

Service Visit Frequently Asked Questions



CORD USA Summer Service Visit 2025

Must be read and understood by all participants and their parents before applying. For optimal communication, please reach out with any questions that are NOT addressed here.

1. What is the service project?

This is an opportunity for Bala Vihar youth in the United States to volunteer at one of our CORD centers in India.

2. How will my child benefit from this project?

Volunteering directly with the less privileged provides students with a meaningful opportunity for inner growth and personal development.

3. What is the duration of this project?

The program lasts approximately two weeks. Part-time attendance is not permitted. Students and chaperones may only leave in the case of an emergency.

4. What is the eligible age to participate?

Student volunteers must be at least 15 years old by July 2025 and be rising 10th graders or above. They must be currently enrolled in the Bala Vihar program to apply. Continuous enrollment for the past few years with good attendance is preferred.

5. What is the application timeline?

- **Chaperone applications** open first and remain open for six weeks or until the necessary number of chaperones are selected.
- **Student applications** open after chaperones are selected and remain open for two months or until all slots are filled.
- Upon registering, you will receive an acknowledgment email. This does **not** confirm participation.
- Once selections are finalized, confirmation emails will be sent to selected students. Those not selected will also be notified.
- Do **not** purchase tickets until you receive a confirmation email.

Selection is conducted by a team of national and regional coordinators after a thorough review. Their decisions are final.

6. What will students do as part of the program?

Students will engage with various CORD programs, including:

- Interacting with Bala Vihar children, adolescent girls, differently-abled individuals, and Mahila Mandal groups.
- Participating in physical labor such as village clean-ups, toilet construction, and digging compost pits.
- Performing activities outdoors in warm weather, requiring appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Hiking and walking as part of field activities. Students and chaperones must be physically capable of participating without assistance.

7. What is expected of students?

- Attendance at **all** pre-departure online meetings is mandatory. Missing two or more meetings will result in disqualification.
- Students must adhere to volunteer guidelines and chaperone instructions.
- Modest attire is mandatory and crucial to the program's success.
- Service hours will be awarded based on conduct and active participation, not just attendance.
- After returning, students must volunteer for a **CORDUSA project within the academic year**. Guidance will be provided for local projects. Apply **only** if you are committed to fulfilling this requirement.

8. What are the registration fees and costs?

- **Total cost:** \$1,500 per person (students and chaperones).
- **Payment schedule:**
 - \$250 non-refundable registration fee at the time of application.
 - \$1,250 payment within three days of acceptance notification.
 - All payments are non-refundable.
- The fee covers boarding, food, and project transportation **after arrival** at the CORD center.
- **Not included:**
 - Airfare to India.
 - Transportation to/from the CORD center at the start and end of the trip.
 - Incidental expenses.
- An additional \$125 must be paid via Zelle to the assigned chaperone for incidental expenses. Any unused amount will be refunded after returning to the U.S.

9. How can I apply?

- Applications must be submitted online via the **CORD USA website**.
- A complete application includes:
 - Online form submission.
 - Release of liability form signed by **both parents and the student**.
 - Payment of the initial registration fee.

- Bala Vihar teacher evaluation form (student responsibility to follow up with the teacher).
- **Incomplete applications will not be processed.**
- The regional CORD USA coordinator will interview students before final selection.

10. Where do we send the release of liability form?

- The signed form must be scanned as a **PDF** and uploaded at the time of registration.
- **Without all signatures, the application is incomplete and will not be processed.**

11. What are the immigration requirements?

- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring valid travel documents.
- **Strongly recommended:** Obtain an **OCI (Overseas Citizenship of India) card** well in advance, as processing can take 3-4 months.

12. What are the boarding arrangements?

- Boys and girls will have separate accommodations.
- Students must adhere to cultural norms regarding interaction between boys and girls.
- Violating program guidelines may result in dismissal from the trip.

13. Will students be supervised at all times?

Yes. Trained program managers oversee activities, and chaperones accompany students throughout the trip.

14. Will chaperones accompany my child to India and back?

Group travel to India will be facilitated, but each student is responsible for their own travel arrangements.

15. What are the muster point arrangements?

- A **muster point** and time will be designated in India where students and chaperones will gather before traveling together to the CORD center.
- Chaperones' responsibility begins **at the muster location and time** and ends **at the muster location and time** at the end of the trip.
- Parents must arrange for students to arrive at and be picked up from the muster location.
- **Do not book international tickets until muster details are confirmed by CORD USA.**

16. What are the service visit dates and location for Summer 2025?

- **Location:** CORD Siruvani, Tamil Nadu, India.
- **Dates:** Sunday, July 27, 2025 – Saturday, August 9, 2025.
- **Muster Point:** Coimbatore Airport.

- Arrival: **July 27, 2025, at 12:00 PM (Noon).**
- Departure: **August 9, 2025, approximately 4:00 PM.**
- Parents must ensure timely pickup from Coimbatore Airport upon trip completion.

17. Are similar programs available at other CORD centers?

Yes. Similar programs have been conducted at other CORD centers, and more locations may be added in the future.

18. Are there COVID-related requirements?

- All participants **must be vaccinated.**
- We will follow CORD center protocols as necessary.

19. What facilities are available?

- Clean, comfortable, and safe accommodations.
- Vegetarian meals and bottled/purified water are provided.
- Western toilets may be available.
- Packed lunches will be provided during field visits.

20. What if my child gets sick?

- Only **basic** healthcare is available at the service locations.
- A **local guardian in India is required** to pick up the student in case of serious illness.
- Chaperones and the service center can handle only minor health issues.

21. Why is a local guardian required?

- In case of an emergency, parents may not be able to reach the child in time.
- A **designated local guardian** ensures the child receives necessary medical care if needed.
- Chaperones **cannot** serve as guardians since they must remain with the group.

22. Can parents visit their child during the service visit?

- Family members may visit students at the CORD center on a designated date (to be announced).
- Parents/visitors **cannot** stay with the student.
- Only selected chaperones may stay with students during the program.

For any additional questions, please contact **CORD USA**.