

Guide to Sponsoring a Short-term Mission Trip/Project

Churches are often requested to assist members in raising funds for a short-term mission project or to provide support for a youth group mission trip. This is a legitimate charitable objective and therefore contributions can be accepted if the proper procedure is followed.

1. Officially endorse the project

Once a project has been identified, it must be endorsed by a church board/committee, through their minutes. Some of the questions which should be asked include but are not limited to:

- Does the project help to further the charitable objects of the church?
- What accountability exists for the amount of money to be collected and spent?
- Are any of the expenditures to be used for purchasing supplies to be taken or shipped overseas? What controls are in place to ensure that these supplies will be purchased, shipped, reach their intended destination and used for charitable purposes?
- Has the trip been self-organized or are arrangements being made through another charitable organization?
- What lines of accountability are in place between the individual(s) and the church?
- Does the church's insurance policy cover the individual while traveling? If not, what arrangements have been made? You may want to think critically of any number of situations which might occur and who would bear responsibility for the associated costs.
- Will the individual be working directly with children? Have the necessary character references/police checks been provided?
- Will the individual/group be combining the mission trip with vacation time? Receipts cannot be issued if any portion of the time away allows for vacation-like activity. This includes, for example, extending the trip to provide for a week at a resort, visit with family or other similar activities.

2. Establish a mission project fund and raise the money

Contributions should be held in a designated fund, separate from the regular operating funds of the church. Donors should be encouraged to donate to the project not to the individual(s) going on the mission trip. The definition of the mission designated fund should indicate that if more funds are received than are required for this particular trip, surplus contributions will be held for future mission trips or to be used where it is needed most upon the decision of the Church. Funds should

be distributed equally between all participants, not on a pro-rata basis to what was raised by the individuals.

3. Report to the congregation

In order to close the “accountability loop”, arrange for the individual/group to report back to the congregation once they have returned from their trip.

DISCLAIMER: This guide is provided for information purposes only and is not intended as advice to the local church. Information is current only as of the date that the guide was prepared. Readers are advised to seek professional advice for their particular situation.

Revised 08/2014