

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is involved in requesting and recruiting a volunteer?

A: The process consists of the following steps:

- The first step for those who are interested in requesting a volunteer is to fill out the New Project form.
- After GISCorps receives the request from a Partner Agency (PA), depending on the nature of the request (number of volunteers, urgency, etc.), one or two of GISCorps Core Committee (CC) members will volunteer to conduct research on the PA and will try to learn as much as possible about the mission of the PA and the specific project. If the PA and their project are deemed in synch with GISCorps's missions and capabilities, we notify the PA of the approval. Otherwise, we notify the PA accordingly.
- For an approved mission, one or more CC members will "adopt" the project and contact the PA to fine tune/clarify the job description (JD) or any other ambiguous matters.
- Based on the finalized JD, the volunteer database is searched and a shortlist of qualified candidates are selected and then contacted for their availability.
- We give the candidates 7-10 days to respond and to tell us if they are interested and available.
- We then forward the resumes of available candidates to the PA or if the PA doesn't have GIS expertise, we select the final volunteer(s) for them and will then put them in direct contact with the PA.
- At that point, the two parties will work directly with one another. For on-site missions, the two parties will discuss the details of accommodation, airfare, meals, insurance, and etc. For remote missions (where a volunteer works from their home or office), the communication protocol will be established at that point.
- The CC member(s) will keep in touch with both parties until the end of the project and will ask that both parties would submit their feedback on our website. Either the volunteer or the PA almost always write an article or broadcast their stories via a blog or photo essay. You can see example of those stories at our Projects' webpage.

Q: Will GISCorps pay for the expenses of its volunteers?

A: No, GISCorps' responsibilities include:

- Recruiting and pre-screening volunteers
- Identifying and evaluating projects
- Matching volunteers' expertise to project opportunities
- Establishing communications with partner agencies; universities and/or other organizations with similar goals
- Investigating fund raising opportunities (grants, in-kind contributions, and etc.)
- Stewarding this web site, which is the main communication means between the Core Committee and the GISCorps volunteers

Q: Is GISCorps responsible for Health Insurance and security of its volunteers?

A: No, the Partner Agencies take direct responsibility for matters such as these.

Q: Am I guaranteed a GISCorps volunteer position if I fill out this application?

A: GISCorps does not guarantee an assignment to everyone that applies to become a GISCorps volunteer. As new projects become available, our task is to supply the best qualified candidates for the task at hand. Therefore for each new project that fits the mission of GISCorps we will select two-three volunteer candidates and put them in touch with the agency that is hosting the project.

Q: Are donations to GISCorps tax deductible?

A: Yes, GISCorps operates under URISA's auspices and therefore is a non-profit organization.

Q: Where would GISCorps send me and for how long?

A: That would depend on the project. Our assignments are typically between 2 weeks - 2 months.

Q: Is there any "time off" to explore the culture, the different regions of the country, and to get to know people outside of work?

A: That would depend on the place and the type of project. This question will be answered on a case by case basis.

Q: Can I bring my spouse/partner/children?

A: You should coordinate with the partner agency on this.

Q: What would my job be like?

A: It is our opinion that it will be rewarding at many levels and from many perspectives. Your job will depend on the assignment and the place of work just like any other.

Q: How much does it cost? Who pays?

A: This will depend upon the type of the project and the partner agency's requirements. Generally and in most cases, it will not cost you anything. Also, there will be no monetary compensations.

Q: What kind of GIS specialists do you need?

A: Any kind. We have categorized them in our volunteer form to ease our work.

Q: I have less than X years of professional experience. Can I still apply?

A: Yes. You should apply, since different projects ask for different levels of skills.

Q: I'm not an American. Can I still apply?

A: Yes, you can apply. GISCorps is an international organization. However, your recruitment will depend upon the partner agency's requirements.

Q: Would I work alone or with other volunteers?

A: We do not know the answer to that. It would depend on the project.

Q: How are volunteers selected? What is the procedure?

A: As new projects become available, our task is to supply the best qualified candidates for the task at hand. Therefore for each new project that fits the mission of GISCorps we will select two-three volunteer candidates and put them in touch with the agency that is hosting the project. Please see our Organizing Principles and Policies for more on this.

Q: How are projects selected?

A: We screen all of the projects that are asking for our involvement to make sure that they fit our mission. Please see our Organizing Principles and Policies for more on this.

Q: What is the training like for GISCorps volunteers?

A: GISCorps will not hold any training sessions for its volunteers. However, the partner agency might.

Q: Where would I live? What are the amenities like?

A: We do not know the answer to that. It would depend on the project.

Q: Is it safe? What happens if there's a coup?

A: It would depend on the project.

Q: How is GISCorps funded?

A: GISCorps is a volunteer based organization fully funded by donations of other similar organizations, universities, local governments, and individuals. The seed money for GISCorps was provided by URISA.

Q: How can I be sure GISCorps is a legitimate organization?

A: GISCorps operates under URISA which stands for Urban and Regional Information Systems Association and has been in operation since 1963. URISA is an international non-profit association of professionals using GIS and other information technologies. URISA promotes the effective and ethical use of spatial information and information technologies for the understanding and management of urban and regional systems.

Q: Can I make a contribution to GISCorps?

A: Yes, unless it is software or hardware. Please see our section on Contributions.

Q: Can the company I work for get involved with GISCorps?

A: Yes. We welcome partnerships and sponsorships. Please contact us on this matter at info@giscorps.org.