



What do volunteers on European Voluntary Service do?

This depends on the organisation the volunteer is hosted in. An outline of expected tasks and outcomes for the EVS project is agreed on by all parties prior to the start of the experience.

As well as the project related tasks and regular meeting with their mentors volunteers are encouraged to reflect on their experience as a learning opportunity. They can gain a Youthpass certificate. This certificate is a confirmation of participation and an individualised description of the experience and learning outcomes. To find out more about Youthpass visit www.youthpass.eu

How much do volunteers need to raise/pay?

European Voluntary Service does not cost the volunteer any money either before or during their experience. The funding from the national agency is used to cover travel and accommodation costs for the volunteer as well as a small monthly allowance for the volunteer.

What is the application process?

EVS is made up of a three way partnership: the hosting organisation, where the young person spends the voluntary service working, the volunteer themselves and the sending organisation, which helps the volunteer to prepare before leaving the country.

The sending organisation should be non-profit making and have accreditation with the National Agency. If a young person is involved with any non-profit making organisation, these organisations can apply to the national agency to become accredited. If a young person is not involved with an organisation they should source an accredited one directly from

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm

Prospective volunteers will then search for a host organisation. This can also be done throughout the European Commission's database:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm

Another website which may be useful to sign up to is

www.youthnetworks.eu/

This is not only a database of projects but also a place where volunteers can add their profiles and hopefully be spotted by hosting and sending organisations.

Once a volunteer has been accepted by a hosting organisation, then an application for funding should be made to the national agency in either the hosting or sending country by either the hosting or sending organisation.

Application Deadlines:

Each year there are five deadlines – 1st February, 1st April, 1st June, 1st September and 1st November. The activity should be timed to begin three months after the application deadline.

Types of Volunteering Opportunities:

There are many types of organisations approved to host and also to support volunteers through sending. A young person can volunteer in a particular field that they see as relevant or interesting to themselves, their learning and their future. Areas include Social Care, Arts, Horticulture, Sports and Environmental projects.

Location of Volunteer Opportunities:

European Voluntary Service is an international volunteering opportunity. It can be sought in all EU member states (known as Programme Countries). Members of the European Free Trade Association – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway as well as South East Europe. Eastern Europe and Mediterranean States (known as Neighbouring Partner Countries) are also locations for prospective volunteers.

Duration of Voluntary Service:

The voluntary service may last from 2 months to 1 year. In certain cases the duration can be lessened to last from 2 weeks. This is known as short term European Voluntary Service and can be applied for outside of the normal deadline dates. This type of EVS should involve young people facing difficulties, those with fewer opportunities or those with disabilities. Also in place for short term volunteers are exceptional costs to cover an advance visit to the project and extra support if required. Short term European Voluntary Service can also be carried out as a group project with young people volunteering together.

Hands on guide to...

European Voluntary Service

What training, support and supervision are provided for volunteers?

In certain cases pre-departure training will be organised for volunteers by the national agency. All EVS volunteers are given training on-arrival or shortly after arrival in the country of their service. Mid-way through their experience, training will be offered with other EVS volunteers in that country. Every EVS host organisation should have a mentor for the volunteer who is there to support the volunteer and his/her learning. There should also be a supervisor in place to oversee and monitor the volunteer's work.

Brief description of Léargas:

Léargas is the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme. Volunteers are not hosted or sent by Léargas; rather we are the funding body; assessing applications received from hosting and sending organisations. We, like all national agencies across participating countries, organise on-arrival training for incoming volunteers and are a point of support for organisations and volunteers.

And Finally...

Beneficiaries of this action are not just the European society but the organisation and the community in which the volunteer is situated. Most important is the volunteers experience and personal development. "EVS is a learning service: throughout non formal learning experiences young volunteers improve and or acquire competences for their personal, educational and professional development" (Youth in Action Programme Guide, European Commission, 2007, Pg.39).



HANDS ON GUIDE

Léargas
189 – 193 Parnell Street
Dublin 1

T: 353 1 873 1411
F: 353 1 873 1316
W: www.leargas.ie/youthinaction
E: cdarcy@leargas.ie or youth@leargas.ie

