with you through your departure and beyond. He/She will conduct ~30 phone/web interview (or in person, if applicable) to discuss your background, goals, and expectations of a volunteer placement. Then, you will receive an invoice for the remainder of the program,

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and once we receive at least half of this fee, we will send your details to Latin America to find available projects that match your interests. Some companies may want to conduct a phone interview with you, which your Program Coordinator will prepare you accordingly. Placements are confirmed prior to departure with both volunteers and project managers agreeing on the terms, duties, responsibilities, and schedule.

5) *How long can I volunteer in Latin America?*

The minimum duration is two weeks, and you may stay up to one year.

6) *What type of visa assistance does **Cultural Embrace** provide?*

Participants going to Latin America for three months or less will travel on a tourist visa good for up to 90 days. If you are planning to stay longer than 3 months, you will have to apply for an extension of your tourist visa. Please note that any visa fees are the responsibility of the applicant. And, while we try to assist you during the process, ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained the appropriate visa for your volunteer experience. *Cultural Embrace* has no control over the visa process and cannot guarantee that your visa application will be accepted.



7) *What should I wear and bring to Latin America?*

Depending on the time of year and location of your placement, you will need to dress accordingly. Please note that Latin America is a conservative country and the locations in which you will be volunteering will probably be more traditional than the larger cities. *Cultural Embrace* will provide you with more details in your *Cultural Embrace* pre-departure kit.

8) *Can I volunteer and/or live with a friend or partner?*

Yes, you can enroll in this program with a friend or partner. Please just let us know so we can make sure your trip is coordinated simultaneously. We encourage you to travel and explore your world with others. This enhances your experience and memories, and you can be rewarded for referring others to travel on a CE program.

9) *How long will it take to make my placement?*

We ask applicants to apply at least 3-4 months in advanced of your desired start date. The placement may take less time than this, but we want to ensure that we have enough time to find a great placement for you! There are additional administrative fees if you apply less than 3 months in advanced, and we do not contact our local partners until we receive at least 50% of the program fee payment.

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10) *When should I buy my plane ticket and does Cultural Embrace provide any resources to help with plane tickets?*

Plane tickets should not be purchased until after your placement has been confirmed. *Cultural Embrace* works with consolidators and discount travel agencies that can help find cheaper tickets than those that are available to the general public. We have a partnership with STA Travel (1-877-236-1048) for great student/youth rates, and they have a very nominal service fee if you need to make any changes before or during your travels.

11) *What do I do if I have a problem or complaint within my volunteer placement?*

You should first speak with your project supervisor or manager to give them an opportunity to explain or investigate the situation. If the complaint still exists, then please contact your local representative in Latin America, as well as let *Cultural Embrace* (Austin office) know so we may diplomatically mediate on your behalf. Please note that you will be assigned an in-country representative that will assist you with any questions or concerns. We also encourage you to fill out our program evaluations.

12) *Is there someone I may speak to about their experience on this program, and being abroad?*

Yes, we have a network of current and past travelers that are happy to communicate with you. Due to confidentiality, please contact our Austin office to receive a list of names and contact information of participants and alumni that have agreed to be contacted by others. Additionally, we encourage you to check out, use, and get involved with our social media community. These community sites will provide great insight of what you should expect on your adventure abroad. Plus, we provide additional discounts to our community members!



Facebook Page (<http://www.facebook.com/CulturalEmbraceTravel>)

Twitter (<http://twitter.com/culturalembrace>)

Blogger (<http://www.culturalembrace.blogspot.com/>)

Youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CulturalEmbrace1>)

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A Few Words. . .

At *Cultural Embrace*, we want to facilitate experiences that, first and foremost, help individuals have a safe and healthy time abroad while becoming better acquainted with both themselves and the richly textured cultures of the world around them. Our partnerships with companies, non-profits, and NGOs grant program participants the opportunity to explore Latin America first-hand while adding valuable content to their resumes. Volunteering in Latin America is, putting it shortly, a tremendously edifying experience that is sure to leave you with lasting memories and a renewed sense of purpose. So do yourself a favor: call *Cultural Embrace* straight away and let us start planning your once-in-a-lifetime international adventure!

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@culturalembrace.com or by phone at 1-512-469-9089 or by Skype: Cultural.Embrace.



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