

WORK PROFILE

COSTA RICA

2021-2022



About Projects in CR

General Observations

The age limits for the ICYE Costa Rica program are between the ages of 18 to 30. Exceptions can be made, but they're subject to prior evaluation.

Also, in the case of some projects, volunteers must observe certain rules as to behavior and personal presentation. Regarding clothing, you will be allowed to dress as you please only during non-working hours, while at the project you'll have to follow the dress code, if there is one.

The admission of piercings, dread locks or other unconventional hairstyles (especially projects with children tend to be a little stricter in that area), tattoos on visible areas, etc. is defined by the regulations of each individual project and have to be complied with.

Please keep in mind that volunteering in Costa Rica might be very different than in your home country. Many projects are just starting to work with volunteers and will often not be so well structured. Perhaps at first you might get frustrated because you may not have a specific task assigned, or because work seems boring. Earn your superior's and co-worker's trust and soon you will get more responsibilities. Also, the staff of ACI does regular project visits to ensure that your working schedule allows for your stay to be as beneficial as possible both for you and the project.

In Costa Rica, there are several different Volunteer Service Organizations. However, there are many volunteers who want to work in our country, so the organizations generally are able to choose who they will accept. If you do not have special training or qualifications, the tasks assigned to you will depend largely on the current needs of your project. Initiative is always very important!

However, we try to satisfy special interests and desires of every individual volunteer with or without special training - as often as possible.



Important Information

To help ensure a positive volunteering experience with ACI-Costa Rica, please read carefully and take into account the following:

1. To be a volunteer in Costa Rica, Long Term volunteers need to get the migratory status as "VOLUNTEER". Please review the chapter "Visa Process in Costa Rica" in this guide and bring the necessary documents with you to Costa Rica.
2. ACI-CR does its best to find the project that suits you the most. Nonetheless, sometimes assigning you to your first choice of project will not be possible, so we take into account your secondary or tertiary preferences.
3. None of the volunteer placements offers a salary.
4. Depending on your specific project you are expected to work 30 to 40 hours per week. When you arrive in Costa Rica, you will have to sign an "Agreement on Participation".
5. When there are "tours" or activities your project wants you to participate in, the project itself is responsible for your expenses.
6. Your vacations have to be coordinated with the project and sometimes are already defined by the project (for example in the case of schools). Volunteers have to adapt to the conditions of their project.
7. Accommodation is mainly with Costa Rican families. However, especially when you choose ecological projects, you may also have to live in the project.
8. You could be living in very different parts of Costa Rica: the capital, big cities, small towns and rural areas, depending on the families'/project's location.
9. Your Host Family and Project Information will be confirmed as soon as possible. The project's detailed information will be provided once in Costa Rica.



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Types of Voluntary Service Jobs: ACI-Costa Rica offers many different work placements for international volunteers. In the following you find a list of general project types.

PROJECTS WITH CHILDREN: There are many projects working with children (for example day care centers for children from low income families, rural schools, shelter for children in social risk, etc.). Volunteer work usually includes assisting during classes, taking care of the children, playing with them and organizing activities with them. Manual work and help in the kitchen are also frequently part of the tasks. Especially in rural schools, help with office work will also often be appreciated.

ELDERLY PEOPLE: Homes for the elderly provide accommodation and special attention. Volunteer tasks are mainly related to keeping company and sharing with the residents, organizing activities, and sometimes assisting in physical therapy. As in the case of projects with children, tasks may also include help in the kitchen or other manual work.

PERSONS WITH DISSABILITIES: ACI cooperates with several institutions (mainly schools) for persons with physical, mental and visual or auditory special conditions. Volunteers assist during therapies and also fulfil the same tasks as in projects with children or elderly people.

ECOLOGICAL PROJECTS: Ecological projects include and often combine conservation, rural development, and sustainable tourism initiatives. Volunteers help in field work (reforestation, species documentation, marking of trails, animal protection), but often also in the office (for example with the translation of information material or the maintenance of web sites) or with environmental education projects for tourists and locals. English or other language classes for people working in the project are also frequently asked for.



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HUMAN RIGHTS AND CITIZEN DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS: Different organizations work on different areas – as ranging from human rights in general to group rights or interests (children & youth, migrants, handicapped persons, indigenous people, rural communities etc.) and specific topics (labour rights, health, education etc.). In these kinds of organizations, volunteers mostly help in the office (for example doing translations, assisting in the organization of activities or campaigns, attending the phone), but usually there are also field trips from time to time. Because of the kind of work involved, the organizations in general ask that applicants already possess an advanced Spanish level. Previous experience in the specific work area of the organization is a plus.

CULTURAL PROJECTS: There are different groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations dedicated to promoting and enriching Costa Rica's cultural life. In these projects, you'll need an open mind and the ability to easily connect and communicate with people, which makes previous knowledge of Spanish at least at an intermediate level especially important. Please note that there are only few placements in this field.

ACI: ACI also accepts volunteers to work with different tasks ranging from office work and translations to project visits, preparation of camps and socio-cultural animation, giving you the opportunity of meeting lots of people, visiting different parts of Costa Rica and getting an insight into how the volunteer work and intercultural learning is organized. If you are interested, let us know!

OTHERS: There also exist other possibilities of volunteer work, including work in universities or secondary schools, a hospital, with drug/alcohol abusers, teaching English, sports, etc. Please note that we will give the detailed information about projects once in Costa Rica.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN SOME CASES (ESPECIALLY ECOLOGICAL PROJECTS) ACCOMODATION COULD BE WITHIN THE PROJECT.

