



## Trip Funds and Travel Cost Policy

### **Trip Funds Policy**

Lifewater Water Corps members are responsible to cover their full trip and travel costs (trip funds) for Lifewater's international training trips. Water Corps members may personally contribute these funds and/or solicit donations from others.

Funds received by Lifewater on behalf of a Water Corps member are considered tax deductible donations and are eligible for receipting as such.

### **Trip Approval and Payment**

Water Corps members must be approved for a trip by Lifewater staff and submit a signed Trip Commitment form before they can begin fundraising for trip funds. The appropriate trip code must be included with all donations to ensure proper processing and credit.

- All checks must be accompanied by a Reply Coupon (available on the VTIC) listing the Water Corps member's name and specific trip code.
- Online donations are also acceptable but must include the Water Corps member's name and trip code in the comments section.

\*\*NOTE: It is imperative that the Water Corps member's name NOT appear on the memo line of any check donation.

### **Excess Trip Funds**

Tax deductible donations made to non-profit organizations cannot be returned to a donor or individual. Funds contributed in excess of the trip cost are considered donations to the greatest need.

Trip funds contributed in excess of the stated trip cost are not eligible to be designated as deferred trip funds or 'rolled-over' to cover costs of additional trips. Excess funds are considered donations to the greatest need. Water Corps members are encouraged to monitor their fundraising results carefully, through ongoing contact with supporters and donation tracking through the VTIC, and inform donors when they have reached their trip fundraising goal.

### **Trip Cost Timeline**

<b>Airfare, Trip Cost &amp; Forms</b>	<b>Due Date Schedule</b>
Airfare	If airfare is being purchased through Lifewater, full coverage of airfare must be submitted to Lifewater <u>prior</u> to purchase of tickets
Trip forms and color copy of passport	Due by purchase of airline tickets
50% of remaining trip cost	Due no later than 3 weeks prior to departure
100% of trip cost balance	Due by date of departure



### **Trip Withdrawal, Postponement, Cancellation, or Removal**

Once a person is approved for a trip and has signed the Trip Commitment form, any funds received by Lifewater from or on behalf of that Water Corps member are designated as trip funds. Should a Water Corps member need to terminate their participation in a trip for any reason, any funds contributed will be transferred to the greatest need. Lifewater reserves the right to work within individual circumstances to find another means of applying those funds (such as an upcoming trip), but such a solution cannot be guaranteed.

If a trip is postponed or terminated due to weather, insecurity, or natural disaster, those funds will be transferred to the greatest need. Lifewater reserves the right to work within individual circumstances to find another means of applying those funds (such as a rescheduled trip or alternative trip), but such a solution cannot be guaranteed.

Lifewater reserves the right to remove an individual from a trip/team prior to or during a trip if the individual's behavior contradicts the Team Code of Conduct (per the Trip Commitment form). In such a case, any funds contributed towards the trip will remain within the designated project.

### **Understanding trip donations and IRS Allowable Costs**

- Questions regarding personal trip expenses and tax deductions should be directed to a personal tax preparation specialist.
- The Internal Revenue Service has allowable categories for mission trips. Using these allowable categories, Lifewater staff estimates trip and airfare costs and posts the trip on the Volunteer Information Center (VTIC). Allowable costs used to estimate trip and travel costs include reasonable expenses for:
  - **Airfare** - from the U.S. returning (round trip) to the U.S.
  - **Airport Tax** - international airports may charge arrival and/or departure tax
  - **Food** - food, non-alcoholic drinks, snacks
  - **Lodging** - hotels/guesthouses for the duration of the training trip
  - **Ground Transportation** - travel to/from training venue, airports, lodging, restaurants
  - **In-Country Communications** - internet, phone/minutes/SIM purchases
  - **Emergency Medical Travel Insurance** - Lifewater purchased travel insurance effective: day of departure - day of return
  - **Lifewater Logistical Support** - administration costs for the organization, team preparation, communications and management of the trip
- As a team prepares for the trip actual costs may increase or decrease due to inflation, currency fluctuations, and/or availability of appropriate accommodations. Lifewater staff monitors these factors and updates the team as changes are known.

### **Individual team members also incur additional costs falling into two categories**