



# RIDGE MISSIONS

## SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIP

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How are short-term mission trips selected?

Short-term mission trips are selected based on ministry partnerships fostered by a trusted relationship with a missionary and/or non-profit ministry agency. Each trip aims to provide a faith stretching, Christ-focused, missional, edifying experience.

#### How are participants selected?

Each interested participant will fill out an online application at [www.austinridge.org/trips](http://www.austinridge.org/trips). Austin Ridge trip leaders will review applications & reach out to participants to confirm team placement.

After your application has been approved, you will need to submit a **\$200 non-refundable deposit (\$50 for Reynosa trips) in order to be added to the team**. This deposit will be applied to the overall cost of the trip. Registration is limited for all trips.

#### How are the costs determined?

For the majority of our Austin Ridge trips, costs are determined well in advance of the team's departure. We carefully work with our ministry partners to develop a cost for the team based on costs for travel, lodging, food, in country transportation, ministry costs, and other unique factors associated with each trip. The final cost may vary from the approximate pre-trip costs.

#### What is not included in the cost of the trip?

Passports, passport photos, fundraising letters/postage, medical exam/immunizations required by select destinations, travel medications, souvenirs, cost of visa applications if required, personal meals to and from destination and some tourist-type events while on the trip.

Austin Ridge does NOT make seat selections, meal selections or special accommodations for trip participants. All trip participants will handle any special requests directly with the airline, this includes adding frequent flyer numbers and individual flight check-in.

#### Where will we stay & what will we eat?

We will stay in lodging arrangements provided by the host. Depending upon your destination, teams will either be staying in a retreat-style setting or a hotel. All meals will be paid for as part of the cost of the trip, *excluding* meals while traveling to and from the destination. You will be encouraged to be flexible about your food preferences by experiencing local food and by being a gracious guest.

## Do I need a valid passport to travel internationally?

Yes. If you don't already have a current U.S. passport, you may obtain one by picking up the forms at certain branches of the U.S. Post Office or by going online to <http://travel.state.gov/passport>. Passports typically take six weeks to process, however, it is recommended you allow for extra time. Also, most countries require your passport to have an expiration date of *at least six months after your trip's return date*. We will ask you to renew your passport if this is not the case for your current passport.

## How will we/I raise funds?

Team members are encouraged to pay for the costs of the trip by either raising funds through the support of friends and family or providing their own way. Team leaders will provide assistance and helpful tools to raising support. Austin Ridge encourages a team-based approach to fund-raising where the overall cost of the team is prioritized over individual costs.

For example, if the cost of the trip is \$1,000 per person and 10 people go on the trip, the team goal is \$10,000. Each participant is responsible to contribute \$1,000 toward the team goal. If participants are able to provide more than the per person cost, that amount will be applied toward the team goal and will assist teammates who may be in financial need. Amounts raised above and beyond the team goal will be donated to the partner ministry organization for that trip.

## How critical are financial deadlines?

**VERY!** These financial deadlines are vital since there are a number of significant pre-trip expenses (i.e., airfare, accommodations, etc.). Therefore, every effort must be made to make payments in a timely fashion. You will be able to monitor your fundraising balance through your Managed Missions account. **A \$200 deposit is due upon application acceptance and will be applied toward your trip balance (\$50 for Reynosa trips).**

Important financial deadlines:

- 50% of funds are due 60 days prior to departure
- 100% of funds are due 15 days prior to departure

Failure to meet these deadlines may result in you being removed from the team. If, through unforeseen circumstances, meeting deadlines is not possible, please notify your team leader as soon as possible.

## What if I sign up but end up not being able to go?

In the event that you end up not participating in the trip for any reason, you will be responsible for all trip expenses Austin Ridge Bible Church has incurred on your behalf at that time. Please note that per IRS regulations, any charitable contribution made to Austin Ridge designated to your personal support account (whether the contribution is from you or from someone else) is considered a tax-deductible donation, and therefore **cannot be refunded**.

### Can I make special travel arrangements?

No. Austin Ridge will purchase airfare that facilitates group travel. It is imperative for team unity, liability reasons, and the benefit of our hosts that all trip participants travel to the destination and back in one group.

### What will I pack?

A complete packing list, and other helpful trip resources, will be provided to each participant.

### What are the pre-trip requirements?

In preparation for the trip, each team member will be expected to:

- Attend 3-5 pre-trip meetings. These meetings are designed to prepare each team member spiritually, for the cross-cultural experience and specifically for the unique activities of their trip. These meetings are vital to building relationships and setting the tone for a meaningful trip.
- All trip waivers and consent forms must be signed before departure.
- Some destinations require medical shots, vaccinations, and visa applications.

### What are the post-trip requirements?

Team members will be encouraged to attend a post-trip debrief (approximately 1-3 weeks after arriving home) that allows participants to reflect upon and process the trip in a healthy manner. A good debriefing facilitates an understanding of how to be missional upon returning. We strongly recommend following up with your prayer/financial supporters soon after returning from your trip as well.

### Are there any risks involved?

Every precaution is taken to ensure your safety. However, as with any travel, there are unforeseen challenges and difficulties.

### Is insurance provided?

The cost of your trip includes trip insurance, which provides coverage for emergency medical expenses, medical evacuation, accidental death, political and security evacuation, etc. It is highly recommended that participants have their own comprehensive health insurance for the duration of their trip as well.