GLOBAL VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Operation Smile



AUGUST 2024

Welcome

We're so excited to welcome you to the Operation Smile family! Did you know Operation Smile is one of the world's largest volunteer-based nonprofit organizations? Now you're part of one of the largest networks of global volunteers, who are all committed to the same cause: bringing safe surgery and comprehensive care closer to home.



©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Volunteer Handbook Table of Contents

This handbook is your guide to all things related to volunteering on medical programs at Operation Smile! From our code of conduct to what to pack and how to access training opportunities, everything you need to know is right here. Access the latest version on the Volunteer Portal.

Volunteer Resources

- About Us
- Mission
- Strategy
- Principles
- Core Values
- Where We Work
- Volunteer Team

Operation Smile Programs

- Operation Smile Medical Global Standards
- Program Settings and Activities
- Building Volunteer Teams
- I'm Ready to Go! Now What?

Pre-Program Planning

- Pre-Program Communication
- Temporary Medical License
- Financial Responsibilities
- Logistics and Travel Planning
- Entry and Transit Documentation
- Health Information and Emergency Contact
- Safety Preparation
- What to Take

During the Program

- Arrival
- Delays
- Team Communication
- Team Unity and Cultural Sensitivity
- General Schedule
- Photos and Social Media
- Staying Healthy and Safe
- Incident Reporting

After the Program

- Share Feedback
- Volunteer Evaluations
- Filing a Grievance

Staying Engaged

- Operation Smile Academy
- Social Media
- Email
- Resource Links

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

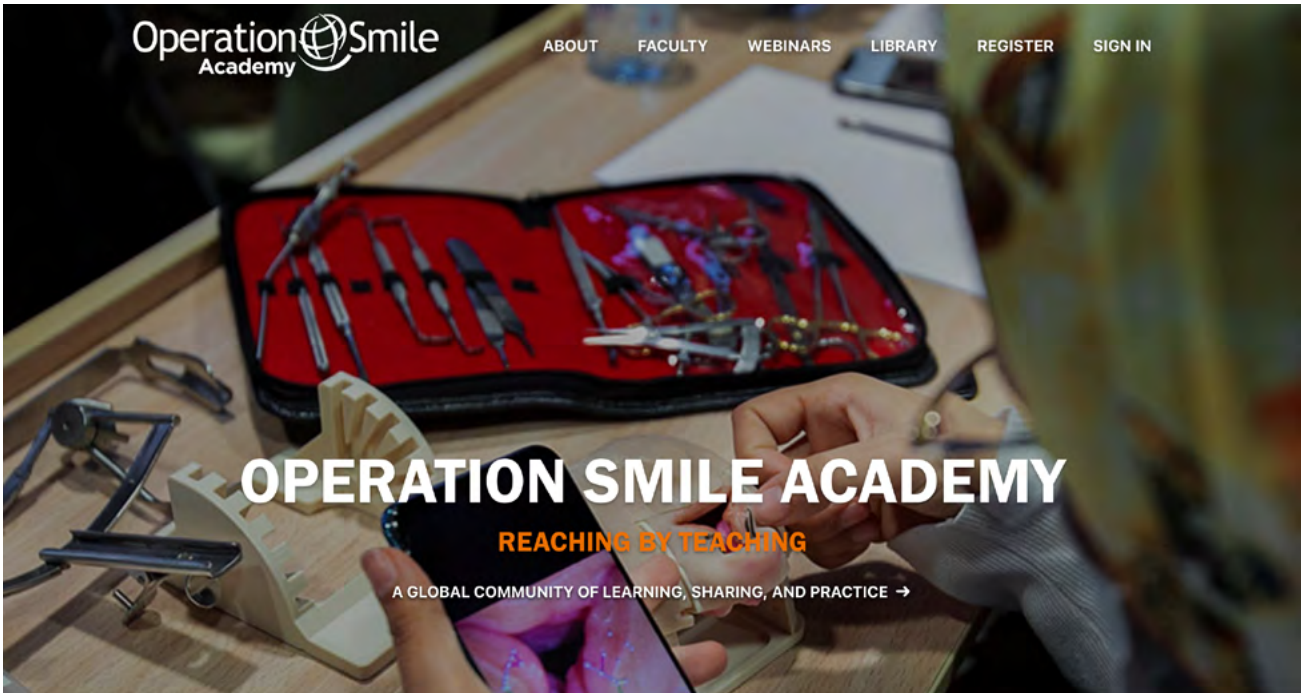
VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Staff Support

Your volunteer coordinator is your primary point of contact, offering support throughout your journey with us. Your volunteer coordinator is always available to answer questions, help you prepare for your next program and keep you informed of all that's happening at Operation Smile.

Volunteer Portal

Access the **Volunteer Portal** to find helpful resources, update your preferences and contact information, and keep your documents up to date. If you do not have log in information, your volunteer coordinator can help you access your account.



Operation Smile Academy

Operation Smile Academy (OSA) is an online learning and mentorship service for cleft care professionals. Our goal is to increase the capacity of health professionals and health systems to treat people affected by cleft conditions. The OSA library is filled with content ranging from recorded live demonstrations to published research articles and webinars.

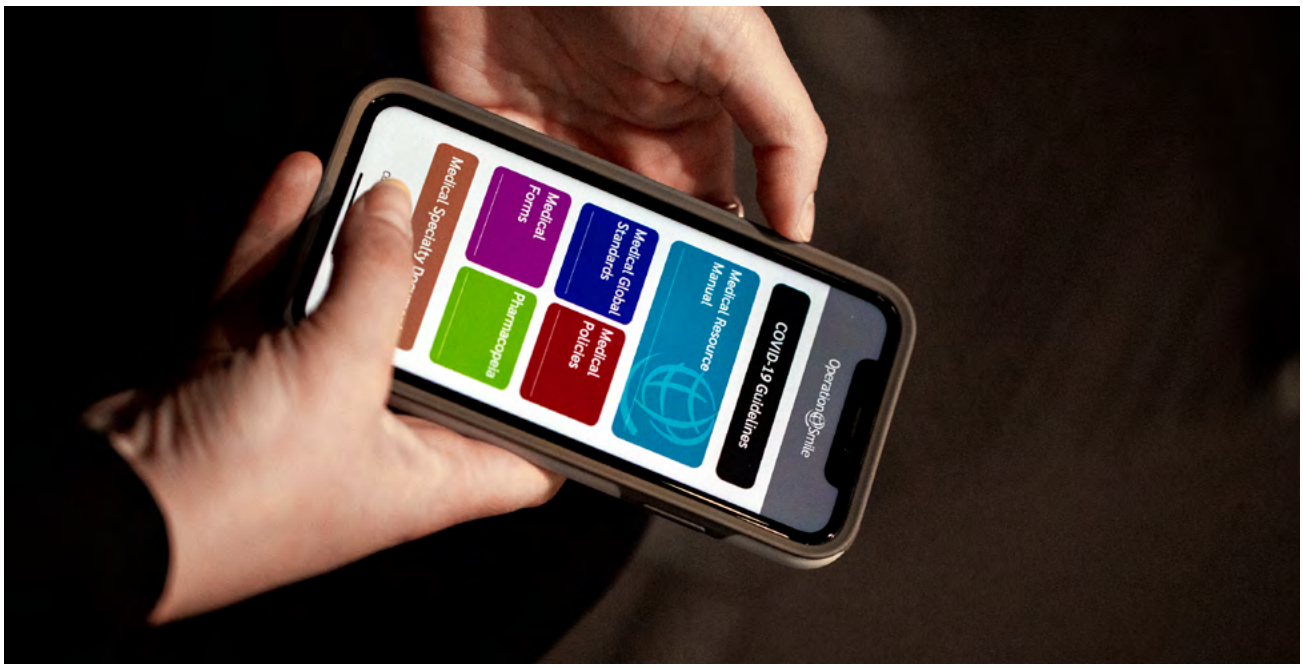
Scan the QR code or **click here** to check out the course catalog, upcoming events and more.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Operation Smile Medical Volunteer Resources App

Our app offers easy access to the latest resources from our team of global medical experts in nine languages, including Global Medical Standards, policies, forms and documents. Download the app. Scan the QR code or search “Operation Smile” in the Apple or Google Play stores.

Tip:
Download documents to your device for easy offline reading.



Website

Visit **OperationSmile.org** for valuable updates about our care, programs and ways to donate. See volunteers share their experiences of bringing hope and healing to our patients around the globe.

OperationSmile.org

Social Media

Follow us on social media to stay connected to the latest happenings.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

ABOUT US

Operation Smile is a global nonprofit bridging the gap in access to essential surgeries and health care, by providing cleft surgery and comprehensive care, medical education and training, and long-term investments in strengthening local health systems and workforces.

At Operation Smile, we're wholeheartedly committed to transforming lives. We believe that every child deserves access to top-notch care. For more than four decades, we've been right there alongside communities worldwide, working hand in hand to offer free, life-changing cleft surgeries and comprehensive care. Yet, there's more to be done. Five billion people, two-thirds of our global family, lack access to safe and affordable surgery.

Did You Know?
Operation Smile has provided surgical care to more than 400,000 patients over the past 40+ years. Many more have benefited from our comprehensive care services.

MISSION

Through our expertise in treating cleft lip and cleft palate, we create solutions that deliver safe surgery to people where it's needed most.

STRATEGY

To make a real and lasting difference, Operation Smile focuses on surgical excellence and investing in people and infrastructure to close the distance patients must travel to receive essential care. Working with local doctors, health systems and governments, we train and provide educational opportunities to medical providers in the communities we work in to bolster local hospitals and clinics to bring care closer to the patients who need it most.



©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM OUR CO-FOUNDERS

When we started Operation Smile in 1982, we simply wanted to help children by repairing their cleft lips and palates. That desire has sprung into a movement. As Operation Smile grows and evolves, we must stay true to the principles at the heart of our identity, culture and approach to extending access to quality surgical care. These five principles inspire and motivate all of us. They are the core of who we are as an organization.

1. The quality of a child's care comes first.
2. Our staff, volunteers and donors are the lifeblood of our organization.
3. A network for collaborative, sustainable health care organizations fuels our success and expansion.
4. We invest in youth because they will champion the future.
5. When we help children and their families, we transform these families, the socioeconomics of their communities and ultimately, our world.

Kathy Magee, B.S.N., M.S.W., M.Ed.
Operation Smile
Co-Founder, President & CEO

Bill Magee Jr., D.D.S., M.D.
Operation Smile
Co-Founder and CEO Emeritus

CORE VALUES

As a team, we each commit to bringing these core values to everything we do.



RESILIENCE



IMPACT



COMPASSION

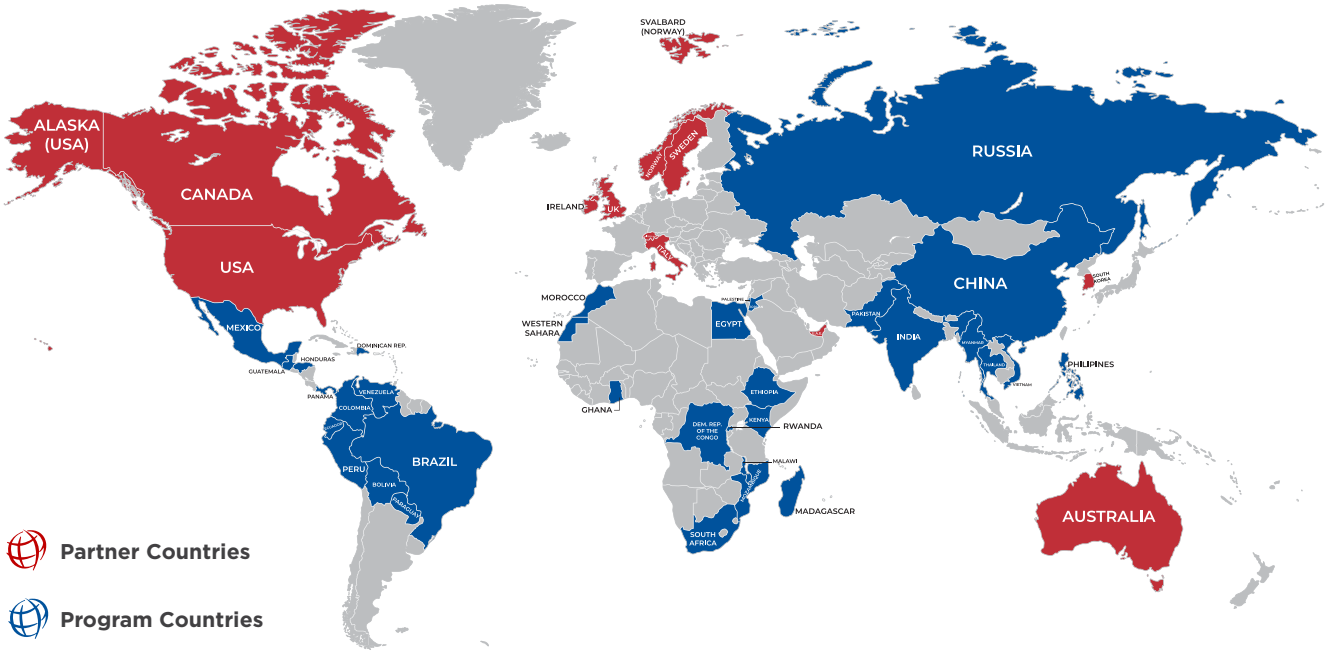


RESILIENCE

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

WHERE WE WORK

Operation Smile delivers medical care for patients and educational programs for health workers in 35+ program countries. Our partner countries support program countries with resources and volunteers. We accept qualified volunteers from all countries. Our global headquarters is in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA.



VOLUNTEER TEAM

At Operation Smile, we invite volunteers to be an integral part of our mission to bridge the gap in access to essential surgeries and health care, beginning with cleft surgery and comprehensive care. By joining our volunteer community, you become a catalyst for transformative change, aligning your skills and dedication with our commitment to improving the health and dignity of individuals around the world.

As an Operation Smile volunteer, you can be proud to:

Transform Lives

- Transform not only the lives of children but also their families and entire communities by providing access to safe and secure surgical operations.
- Witness immediate and visible results through life-changing surgeries and comprehensive care.
- Provide comprehensive care and support to ensure long-lasting transformations.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Use Your Skills for Good

- Donate your time, skills and expertise to provide care and help build local capacity.
- Collaborate with some of the world's most talented medical professionals, sharing and learning from their expertise.
- Contribute to Operation Smile's leadership in safe cleft surgery worldwide.

Be Part of a Global Community

- Be part of a diverse team of volunteers from around the world.
- Foster teamwork and collaboration with local and international peers.
- Connect with a global community united by a shared mission.

Volunteer Roles

Our volunteers represent a wide variety of specialties and backgrounds. If you participate in a program, you can expect to work with volunteers in the following roles.

Medical volunteer specialties:

- Anesthesia
- Pediatrics
- Biomedical technology
- Post-anesthesia care
- Nursing
- Psychosocial care
- Nutrition
- Speech language therapy
- Oral health
- Surgery
- Patient health records and imaging

Support volunteers (non-medical):

- Administrative support
- Meal preparation
- Community speakers
- Patient advocates
- Corporate partner support
- Students and student sponsors
- Drivers and logistics support
- Translators
- Event coordinators and support
- Warehouse and resource support

Typically, support volunteers are based in our program countries and volunteer directly in their home communities or at our headquarters in Virgina, USA.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Leadership Opportunities

After gaining experience with Operation Smile, many volunteers seek additional responsibilities. Those well-suited for one of the following leadership opportunities will:

- Uphold Operation Smile program protocols and standards.
- Help guide and support other volunteers.
- Educate and mentor new volunteer trainees.
- Advise staff on clinical topics.

Clinical Educator

Clinical educators help train and mentor peer volunteers and local health care professionals. They are critical to Operation Smile's strategy to build local capacity for essential surgery and comprehensive care by growing the number of approved volunteers and cleft competent clinicians available to serve their communities. Clinical educators are approved to provide clinical education in their chosen specialty on international Operation Smile programs.

Selection process: To be considered for a clinical educator role, volunteers must have:

- An active license,
- Past or current experience in an academic institution teaching post-graduate clinicians in their clinical specialty for competency,
- Past or current experience teaching in a low-resource setting,
- At least one reference from a past trainee in a low-resource setting, and
- OSI active credentialing status.

After completing an application, new candidates will meet with an OSI representative to discuss the position in more detail. A staff member or peer volunteer can nominate for this role. If found to be an appropriate match, the candidate will attend an educator orientation and complete an observation on a clinical program with an educator sponsor.

Coach

Through the coaching program, new volunteers (or volunteers without recent program experience) are paired with experienced peers in their specialty area. Pre-program, the volunteer coach will guide them to be more confident and knowledgeable of Operation Smile protocols.

Selection process: Contact your volunteer coordinator to see if this opportunity is available within your home country.

Team Leader

Team leaders provide direct oversight of volunteers within their specialty during a program. A team leader is appointed for each area: anesthesia, surgery, pediatrics, nursing, oral health and medical records. These leaders solve most challenges that may arise during a program in partnership with Operation Smile program country staff.

Selection process: Fellow volunteers and staff use volunteer evaluations to identify potential team leaders with relevant leadership skills and experience. Operation Smile program country staff select and assign team leaders.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

OPERATION SMILE PROGRAMS

We believe that every child deserves access to top-notch care. Not every country or community around the world is the same. That's why we work with local medical professionals, governments, hospitals and other NGOs to create various models of surgical and comprehensive care. Together, we determine which solutions work best to reach as many children as possible and close the distance patients must travel to receive essential care.

Operation Smile Medical Global Standards of Care

We are proud to stand at the forefront of cleft care and safe surgery, setting the standard for excellence. Our Medical Global Standards outline the levels of performance in care that can be consistently and uniformly expected by all patients, volunteers, staff and supporters in all Operation Smile programs. Created on global, evidence-based practices, our standards are supported by medical policies and procedures and approved by our Medical Oversight team.

Review our Medical Global Standards in the Operation Smile Medical App before every program.

Our Commitment to Safety:
Safety is central to everything we do. In addition to our Medical Global Standards, our Four Pillars of Safety Checklist focuses us and our hospital partners on four key areas: following patient screening protocols, meeting post-surgery care needs, preparing for emergencies, and educating patients and caregivers.

Program Settings and Activities

The activities and settings where our clinical programs take place vary. A volunteer may participate in a short-term surgical program at a partner hospital, a training program at a rural medical clinic or cleft care center, or through a mobile dental clinic, as examples.

What is a cleft care center?
We provide year-round comprehensive care for patients through our cleft care centers. Our dedicated volunteers and staff support our 32 care centers in 19 countries. We help patients live more fulfilling lives by providing speech therapy, dentistry, psychosocial care and more.



©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Surgical

Each year, Operation Smile conducts hundreds of short-term (less than 2 weeks) and long-term (more than 2 weeks) surgical programs in locations around the world. Every one of those locations is unique. As part of our work to strengthen local health systems and workforces, surgical tables can also serve as educational tables. We pair experienced mentors with mentees to help address the shortage of trained health care professionals in many low- and middle-income countries.

Comprehensive Care

The commitment we make to patients often begins before surgery. Children born with cleft conditions often require multiple surgical procedures, dentistry, orthodontics, speech therapy, nutrition guidance and psychosocial care throughout their youth. Our teams encompass a wide range of medical specialists, all professionally certified and committed to providing excellent care and creating a lasting impact.

Training & Education

Training and education are at the heart of every clinical program, ranging from lectures and workshops to hands-on experience. Our medical volunteers contribute expertise and knowledge from diverse backgrounds and experiences, creating a powerful exchange of ideas and knowledge. Our training and education programs elevate safe surgical standards and strengthen a global network to reach more people earlier in their lives and closer to where they live.

Building Volunteer Teams

Each Operation Smile program is unique. Some programs have a team from that country. Others rely more on international volunteers. The Global Volunteer Management team works to ensure each team is balanced with necessary volunteer skills, diversity and experience to meet program goals. We consider the following when building teams.

1. **Offer local first.** Our programs are fortunate enough to have the support of volunteers that live in the same country or region as our program sites. We use these volunteers in as many positions as possible to build capacity and minimize travel costs. If we can't fill a need locally, then we will request international volunteer support.

2. **Meet safety standards.** Each program team is created based on our Medical Global Standards. We account for factors like the number of expected patients and available anesthesia tables. Getting the right mix of new and experienced Operation Smile volunteers is also important.

3. **Match skillsets.** We take medical specialties and languages spoken into account when evaluating our volunteer needs for each program.

4. **Meet education and training needs.** We match educators and mentors to the training needs of each program to ensure long-lasting transformations for the communities we serve.

5. **Provide required documentation.** We turn to volunteers with current travel and professional documents that allow us to swiftly apply for any entry or temporary medical licensure required by various countries to participate.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

I'm Ready to Go! Now What?

Once you've submitted your paperwork, here are the next steps.

1. **Match process.** We will help identify potential matches for you based on volunteer openings for upcoming programs.
2. **Program invitation.** Once you've been matched to an opportunity, your volunteer coordinator will send you an invitation to participate in a specific program.
3. **Commitment.** After reviewing your professional and personal commitments, you can sign up for the program or wait for the next opportunity.

1. Match Process

- Let your volunteer coordinator know if you have interest in volunteering for any particular regions or countries, and of your schedule availability.
- If openings become available on the program, your volunteer coordinator will let you know if you're the right fit.

Assignments should only be coordinated directly with the volunteer coordinator. **Please do not reach out to program country staff or other personnel as this will not expedite your chances for a specific program assignment.**

2. Program Invitation.

We begin building each volunteer team four or more months in advance. For that reason, **your first program placement may take up to a year.** Many factors can impact that timeline, including volunteer availability, location and program date confirmation, local regulations and more. While we try to provide our volunteers with as much notice as possible, we often learn about volunteer needs with just a couple of months' notice. When we reach out, you will have limited time to confirm your availability. Please consider any clearance or coverage you would need professionally and personally so you can respond in the requested time frame.

3. Commitment.

We ask for the full commitment when you sign up for a program. Please verify your schedule is clear of work and personal obligations during the length of the program and travel time when you commit. Finding replacement volunteers with short notice is difficult and, in some cases, may not be possible, which could leave a gap in the team and impact the program. We understand that in rare cases cancellations cannot be avoided.

If you have a schedule that allows you to join a program with short notice, please let your volunteer coordinator know so they can turn to you as a replacement, if appropriate.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Be Ready.

To make sure you are ready to go when an opportunity arises, keep your information updated in the **Volunteer Portal**. If you do not have internet access, please send updates to your volunteer coordinator.

- Certification and licensing documents
- Current contact information
- Current CV
- Emergency contact
- Travel preferences and valid passport

We appreciate your support in maintaining your personal and professional information to meet our Medical Global Standards.

Helpful Tips

- If possible, submit your documents in English or acquire an officially translated copy so we can quickly process your paperwork.
- If documents appear blurry or incomplete, your paperwork may be rejected. Please be sure to upload clear copies in color, if possible.
- Use our short version CV template to save time and money on translation.
- Keep your documents current and upload the most recent version so we know you meet travel and certification/licensing requirements.
- We will ask you to sign the following documents annually:
  - Volunteer Code of Conduct
  - Travel Policy
  - Social Media Policy



©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

PRE-PROGRAM PLANNING

After you sign up for a program, your volunteer coordinator will send you an official confirmation that outlines key information about the program, your role and next steps.

Shortly after receiving the confirmation, you will receive another communication about travel, any training component, and a request for any additional documents required, such as for a temporary medical license or country entry.

Pre-Program Communication

You may hear from a few different staff members prior to departure.

Regional Volunteer Coordinator	**Travel Coordinator**	**Program Coordinator**	**Volunteer Coordinator**
Ensures all logistics and paperwork are completed.	Shares flight options, tickets and travel insurance. In some countries, the volunteer coordinator may coordinate travel.	Plans and provides on-the-ground program support, including domestic travel and information sharing before your departure.	Serves as your point person to prepare you for each program and answer any questions before or after.

You will receive a team packet from the program coordinator, typically within a couple weeks of the program start date. The packet includes:

- Country entry requirements, including vaccinations and documents.
- Operation Smile program staff contact list.
- In-country transportation details, including airport pickup.
- Detailed program schedule.
- Program location and hotel information.
- Cultural, safety and health tips.
- Volunteer team list and group WhatsApp details.

Tip:

WhatsApp is often the main communication tool used before, during and after most programs. Download the app and share your WhatsApp number with your volunteer coordinator and program coordinator. Add your number to your contact information in the Volunteer Portal. In some countries, another mode of communication is used. If this applies to you, we'll share details in advance.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Temporary Medical License

Operation Smile works within all regulations that govern medical practice in program countries. If you volunteer in a different country than where you reside, you most likely will need a temporary medical license (TML).

After you are confirmed to a program, you will receive a list of required documents and instructions so we can submit a TML application on your behalf. Often, we will already have most or all the documents, but sometimes a country requires additional documentation, such as:

- Proof of good health
- Letter of good standing from your employer or government
- Country-specific application

Authentication and translation requirements may apply. If we can complete this on your behalf, we will. Some countries require volunteers to complete this step in their home country. Your volunteer coordinator and regional volunteer coordinator will let you know exactly what we need.

Financial Responsibilities

Operation Smile will fund the following expenses:

- Economy air transportation to and from the program site, including one standard checked bag,
- Ground transportation to and from the hotel and the hospital as needed during the program,
- Lodging during the program in a double occupancy room (if a single room is requested and available, you will pay the cost difference),
- Select meals that will be outlined in the team packet,
- And one program t-shirt when applicable.

Each volunteer is financially responsible for:

- Travel-related expenses outside of airfare and first checked bag like upgrades, visas, immunizations, airport taxes and additional checked baggage,
- Any meals not hosted by Operation Smile or our sponsors,
- Incidental and personal expenses, such as souvenirs, personal hotel charges, phones or SIM cards, internet and personal entertainment,
- Additional program t-shirts (if available),
- And any expenses related to extended, approved personal travel after the program.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Logistics and Travel Planning

Flight Arrangements

Operation Smile books and pays for all volunteer flights for our programs. We coordinate flight schedules based on program dates, considering both your flight experience and best cost option as trusted stewards of donated funds. We want you to arrive in time to be rested and ready for the program. Please review our detailed travel policy and return the signed acknowledgement page to your volunteer coordinator. Log travel preferences and frequent flyer accounts in the Volunteer Portal.

Check In

You must check in to your flight online before heading to the airport when leaving for and returning from the program. If you skip this step, your airline may remove you from the flight and put you on standby. If you can't check in, contact your volunteer coordinator for help before going to the airport.

If you choose to book your own flights for a program, you must get approval from your volunteer coordinator first. We will reimburse you for the flight Operation Smile would have purchased for you or the one you booked — whichever costs less. The reimbursement cost must be agreed upon before the flight is booked. Please consult our volunteer travel policy for more details. **Please note: We can't reimburse self-booked tickets or penalties incurred if you need to cancel or change your flights due to program cancellation or date change.**

Program Transportation

Transportation between the airport and hotel will be provided, and between the hotel and program site. This could include transit in personnel or volunteer cars, bus, train or even a domestic flight. For details, see your team packet.

Personal Travel Requests

Many volunteers choose to travel after attending an Operation Smile program. If you want to add personal travel, here's what you need to do:

- Plan your travel for after the program. We don't allow pre-program personal travel because we want every volunteer to arrive on time, rested and ready to go.
- Contact your volunteer coordinator. They will need to review and approve your travel plans.
- Expect to pay for any additional travel costs beyond what we originally booked.
- Manage your personal travel arrangements and any issues that arise during your personal travel.

Lodging

The program team will arrange a double-occupancy hotel room for the program's duration. If you would like to request a single room, please let your volunteer coordinator know and she/he can submit this request. If a single room is available, you will be expected to pay the cost difference. If you would like to share a room with a specific volunteer, please also submit this request through your volunteer coordinator. International volunteers must reside in the provided lodging for the program duration.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Entry and Transit Documentation

Visas

If you are volunteering internationally, you will need to secure the appropriate visas. We encourage you to research requirements and submit your application early. Your volunteer coordinator is a great resource to guide you.

- Visa requirements vary by country. Some countries require an **entry visa**, others require a **transit visa** to enter an airport during layovers.
- If you do not have the appropriate visa, you will be denied flight boarding.
- Recommended resources: Your embassy website. We recommend the Sherpa travel website: apply.joinsherpa.com. Scan the QR code, enter your home and destination countries, and you will find details about visa requirements and other travel information.

Passport Expiration and Page Guidelines

For example, if you travel to Bolivia for a program and depart from Bolivia to return home on January 1, your passport expiration date must be no earlier than July 1. Your passport must meet this requirement when you are asked to join a volunteer team. Be sure your passport has at least two blank pages to meet visa requirements.

We highly recommend you carry a photocopy of your passport, important travel documents and emergency contact information when you travel.

Vaccinations

Vaccination requirements and recommendations vary by country. We encourage you to consult with your health care provider for guidance on country-specific vaccinations and suggested infectious disease protocols. While Operation Smile does not require specific vaccinations to participate, each volunteer must follow host country requirements for entry, which may include vaccinations.

Travel Insurance

All Operation Smile volunteers who travel more than 100 miles outside their country of permanent residence are covered under our Accident Insurance Plan. After booking your flight, you will receive an insurance card. Keep it handy in case you experience an accident or sickness requiring medical treatment while on Operation Smile business. If you already purchased personal travel insurance, please use that as your primary plan. For assistance accessing the Operation Smile insurance plan, contact your onsite program coordinator.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Health Information and Emergency Contact

We ask that you complete our Health and Emergency Contact Form before departing to each program you are assigned to ensure information is always up to date. This will be sent to you by email before you leave for the program. The information you share is confidential. Only the team doctor and select Operation Smile staff can access these documents.

Safety Preparation

Keeping our patients and volunteers safe is our number one priority. Operation Smile collaborates with our local counterparts and their governments when assessing potential program sites. We communicate frequently to ensure your safety and security. Whether you are traveling domestically or abroad, following reasonable precautions will help greatly.

General safety tips:

- Avoid carrying or wearing valuables.
- Withdraw money from ATMs only during daylight hours, preferably in banks or hotels.
- When in transit, carry important travel documents such as your passport and visa.
- Always inform fellow team members and Operation Smile staff of your plans.
- Avoid walking alone, especially at night, and stay on well-traveled streets.
- Avoid demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience. Remove yourself from the location and let the program coordinator know if you need immediate assistance.
- The program coordinator will share any updates and will address your questions, comments or concerns.

During each program, the country director and program coordinator are responsible for the safety and security of volunteers and for implementing Operation Smile's safety and security protocols. If you have questions or concerns, share them with the program coordinator.

Operation Smile remains keenly aware of the challenges we face as a global community. As a global organization, we remain resilient and cautious to ensure the safety of our patients, volunteers and staff. At times, Operation Smile volunteers may be deployed to areas of higher risk which are susceptible to natural disasters, transportation accidents, and civil and political unrest. Operation Smile works to minimize these risks, but they cannot be eliminated completely.

Operation Smile personnel, alongside external security consultants, continue to assess hazards, vulnerabilities and potential impact any higher risk situation may bring on the activity plan and volunteers' well-being. For programs that are approved to take place in these areas, we may implement additional security practices and policies based upon the current situation. In these cases, the program team will stay in close contact with the volunteers for current updates and expectations.

What to Take

See below for a basic packing list for a typical program. Be sure to pack anything you absolutely need in your carry on. Work with your volunteer coordinator if you have any specific needs. Additional details will be available in your pre-program team packet.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Tickets and Documents

- Passport with at least 6 months validity and 2 blank pages along with other forms of identification
- Visa, if applicable for transit or entry
- Airline tickets and travel insurance (printed)
- Personal cash (check the local currency)
- Photocopies of all travel and personal documents. Leave a set with your emergency contact.
- Printed pre-departure email. Leave a copy with your emergency contact
- Vaccine records if traveling to a location with mandatory vaccine requirements. Some countries require original records, e.g. yellow book.

Clothing

- Money belt
- Small backpack
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Comfortable shoes
- A party-casual outfit for the final celebration

Professional

- Scrubs (one pair of scrubs for each surgical day, surgical scrub caps, if applicable)
- Anesthesiologists - laryngoscopes, stethoscopes
- Surgeons - headlamps
- Nurses - pulse oximetry, stethoscopes (optional)
- Psychosocial providers - medical preparation toys and equipment, distraction toys, group games/activities and donatable toys for all age groups
- Other role-related items

Medicine, Hygiene and Snacks

- General toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Hand sanitizer
- Bug repellent
- Eyeglasses, contact lenses and sunglasses
- Ear plugs

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

- Prescription medications and personal medicine (consider packing medicine with carry on luggage, please note not all medicines are available everywhere)
- General travel medicines for allergies, stomach and intestinal issues, heartburn, etc.
- Meal replacement bars and snacks (please do not share with patients)
- A water filtration bottle or water purification tabs may be recommended depending on program location

Electronics, Entertainment and Miscellaneous

- Universal plug adapter for sockets and converter for voltage
- Chargers
- Suitcase lock
- Personal entertainment (books, cards, journal, travel games, camera)
- Any small donatable toys or gifts to help distract and entertain patients during long wait times



©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

DURING THE PROGRAM

The big day is here! Make sure you get as much rest as you can both before and during your journey – you won't want to miss any of the activities we have planned for you.

Arrival

If you are traveling internationally, a member of our team will meet you at the airport. Contact the program coordinator if you do not see the arranged pick up. **Please do not seek your own transit.**

If you are volunteering in your home country and do not live near the program site, your program coordinator will help arrange transportation.

Delays

Although we try to find the best route for each volunteer to arrive on time and rested, travel issues beyond our control can cause delays. If you experience a delay, follow these steps.

1. Ask the airline for options to get to your destination.
2. Call the emergency after-hours number in your final itinerary email. If you don't reach a resolution with the after-hours service, contact your regional volunteer coordinator or volunteer coordinator. They will connect you with our Volunteer Travel Team or you can email travel@operationsmile.org.
3. If you know you are going to miss your first flight, you need to **properly cancel the flight** and any subsequent flights by using the airline app, calling the airline support number or emailing travel@operationsmile.org. This step is extremely important because otherwise they will consider you a "no-show" and your flight may not be credited for rebooking.
4. Send your program coordinator a WhatsApp message so they can reschedule pick up.
5. If the airline loses your luggage, visit the airline office in the baggage claim area. Once your bags are located, the program coordinator or another team member can assist with delivery.
6. You will receive an email or text message if the airline changes your departure flight. Please make sure your program coordinator is aware so they can adjust your airport transfer.

Team Communication

Most programs begin with a kick-off meeting. This is a great opportunity to meet the team and discuss the plan for the program. During the meeting you will learn how the team will communicate and where to find updates. Typically, the team will host daily meetings, use the WhatsApp mobile app for chat messages and place announcements on message boards in the hotel or hospital. Team meetings during each program are mandatory for all volunteers unless otherwise noted by the program staff. If you don't have access to a cell phone during the program, let your program coordinator know.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.



Team Unity and Cultural Sensitivity

Operation Smile strives to build a team that embodies our core values and guiding principles. The strength of our volunteer teams is the foundation of every program, as we work to deliver safe surgery to where it's needed most.

Our teams are made up of people from all over the world. Cultural sensitivity is essential. Being culturally sensitive means understanding that cultural differences exist without defining their value or worth as positive or negative, right or wrong. Respect for the customs and values of other volunteers is integral to a successful program, whether you're volunteering in your home country or abroad. This is equally important when working with patients and Operation Smile or local hospital staff. Hospitals and care centers operate differently around the world, so respecting the policies of those facilities is crucial. We suggest dressing appropriately based on local customs and using positive, non-political language.

Be mindful of cultural practices and traditions when taking photographs or videos. Seek guidance from staff or interpreters to ensure respectful representation. Do not post photos or videos of yourself, team members or patients that may be perceived as unprofessional, culturally insensitive or offensive. If you have questions concerning culturally appropriate behavior, please contact your volunteer coordinator.

General Schedule

While some programs can be as short as three days and others may last several weeks, a typical short-term surgery program lasts five to 10 days. The duration is based on the program length, country, hospital commitments and other factors.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Sample Program Schedule

Program schedules vary. Be sure to refer to the detailed schedule in your team packet for exact details.

Team Meeting
An initial kick-off meeting brings the whole team together before the program starts. This is a great opportunity to meet everyone and hear the plan for the program.

Educational Programming
Some programs dedicate a full day to formal educational opportunities for Operation Smile trainees and local health care providers in addition to mentoring throughout the surgical days. Other programs dedicate a surgical table or offer various other training opportunities throughout the program schedule.

Patient Screening
Many patients will come to be evaluated with the hopes of receiving surgery. Some may have been pre-screened prior to the program, while others may be traveling in for the first time, coming from great distances. Each patient will be evaluated for readiness for surgery. If a patient is not eligible, they may receive antibiotics, nutrition support and referrals for other care.

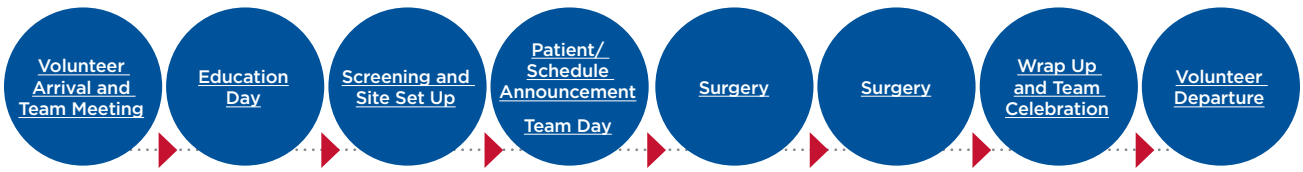
Site and Operating Room Set Up
We ensure everything is set up and ready to go for our surgery days. Our biomedical technicians play an important role in preparing equipment. Depending on your assigned role you may be a part of this set up.

Surgery Schedule Announcement
Once the surgery schedule is determined, the list is made available to waiting families. Some patients may be identified as “stand by” in case openings occur throughout the program. This can be a difficult time for those patients and families who are not eligible or able to receive surgery during this time. Staff and volunteers will often work with them to plan for upcoming programs or care options as appropriate and offer much needed psychosocial support.

Team Day
If time allows, the host team will plan an outing for the team to enjoy within the area of the program site. This could be a day at the beach, a special point of interest or a private event at a local partner’s home. This is a great opportunity to get to know the team, prepare for the week ahead and to familiarize yourself with the local culture.

Surgery and Comprehensive Care
Each patient visits the pre-op area, a defined space that is equipped with toys, art supplies and role-playing materials such as surgical caps and oxygen masks to help ease anxious emotions. Operation Smile ensures every patient treated will benefit from the same state-of-the-art equipment, procedures and highly trained volunteers no matter where they are seen. In post-op, parents are shown how to care for their child when they return home and advised on any follow-up treatment.

Celebration Event
This is always a highlight of the program. It is often the first opportunity to relax, acknowledge what we have achieved and celebrate all our new friendships. Suddenly, this group of strangers has become a new family, and it is hard to say goodbye!



©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Photos and Social Media

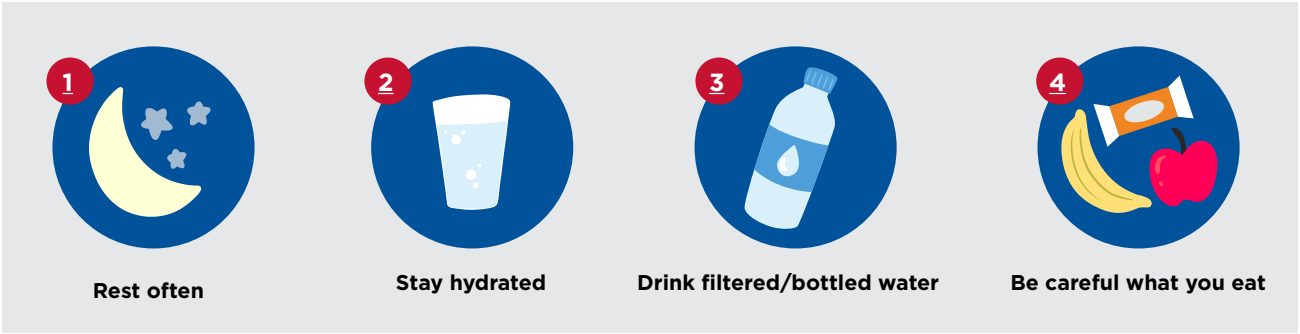
At Operation Smile, we believe in the power of photography and video to capture the spirit of hope and transformation in the lives of our patients and their families. We invite you to share your experiences with us on social media. Please follow our social media guidelines. You will receive and sign our Social Media Policy before attending each program.

Do's	**Don'ts**
Share positive stories of transformation and empowerment.	Show patients in compromising situations without consent, such as during a procedure or recovery.
Tag @OperationSmile and the social media account of the Operation Smile program country.	Take pictures or videos if the patient is uncomfortable, crying, sad, sleeping or has blood around their stitching, face or medical gown.
Demonstrate sensitivity and respect.	Direct patients or families to pose in a way that makes them feel self-conscious.
Seek consent from patients, families and medical staff before taking photos or videos.	Use language that evokes pity.
Respect the wishes of patients, families and medical staff.	
Ensure the comfort and safety of patients.	

Staying Healthy and Safe

The safety of our patients, volunteers and staff is our top priority.

Safety tips



Team Doctor

Each volunteer team is assigned a team doctor. If you experience a health problem or injury during the program, please let them know right away. We want to help you and protect our patients and team members from any contagious illness. An emergency medical kit stocked with supplies is always available to keep you safe and address any incident, such as a needlestick. Ask your program coordinator or team doctor for assistance.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Incident Reporting

In Operation Smile, there is a saying, "If you see something, say something." If you see something that makes you wonder, doesn't feel right or that you don't understand, then speak up. Tell your program coordinator, team leader or the clinical coordinator so they are aware and can help explain or address the situation. We count on our volunteers to be the eyes and ears on every program, whether it is your 1st or 50th program.

Please remember that when you participate in a program, our team includes volunteers from around the globe. We feel it's important to stress that all volunteers are guests on our programs. Work styles and work environments may vary from country to country. While all programs abide by our strict Medical Global Standards, local hospital processes, equipment and capabilities may vary from what you might be familiar with. Sensitivity to and respect for local customs and social values of the country is an essential component of team membership.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Share Feedback

We want your experience as an Operation Smile volunteer to be as life-changing for you as our programs are for the patients and families we serve. Please share your feedback with us by completing **this survey**. We want to hear it all – the good and the opportunities to improve.

Volunteer Evaluations

We evaluate every volunteer at the end of each program. Evaluations offer valuable feedback to help us see if the volunteer can be considered for additional roles within their specialty or if additional education and training opportunities are needed to enhance skills. For new volunteers, we complete a skills checklist to assess areas of competency.

Who completes evaluations?

Team leaders, clinical coordinators and volunteers within each credentialed specialty.

Who can see evaluations?

Feedback provided on these evaluations is confidential and only visible to Operation Smile staff. If we share evaluation feedback, you will not know who provided it. We protect the identity of our evaluators so they can be as candid as possible so together we can deliver the safest care to our patients.

What if I want to share something after submitting an evaluation?

It's not too late! Share your feedback by completing this **survey**.

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

Filing a Grievance

We want to address any concern you may have as soon as possible. We encourage you to report any violation of our Code of Conduct. You can also share questions about our policies and procedure and positive suggestions for improvements.

During a program

If a concern arises, please reach out to your program coordinator right away. We want to address your concern as soon as possible. Your program coordinator can address any concerns you may have, such as procedure violation, behavior issue or conflict.

After a program

To share a concern or follow up on an issue you reported during the program, please contact your volunteer coordinator or email **volunteerinfo@operationsmile.org**.

Anytime

Another option is to report your concern to EthicsPoint, an external organization that provides confidential reports to Operation Smile. You can report anonymously.

1. Visit the **EthicsPoint web page**
2. Call **+1 844-602-9020** (a U.S. toll free number)
3. Mail a detailed, written statement to c/o Finance and Audit Committee Operation Smile 3641 Faculty Blvd Virginia Beach, VA, 23453 USA

Next steps

Operation Smile will promptly investigate any alleged violation of its policies. Operation Smile reserves the right to pause or terminate volunteer approval status during or resulting from an incident investigation. Dismissal is usually the result of an obvious infraction, as detailed in the Volunteer Code of Conduct, but may also be an accumulative decision based on:

- Repeated offenses, e.g. insensitivity to cultural differences
- Diminished or altered clinical skills
- Total dysfunctional ability to adapt to a program environment
- Disruptive behavior which compromises a program
- Permanent physical conditions which may inhibit or result in danger to the volunteer or others
- Psychological conditions which may inhibit or cause danger to the volunteer or others, e.g. altered mental state

Causes for immediate dismissal include:

- Abandoning patients
- Sexual harassment
- Illegal activity
- Falsifying any aspect of the Operation Smile volunteer application or supporting documents

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.

STAYING ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

Operation Smile Academy

Through Operation Smile Academy, you can access educational resources, such as speaker series and lectures on a wide-ranging number of topics and specialty areas. Access it **here**.

Social Media

To stay connected after your program, please follow Operation Smile on social media:



Questions or Concerns?

Email us at **volunteerinfo@operationsmile.org**.

Resource Links

- **Code of Conduct**
- **Volunteer Portal**
- **Medical Global Standards**

©2024 Operation Smile, Inc.