



Volunteering with MOMS

We are glad you are interested in working with us. Many people have questions about MOMS' needs and criteria and the commitment necessary. This document will answer those questions. Read this, then get in touch with us so we can talk about the possibilities.

Who is MOMS?

Midwives on Missions of Service is a charitable institution, a non-profit organization registered under the IRS rules, section 501(c)(3). We are not a religious organization, although most of the staff, Board, and volunteers have a spiritual practice of some sort.

Our mission is to improve maternal/child health and maternity outcomes through education and service. Our focus is on underserved women who do not have access to quality maternity care.

We train women to be skilled birth attendants, customizing our curriculum to meet the needs of the situation – local culture, national support, and the needs of the learners and the women they will serve. We include both theory and practical skills, believing that the birth attendants will make better decisions if they have a solid understanding of the factors involved in a woman's condition.

We are called to serve the marginalized women of the world. We have a vision of improving women's and children's lives by helping provide excellent maternity care. We stay focused on serving women and preparing them to support their communities skillfully. With rich experience in working effectively and efficiently, we also think creatively. We act responsibly with the trust our donors and our clients have given us. We like to have fun, not taking ourselves too seriously, while taking MOMS' work very seriously.

MOMS is a small organization, and that is deliberate. Larger organizations require a larger infrastructure. The people we serve cannot support or match such infrastructure needs. MOMS is nimble and can go into tiny, poverty-stricken areas because we do not need large facilities, expensive or bulky equipment, or salaried employees. We can go into areas of great need with skillful hands, trained minds, sensitive hearts, and a couple of suitcases full of supplies.

The skills that MOMS needs:

MOMS uses volunteers in many areas. Some areas require specific skills, such as book-keeping, grant-writing, teaching, and curriculum development, while others are more general, such as sourcing supplies, hosting showers or other fund-raising events, or researching malaria. Following are some of the roles where we use volunteers.



Board of Directors.

- Board members are not paid.
- Positions include President, Secretary, Treasurer, and general members.
- Board members make decisions, give presentations, raise money, research options, contribute ideas, and do other tasks that need to be done.
- MOMS has a packet with the information prospective Board members need.

Fund-raising.

- Fund raisers are not paid.
- Fund raisers make presentations, host dinners or showers or other social events, ask others to contribute, arrange for MOMS to be included in corporate giving activities, write grants, and similar activities.
- Fund raisers discuss their plans with the Board, and after the Board approves, the fund-raiser plans and conducts the activities.
- Fund raisers report on the activities, offering suggestions for improvement and recommendations for aspects of the activities that are worth repeating.
- Fund raisers promptly send the proceeds to MOMS Treasurer.

General support.

- General supporters are not paid.
- General support includes activities such as web site maintenance, office support, creation of presentations, research into sources of funds or supplies, etc.
- General supporters work as opportunities arise and as time permits.

Curriculum developers.

- Curriculum developers are not paid.
- Curriculum developers use instructional design and development skills to create lesson plans, instructor guides, and learning material for MOMS programs.
- MOMS instructional designer coordinates these activities, with the oversight of the Board.
- MOMS Instructional Designer must approve all applicants.



Trainers.

- Trainers are not paid.
- Trainers teach according to the curriculum prepared by professional instructional designers and midwives.
- Training sessions last all day, four days a week.
- Trainers coach the learners during practica at the local clinic.
- Trainers must have excellent theoretical understanding and practical experience with the subjects they teach.
- MOMS provides detailed instructions for preparing for overseas travel.
- MOMS Volunteer Coordinator and President must approve all applicants.

Program managers.

- Program managers are not paid.
- Program managers administer the program according to the standards set by MOMS.
- Program managers coordinate with local leaders to adapt to changing circumstances.
- MOMS provides detailed instructions for preparing for overseas travel.
- MOMS Volunteer Coordinator and President must approve all applicants.

Criteria for volunteers

Volunteers must be willing to work.

Trainers must be able to teach four days each week plus coach the clinical practice as appropriate for their skills. Curriculum developers must meet deadlines and quality standards. Researchers must report on their findings promptly. Board members must attend meetings, vote intelligently on issues, provide input and feedback on ideas, generate ideas. And so on.

Volunteers for trips to Sierra Leone will not have time for sight-seeing, exploring, researching personal history, or other personal activities. This is not a time for reflecting on one's own needs, vocation, or personal direction. Every volunteer must stay focused on the task and on keeping themselves and the rest of the team safe. That is a full-time effort.

Volunteers must support MOMS' mission, focus, and philosophy.

Volunteers certainly have their own perspectives on life, poverty, maternity care, politics, gender issues, and religion. Yet volunteers must manage their behaviors so those perspectives do not compromise MOMS' mission and work.



Volunteers must have emotional resilience and flexibility.

Working with a non-profit agency can be challenging. Limited resources and a huge mission create tension. Volunteers working hard can get tired and frustrated. They at times see terrible things happening to women and infants. Those working in the US at times get jealous of those who “get” to travel. All this requires significant maturity and self-assurance, a balanced perspective, and a great sense of humor. When volunteers can share the joy and the pain with each other, the experience can be wonderful.

Volunteers must be willing to contribute financially.

All volunteers should give – perhaps \$5.00, as was given by a middle-school student from her allowance, or \$25,000, if that is appropriate. We’ve learned that volunteers who give money develop a greater sense of commitment to the organization. They also tend to feel more attached to MOMS’ accomplishments. Volunteers for overseas trips will pay their own expenses and contribute to getting the needed supplies.

Volunteers must be skilled at the work for which they volunteer.

We give our good wishes to those who want to learn training, midwifery, or program management skills. But volunteers are not clients. All volunteers must be competent in their work so that together we can serve our clients and meet our mission.

Volunteers must have a “clean” reputation.

Volunteers for working overseas must pass a background check. If the government checks on the individual, we want to anticipate any questions they may have. Please let us know if you have been arrested, deported or banned from visiting a country, or have had any licenses suspended or revoked, and so on. Most of these situations are not a problem, we just need to know. Some of these conditions might prevent you from getting a visa. We need to discuss issues like these fully before making plans.

Next steps.

If you are interested in volunteering for MOMS, the best way to start the conversation is to contact us at volunteers@globalmidwives.org. We would like you to complete a volunteer application form, although it is not always necessary.

Going to Sierra Leone with MOMS is, for some, extremely rewarding. We would love to talk with you about the possibilities, needs, and logistics involved.

Those of us involved with MOMS love what we are doing. We are committed to improving maternal and neonatal health, especially for poor women. We welcome you to join us.