

Mennonite Voluntary Service Contributions

Soliciting funds

Mennonite Mission Network – Jan, 2012

Thank you for your interest in partnering with the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) program. Whether you are applying to become an MVSer in one of our units, or an advocate providing support to a participant, you have made an important step toward an experience of faith development and cross-cultural ministry that will have a lasting impact on your life. You will discover more of how God is at work in the world and in your own life. Our prayer is that you will also imagine ways that you might become involved in the kingdom of God as a follower of Jesus Christ.

We know that raising support can feel like a daunting task. Yet for many participants this has been a wonderful experience in feeling support from others and growing in their faith in God's ability to provide. We encourage you to consider that there are family, friends, and those in your home community/congregation that truly do care for and want to support you.

It is important to ask your home community/congregation to join you in this experience, for you are not embarking on an individualistic endeavor, but one that is grounded in the community of faith. Now is also the time to visit your pastor(s) to talk about your plans for participating in MVS. Part of the role of the advocate will be to help raise contributions for the expense of the unit and location that the participant will be serving with. The following guidelines and reflections will help as you begin contacting people to raise these contributions.

MVS is committed to participants and their home communities and congregations helping fund our units and service opportunities.

We ask participants and their advocates, home community/congregations, families and friends to help raise the needed financial support for the unit and locations. Your contributions help make this program possible.

Please carefully read through this material before contacting people for support. Though this is not easy for some, we have found that people often want to partner with you in this way. We have found that it can also be a growing experience for your faith as you see how others generously desire to walk with you. Fundraising is about commitment, accountability, community, and shared trust. It is about our relationships with God, the church, our family and friends.

How to approach potential supporters

Thank God for opening the way for new experiences that allow us to grow and participate in extending God's kingdom as living examples of God's love.

Make a list of relatives, church friends and neighbors who you plan to contact personally through a letter or phone call. For those nearby, a personal visit is the most effective. Ask the people you identified if they are interested in supporting you and your unit and location in this experience.

Remember: You are providing an opportunity for those you will contact to participate in extending God's kingdom, but each person must decide if they are able to give (2 Corinthians 9:7). Do not be afraid to allow people to be supportive in ways beyond finances as well. In your visit, phone call or letter, take time to explain what you will be doing and what you are asking of them. Be pleasant, and give them time to think and pray about it. Pastors or youth leaders may help in giving guidance on presenting the program's need for contributions to the church. You may want to write letters to people describing your involvement. Share with others the general things you will be experiencing in MVS: cross-cultural service, learning and formation. Add specifics later, remembering that those

giving are committing to support your participation in joining in God's work as much as they are a certain type of service or location. This is your opportunity to share what MVS is all about! Make it clear that all funds should be channeled through you and your church, which will in turn be given to MVS for the support of your unit and location (note the suggested solicitation letter later in this document). If you have any questions related to fundraising, please contact an MVS staff member.

Collecting contributions

It is your responsibility along with your advocate to solicit funds for MVS and develop a support network. This includes personally contacting your pastor, family and friends.

MVS is asking each participant and advocate to raise at least US\$3,000 to help cover unit and location expenses. MVS seeks home community/congregational partners and individual donor contributions to help meet additional administrative costs beyond this point. This amount helps offset the cost of orientation, healthcare, lodging and food, and other unit and location related costs. Your motivation for soliciting funds for MVS is highest before you leave home as you anticipate entering service. Many people will be excited for you as you plan your entry into the program. The longer you wait, the more difficult it becomes because of the busy involvement in service. You or your family as well may have resources that can and should be used to help cover your participant contribution.

If you can live at home while working during the summer, or for a few months before your MVS experience, you may be able to earn and save a significant amount of the participant contribution. Be diligent now so you will not have to be anxious later. We encourage a minimum of 10 percent of the total contributions you are asked to help raise be covered from your personal funds. We have learned that participants gain a greater appreciation for their MVS experience when they also invest financially.

Financial contribution plan

We recommend that contributions you have been asked to help raise be turned in by the start of orientation. If other arrangements need to be made, please contact the MVS director. It is much more difficult to raise the needed unit and location contributions after you have left for your unit location. Contributions you raise cover unit and location expenses and administrative costs.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Tonia Martin, MVS director, at ToniaM@MennoniteMission.Net.

Advocate information

As advocate for the MVS participant, you will provide a collection point for the contributions they have been asked to raise for the expenses of the unit and location. Because the majority of our participants come from communities of affluence, we ask the participants and their home community/congregations, families and friends to help raise the needed financial support for their MVS experience. The contributions help make this program possible. Please carefully read through this material.

Participant's responsibilities

MVS participants will make a list of relatives, church friends and neighbors, and contact each of them personally.

- The MVS participant will approach these individuals in person, by letter or by phone, describing their involvement and asking if they are interested in contributing to the support of the program.
- Pastors or youth leaders may help in giving guidance on presenting the support opportunity/invitation to the home community/congregation.
- MVS participants will write thank-you notes to contributors. Encourage participants not to forget this important response of gratitude.

Collecting contributions

Checks should be made payable to your local congregation, with “MVS” and the participant’s name on the memo portion of the check. All checks and cash should be given to you as designated treasurer to record.

Checks given to the participant should be passed on to the advocate, since you will send one cumulative check payable to:

USA

**Mennonite Voluntary Service
Mennonite Mission Network
PO Box 370
Elkhart IN 46515-0370**

Canada

**Mennonite Church Canada
600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4**

DO NOT SEND CASH IN THE MAIL.

In either case, please be sure to put **MVS** and the **participant’s name** on the check memo line (donations not labeled clearly will go to Mennonite Mission Network’s MVS general fund).

Contributions are tax-deductible. Inform your contributors that they will receive a donation receipt from your home congregation or from Mennonite Mission Network (in the U.S.) or Mennonite Church Canada (in Canada) on behalf of MVS for all contributions. All checks must be made payable to your home congregation, Mennonite Mission Network, or to Mennonite Church Canada to be tax-deductible. Checks made out to the participant are not tax-deductible. It is the participant’s responsibility to keep in touch with you as to the ongoing status of the funds they have been asked to help raise for their MVS unit and location.

Participants are encouraged to send a thank-you note to each contributor to express their gratitude for the generous giving of those who contributed.

Due to IRS and CRA rules pertaining to tax-deductible giving, contributions designated for MVS cannot be returned. All contributions received will be used for meeting the needs of the MVS program.

Soliciting funds (sample letter)

Dear [Name], family, friends and church members,

It is with a sense of real excitement and anticipation that I write this letter to you. Beginning in [August], I am planning to enter the MVS program. MVS provides young adults cross-cultural experiences that create space for intentional formation. MVS is an experience designed for young adults to grow in their faith, develop a deeper appreciation for the church here at home and globally, learn how to see what God is doing in the world, and imagine ways to become a part of God's kingdom work.

I will spend one week in orientation before traveling to my service location. During this time, I will have the opportunity to interact with other MVS participants and a variety of teachers, pastors, and local community service organizations. I look forward to this time being filled with learning, prayer, reflection and good conversation. After this time, I will leave to spend the next year in a service location where I will have the chance to live with and get to know a faith community in a different culture than my own. I am looking forward to serving and building relationships that are transforming in my life. While I am there, I hope to stay in regular contact.

I very much need you to go on this journey with me, in prayer and financial support. Going with MVS requires me to raise part of my financial support because we do not ask the communities we serve in to fully support us financially. I will be keeping you informed about my experiences through regular communication. I want my year in MVS to be a time where we share our experiences and stories of faith with one another. My hope is that we all grow in faith as a result.

USA
I invite you to prayerfully consider contributing whatever feels appropriate for you. All gifts should be made payable to [home church] and given or sent to [designated treasurer] at [address]. If you would like the gift to be tax-deductible, you can make your contribution by check. Please designate it for MVS and include my name in the memo line. You will be sent a donation receipt from [home congregation] or Mennonite Mission Network on behalf of MVS.

Canada

I invite you to prayerfully consider contributing whatever feels appropriate for you. All gifts should be made payable to [home church] and given or sent to [designated treasurer] at [address]. If you would like the gift to be tax-deductible, you can make your contribution by cheque. You will be sent a donation receipt from [home congregation] or Mennonite church Canada on behalf of MVS. Support for this program can go either to my home congregation [name of congregation], or to "Mennonite Church Canada". In either case please specify "MVS" and my name in the memo portion of the cheque. All donations will receive a receipt either from my home church or from Mennonite Church Canada.

As I mentioned earlier, I am really looking forward to this experience as a time of spiritual growth and discovery of what God is doing in the world through my service experience. I would like to thank you in advance for helping to make this possible for me.

Thank You!

[Name]

USA

_____ Yes, I would like to support [Name] in the MVS experience.

_____ One-time gift of \$_____.

_____ I will be supporting through regular prayer.

Please detach and send to [home church and address].

Checks should be made payable to [home church].

Thank you!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Canada

_____ Yes, I would like to support [Name] in the MVS experience.

_____ One-time gift of \$_____.

_____ I will be supporting through regular prayer.

Please detach and send to:

Mennonite Church Canada

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.

Winnipeg, MB. R3P 0M4