The Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod

Mercy Medical Teams

Mercy Medical Team Program FAQs

Q: How much does a Mercy Medical Team (MMT) trip cost?

A: The cost of MMTs varies greatly according to the location and time of year. The cost is split into two separate areas: airfare and the ground fee.

Airfare is paid directly to our travel agent and is generally due three months prior to the team's departure. Airfare is often difficult to predict, therefore offering an estimated cost can be difficult. Searching on the Internet may help you get an idea of airfare costs, however, keep in mind that no rate is set in stone until the ticket has been purchased. Airfare prices can change from day to day.

The **ground fee** is determined by the costs on the ground, as well as the size of the group. The fee is paid directly to the LCMS and covers the cost of food, lodging, transportation and clinical costs during the trip. Ground fees are typically determined 4-6 months prior to a trip departure and are not due until one month prior to departure. Ground fees are generally set between $1,200 and $1,700 depending on the location and accommodations.

Q: Do you have financial assistance available?

A: The Mercy Medical Team program relies on volunteer fees to cover the cost of trips. The program has only been able to offer assistance when there has been a surplus in the budget from donations. When we do not have extra funds, we cannot offer opportunities for assistance. When financial assistance is possible, we consider the financial situation of the potential beneficiary and the skill sets needed for a specific trip. In other words, if a team does not have a chaplain, and a potential volunteer chaplain is unable to pay, he would qualify for financial assistance.

In most cases, we encourage potential volunteers to raise funds. We have a variety of tools for fundraising that we can make available upon request, including: a brochure, PowerPoint template, fundraising letter and DVD.

Q: I am not a medical professional or a pastor; can I still serve with an MMT?

A: We welcome hardworking laity to join us in addition to medical professionals and clergy. As long as you have a passion for service and are willing to work as a team, we can use your help.

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Q: How do I sign up to join a Mercy Medical Team?

A: The first step to signing up with a Mercy Medical Team is to complete to volunteer application found on our website. You only need to sign up once. Once registered with us, potential volunteers will receive updates and recruitment appeals for specific opportunities. When you have identified a trip you would like to join, contact our office, through either phone or email, and we will send you a letter of intent. Once you have signed the letter, submit the document to the LCMS along with a $100 deposit towards the cost of the ground fee. You will be officially added to the roster. Once on the roster, volunteers will receive an electronic packet with all the information and documentation needed to prepare for the trip.

Q: What do Mercy Medical Teams do?

A: Mercy Medical Teams offer short-term, primary medical care services in coordination with long-term partnerships and other LCMS health-related programs. In some cases, Mercy Medical Teams also offer consultative and educational services in addition to or instead of direct medical care. The goal of Mercy Medical Teams is to contribute to the capacity of international partner church bodies and local institutions to offer medical services. Mercy Medical Teams are only part of a holistic set of program activities intended to address body and soul in a positive and sustainable way.

The daily tasks of a Mercy Medical Team are determined by the location and the nature of the partnership. Anyone interested in a specific trip or location should feel free to contact an MMT representative for questions about a specific trip or location.

Q: How do Mercy Medical Teams evangelize?

A: Mercy Medical Teams serve as an opportunity for Christian professionals to use their vocational skills and passion for service to demonstrate Christ's love and mercy in a positive way. We often say MMTs are an opportunity to serve as the hands and feet of Christ. Just as Christ's mercy is unconditional, so too are the services we provide. We do not hand out literature or pray with patients as a condition of their treatment. In many cases, there are opportunities to speak with patients about Jesus or to pray with them. We encourage volunteers to embrace these opportunities. Our goal is to contribute to the outreach efforts of the local church.

Q: I am interested in volunteering, but I have never been in a developing country before. Are Mercy Medical Team trips safe?

A: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will never knowingly lead volunteers into unsafe conditions. There are some risks with international travel; however, common sense and good judgment go a long way. Each team is accompanied by an experienced team leader and local partner with knowledge of the local issues. These individuals are equipped with valuable knowledge to help keep you safe.

Volunteers with little international experience often experience culture shock when arriving in a new country and when re-entering the United States. Each trip ends with a debriefing led by the team leader.

"Let your mercy come to me, that I may live" (Psalm 119:77 ESV).

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