Whether you decide to volunteer for a week or several years, committing yourself to service is a big step. Here are some questions to help you reflect upon the decision to volunteer.

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Each person is motivated by their own personal talents, experiences and goals. It helps to be aware of your motivations and expectations about your term of service. This experience will be challenging in many ways, so be honest with yourself about your comfort level with certain considerations.

**ASK YOURSELF**

- Why do I want to be a volunteer?
- What are my expectations?
- What do I have to offer?
- How do I handle changes?
- How do I relate with others?
- What gives me satisfaction?

**SELF ASSESSMENT/DISCERNMENT**

Use this grid to help you assess your motivations and comfort level with these important questions to consider when exploring service opportunities. Then, rank them in order of priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am passionate about/interested in this type of work:</th>
<th>I am not as comfortable with this type of work:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Rate these questions by percent (0-100%) or yes/no*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I want to serve abroad:</th>
<th>I want to serve in the U.S.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to live in community with other volunteers:</td>
<td>I am ok living alone or with a host family:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to serve in an urban area:</td>
<td>I want to serve in a rural area:</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would consider a faith-based organization:</td>
<td>I prefer a secular organization:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want a 1-year commitment:</td>
<td>I am open to a renewable or 2-year commitment:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ASK THE AGENCY

1. What is the history/mission of the organization? Is it compatible with your own ideals, interests and aspirations?
2. Will you be required to do fundraising for the organization?
3. Are they willing to put you in contact with former volunteers?
4. What happens if you can’t complete your term – what are the policies?

Financial

1. Is loan deferment available if I have student loans?
2. Is room and board included?
3. Is there a stipend offered, if so how much?
4. Is a simple lifestyle (living on a minimal amount of money) an option or required in the program?

Health

1. Is health insurance provided for volunteers?
2. Is there a deductible, how much?
3. Does the program fund prescription medication?
4. Does the program fund pre-trip vaccinations?
5. Is there access to medical care at the placement site? If so, what kind?

Community/Interpersonal

1. Is there an orientation at the beginning of the program? Where? How long?
2. Is there a re-entry/re-orientation session at the end of the program? Where? How long?
3. Is there a support system at or near the placement sites?
4. Do volunteers live together, alone or with host families? Do I have to find my own housing?
5. Is language training necessary? Is it provided for volunteers?
6. What kind of staff supervision/mentoring is provided?
7. Is on-going training and support available at the site?

Transportation

1. Does the program pay for transportation to and from the service site?
2. Does the program pay for transportation to orientation/re-entry programs?
3. Does the program pay for VISA fees?
4. Is travel possible during the service term, if so what support does the program offer?
5. Am I allowed to drive a vehicle at the placement site?
6. Can I bring my own vehicle? Who covers daily travel expenses, repairs, insurance?

Education

1. Is an education award/grant available at the end of my year of service?
2. Does the program offer graduate school classes or credit towards a graduate degree?