



Frequently Asked Questions—World Water Corps

September 2007

1. What is the World Water Corps?

The World Water Corps is a team of volunteers recruited by Water For People to support its mission and international programs designed to provide safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene education for people in developing countries where Water For People works. Volunteers are self-nominated for short-term assignments that generally last two weeks and are placed to support key Water For People objectives in-country.

2. Where does Water For People work?

Water For People currently works in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Malawi, and West Bengal, India. Work in these countries is outlined in five-year country strategies (Guatemala forthcoming) that are available on the Water For People website at www.waterforpeople.org. Follow the links from “International Programs” to “Where We Work” to descriptions for each country program. Water For People will be expanding its work into five additional countries by 2011, including Nicaragua, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Rwanda, and Uganda.

3. Is the World Water Corps associated with the Peace Corps?

No. The World Water Corps is a Water For People program and not linked with the Peace Corps, Engineers Without Borders, or other volunteer associations. Some World Water Corps volunteers may have past experience with the Peace Corps or other groups, but the World Water Corps was developed by Water For People to support Water For People’s work overseas. Water For People is a North American 501(c)(3) organization that is supported by the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the Water Quality Association (WQA), the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC), the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) and other individuals that support the mission of Water For People. Water For People—Canada was founded in 1995 to engage Canadians in the mission of Water For People and is a Canadian-registered charity.

4. What type of work do World Water Corps volunteers do?

World Water Corps volunteers provide professional support to Water For People’s work overseas, based on formal requests from the field by country offices for additional technical support. At present, technical support is needed in monitoring, evaluations, mapping/needs assessments and a variety of targeted assignments. World Water Corps opportunities evolve and expand as country programs continue to implement their five-year strategic plans. Future opportunities could be in the areas of hydrology, partner mentoring, business planning, photography, planning, tariff collection, metering, and private sector development.

World Water Corps volunteers are also needed in the U.S. to help vet potential volunteers for overseas assignments. If interested, please contact Clair Olivers at cholivers@verizon.net. Water For People is also supported by numerous local committees throughout North America that raise funds and awareness of the organization's work. Contact Judi Kraszewski at jkraszewski@waterforpeople.org to learn more about how you can support these efforts by joining a local committee in your area.

5. What is the World Water Corps's link to AWWA, WEF and other professional organizations?

Water For People was founded in 1991 by members of AWWA and continues to be supported as a "charity of choice" by professional organizations serving the North American water and wastewater communities. Water For People encourages members of these professional organizations to lend their support and serve as World Water Corps volunteers as a professional responsibility to help others.

6. Will World Water Corps volunteers be involved in "hands-on construction?"

No. A key component of Water For People's model for sustainable water and sanitation development is community involvement. Community members are encouraged to contribute labor so that they take ownership of their system and understand its functionality. Water For People questions approaches that rely on short-term expatriate labor and supervision of projects when longer-term interventions are always required for sustainable systems. As such, Water For People is not like some other institutions that participate directly in the construction of facilities. Instead, professional skills are used to enhance the capacity of Water For People and its partners so that they in turn can support sustainable water supply and environmental sanitation in their countries well into the future. The World Water Corps is really designed to build skills and understanding and to enhance the work of Water For People overseas.

7. Are World Water Corps volunteers involved in disaster relief?

No, Water For People is a development organization and is not involved in short-term disaster relief.

8. Will I be eligible for all World Water Corps opportunities if I complete an application?

Water For People uses its annual program and project plans to define volunteer opportunities. Those defined needs are compared with the active World Water Corps volunteer database to match needs with the skills and preferences you provide on the form. If there is a potential match, you will be contacted to confirm that you are still interested and are available for the assignment under the terms and conditions that exist before you will be considered further for the assignment.

9. Does Water For People pay World Water Corps volunteers?

No, this is a volunteer program. Volunteers are also responsible for their travel expenses related to the volunteer assignment.

10. Can I be considered for more than one assignment or country?

Yes, you will be considered for assignments in any country and as many times as you are available so long as your skills, preferences, and willingness to volunteer match a World Water Corps need.

11. Do I need to be fluent in the native language?

It depends on the make up of the team and the assignment. Fluency in the native language by some members of the team is required. Some assignments may require that all team members be at least conversant in the language of the country. However, some members may be selected based on professional skills with the language skill being optional. Some of the countries where Water For People works use English as the common language.

12. Would I be volunteering in dangerous and hazardous conditions?

Water For People works in remote rural areas of developing countries. While every effort is made to ensure volunteer safety, Water For People is working in unpredictable parts of the world where water and environmental sanitation needs are considerable. Volunteers will therefore be exposed to typical dangers and uncertain conditions in rural and peri-urban areas of these countries. Although Water For People will not knowingly send volunteers into a dangerous situation, the volunteer will be required to sign a waiver holding Water For People harmless with the volunteer being the responsible party. Water For People will provide insurance to cover medical care, accidental death or dismemberment, emergency evacuation and repatriation of remains for its volunteers while they are traveling and doing work as part of the World Water Corps.

13. How long are World Water Corps assignments?

Most assignments will be for about two weeks, with some being longer or shorter. Some may require follow-up trips. If you apply to support work in the U.S., then assignments can be considerably longer, on a part-time basis.

14. Do I need to be a member of AWWA, WEF or other supporting organization to participate in the World Water Corps?

No.

15. Can I specify countries, type of work, or time of year?

Yes, although the timing and nature of World Water Corps assignments will be determined by country programs to fit in with their other work. Potential volunteers can identify countries that they would like to work in and indicate which opportunities they wish to volunteer for (from a list of available/forthcoming volunteer opportunities defined by Water For People).

16. Does Water For People provide training for the assignment?

Yes, typically at the start of the assignment in-country and by e-mail and conference calls ahead of time. You may also need specific training in Denver or another agreed location for some assignments, though this is not typically the case.

17. How many people will be on a team?

It will depend on the project, but the typical team will have a team leader and two to five additional members. The team skills required will depend on the assignment.

18. How are the travel and related costs funded?

As a volunteer, you are responsible for all air and other travel to the designated city, lodging, food and incidental costs. Water For People will generally provide project travel from the designated airport and among the volunteer sites during the assignment and also provide Water For People insurance coverage during the designated assignment.

19. Will Water For People help raise funds for my travel costs?

No, Water For People focuses its fundraising efforts on supporting our defined field work in the countries in which we operate. Water For People and those who support Water For People cannot divert resources away from this critical task.

20. What are travel and living conditions like for volunteers?

Water For People works in isolated parts of countries as these are the areas that are often the most neglected. Conditions will be adequate but will not be comparable with what most North Americans are accustomed to when traveling overseas. Conditions can be primitive by North American standards, more like camping than a vacation resort experience.

21. What about medical emergencies?

Volunteers will have access to in-country medical support, but the quality of this can vary considerably between and within countries. Most project sites will not have easy access to modern medical facilities or medical care. If the volunteer has any medical treatment needs, they should consult their personal physician about any precautions and limitations of travel.

22. How do I apply? How do I get selected?

The Water For People website has an online application (www.waterforpeople.org/corps/) for the World Water Corps. Your application should be updated annually to ensure that your contact information and availability information is current. The World Water Corps Volunteer Evaluation Committee will screen the applications to meet project needs as opportunities become available. The committee will identify all applicants that appear to match project team requirements and then contact the applicants. The applicants will receive a brief explanation of the project, the schedule, and the conditions of travel and service. If applicants are interested, they may be interviewed by telephone by a committee member and references may be contacted to verify key team requirements. The committee will then provide the list of qualified candidates to the Water For People International Programs Group for final selection.

It should be stressed that the World Water Corps is a volunteer-managed program. Water For People staff members are not involved in volunteer selection and as such should not be approached regarding your application.

23. How do I find out about the World Water Corps current and future opportunities?

Refer to the Water For People website (www.waterforpeople.org/water_corps.html) for further information. Volunteer opportunities will be posted as they become available. Another channel of information is Water For People's North American local committee network. Many of these

Water For People Local Committees are associated with AWWA Sections and WEF Member Associations.

24. Now that I have been offered the opportunity to be a World Water Corps volunteer and submitted the application, what is the next step?

The process works as follows:

- **Step 1.** Water For People will identify a need in country that is to be filled by the World Water Corps. Once that need is identified, the World Water Corps Committee will create a short list of volunteers to consider from the pool of applicants to the World Water Corps. This short list includes those who have applied and appear to meet the assignment's technical, language, and schedule requirements.
- **Step 2.** The committee will contact each of the individuals on the short list to outline the assignment and to confirm that the applicants are still interested and available, and that they are willing to accept the conditions and responsibilities of the assignment.
- **Step 3.** If they answer in the positive, they may be interviewed by telephone by the committee and their references may be contacted. They will be given a more detailed explanation of the assignment, expectations, and the names of the proposed team members and leader, when selected.
- **Step 4.** Based on the above review process, the committee will prepare a "recommendation of volunteers" for the assignment to Water For People's director of International Programs for final approval.
- **Step 5.** The selected volunteers will be notified by a committee member and plans for the assignment will proceed.

Individuals from the short list who are not selected for the assignment will be notified and will remain on the volunteer list for possible future assignments. Volunteers not selected may choose to expand their interest to other assignments by sending a notice to the committee and updating their application if required to clarify their availability and interests.

25. Should I add more information or update my application to improve my chances of being selected for an assignment?

This is not necessary but may be helpful. The World Water Corps Committee makes its initial determination based on the completed application and supplementary resumes. This information is used to create the short list. Clarity and flexibility of time and interest, along with a good explanation of your field and project-related experience, is most helpful. Once you have been selected for a short list, the committee may ask for additional information if more is required to confirm that there is a good match for a given project. Third-party support letters should not be sent. If you want to include a reference statement, include it in the background information itself. When committee members conduct interviews for the short list, they may ask for references for contacting if they determine that it would be helpful.

If, however, you find that you are not being selected, you may wish to review your application and make amendments to enhance your profile by expanding your preferences.

26. Will my support and participation on one of the more than 50 Water For People local committees improve my chance of being selected for a World Water Corps opportunity?

Yes. Local committees are the “grassroots support” for the Water For People mission and its fundraising and advocacy activities. In selecting team members for an assignment, individuals who are both qualified and active supporters and participants in Water For People local committees will be given a preference over a volunteer that has not been an active supporter and donor to the Water For People program. Volunteers with an understanding of Water For People and its mission and programs are preferred.

Water For People has more than 53 local volunteer committees across North America. These committees are active organizing fundraising events, outreach activities and presentations, as well as generating media interest on behalf of Water For People. If you would like to join a local committee, please contact Judi Kraszewski at jkraszewski@waterforpeople.org.

27. What flexibility on the actual travel schedule is there if I am offered an assignment?

This depends on the assignment. Some assignments are time-sensitive while others are more open-ended. The final dates of travel will be set by staff in the country program, but consideration will be given to volunteers’ availability whenever possible. If you are unable to travel on the established schedule, an alternate volunteer will be asked to fill your spot and your name will remain on the list of potential volunteers.

28. How are travel arrangements made?

Water for People has contracted with ALL WAYS TRAVEL of Olympia, Washington, and Richard Siffert to act as the preferred travel agent. The purpose of this arrangement is to have a travel agent who understands travel needs, conditions of travel in the assigned country, and who has already completed the research required to answer questions that may arise. Even if you do not use ALL WAYS TRAVEL to arrange your travel, you must coordinate with them on scheduling, lodging, waiver, and insurance which they are contracted to handle for Water For People. ALL WAYS TRAVEL contact information is 360-943-8700 or e-mail at state.allways@mcleodusa.net. Richard Siffert’s e-mail is 4sifferts@comcast.net.

Richard Siffert is a retired state health water supply planner and an experienced world traveler to rural areas in most of the countries in which the assignments are being made. Water For People will brief Richard Siffert on all of the in-country travel plans and lodging arrangements. You will be able to rely on ALL WAYS and Richard Siffert to assist you with the selection of the most appropriate schedule and routing and travel arrangements to the designated airport near the project site. Water For People staff in Denver and the in-country staff will coordinate with Richard to make the necessary travel and housing arrangements. ALL WAYS will also provide a list of recommended clothing and other travel supplies for you to take along on the trip.

29. Will I be required to bring equipment or write reports?

No special equipment will be required except that provided by Water For People for the assignment. However, volunteers are encouraged to bring their own digital cameras and, in some cases, laptop computers. Team leaders will be ultimately responsible for submitting a final report to Water For People–Denver on the World Water Corps assignment within 30 days of returning home.

30. Who should I contact for further information?

Please contact the World Water Corps Committee for all World Water Corps assignments, not Water For People staff in Denver. World Water Corps Committee members are volunteer managers of this program and are in contact with the Denver staff on a regular basis to ensure that current opportunities, policies, and answers are available to all volunteers. Current committee members include Clair Olivers, cholivers@verizon.net; Bob Wubbena, bob.wubbena@hdrinc.com; Dave Fox, dmf@foxeng.com; Jeanne LeJeune, jeanne.lejeune@hdrinc.com; Richard Siffert, 4sifferts@comcast.net; and Annie Carriere, annie.carriere@polymtl.ca.

There is a wealth of information about Water For People on the website at www.waterforpeople.org, including task descriptions for typical World Water Corps assignments and reports from past assignments. Reviewing this information will give volunteers or potential volunteers a better idea of the details of the work that teams typically do and what is expected. If you are new to Water For People, reviewing the website will help you gain an understanding of what is unique about Water For People's model for sustainable development and why volunteers do not build projects. Water For People is "a hand-up, not a handout," focusing on building the capacity of our local government and nongovernmental organization partners, and of the communities themselves.

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