



AWHONN Perinatal Education Xchange: Advancing Care Abroad Through Shared Experiences

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is covered in the program fee?** The program fee covers lodging, customized programming with field clinic experience, continuing education credits, ground transportation in the host country to/from scheduled group activities, some meals in the host country, safe drinking water, program staff support, interpretation services, and educational seminars for the group. Airfare, fees associated with renewing/processing passports, medical supplies, travel insurance, mobile phone data fees, some meals, and optional recreational activities are not covered by the program fee.
2. **What organization is AWHONN partnering with to execute this program?** AWHONN is partnering with International Service Learning (website: <https://islonline.org>). For over 30 years, International Service Learning (ISL) has been leading groups of volunteers to countries all over the world to provide medical services for communities in need.
3. **If I want to participate in a trip, when would the program fee be due?** The total program fee can be paid as a lump sum to ISL at least three months in advance or split into two payments with the first half of the payment due three months in advance and the second half of the payment due two months in advance.
4. **Is the program fee refundable?** If you cancel your registration 30-60 days prior to the departure date, you will receive a 50% refund or program credit. If you cancel within 30 days prior to the departure date, you will not receive a refund. This is due to a few factors such as securing a hotel room block and contracting drivers that require nonrefundable deposits in the host country. It is strongly recommended that participants research and acquire travel insurance on their own.
5. **Will there be an informational session I can attend to learn more about this program?** Yes. AWHONN will host a virtual informational session for members to learn more about the program and there will be time set aside for audience questions. The date and time of this session will be posted on the program website: awhonn.org/apex
6. **What will the informational session cover?** The informational session will provide an overview of the program goals, introduce the program team, discuss timeline, and expected activities. Pictures of meals, transportation, and lodging that participants may be exposed to or should expect will be shown. Time will be set aside for audience questions.
7. **Do I need to know the language of the host country before applying to be part of the volunteer delegation?** No. Our partner programs in the host country will provide materials in English and interpreters on site. However, we strongly recommend that volunteers spend some time prior to their departure learning culturally appropriate phrases and greetings such as “hello” and “thank you” in the native language of the country being visited.
8. **Do I need to have a passport to participate in the APEX program?** Yes. The APEX program involves travel outside of the U.S. thus requiring a passport. Currently (May 19, 2025), all U.S. citizens must have a valid U.S. passport with an expiration date of at least six months after the last day of the program to be able to travel to the countries where the APEX program takes place. These requirements may change. If you are a U.S. citizen, please visit the U.S. Department of State’s website for the most up-to-date travel requirements to visit another country. If you are a non-U.S. citizen, please visit the embassy in the country where your passport was issued for passport and visa travel requirements.



9. **Do I need to apply for a travel visa to participate in the APEX program?** This depends on the country you are traveling to and the country that issued your passport. U.S. citizens should visit the U.S. Department of State's website for the most up-to-date travel requirements to visit another country. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the embassy of the country where their passport was issued for passport and visa travel requirements. For example, if participating in the APEX Belize program, there are no visas currently (May 19, 2025) required for tourist visits of up to 30 days for U.S. citizens but proof must be shown demonstrating intent to depart Belize (such as onward or return air tickets) and proof of sufficient funds to maintain oneself in Belize.
10. **Does the program provide a list of required documents prior to traveling?** Yes, the program team will provide all volunteers with travel information, including information on any documentation one should prepare and pack prior to traveling.
11. **Will AWHONN and/or the partnering organizations provide travel insurance for the delegation?** No. However, it is strongly recommended that participants acquire travel insurance on their own.
12. **Is travel insurance required for participation?** It is strongly recommended that you purchase your own travel insurance as AWHONN, ISL, and any other partnering organizations will not provide insurance and will not be liable for any accidents that occur during the trip. Additionally, some of the partnering hospitals and clinics in the host country may have policies requiring proof of insurance.
13. **Are vaccines required for participants?** Based on our experience, some of the hospitals and clinics that the delegation will be visiting or volunteering with may require that international volunteers be vaccinated prior to arrival. Vaccine requirements will be shared in advance with each delegation. Vaccines against COVID-19, influenza, hepatitis are strongly recommended along with other recommended vaccines posted by the CDC for international travelers (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>).
14. **When will the final trip itinerary be posted?** Arrival and departure dates for the program trip will be shared upon announcement of the trip opportunity on the AWHONN website and other member communication outlets. However, hourly details for each day of the trip may not become available until a few days prior to the arrival date. A few weeks prior to the arrival date, we will try our best to have a tentative detailed itinerary for each day of the trip. Participants should understand that this will be a draft and last-minute changes may occur closer to the arrival date. The arrival and departure dates will remain the same regardless of the changes.
15. **What types of clinical or healthcare-related activities will the trip include?** This depends on the country the delegation is traveling to as options vary for each trip. Some examples of clinical or healthcare-related activities participants will engage in can include assisting with well women checks, visiting and/or assisting in the neonatal unit or birthing center, meeting with and shadowing other clinicians, touring hospitals or community centers, visiting nursing schools, and providing education in the community or to nursing students.
16. **Will there be some downtime during the trip that I can use to explore the area on my own?** Yes, there will be some late afternoons and evenings free of pre-scheduled programming. Participants may use this time to visit nearby restaurants, shops, and attractions. However, participants must discuss such plans with program staff. Additional information will be shared during the pre-trip meeting.
17. **Where will I be staying while in the host country?** The program will try to secure lodging from a local and family-owned establishment. AWHONN's partnering organization, ISL, will work with local businesses to secure modest housing and rooms for our delegation. Rooms will include beds, running water, and air conditioning. Please note that the delegation will not be staying in a resort or hotel chain commonly found in the United States. Staff will provide more information about lodging for each trip.



18. **What types of group recreational activities will the trip include?** This depends on the region the delegation is traveling to. Participants will have an opportunity to vote on a group recreational activity based on a few options. Examples of recreational activities can include visiting an archaeological site, local island or market, and taking traditional dance or cooking classes.
19. **Will I get to meet other AWHONN members who will be part of the delegation before departure?** Yes. At least three virtual meetings will be scheduled prior to departure with all individuals who will be part of the volunteer delegation. This will provide an opportunity for participants to connect with one another before traveling together.
20. **Can I participate in the program and volunteer as part of my family's vacation trip?** AWHONN staff have worked with partnering organizations to develop a custom curriculum and itinerary with nurses in mind. We ask that all individuals who apply and participate in this program commit to being part of all scheduled activities, which include educational seminars and site visits to clinics, hospitals and/or community organizations to provide compassionate care to women and newborns. Program fees will not cover expenses and activities for relatives or other travel companions who are not officially part of AWHONN's delegation.
21. **Are continuing nursing education credits offered for participating in this trip?** Yes. The program generally includes about 30 continuing education credits. More information about continuing nursing education will be shared about one month in advance of the trip start date.
22. **Can I bring donations?** If interested in collecting donations to bring on the trip, please email apex@awhonn.org to discuss this further. Also, please note that AWHONN's Every Woman, Every Baby initiative collects donations year-round to support lifelong learning for nurses, research that leads to improving nursing practice and patient care, and education and activities that provide information and resources for women and their families. More information is available at <https://www.awhonn.org/about-us/donate/>
23. **Is there a waitlist for volunteers to be a part of a delegation?** Yes. Since each delegation is limited in capacity, we will open a waitlist once we've reached capacity for each trip. AWHONN staff will monitor the waitlist and notify individuals of new updates.
24. **I have other questions that are not listed here or anywhere else. Who should I contact?** For additional information, email your question(s) to apex@awhonn.org.