CRS Farmer-to-Farmer

Volunteer Handbook

Photo Credit: Mountaga Drame. DeVonne Jackson, CRS Farmer to Farmer Volunteer, using sign language to teach students of St. Anthony School for Deaf about planting.

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Welcome Message

Dear Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer,

We would like to express our gratitude for your service to the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program and the host organizations we support. Your hard work, dedication, and talent will significantly benefit our host organizations and help us achieve the program's objectives.

We kindly request that you thoroughly review the volunteer handbook, as it contains valuable information to guide you throughout your assignment. This guide serves as a comprehensive overview of the volunteer cycle from intake to post assignment.

If you encounter any questions that are not addressed within the handbook, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Operations Specialist for assistance. Once again, we sincerely thank you for your unwavering dedication and wish you a successful and fulfilling assignment.

Warm Regards,

The Farmer-to-Farmer Team

Photo Credit: Rick D'Elia for CRS. Inventor Jock Brandis teaches farmers how to test peanuts (groundnuts) for aflatoxin, a fungus that infects peanuts around the world, causing potential health risks.

Intake and Onboarding

Documents

The first step in the volunteer onboarding process is to submit your passport and relevant vaccination card. After submission and approval, your Operations Specialist will provide you with a link to access the documents listed below for your review and electronic signature.

These documents must be submitted prior to booking flights. We kindly request that you share the reference link with 2 to 4 references as soon as you receive them. We require a minimum of 2 professional references.

For returning volunteers, only documents 3 & 4 need to be submitted for each new assignment. If your travel information, passport, or medical clearance has expired/changed, please resubmit the documents to keep your records up to date. Medical clearances are valid for 12 months from the date of clearance.

Documents Required:

1.   **Passport with at least 6 months validity**
2.   Volunteer Travel Information Form
3.   Volunteer Release – US citizens
4.   Addendum to the Volunteer Release
5.   Medical clearance form
6.   Banking information form
7.   Reference form

Personal days

F2F volunteers sometimes express an interest in extending their assignments to include personal days for sightseeing and other activities. CRS F2F is happy to accommodate these requests, following our donor guidelines on allowable costs. Please inform your Operations Specialist about the number of days you plan to take as personal days before the ticketing phase.

Volunteers have the option of being accompanied by friends or family members during, before, or after the assignment, subject to approval from the F2F country team and consideration of the assignment location and type. It is recommended for companions to join after the assignment concludes, allowing the volunteer to concentrate on their objectives during the assignment. First-time volunteers are encouraged to undertake solo assignments for a comprehensive F2F experience.

If bringing a companion, volunteers will be responsible for covering all associated expenses, including but not limited to airfare, additional accommodation charges, insurance, etc. Volunteers must acknowledge, plan for, and take full responsibility for their companions while in the country, whether it is during, before, or after the assignment.

Here are some important points to consider if you are thinking about taking personal days during your upcoming F2F assignment:

- Please notify your Operations Specialist <u>as soon as possible</u> if you are planning on adding personal days to your assignment.
- **Timing personal days**: It is preferred that volunteers take personal days at the conclusion of their assignment rather than before. This is due to mandatory CRS security orientation sessions that must occur within 48 hours of the volunteer's arrival in country.
- **Travel cost:** CRS will cover the baseline fare, which represents the most cost-effective option for transportation to and from the country during the agreed-upon assignment dates. The additional cost above the baseline fare generated by the new travel dates is the responsibility of the volunteer. Typically, this extra cost is minimal, unless there are significant variations in travel dates or itineraries.
- Volunteers will need to share their credit card details with the travel agent for the payment of any additional fees.
- **Accommodation, per diem and transport:** CRS will cover the cost of volunteer lodging until the agreed upon end date of a volunteer's assignment. Volunteers are responsible for arranging their own lodging for their personal days.
- Similarly, while CRS can commit to providing volunteer transportation to the airport on the day their assignment ends, we are unable to do so after personal days.
- CRS cannot cover any additional airline and or hotel fees resulting in delays or cancellations during personal days.
- **Insurance:** Volunteers will be insured until the end of their agreed upon assignment date and will have to obtain separate insurance coverage for their personal days.

Booking flights

Once all documents are submitted and assignment dates agreed upon, your Operations Specialists will work with the CRS travel agent to finalize the ticket for your assignment. At this stage, it's crucial to confirm whether you will be taking personal days in the host country.

Typically, volunteers depart from the USA on a Friday, arrive in the host country late on Saturday night, have a day of rest on Sunday, and begin in-country onboarding on Monday. Volunteers traveling to Timor-Leste will depart on a Thursday to ensure a rest day on Sunday.

Our primary objective is to transport all volunteers comfortably and safely to the host countries. However, it's essential to understand that all air tickets must adhere to the guidelines established by our donor, USAID, and CRS. These guidelines include:

- All booked flights must be Fly American Act (FAA) compliant.
- All booked flights must be the most economical airfare i.e., economy cabin airfare.
- CRS cannot book a volunteer's preferred airline unless it is priced competitively.
- Itineraries with 4 - 6 hours layovers entitle volunteers to an airport lounge
- Itineraries with 6 - 9 hours layovers entitle volunteers to an airport lounge or hotel room.
- Itineraries with 9+ hours layovers entitle volunteers to a lounge or hotel room (booked through CRS)

You will be presented with ticket options that align with our booking guidelines before the final purchase is made. Once the ticket is issued, you will have 24 hours from the time of purchase to review and reconfirm that the ticket is accurate and meets your preferences. You will receive an email directly from our agents. Please be aware that once a ticket has been purchased and the 24-hour period has elapsed, we are unable to make modifications to the ticket without incurring penalties from the airline.

Non-FAA compliant flights

Volunteers who opt for a non-FAA compliant flight will need to cover the cost of the ticket themselves, and there will be no reimbursement provided for it. F2F grant funding cannot be utilized, either directly or indirectly, to cover non-FAA compliant airfare.

Layover lounges and hotel reimbursements

CRS offers options for lounges or hotels depending on the layover length:

- Layovers lasting **4- 6 hours**, you are entitled to access airport lounges. You have the option to prebook lounge access at the transit airport, although it's important to note that not all airports offer this option.
- For layovers between **6 and 9 hours**, you are entitled to lounge access **or** a hotel room; however, it is recommended you opt for lounge access due to the unpredictable nature of airport security.
- Layovers of **9 hours or more** or more entitle you to a hotel room or lounge access. When possible, CRS will pre-book hotels in advance and directly pay; however, volunteers may be asked to pay directly and request reimbursement depending on certain locations.

Volunteers are asked to book their own lounges and request reimbursement after the assignment.

Seating preferences & Expenses

CRS can accommodate basic volunteer seating preferences, such as aisle or window seats. However, we are unable to fulfill requests for upgraded seating, such as moving to a different class or securing extra legroom. Volunteers are free to cover the cost and arrange these upgrades directly through our travel agent or the airline. It's important to note that CRS does not cover these expenses and cannot provide reimbursement for such cost.

Medical preparation

For volunteer safety, we require a signed Medical clearance from your physician confirming your fitness for the assignment. Medical clearances are valid for **one year.** If your medical clearance is from another implementer for F2F assignments and is less than a year old at the time of travel, CRS will accept it.

Certain countries may require specific vaccinations for entry (e.g., yellow fever and covid-19 for Uganda). We advise volunteers to consult their doctors and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for required and recommended vaccinations, and medicines. Please make sure to communicate the precise location of your assignment to your medical provider, as the CDC site provides a comprehensive list of vaccinations, and all are not required. Some of the recommended vaccinations may be for specific regions within the host country that your assignment does not encompass. **CRS does not provide medical advice**;

however, your Operations Specialist can provide information on the precise location of your assignment for you to make an informed decision on which CDC recommended vaccinations to take.

CRS reimburses volunteers for CDC required and relevant recommended vaccinations and medicines. For efficient budget management, we request that volunteers obtain multiple vaccination quotes before making a final selection. If the total vaccination costs exceed **$500**, please seek approval from your Operations Specialist prior to incurring the expense. **Receipts are required for all reimbursements.**

Reimbursable with receipt	Non-reimbursable
• Travel vaccines • Malaria pills, when recommended. • Travel checkup fee – this includes a basic physical.	• Routine vaccines (MMR, chickenpox, polio, tetanus, flu, etc.) • Medical supplies (bed nets, water filters, etc.) • Personal medications, annual physical fee

Training materials

Volunteers are allocated a **$50** budget for purchasing materials in preparation for their assignments. If the materials you intend to purchase exceed this budget, please seek approval from your Operations Specialist prior to incurring the expense. This expense is reimbursable with a receipt and should be included in the end-of-assignment reimbursement and expense form.

If you prefer not to be reimbursed for materials or other items purchased on behalf of the assignment, please inform your Operations Specialist. Your generous donation will be reported as a resource mobilized by F2F volunteer.

Visa

Volunteers are required to independently apply for the necessary visas at least **10 – 14** days before their scheduled departure. CRS will provide guidance and necessary supporting documents.

Each country has its unique visa process with varying fees. However, volunteers can expect to receive a visa decision within 48-72 hours of application across all countries. Please see the links below for guidance on applying for your visa for each country. If there are any delays or issues with your visa process, we ask that you inform your Operations Specialist.

Country	Visa Type	Visa Fee	Visa Guideline link	Visa Application Website
Ethiopia	E-visa	$202	Ethiopia Visa Application Guide	https://www.evisa.gov.et/#/home
Nepal	E-visa Visa on Arrival	$50	Nepal Visa Application Guide	https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/
Timor-Leste	Visa on arrival	$30	Timor-Leste Visa Application Guide	On-arrival
Uganda	E-visa	$55	Uganda Visa Application Guide	https://visas.immigration.go.ug/#/

Per-diem & Layover expenses

CRS provides volunteers with per diem for all volunteer assignment days. Aside from a few exceptions, CRS per diem rate is set at 50% of the published U.S. Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) and range depending on the country of travel. Receipts are not required for your meals during assignment days. Volunteers have the choice to receive per diem in advance of their assignment or as a combined payment along with any reimbursements post assignment. Kindly inform your Operations Specialist of your preference.

Country	Daily Total	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental
Ethiopia	$50	$8	$12	$20	$10
Nepal	$55	$8	$14	$22	$11
Timor-Leste	$50	$8	$12	$20	$10
Uganda	$35	$5	$9	$14	$7

Note: The "incidentals" category covers laundry, service charges, tips, and miscellaneous expenses.
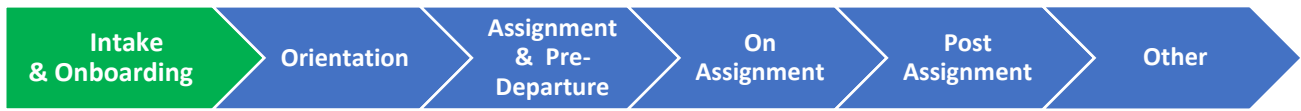
Layover meals reimbursement guideline

- CRS **does not provide** per diem for meals provided during flights but reimburses meals consumed during layovers based on receipts. **Please purchase layover meals within the rates listed below** as we are unable to reimburse beyond the allowable rates. Alcohol purchases cannot be reimbursed.
- CRS **does not** reimburse for travel expenses during layovers to purchase meals as volunteers are expected to purchase layover meals at the airport or at the layover hotel.

Layover Continents	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Australia	$10	$16	$26
Brussels	$11	$19	$30
Dubai	$13	$21	$34
Indonesia	$9	$15	$24
Paris	$13	$21	$34
Qatar	$12	$20	$32
Singapore	$11	$17	$28
United States	$11	$17	$28

Expense summary

Expenses	Payment Method
Travel related medical expenses and travel check up	CRS reimburses only travel related vaccinations and medication. CRS does not reimburse for routine vaccines and extensive physical checkups.
Passport renewal	CRS does not reimburse
Training materials	CRS reimburses up to $50 per assignment
Airport transportation in US	CRS reimburses either mileage, parking, or taxi
International airfare	CRS pays directly
Visa	Direct deposit to volunteer
In-country meal funds (per diem)	Direct deposit to volunteer

Emergency Insurance	CRS pays directly
Layover meals/incidentals	CRS reimburses, based on receipts per the average Daily Guideline Rates for layovers.
Layover travel expenses for meals	CRS does not reimburse
Layover hotels	CRS covers either directly or reimburses volunteer based on location
Seat upgrades, extra luggage fees	CRS does not reimburse

Orientation

Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP)

The Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) is a USAID approved guideline that reviews available and acceptable pesticides, and in establishes a set of Active Ingredients (AIs) that are authorized for activities in which F2F (Farmer-to-Farmer) volunteers may engage. PERSUAP promotes the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), an approach aimed at protecting agricultural production and public health from the damaging effects of pests. In addition, the PERSUAP outlines the elements of a logical Safe Use Action Plan, which enables and promotes the careful and safe use of all pesticides.

USAID classifies PERSUAP into four categories; PERSUAP Type I assignments directly related to pesticides recommendations, Type II as assignments with indirectly related with pesticides, Type III assignments related to curriculum review and designing, business plan development and strategies development and Type IV as assignments associated with other USAID projects and collaborators.

The mitigation measures shall be implemented by F2F volunteers to minimize or avoid any potential irreversible long-term adverse effects on human health and the environment:

- Type I volunteers are required to implement all measures.
- Type II volunteers should review and be familiar with the measures.
- Type III volunteers should not involve pesticides in anyway and do not therefore need to be familiar with the measures but are required to read the brochure on pg. 64-65
- Type IV volunteers should refer to the applicable Type 1, 2, or 3 assignment.

The assignment type can be found on the assignment scope of work (SOW).

Medical Insurance

CRS provides comprehensive in-country medical insurance for all F2F volunteers through International SOS for the duration of their assignment. You will be required to download the SOS mobile app on your smart phone to register and obtain a Pre-Trip briefing on the destination. The pre-Trip briefing includes a thorough briefing on the destination as well as contact information to accredited healthcare providers. The app is available on both the Google play store and Apple app store. Important information on CRS International insurance through SOS and the steps to follow to get set up can be found in the F2F travel insurance process document. Please review this document as well as the best practices in detail and reach out to your Operations Specialist if you have any questions.

Your **SOS Membership Number: 11BYCA814708**. You will need this number to register on the app.

We advise all volunteers to complete their Pre-Trip briefing prior to departure and to contact the SOS Assistance Center when in need of medical attention. The Assistance Centers can provide medical and security recommendations, and if a provider is needed, logistical support. We also can place a Guarantee of payment at the facility on behalf of the volunteers, as CRS has emergency coverage for volunteers when traveling.

We recommend volunteers "Call Early and Call Often" as advice and referral information are all free. Please read the afore linked F2F travel insurance process, and the wheel on the last page has many examples of why to call International SOS.

If you plan to take personal days, you can obtain insurance for the additional days. CRS recommends International SOS for this purpose. You can purchase personal travel insurance through this link.

CRS Trainings

All volunteers are required to complete 3 short courses prior to their departure, and if desired take the optional courses. These required courses provide an overview of personal safety and security in the field, safeguarding, and gender issues (2024 - 2029 program focus area). The SMART Skills courses, a CRS-created curriculum, offer instruction in five essential skills for farmers: Work Effectively in Groups, Save, Access and Manage Finances, Sustainably Increase Production, Engage with Markets, and Innovate. These skills are collectively known as Skills for Marketing and Rural Transformation (SMART Skills). These courses are optional and recommended for volunteers undertaking assignments in topics related to Marketing, Financial Education, Managing farmer's groups etc.

All courses are required only once and can be found of the F2F CRS Learns F2F portal

Courses:
- Gender Foundation (required)
- Safe and Sound (required)
- Safeguarding (required)
- SMART SKILLs (optional)

To register for the courses log into the F2F CRS Learns F2F portal.

- Create an account by filling in the relevant information. Note: save you password in a safe place.
- Once in the portal, register for the above listed courses by clicking on each individual link.
- Select the "Request" button and then the "Register" button once it appears.
- Once the above step is completed, select the "Launch" button to begin the course. Note: the course may open in a different window.
- To access the other courses, navigate to the home menu, select "Welcome" and repeat the above steps.
- To view your certificate of competition, go to the home menu and select "Transcript." You can access and download the certificate(s) by selecting "View My Certificate"

Email the certificates of completion for all courses to your Operations Specialist.

Additionally, please take a few minutes to read this document:

- Code of conduct and ethics

Gender

CRS is excited to launch a new learning agenda in the FY24 which will continue throughout the five-year cycle. The learning agenda will focus on changes brought about through a more gender-sensitive approach to programming.

To support this effort, CRS has adapted some of its tools. For example, the SOW template will encourage hosts and volunteers to think through the timing, location, and delivery of assignments with a view to remove gender-based constraints for training participants. CRS F2F will employ gender-sensitive tools to ensure that assignments address gender-based gaps and target women, increasing their participation in F2F assignments and the benefits they gain from them.

Volunteers are encouraged to join this journey by taking the **Gender Foundations training**, reading the country-focused gender briefs, and utilizing additional resources. They should also ensure that their assignments are gender-sensitive and responsive.

- Ethiopia Gender Brief
- Nepal Gender Brief
- Timor-Leste Gender Brief
- Uganda Gender Brief

Respect, Equity Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) & Safeguarding at CRS

At Catholic Relief Services, we are committed to putting our faith into action to catalyze transformational change. How we deliver our mission matters as much as what we do. CRS seeks to live out our values as an agency by creating and maintaining a workplace environment that promotes our core value of human dignity and exemplifies Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) for all colleagues, partners, donors, and program participants. Read more about REDI click on the below link. Additionally, Safeguarding is our collective responsibility to make sure that staff, volunteers, partners, consultants, and host communities, especially children and vulnerable adults, are treated with dignity and respect. Volunteers are obligated to follow the CRS Safeguarding policy (linked below).

- Be REDI: Introduction to Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at CRS
- Safeguarding for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers

Country program overview

To learn more about your host country, we ask volunteers to review Section 4 of the country specific toolkit. Here, you will get information on your host country's:

- Briefing book
- Constant companion
- Security plan
- F2F Team Biographies

Click on the relevant country to access the above information:

- Ethiopia
- Nepal
- Timor-Leste
- Uganda

Outreach & Photography guide

Volunteer outreach is an important component of the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program. As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to share stories directly from your assignment and to demonstrate the positive impact of the program to a wider audience. We also encourage you to share your volunteer experience to inform the public about the good work that you are undertaking and to raise public awareness of U.S. development programs.

Sharing information about your assignment can take many forms, including but not limited to:

A social media post about your F2F assignment (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)

A presentation to a group which you are affiliated with (e.g., professional association, education institution, staff meeting)

A blog post about your F2F assignment

A publication in an academic journal or industry publication that features or mentions your assignment

An interview, article or other media feature (e.g., radio interview, article in your local newspaper, guest on a podcast)

An email blast to family and friends

Kindy review CRS Outreach Guidelines for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers which provides guidelines for volunteer outreach and best practices in photography. Below are video training resources to guide you on various outreach topics

- F2F Photograph Training – Permission and Consent
- F2F Photography Training – Taking photos
- F2F Photography Training – Volunteers submitting photos to CRS
- Storytelling for F2F – Audience and using photos to tell stories
- Storytelling for F2F – Telling the F2F Story

Assignment related resources

The resources below will help you as you finalize your F2F assignment. This can also be found in Section 5 of the F2F toolkit online.

- Volunteer Final Report Format
- Volunteer Presentation template
- Pesticide Use Form

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- [F2F Environmental Guidelines](#)
- [F2F PERSUAP Type 1 Assignment form](#)
- [F2F PERSUAP Type 2 Assignment form](#)
- [F2F local volunteer model One-pager – only applicable for Paired Remote Volunteer (PRV) assignments](#)

Assignment & Pre-Departure

Connection call

To ensure alignment with assignment objectives, we schedule at least one connection call between the volunteer, our F2F country team and a representative from the host organization before volunteer departure. This call serves to introduce the volunteer to the host, discuss and agree on the assignment's objectives while also enabling volunteers to establish a relationship with the host prior to their departure. We encourage volunteers to reach out to their Operations Specialist or the F2F country team if they desire more communication with the host before departure or if there are any ongoing confusions about the SOW objectives that were not addressed during the call. It is essential for the volunteer to possess a clear understanding of the assignment's SOW and objectives.

These connection meetings will be conducted through platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom, or WhatsApp. Please be aware that due to limited internet connectivity in some of our host organization sites, the meeting venue may change at the last minute. We appreciate your patience and flexibility in this regard.

Connecting with previous volunteers

Sometimes volunteers seek to connect with individuals who have previously conducted a F2F assignment, supported the same host organization, or have recent experience in the host country. If you wish to connect with past volunteers, your Operations team can facilitate your connection request.

Travel best practices

Traveling to a new country can be exciting and stressful. We ask volunteers to follow the below guidelines to ensure a smooth and stress-free journey.

- Checking in times: Check your ticket a few days prior for check-in deadlines for your airline and airport. For international flights, this deadline may be 45 minutes or longer.
- Allow time to check a bag and pass-through security. The Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) recommends travelers arrive **three hours** prior to an international trip.
- Travel Documents: please make sure you bring the following with you to the airport when traveling: COVID vaccine card, passport, visa (if needed), and Yellow Fever card (if needed).
- Pack medications and a change of clothing in your carry on in the event of lost or delayed baggage (CRS does not provide travel insurance)
- Be prepared for the unexpected – flight delays and/or cancellation.

Flight delays and/or cancellations

In case of a flight cancellation or other travel issues we ask that you inform your Operations Specialist and work with the travel desk at the airport to secure the next flight out.

If for any reason you are unable to work with the airline desk, follow the below steps:

- Email corporate traveler CTAH@corporatetraveler.us (CT agent and copy your US F2F point) or call them on 703-236-1220 if you have international dialing.
- Email/call response time: 7-20 minutes.

Send your Operations Specialist a WhatsApp message informing them of the travel issue.

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Checklist: Are you ready to travel?

☐ Submit on-boarding documents

☐ Send Reference form link to referees

☐ Submit medical clearance forms

☐ Make appointment and obtain relevant vaccinations

☐ Submit application for visa

☐ Complete CRS Learns courses, and submit certificates to Operation Specialist

☐ Complete reading relevant documents:

- Be REDI: Introduction to Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at CRS
- PERSUAP guidelines for volunteers
- F2F Environmental Guidelines
- Safeguarding for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers
- Code of conduct and ethics
- Travel insurance process
- Read relevant Gender Brief: Ethiopia Gender Brief, Nepal Gender Brief, Timor-Leste Gender Brief, Uganda Gender Brief

☐ Download SOS insurance app, and complete registration

☐ Contact SOS through the app to receive a Pre-Trip Briefing

☐ Attend Connection call with host organization

☐ Confirm pre-departure logistics guidelines

☐ Read CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F volunteers

☐ Review suggested packing travel list

☐ Print relevant documents for travel: SOW, Visa, Visa Receipt, Country Constant Companion

☐ Pack relevant travel documents: passport and vaccination cards

☐ Pack relevant personal items in carry-on including medications, extra set of clothes, chargers etc.

On Assignment

Arrival in country

Upon arriving in the host country, you will need to go through immigration and customs. To ensure a smooth process, please ensure that all your relevant documents (such as a valid passport, visa, and vaccination record) are in order.

The hotel will arrange for a driver to pick you up, and they will have a placard with your name for easy identification. You will be driven to the hotel, and a CRS F2F team member will contact you ither on the same day or the following day.

On Monday or the day following a rest day, a CRS driver will pick you up and transport you to the office for in-country onboarding.

In-country on-boarding

In-country onboarding comprises a few key components: a security briefing, a review of CRS policies & procedures and a program briefing.

Security briefings are conducted by the CRS security team in-country. It is crucial to provide information regarding the locations you plan to visit during any personal days at this time, to help us ensure your safety and coordinate with our team effectively. We kindly request all volunteers to strictly adhere to the established security measures for both their own safety and that of our host organizations.

The program briefing will be led by a CRS F2F team member. During this session, you will receive a laptop, phone, and access to a wireless internet device for use throughout your assignment.

Additionally, the team will cover various aspects, including SOW and objectives, safeguarding procedures, medical emergency procedures to follow, media outreach and guidance, and your expected responsibilities during the assignment. These responsibilities include supervising attendance records, completing a final report, and participating in end-of-assignment presentations and debriefs. An overview of what is covered during the briefing can be found here. Please review the orientation agenda beforehand to address any questions during the meeting.

Upon the conclusion of your in-country onboarding, you will travel to the host organization site. A CRS F2F team member will accompany you, and if necessary, a translator will be provided. Upon arrival, you will check into your hotel and then hold a pre-assignment meeting with the host representative to discuss training schedules and logistics. The host-volunteer meeting agenda can be found here. At the hotel, a F2F Team member should perform a brief check of the hotel room and premises to ensure security and safety. Please request this if it is not offered.

Assignment requirements – attendance roster, reports, & debrief

Attendance roster

In every assignment, volunteers have the responsibility of training host organizations and their members on topics aligned with the SOW objectives. To ensure the effectiveness of these training sessions, it is imperative that selected participants attend, and attendance records are diligently maintained and reported to USAID.

A representative from the host organization or the translator must maintain a daily attendance record using an electronic/excel or paper-based attendance roster provided by the CRS F2F team. We request that volunteers oversee this process to verify both daily and final attendance numbers. Only participants who have attended at least **75%** of the entire training sessions can be counted as having completed the training.

Reports

Volunteers must submit an end-of-assignment report using the CRS report template and the Volunteer Presentation template We kindly request that you complete and submit this report before your departure from the country. The information contained in these reports is instrumental in monitoring host organization progress and is reported to our donor, USAID.

In-country debrief

Volunteers will need to prepare a concise presentation of their assignment using the CRS F2F Volunteer Presentation template, which will be utilized in the debrief meetings held in-country. These debrief meetings will involve both the host organization and the CRS F2F team. Depending on the schedule, a representative from USAID and/or CRS may also be present during the debrief meeting held upon your return to the capital city.

During these debrief sessions, volunteers are expected to discuss various aspects of the assignment, including its successes, challenges, and recommendations. It is also important for volunteers to review the recommendations with the host organization to ensure their feasibility. Recommendations that are accepted will be closely monitored by our country team and reported to our donor, USAID.

Medical emergency

If you become ill during your assignment, follow these steps:

1. Immediately contact a F2F country team member using your CRS phone if you start to feel unwell.

2. F2F country staff will connect with the host and deploy support immediately based on the level of medical emergency.

3. Contact International SOS through the SOS app and alert them to the medical emergency. SOS will make a referral to an appropriate medical provider. Alternatively, you can make an international call to SOS at 1-215-942-8226.

4. Your SOS membership number is **11BYCA814708** and this card can be printed out for reference.

Going directly through the SOS is recommended as SOS will assist you directly with your case and pay the provider/hospital for your bills once the issue has been resolved.

If you receive care at a provider not affiliated with SOS, you will have to self-pay for your medical care and will be reimbursed through a claim form upon your return to the US. Email your US F2F Point of Contact (PoC) for the form and next steps. We strongly discourage this method since claims can take a long time to process and create issues if there are no proper receipts.

We kindly request that volunteers adhere to the medical advice provided by the healthcare professionals in the host country.

More details on the CRS insurance process can be found here.

Personal days and weekends

Volunteers taking personal days must inform the CRS F2F team of their intended personal day location(s) for security assessment prior to departure from the US and during the in-country onboarding orientation session. Personal days should be scheduled after the assignment, and volunteers are responsible for all associated logistics and costs. CRS does not cover accommodation, per diem, or any airline fees due to flight cancellations.

Our CRS F2F team members are happy to provide recommendations for places of interest to visit during the weekends and personal days of your assignment. We ask volunteers to make their own logistic arrangements including driver, vehicle, and accommodation.

For your safety and security, it is imperative that you strictly adhere to the locations you provided to the security team during your in-country onboarding. Deviating from these designated areas poses potential risks and compromises our ability to ensure your well-being. If there are any planned deviations, we ask that you inform the F2F country team ahead of time to obtain approval from the security team. If permission is not granted, we kindly request all volunteers to strictly adhere to the established security decisions.

Please note that some assignments, due to their short duration (2-3 weeks), may require training on Saturdays.

Post Assignment

Expenses and reimbursement

Upon return to the U.S., we kindly request that volunteers submit their complete expense and reimbursement report using the CRS reimbursement excel sheet. For all reimbursable expenses, please ensure that valid receipts are provided, as we are unable to process reimbursement without one. Please complete the document in its entirety, excluding per diem or items for which CRS has made direct payments.

You can anticipate receiving reimbursements within 7- 10 days of submission. Your prompt attention to this process is greatly appreciated.

Debrief(s)

To enhance both the volunteer experience and the F2F program, we kindly ask all returning volunteers to participate in our brief 10-minute volunteer debrief survey. Your honest feedback is greatly appreciated.

Additionally, volunteers who wish to engage in a direct conversation with the F2F Director should inform your Operations Specialist who will arrange a mutually convenient time. This meeting will be conducted via MS Teams.

Outreach

CRS expects all F2F volunteers to attempt at **least three outreach activities** post assignment. Our donor, USAID, also requires that we report on F2F volunteer outreach activities annually. To help us with our reporting requirements, please send documentation of your outreach, and any required consent forms, within **four weeks** of completing your F2F assignment to farmertofarmer@crs.org. Please review the CRS Outreach Guidelines for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers on information on sharing outreach on social media and other platforms.

If you have good quality photos of your assignment that you would like to share, please email a maximum of five with corresponding captions and photo credit to farmertofarmer@crs.org

Explore CRS' F2F public & private Facebook pages and tag us in your posts about your experiences.

Post Assignment checklist

☐ Validate participant registration sheet

☐ Finalize and submit assignment reports, presentations, and **5 high quality photos** to farmertofarmer@crs.org

☐ Hold debrief meeting with host, CRS F2F team member(s), and other selected stakeholders

☐ Fill and submit CRS reimbursement excel sheet to Operation Specialist including receipts

☐ Submit post assignment debrief survey

☐ Conduct at least three (3) outreach activity/per assignment. Use CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F volunteers

☐ Debrief with F2F Director (optional)

☐ Refer a colleague or friend for a Farmer-to-Farmer assignment

☐ Fill out bi-annual volunteer outreach survey when received

Other
Frequently Asked Questions

Will I receive compensation for my time on an assignment?

No. Although our program covers the costs incurred by volunteers during their assignments, volunteers are not compensated for their time. These opportunities are volunteer-based and not considered paid consultancies.

What if my flight is delayed?

If your flight is delayed but you are still able to make your connecting flights no further action is needed.

What if I miss my flight?

If you miss your flight, you should quickly chat with someone at your airline counter to see if it is possible to arrange another flight. If you are unsuccessful, email corporate traveler (CT) CTAH@corporatetraveler.us (CT agent and copy your Operations Specialist) or call CT on 703-236-1220 if you have international dialing.

What if the airline loses my luggage?

Personal property like luggage is not covered by CRS if it is lost or damaged. Unfortunately, we do not reimburse for lost luggage but would work with the volunteer to try and locate the luggage and if unsuccessful, encourage the volunteer to file a claim with the airline and their insurance.

Do I need to travel with my personal computer?

No, you are not required to travel with your personal computer. A computer will be provided to you for the purpose of your assignment.

What are transportation and accommodations like for a typical assignment?

Volunteers are provided with individual rooms, typically in local hotels, guest houses, or lodging arranged by our country partners, all meeting CRS safety standards. Transportation logistics, including flights and ground transportation, are carefully coordinated to facilitate arrivals and departures. Detailed information is provided to volunteers before departure for a well-prepared and seamless experience.

Can I volunteer with a friend/spouse, or can friends or family members accompany volunteers on their assignments?

Volunteers have the option of being accompanied by friends or family members during, before, or after the assignment, subject to approval from the F2F country team and consideration of the assignment's location and type. It is recommended for companions to join after the assignment concludes, allowing the volunteer to concentrate on their objectives during the assignment. First-time volunteers are encouraged to undertake solo assignments for a comprehensive F2F experience.

If bringing a companion, volunteers will be accountable for covering all associated expenses, including but not limited to airfare, additional accommodation charges, insurance, etc. Volunteers must acknowledge, plan for, and take full responsibility for their companions while in the country, whether it is during, before, or after the assignment.

Can I post on social media while in-country?

Yes, we encourage volunteers to document their experiences while in country. However, we ask that you do not post pictures of children and/or vulnerable populations. Consult the CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F Volunteers.

 on more guidance on social media posting.

How can I ensure my short assignment has an impact?

The Farmer-to-Farmer program has a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor assignment impacts. We strive to arrange impactful assignments through a three-step process:

1. Identifying & addressing real needs: Farmer-to-Farmer identifies current gaps in agricultural value chains that are not being fully met by local organizations in each country.

2. Volunteer selection and support: Farmer-to-Farmer selects volunteers who are qualified to address these gaps and ensures that they have an accurate assessment and proper tools to complete their assignments.

3. Assignment follow-up: Farmer-to-Farmer collects assignment write-ups and recommended action plans to help build on successes achieved.

List of F2F Documents/Links

Intake and Onboarding

- [Volunteer Travel Information Form](#)
- [Volunteer Release – US citizens](#)
- [Addendum to the Volunteer Release](#)
- [Medical clearance form](#)
- [Banking information form](#)
- [Reference form](#)

Orientation

- [F2F CRS Learns F2F portal](#)
- [F2F local volunteer model One-pager](#)

- [CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F Volunteers](#)
- [Center for Disease Control website](#)

- [F2F Photograph Training – Permission and Consent](#)
- [F2F Photography Training – Taking photos](#)
- [F2F Photography Training – Volunteers submitting photos to CRS](#)
- [Storytelling for F2F – Audience and using photos to tell stories](#)
- [Storytelling for F2F – Telling the F2F Story](#)

- [Ethiopia Visa Application Guide](#)
- [Nepal Visa Application Guide](#)
- [Timor-Leste Visa Application Guide](#)
- [Uganda Visa Application Guide](#)

- [Ethiopia online toolkit](#)
- [Nepal online toolkit](#)
- [Timor-Leste online toolkit](#)
- [Uganda online toolkit](#)

Assignment and Pre-departure

- [Ethiopia Gender Brief](#)
- [Nepal Gender Brief](#)
- [Timor-Leste Gender Brief](#)
- [Uganda Gender Brief](#)

- [SOS Medical Insurance procedure](#)
- [SOS Medical Insurance Card](#)
- [SOS Medical insurance – self purchase website](#)

- PERSUAP guidelines for volunteers
- F2F Environmental Guidelines
- Safeguarding for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers
- Code of conduct and ethics
- Be REDI: Introduction to Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at CRS

On Assignment

- In-country orientation & Debrief Agenda
- Host-volunteer meeting agenda
- CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F volunteers
- Participant attendance sheet – Excel
- Participant attendance sheet – Paper
- Volunteer Final Report Format
- Volunteer Presentation template
- Pesticide Use Form
- F2F PERSUAP Type 1 Assignment form
- F2F PERSUAP Type 2 Assignment form

Post Assignment

- CRS reimbursement excel sheet
- Debrief survey
- CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F volunteers

Volunteer Assignment Checklist

☐ Submit on-boarding documents

☐ Send Reference form link to referees

☐ Submit medical clearance forms

☐ Make appointment and obtain relevant vaccinations

☐ Submit application for visa

☐ Complete CRS Learns courses, and submit certificates to Operation Specialist

☐ Complete reading relevant documents: Be REDI: Introduction to Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at CRS, F2F Environmental Guidelines, Safeguarding for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers, Code of conduct and ethics, PERSUAP guidelines for volunteers, Relevant gender briefs: Ethiopia Gender Brief, Nepal Gender Brief Timor-Leste Gender Brief, Uganda Gender Brief

☐ Download SOS insurance app, and complete registration

☐ Attend Connection call with host organization

☐ Confirm pre-departure logistics guidelines

☐ Read CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F volunteers

☐ Review suggested packing travel list

☐ Print relevant documents for travel: SOW, Visa, Visa Receipt, Country Constant Companion

☐ Pack relevant travel documents: passport and vaccination cards

☐ Pack relevant personal items in carry-on, including medications, extra set of clothes, chargers etc.

☐ Complete in-country on-boarding and security briefing

☐ Complete in-country meeting with host organization

☐ Implement assignment and meet outlined objectives

☐ Validate participant registration sheet

☐ Finalize and submit assignment reports, presentations, and 5 high quality photos to farmertofarmer@crs.org

☐ Hold debrief meeting with host and CRS F2F team member(s)

☐ Fill and submit CRS reimbursement excel sheet to Operation Specialist including receipts.

☐ Submit post assignment debrief survey

☐ Conduct at least three outreach activity. Use CRS Outreach Guidelines for F2F volunteers

☐ Debrief with F2F Director (optional)

☐ Refer a colleague or friend for a Farmer-to-Farmer assignment

Photo Credit: Mountaga Drame for CRS. Megan Amara SZROM a Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer Strengthening the capacities of Gbedjromede women group in pest management and efficient water management through an integrated market gardening-fish farming approach and how to build a Hugelkultu.

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