



**Tremendous
Hearts**

Volunteer Basic Planning Information: Relocating To South Africa 101...

VISAS AND PERMITS

Volunteers are responsible for obtaining and paying for all of the appropriate visas and permits, tests, appointments and reports as required by their permit application and any permit extensions as required by the Republic of South Africa's (RSA) Department of Home Affairs.

Visitors who plan to be in South Africa for more than 90 days need to apply for a Visitor's Permit (Voluntary or Charitable Activities) prior to leaving their home country. Visitor's Permits are granted for up to 3 years. Volunteers are advised to apply for their permit at least 60 days in advance of departure. See our *Volunteer Immigration Information* sheet (RA-II-10-03) for an annotated list of requirements.

Applications and information for volunteers may be found on South African Consular websites. Links to the U.S. and U.K. sites are below:

- ♥ U.S - <http://www.southafrica-newyork.net/homeaffairs/visitorsvisa.htm#visitors%20permit>
- ♥ U.K. - <http://www.southafricahouse.com/Consulate/Foreign.htm>

Tremendous Hearts will work with our service partners to obtain a "sponsoring organization" letter for those applicants who have been accepted and who need to obtain a Visitor's Permit.

POLICE CLEARANCES AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Tremendous Hearts' service partners require that we provide them with an official police clearance certificate and/or criminal background check to ensure that volunteers have no history of criminal offenses involving children. Since a clearance must be submitted as part of the application for an RSA Visitor's Permit, volunteers should keep a copy of the clearance document obtained for their permit application to give to their service partner. Volunteers are responsible for any and all costs associated with obtaining a police clearance or background check.

U.S. volunteers should contact the South African Consulate through which they are applying to determine whether they will be required to submit a clearance from the FBI or from the agency in their home state that handles such clearances as previous volunteers have received conflicting instructions from consular staff concerning which level is required. FBI criminal background checks can take up to 60 days depending on their backlog. The FBI's instructions for requesting a criminal background check may be found at <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjisd/fprequest.htm>. If the consulate requests a state-level clearance, please check with your local police department to determine the process and costs applicable in your home state.

HEALTH AND INSURANCE

All volunteers are required to have and pay for their own health insurance. Proof of health insurance is required as part of the RSA application for a Visitor's Permit. Volunteers should, before they leave home, check with their current health insurance provider about their coverage while living outside of their home country. Many policies will provide for some coverage while traveling but may require that volunteers pay expenses out of pocket and submit them for reimbursement.

Other options for medical and travel insurance can be found at <http://www.insuremytrip.com>.

Volunteers should also consult with their primary care physician and/or their local travel medicine clinic for advice on immunizations and general health precautions while travelling in South Africa. General information can be found at:

- ♥ U.S. Centers for Disease Control - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>
- ♥ U.S. Department of State - http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html
- ♥ U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office - <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>

HOUSING

Volunteers who are not receiving a Tremendous Hearts Sponsorship are responsible for finding and paying for their own accommodation. Finding housing in Cape Town can take some time. We recommend that volunteers arrange for a month of temporary housing in a B&B before they arrive and allow 2-4 weeks to find long-term housing. Our staff are available to provide assistance in navigating the various housing options and can connect you with other Tremendous Hearts volunteers to explore options for shared housing.

For self-catering, B&B and guest house options, volunteers may want to consult <http://www.capestay.co.za/>. To locate an apartment or house to rent, visit www.gumtree.co.za. Because furnishing a flat can be expensive and time consuming, we recommend looking for furnished or partially furnished accommodation.

We generally recommend staying in the Southern Suburbs or Muizenberg area. These areas will keep volunteers close to the main routes to various project sites and are reasonably safe and affordable.

Recommended locations include Bishopscourt, Constantia, Diep River, Kenilworth, Lakeside, Muizenberg, Newlands, Plumstead, Rondebosch, Rosebank, Tokai, Westlake and Wynberg. When looking in the Diep River, Plumstead, Muizenberg and Wynberg areas, note that there are a wide range of neighborhoods within these areas, some safer than others.

Volunteers who anticipate signing a lease will need to provide the leasing agent with a copy of their ID or passport, housing-related references, bank statements from the last 3 months and/or other supporting documents such as pay stubs to prove the rent is affordable. If signing a long-term lease, expect to make a refundable deposit of two months' rent.

Tremendous Hearts Sponsored Volunteers will live at a Tremendous Hearts house sharing facilities with other sponsored volunteers including kitchen and bathroom amenities.

TRANSPORTATION

Volunteers who are not receiving a Tremendous Hearts Sponsorship are responsible for finding and paying for their own transportation. Public transportation in Cape Town is not recommended for volunteers for safety reasons.

A range of local and international car rental companies are located in the Cape Town airport and arrangements for collection can be made with them via the internet. Previous volunteers have found that First Car Rental [<http://www.firstcarrental.co.za/>] have very competitive rates, especially for manual transmission cars. Rates on cars with automatic transmissions are always higher. Volunteers planning to buy a car should budget between ZAR 50-75,000 in cash. Financing a car in South Africa without a local income or South African credit references will be almost impossible.

Tremendous Hearts Sponsored Volunteers will share a car provided by Tremendous Hearts.

BANKING AND CREDIT

Volunteers should arrange with their home banking institution for access to their account(s) via the web and make arrangements to pay bills from their home country online. Volunteers may want to elect to receive electronic statements for their accounts.

Volunteers may also need to inform their credit card and ATM card providers that they will be traveling in South Africa for an extended period. Volunteers should also inquire about their home bank's fees and procedures for bank wires and transfers, particularly if they plan to purchase a car while in South Africa as the purchase amount will need to be wired to the seller. Volunteers may want to arrange with a trusted friend or family member to be authorized to make financial transactions on their behalf while they are away.

It is possible for international visitors to open a non-resident bank account in South Africa. Deposits are made in non-South African currency but withdrawals may be made in Rand. To open an account, volunteers will need their ID or passport, a copy of their visa or permit and 3 months of original statements from their home bank. Information about FNB's non-resident accounts may be found at <https://www.fnb.co.za/foreign/non-resident.html>.

Recent legislation has tightened credit requirements and establishing credit in South Africa can be very difficult for non-residents, particularly those who are not employed in South Africa. Volunteers should assume that they will not be able to gain access to credit while in South Africa and make their financial plans accordingly.