



AJWS Volunteer Corps Conduct Requirements

AJWS requests certain behaviors of its volunteers in order to ensure their safety and security, as well as to provide a positive experience for all parties involved in the volunteer assignment and a continued strong relationship between the NGO, AJWS and volunteers. Please read the following section carefully and be sure to ask your Program Officer if you have questions regarding the content.

This Code of Conduct is designed for the benefit and safety of volunteers, partner NGOs and AJWS. AJWS reserves the right to terminate the placement of any volunteer for any reason, including for violation of the Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers are required to abide by this Code of Conduct:

- 1) Be culturally sensitive and alert. Follow local customs as much as possible. Treat others with kindness and respect at all times. Your behavior in your host community will reflect on you as an individual, on AJWS, on other Americans and on other Jews.
- 2) Obey local laws at all times. Do not use or possess any drugs which are illegal under the laws of the United States or your host country. If for any reason you have contact with local authorities, you are to contact AJWS staff immediately.
- 3) Act in a safe and responsible manner and be careful not to endanger the health and safety of yourself or others. Under no circumstances should you carry weapons or be in possession of a weapon while serving with AJWS.
- 4) Fully disclose all concerns relating to your physical health to AJWS staff members. If at any time you should suffer from a medical or emotional crisis that demands a significant amount of treatment, you are expected to return to your country of origin as quickly as your health permits. If AJWS staff decides it would be best for you to return home, and you decide to stay abroad, AJWS will not provide any assistance in ensuring your wellbeing during the remainder of your trip.
- 5) If you are ill or injured to the extent that you miss a day of work, you must inform your Program Officer. If you are in an accident, even one you consider minor, you must inform your Program Officer.
- 6) AJWS has a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment. If you are believed to have engaged in any unwelcome advance or conduct, you will be asked to leave AJWS Volunteer Corps. If you are the victim of sexual violence or harassment, please contact your Program Officer immediately so that AJWS can provide you with the necessary support.
- 7) Do not participate in political activities and other large gatherings. These events are potentially dangerous and could easily undermine your effectiveness as a volunteer. By no means may you attend a political event or make any political statement in the name of AJWS.
- 8) You are not permitted to provide loans or monetary gifts to anyone, nor are you permitted to accept any material compensation for your work (though you may accept a symbolic gift of appreciation). Please see the AJWS Policy for Volunteer Giving for more details on this topic.
- 9) You may not drive or ride a motorcycle during your term of service. This is considered a very high risk activity.

- 10) You may not rent or drive a car during your assignment.
- 11) You may not provide any direct medical care or services while on your assignment with AJWS. This includes in your (off-hours) spare time while you are not volunteering with your AJWS partner NGO.
- 12) You must notify your Program Officer any time you travel away from your assignment location, for work or leisure activities.
- 13) You must register with the consulate of your home country upon your arrival.
- 14) When writing publicly about your NGO (i.e. blogging), do not use the name of the NGO or any individual affiliated with the NGO.
- 15) In case of any emergency at home or in your host country, call the AJWS emergency line, listed at the beginning of this handbook.
- 16) If you plan to take vacation time during your assignment, we strongly suggest that you take this vacation when your NGO is closed. If your NGO is closed during your term of service, if you are observing Jewish holidays or if you choose to take vacation time in the middle of your term of service, you must extend your service to ensure that you are working with the NGO for the full number of weeks to which you committed. You must request any time off from your Program Officer prior to discussing it with your NGO.

Decorum Guidelines

Volunteers should use the following guidelines in their personal lives while on an AJWS assignment.

- 1) Dress appropriately and modestly. This is especially crucial for women. Check with your AJWS Program Officer about the specific cultural expectations of your host country.
- 2) AJWS strongly advises you not to develop romantic or sexual relationships with members of your host community.
- 3) Conduct yourself in a professional and conservative manner, not only during the work day, but during the evenings and weekends as well.
- 4) Do not engage in conduct that interferes with the operation of your partner NGO, discredits AJWS or is offensive to other volunteers, partner projects or local people. Avoid conduct that may lead to your becoming a victim of a security incident.
- 5) AJWS strongly advises volunteers not to live with their supervisors.

AJWS Giving Policy for Volunteers and Travelers

During your time in the developing world, we expect that you will be moved by the tremendous challenges confronting the communities you visit. Many of our program participants feel pressure – both internal and external – to respond to the hardships of their hosts by offering gifts of money, clothing, household goods or medicine. We fully understand the natural desire, echoed in Jewish tradition, to offer assistance to a person or a community in need, particularly when you have developed a personal connection.

Please be aware that individuals providing one-time, ad hoc hand-outs or loans can result in unintended and often negative consequences. Gifts can foster a sense of dependency that undermines long-term sustainability. Over time, gift-giving can create an expectation that all visitors will provide gifts – an expectation that, when unmet, can result in tense encounters for future visitors. Furthermore, gifts distributed unevenly can cause community-

wide tension. If one person receives a modest gift – even a t-shirt or school supplies – and a neighbor receives nothing, interpersonal tension can result.

In order to mitigate against these negative consequences, we expect all of our program participants to fully abide by the AJWS Policy for Traveler/Volunteer Giving. Please refer back to these guidelines throughout your time in the developing world and after your return home. We understand that these may seem rigid and that other groups may have different guidelines, but we strongly believe that they will minimize the potential for ambiguity and tension in the encounter between AJWS participants and the communities in which we work, as well as supporting sustainable development. It is likely, if not inevitable, that you will experience discomfort with these guidelines. We hope that this discomfort provides you with valuable opportunities to learn about the challenges of effective and responsible international development work.

It is important to know that AJWS appropriately compensates all people who work with and for us in the communities in which we volunteer and travel. (This compensation is, of course, not enough to solve all of the problems confronting these communities.) In addition, our grantmaking program provides support that complements the work of our volunteers. Part of our preparation with communities prior to your arrival includes an open discussion of these guidelines to try to ensure that no one harbors any expectations of additional gifts.

AJWS staff have researched and experimented extensively with different approaches to this issue, and we have sought to design guidelines that balance many competing values. We expect our volunteers and travelers to respect these guidelines in order for AJWS to maintain an ethical and sustainable relationship with our partner communities. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please feel free to discuss them openly with an AJWS staff member. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Please note that failing to adhere to these guidelines could jeopardize AJWS' relationship with our local partners and may result in you or your group not being allowed to participate in future AJWS programs or volunteer opportunities. Again, please know that these guidelines stem from our best understanding of how to support our local partners and ensure positive travel experiences and volunteer placements in the future.

During Your Travel/Volunteer Experience

- 1 Please do not give gifts or loans of goods or money to any individuals or organizations in the communities you visit.
This includes belongings that you may wish to leave behind because you will no longer use them after your travel/volunteer experience. Leaving behind unwanted items can be as disruptive as casually distributing gifts.
- 2 Please practice responsible shopping in the communities you visit.
Community members may approach you to sell handicrafts or other items. Please do not purchase items from an individual in your community unless these items are being sold in a store, cooperative or market that serves other people in addition to AJWS groups. Likewise, please do not pay inappropriate amounts of money for items you do not want simply because you are moved by either the suffering or cuteness of the salesperson. If there are small shops and stores in the community you visit, please be thoughtful about distributing the shopping you and/or your group does among multiple shops.
- 3 Please refrain from using your personal contacts to fundraise on behalf of any non-governmental organizations (NGOs) you visit or with which you volunteer (primarily relevant for Volunteer Corps participants).
While in the field, you may be moved to contact your personal connections at home (e.g. relatives, friends or synagogues) to solicit funds for an NGO you visit or with which you volunteer. While these feelings are normal and well-intentioned, please know that such fundraising furthers a culture of dependency, is not a sustainable form of support and establishes expectations that will complicate future traveler/volunteer relationships with the NGO.

- 4 Please exercise discretion in sharing personal contact information with people in the communities you visit.

During your time in the developing world, you may form relationships with people you meet, and you may be asked to share your phone and/or e-mail contact information as a way of staying in touch. In the past, many of the AJWS volunteers and travelers who have chosen to share their contact information have been solicited for financial support after their return from the developing world. While understandable, this might put you in an uncomfortable position. Please keep this possible outcome in mind before sharing your personal contact information.

After Your Travel/Volunteer Experience

- 1 Please do not give gifts or loans of goods or money to any individuals or organizations in the communities you visited.

- 2 Please direct any post-trip fundraising to AJWS and not to the NGOs you visited or with which you volunteered.

When you return from the developing world, we hope that you will want to do more to help the communities you visited, as well as people throughout the developing world. Please direct any post-program fundraising that you or your group pursues to support AJWS' general work. There are important reasons for this:

- a. You will be working with or visiting at most a few of the over 350 NGOs that AJWS supports. Each and every one of these organizations is doing vital work to overcome the significant challenges of poverty, hunger and disease. Unfortunately, not all of our grantees can host travelers or volunteers because of their location or capacity, nor could we possibly bring delegations to more than a small handful of our grantees. In fact, due to health and security risks, our grantees with the greatest need are unable to host travelers or volunteers at all.
- b. AJWS grantmaking staff are experts on how to provide sustainable support to community-based NGOs in the developing world. Their experience and commitment to long-term, sustainable and accountable relationships with our grantees make them uniquely qualified to navigate many of the complications inherent in providing financial support to NGOs in the developing world. By supporting AJWS, you are enabling our staff to utilize their expertise in assisting NGOs like the organizations you visited, and to make these opportunities available to other people.

Please remember that, aside from financial contributions, there are many additional ways to support a partner community. It is critically important to educate the American public about the problems facing the people of the developing world. Telling others about what you have seen, urging your elected officials to respond more effectively to these challenges and helping to promote AJWS and its work in the American Jewish community are all ways to help the people you have met during your experience.

We kindly ask you to refer back to the policies set above and the accompanying explanations throughout your service and after your return home. If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them openly with your AJWS Program Officer.

I acknowledge that I have read, understood and intend to abide by the foregoing Code of Conduct, Decorum Guidelines and Policy for Volunteer Giving. I understand that failure to abide by these policies may result in the termination of my volunteer assignment with AJWS. I sign this agreement voluntarily, knowingly and without coercion.

Signature

Date