

# PARK STREET 2023 SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

## *Getting Started*

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1. Start by completing the **2023 SHORT-TERM MISSIONS APPLICATION** online at [parkstreet.org/missions](https://parkstreet.org/missions). If you have been on a PSC short-term trip before, please choose the **2023 RETURNEES SHORT-TERM MISSIONS APPLICATION**.
2. Applications for our summer trips are due by **March 31**. Fall trip applications are due by **June 1**.
3. Once you are accepted, you will be asked to make a \$100 deposit for international trips. The money will be applied to your fundraising for trip expenses. Payment may be made online at [parkstreet.org/qive](https://parkstreet.org/qive) or by check in the offering plate or mailed to Park Street Church, 1 Park Street, Boston, MA 02108. Please mark deposits with **your name, your team name** and **“deposit.”** (i.e. John Smith, South Africa deposit)
4. With the exception of “youth trips,” candidates under 18 years must be accompanied by an adult, who takes full responsibility for the minor during the trip.
5. Once your application has been received and reviewed, first time Short-Term Mission (STM) participants will be scheduled for an interview with a PSC missions representative.
6. STM participants are required to attend the STM training events, as well as regular team meetings leading up to the trip.
7. Team members are responsible for the cost of their trip. Costs listed are based on estimated travel costs and are subject to change. Members may raise financial support through contributions from family and friends. Giving may be received through the church’s online giving portal or by check (see #3 above).
8. You are encouraged to build support through social media but you may **not** raise funds through fundraising sites, such as GoFundMe.com.

# *Frequently Asked Questions*

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## **Q: What is the purpose of short-term missions?**

Sending out Short-Term Mission (STM) teams is one of the strategies that we use to address our global priorities in Missions. Our aim is to support the long-term goals of our Park Street missionaries and partners by sending short-term teams to encourage them and help with various aspects of their ministries. Our desire is that participants will find their faith strengthened, their vision for missions expanded, and their relationship with the Lord deepened.

## **Q: Do I need to be a member of Park Street Church?**

A: No, but it is preferred that you are a regular attendee of Park Street Church. You should have a personal relationship with Christ.

## **Q: What is included in the cost of the trip?**

A: The largest portion of the cost for international trips is airfare. Housing costs, travel insurance, transportation, project funds, and food are included in the overall cost of the trip. Individuals should be prepared to pay for their own souvenirs, as well as an occasional meal or entertainment on days off.

## **Q: How is the trip paid for?**

A: Team members are asked to raise support as a team to cover the cost of the trip by sending support letters to friends, family members, co-workers, etc. It is a step of faith for each team member to raise these funds and it results in a deeper sense of gratitude for God's provision, as well as a committed team of financial and prayer supporters.

## **Q: Can I pay for the trip myself?**

A: Yes, but we still ask that you send out letters for prayer support, and let the recipients know how to donate to the team/trip as a whole if they are led to do so.

## **Q: Is financial support available from the church?**

A: No, it is not. Typically, if prayer letters are sent to at least 50 people, we have seen all the funds come in.

## **Q: Are donors' gifts tax deductible?**

A: Yes, as long as they go through the church giving options.

**Q: What happens if I raise more money than I need for my trip?**

A: Praise God for that! We encourage teams to work together to raise the cumulative cost for their team. Any overage raised individually goes to help fund shortfalls for the rest of your team. If a team is over-funded, if a trip is cancelled, or if there are surplus funds after the trip, those funds go into the church's overall STM fund and may help support other teams, which might be underfunded or help develop the overall STM program.

**Q: What happens if I do not raise enough money for the trip?**

A: Sometimes God uses a serious lack of support as an indicator that an individual or team should not go on a particular trip. If you find yourself in this situation, the Missions Office together with the team leader(s) will determine if you should go. If your team's budget has been fully met, any overage the team raises may be applied to fund your shortfall. If your team overall has a serious shortfall in its funding, we will determine if the team should continue or not. If there is extra money in the church's STM fund, we may choose to use that to cover the team's shortfall.

**Q: If I decide to cancel my involvement in the trip, can my donations be returned to the donors?**

A: In order for donations to be tax deductible, they must be "irrevocable and non-refundable" according to the IRS. If you are unable to participate in your STM, your donations will go to fund other STM trips or projects that are part of our Missions program. Keep in mind that donations are made to the STM project and not to an individual team member. If you cancel your involvement after travel documents are purchased (airfare, visas, etc.) you will be expected to cover any associated penalty fees and losses that are not covered by travel insurance.

**Q: What kind of preparation is provided for the trips?**

A: A Short-Term Missions Training will be held for all teams covering topics such as fundraising, cross-cultural communication, team building, etc. In addition, teams will meet four to six times in order to get to know each other, prepare for the project, and pray. These meetings are required and are critical to the overall success of the trip. All team members working with children on their trip will be subject to an official background check.

**Q: Will I need a passport or a travel visa?**

A: If you are leaving U.S. soil, you will need a passport. If you do not have a passport, you should begin the application process immediately. Routine processing of U.S. passport applications is currently taking 8 to

11 weeks, with expedited processing currently taking 5 to 7 weeks. See [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) for details and application instructions. **Most countries require that travelers' passports not expire within six months of the end of their trip. Please check your passport immediately. If it expires within six months of the end of your trip dates, please begin the process to renew.**

A travel visa is an entry document required by a foreign government in addition to your passport. Not all foreign governments require a visa. Your team leader will check the foreign entry requirements for the country you plan to visit. If you are not a US citizen, please make sure that the team leader and the Missions Office know. It may mean a different visa process for you.

**Q: Is it safe for me to travel?**

The Missions Office leaders, along with the field leaders, will monitor the situation on the ground for each STM location. If there is any tangible security concern, consideration will be given to cancelling the trip. Travel insurance is always purchased to help deal with such eventualities. There are, of course, situations that are unforeseeable, therefore team members are required to sign a Liability Waiver before leaving the US. All team members are required to register their international travel with the U.S. Department of State's STEP program. ([step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov)).

**Q: How can I serve if I cannot go?**

A: **Prayer is vital** to every STM. Although you may not be able to go, your prayer participation is an invaluable gift for these teams and for the long-term work in these places. Additionally, if you are able, you may participate through a financial gift. Checks or online gifts ([parkstreet.org/give](https://parkstreet.org/give)) should be made payable to Park Street Church and should have the STM team name on the memo line, as well as the individual's name, if you are donating on behalf of a specific participant.

**Q: What happens when our team returns from our trip?**

A: Upon their return, team members will be asked to complete an STM evaluation and participate in a team debrief with Missions staff. The team will also be asked to give a trip report in some form to the church. Participants will be encouraged to continue to pray for the missionaries and projects they served and to seek ways to deepen their missions involvement.