



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

For PEOF and Colegio Amun Shea

Everything you need to know about volunteer positions, our foundation, and how to apply to volunteer in Perquín, Morazán, El Salvador.

Perkin Educational Opportunities Foundation
2016-2017 Volunteer Application Guide

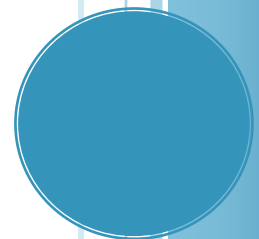


TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	About us.....	2
II.	Program Overview.....	4
III.	Position Descriptions.....	5
	a. Teaching.....	6
	b. Teacher Training.....	10
	c. Behind the Scenes.....	12
IV.	Cost and Compensations.....	15
V.	Application Process.....	16
VI.	Once Accepted.....	17

This document was adapted from PEOF's previous volunteer program document which was compiled by Laurelle Cheng. A huge debt is owed to her in the creation of this guide.

ABOUT US

THE FOUNDATION:

Perkin Educational Opportunities Foundation (PEOF) is a registered non-profit U.S. public charity 501(c)(3) which is also registered in El Salvador as a foreign non-profit foundation. Based in Perquín, Morazán, PEOF was founded in 2007 by a small group of Americans and Salvadorans with the goal of providing a higher quality of education in Central America in the pursuit of overcoming local socio-economic inequalities and stagnation. Nearly ten years on, PEOF is driven largely by Ronald Brenneman, an American who has been linked with the people of Morazán since 1983 when much of the population found refuge in Honduras. The board members of PEOF are a multi-disciplined, broad-based group of individuals who each became aware of the educational needs of the population through their own experience in the area. The foundation is designed to focus and multiply those individual efforts, as well as provide the opportunity to individuals, groups and institutions to join a long-term, non-partisan endeavor that will have a lasting positive impact in an area long crippled by poverty and stagnation.

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

PEOF and its partners believe that education is the great equalizer, but only if the education is effective, applicable, and targeted.

- a. **Effective education** means teaching in a way that genuinely improves the student; education must not, cannot, be rote memorization and copying information from a board. It must be developed in a way that inspires genuine creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning.
- b. **Applicable education** goes beyond the bounds of theory and actually involves the students in the subject material that they are learning (and integrating that material with other fields of study). It also means developing skills that are requirements for success in the real world: critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and effective communication are highly stressed.
- c. **Targeted education** means two things. First, it means that we work to help the people and regions who need it the most. The cycles of violence and poverty so ingrained in Central America can be broken by education, but only

if applied thoughtfully and thoroughly. Second, targeted education stresses the individuality in all of our students; being presented with a wide range of themes, teaching styles, and tasks allows each student to excel, sometimes with things they weren't even aware they could do.

COLEGIO AMÚN SHEA:

Amun Shea was founded in 2008 by PEOF and now serves nearly 70 students who span from Kindergarten through 11th grade. The school year runs from the end of January through mid-November and the small class sizes allow for an intimate educational experience. Amun Shea is the most concrete embodiment of PEOF's goals to date and is in many ways a staging ground for the foundation's creation and implementation of our teaching philosophy.

Immediately, it is an effort to revive the crippled public school system in the direct vicinity of Perquín, Morazan and is targeted towards helping low-income families. In the long run, Amun Shea will serve as a template for the educational reform that we hope to implement all throughout the country of El Salvador and even throughout all of Central America. More information about the school can be found at www.amunshea.com.

PERQUÍN AND EL SALVADOR:

Perquín is nestled high in the north-eastern mountains of the Morazán region of El Salvador. The town's remoteness imparts it with a rare tranquility and natural beauty and provides a wonderful atmosphere for the duties of the volunteer. Incursion of western society is almost invisible, so time spent here is a truly immersive cultural experience. Perquín's setting is also advantageous to the volunteer because of its safety, especially relative to the urban centers of El Salvador.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE PROGRAM

Opportunities for volunteers fall under three different tracks: youth education, teacher development, and behind the scenes work. Some work may be done remotely but the majority of it requires in-country presence. Work with the school tends to run from late January through mid-November (the school year), although there are some classes during the summer break. Work with the foundation is available year-round. Specific information on positions and their requirements can be found below.

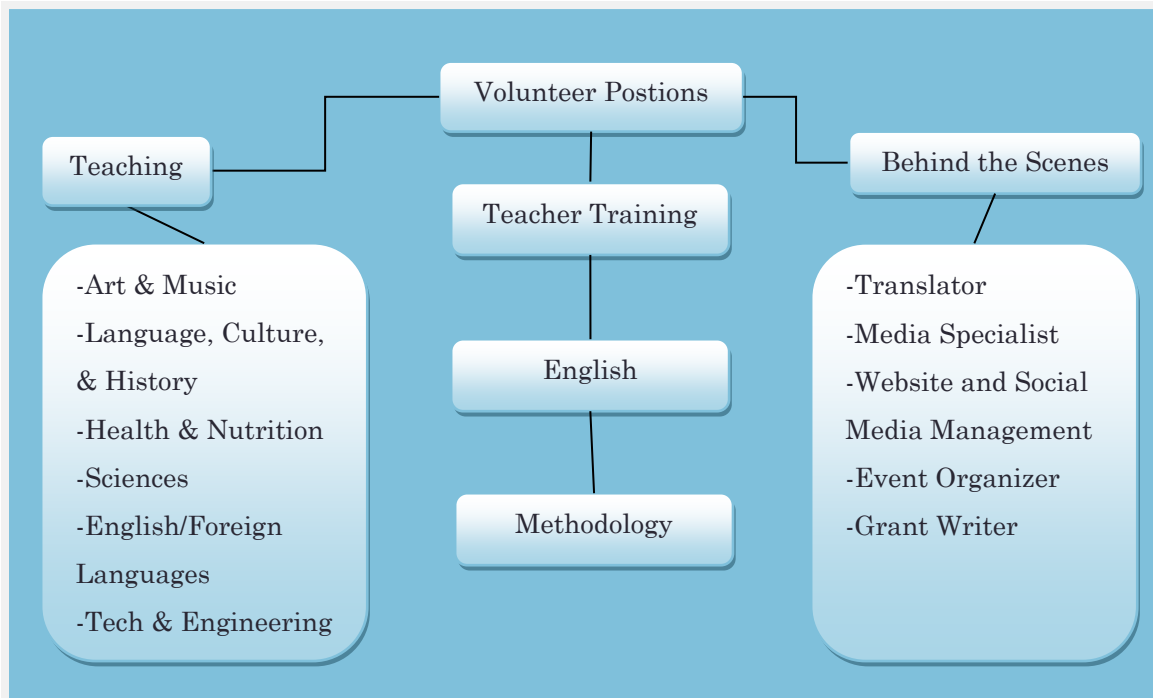
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following list of general requirements are basic things we look for from all applicants. Not meeting one or more of the requirements will not immediately disqualify your application but it will make your acceptance more challenging.

- a.* Have some background knowledge of the Spanish language; the more the better, and some roles require more or less proficiency.
- b.* Have completed or be in the process of completing a higher education degree. This “requirement” has the most flexibility; relevant experience or an otherwise impressive resume may supersede a degree.
- c.* Be comfortable working with children ages 3-16; some positions require more involvement than others, but most will require some interaction with the students.
- d.* Development of a project plan/proposal that will be your main focus during your time working as a volunteer.
- d.* Adaptability and resiliency; you will need to be able to adjust to a new language, culture, and setting. Air conditioning does not exist, Wi-Fi is available but uncertain, and bugs are populous. Not everyone can adjust and flourish away from their home and what they are accustomed to.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

This is a list of available volunteer positions, both for the PEOF and Colegion Amún Shéa. Position availability may fluctuate depending upon incoming applications, so being interested and applying for multiple positions is actually encouraged. Additionally, this list is not exhaustive; if you believe that you have a self-designed position that would fit into our school and/or organization, you are more than welcome to suggest something in your application. The following chart shows the breakdown of suggested functions.



TEACHING

Volunteers should expect to teach for between 5-10 hours each school week at a minimum, though taking on further responsibility is strongly encouraged. Less involved, part-time positions will be considered. Lessons last between 1-2 hours and class sizes rarely exceed 15 students. Combining grade levels is encouraged, so the ability to work with a range of ages and skill levels is a must. Volunteers should have a set project or group of projects that they want to pursue during their stay, although expansion and adjustment is possible. Project proposals should be accompanied by a curriculum with basic lesson plans and required materials.

ART AND MUSIC

Creativity and artistic expression are considered fundamental within our educational program so this position is a crucial one. Integrating these pursuits with the students' other courses of study is hugely important, but even more fundamental is applying a hands-on approach that stimulates the students' creativity. Applicants for this positions should:

- a. Be able to develop a program without expensive/excessive material because limited music and art supplies are available.
- b. Be able to work with class sizes of around 10 students, though larger or smaller classes are possible.
- c. Have specialization in one medium/instrument; this is preferable but not necessary.
- d. Have background in and the ability to teach the more technical aspects of music (music theory, etc.) for music teachers;
- e. Have background in and the ability to teach about art/music history and include the importance of the art/music that they are teaching about.

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, & HISTORY

Poverty in Morazan means that exposure to culture and the opportunity to travel is something that very few people have access to; expanding the minds of our students through access to these things is all the more important in light of this limitation. A manageable project in this area should focus on a single theme (religion, philosophy, art history, etc.) or a

single region (Ancient Greece, the Middle East, American History, etc.) of study. Applicants for this position should:

- a.* Have the ability to introduce new topics in an open-minded, delicate way that allows students to develop their own opinion is hugely important.
- b.* Have experience with in-depth study of or exposure to the target theme or region.
- c.* Have a passion for sharing their specific cultural or thematic focus.

HEALTH, NUTRITION, & HYGIENE

Poverty and poor health unfortunately go hand in hand. Amun Shea seeks to combat this inequality with quality education in health and nutrition, teaching students how to incorporate healthy food into a healthy lifestyle. Specializations may include nutrition, epidemiology/public health, sexual health, or physical education. Applicants for this position should:

- a.* Understand and work within the cultural and material limitations in the Morazan region (ie. Be aware that abortion is illegal and quite frowned upon, limited access to anything more than basic food supplies, limited knowledge about disease transmission and risks).
- b.* Be able to work with touchy subjects with you children (especially sexual/reproductive health).
- c.* Teach about how to integrate a healthy lifestyle into existing societal/personal trends.
- d.* Create an interactive project through which to teach your subject of choice (ie. If discussing the importance of food/water cleanliness, a project that would actually practice and incorporate doing these things in their community).

BIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, & OTHER SCIENCES

Amun Shea stresses the importance of living in-sync with our environment and preserving the natural beauty around us. Environmental studies, green technology, and biology are of particular importance, but any subject that teaches the students about the beauty of the natural world is greatly welcomed at Amun Shea. Applicants for this position should:

- a. Have some level of specialization in your chosen field (ie., one teaching biology should have a background in the study of biology, such as a major or minor).
- b. Have a set, achievable project that you wish to accomplish with the students. Said project should not require a significant monetary backbone, unless you are able to raise funds or provide the money/supplies by yourself or with the aid of an institution.
- c. Complete some background research on the environment of El Salvador and Morazan in particular and attention to the specific problems of the country.
- d. A particularly advanced level of Spanish is preferable for this position.

ENGLISH & FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The English language is a rare thing to hear in Perquin, but the desire to learn it is almost universal. It is viewed, rightly so, as an important ingredient to success, especially for those students who aspire to attend university in and English-speaking country. Other foreign languages are welcomed as well, especially Romance languages. These hold the most interest for the students outside of English and are the easiest for them to learn because of the linguistic connections to Spanish. Applicants for this position should:

- a. Have some kind of certificate in English Language teaching (TESOL, TEFL, CELTA) and experience in a classroom setting is highly preferred.
- b. Have some experience working with young children and patience and adaptability are a must.
- c. Possess advanced or fluent speaking abilities in whatever language you plan to teach
- d. Be aware that they may play the role of an English teacher for our students and our staff (See *English* section under *Teacher Training* for more information on the other position).

TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING

Amun Shea has a great need for specialists with a background in computer science, robotics, and engineering. Programming and app development are of particular interest but all project proposals of this type are welcomed. At the moment we are looking specifically for someone to lead a Technovation Challenge team. More information about this competition can be found [here](#). Applicants for this position should:

- a.* Have at least an intermediate level of Spanish fluency.
- b.* Have experience and/or background in whatever specialty they chose to focus on.
- c.* Be able to work with limited technology resources; most students have a laptop or tablet but not all do and internet cannot be counted on to work on a daily basis.

TEACHER TRAINING

Lessons for teachers will typically be during the school week and may take place during or after school hours. Observation of teacher performance will take place during regularly scheduled classes. Teacher trainers should expect to work at least ten hours a week between classes and performance evaluations, though longer hours are encouraged. Less involved, part-time positions are considered.

ENGLISH

All of our teachers have some background in English but are far from fluent and well below the level needed to meaningfully teach English to their students. Teaching our staff English both allows us to expand as a more international organization, but also allows English to become a more consistent part of the curriculum at Amun Shea. Applicants should:

- a. Be comfortable working across various skill levels in one class.
- b. Have some kind of certificate in English Language teaching is a requirement (TESOL, TEFL, CELTA) and experience in a classroom setting is highly preferred.
- c. Experience teaching English to adults is preferred.
- d. Applicants for this position may play the role of an English teacher for our students and our staff (See *English & Foreign Languages* section under the *Teaching* section for more information on the other position).

METHODOLOGY

If you feel you would work well within our educational methodology and have experience implementing or learning from this kind of teaching, working as a teacher trainer to help apply our methodology might suite you well. Many of our teachers have little experience with teaching or were trained in a more traditional methodology that we are trying to move away from. As our organization is continuing to adapt and just beginning to apply our methodology, this position holds a lot of promise for development within our organization. Applicants should:

- a. Be self-directed and be able to work without a lot of guidelines and boundaries.

- b.* Be comfortable working with and teaching other adults new methods of pedagogy, as well as be comfortable working with children in a school setting.
- c.* Have a background or interest in experimental and alternative pedagogy (such as Montessori and Waldorf educational models)

BEHIND THE SCENES

Some of these positions may be done remotely to some extent, though on-ground presence is preferable. A higher level of Spanish may be required by these positions because of the likelihood that you will be required to communicate in Spanish and English with various members of the school or organization. Work and communication with the community outside of the school is also likely.

TRANSLATOR

A translator will likely work with both the school and the foundation and their main job will be to translate website and social media material, applications, and outreach materials from Spanish to English or vice versa. They may act as a translator in classroom or meeting settings for the school. Volunteers should expect to work at least 15 hours a week, though business will depend on the production of materials that need translation. Additionally, less-involved, part-time positions will be considered. This position may easily be done remotely. Applicants for this position should:

- a. Be fluent or near-fluent in Spanish and English.
- b. Have excellent written and oral communication skills.
- c. Experience with translation is greatly preferred but not required.

MEDIA SPECIALIST

This position will mainly involve working at the school to capture photos and video that can be used for news updates and promotional purposes. This position will preferably be combined with the website/social media manager to some extent. As such, the volunteer should be prepared to create and publish promotional materials and news updates both on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and on our websites (the Amun Shea website and the PEOF website). 10-15 hours of work a week should be expected, though less-involved, part-time positions will be considered. Applicants for this position should:

- a. Have experience working with photography and photo/video editing software.
- b. Be able to supply their own camera/video camera/other necessary materials.
- c. Have experience or interest working in public relations/advertising/public outreach.
- d. Bonus skills include: social media management experience, graphic design abilities, website experience, website design/programming skills.

WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

This position will work closely with or be combined with the Media Specialist position described above. The primary task for this volunteer will be to maintain and expand our social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and to keep our websites up to date with news and current events items. Photography and videography work may be combined with these tasks if the volunteer chooses to combine this position with the Media Specialist position. 10-15 hours of work a week should be expected, though less-involved, part-time positions will be considered. Applicants for this position should:

- a. Have some experience managing social media or be highly proficient/active with social media.
- b. Have experience with website management, journalism, or some related field.
- c. Have excellent written communication skills.
- d. Website design/programming skills, photography/videography experience, and proficiency with photo and video editing software are a plus.

EVENT ORGANIZER

Communication and collaboration between the school/foundation and our partners, other schools, and the community at large is of vital importance to the success and growth of our mission. This position will work to coordinate between students, staff, parents, and other elements of the community in creating and managing events for the school and the foundation. An example project is our festival to celebrate *Día de la Paz* (Day of Peace); the school is coordinating an arts festival in the city center, various cultural and artistic presentations by students, a parade with several surrounding schools. The festival also serves as a fundraising event for the school. Applicants for this position should:

- a. Be fluent or almost fluent in Spanish.
- b. Have excellent communication, organization, and interpersonal skills.
- c. Have some experience with community organization and/or managing fundraising events.
- d. Be familiar/become familiar with the cultural trends of the Morazan area and be comfortable working within these bounds.

GRANT WRITER

This position can easily be done remotely, though an on-ground presence is preferred.

Volunteers for this position should expect to work at least 15-20 hours each week, though less-involved, part-time positions will be considered. The position will primarily involve working to apply for grants and work with our various partners to implement and maintain various projects for the foundation and the school. Project/grant focuses will largely focus around education and teacher training, agriculture, and environmental studies and policy.

Applicants for this position should:

- a.* Have excellent organizational and communication skills, especially written.
- b.* Be able to complete grant and project applications AND be able to seek out such opportunities on behalf of the foundation.
- c.* Background experience in subjects such as education, agricultural science, and environmental studies are a bonus.
- d.* Fluency in Spanish and English is a bonus so that applications can be filed in both Spanish and English.

COST AND COMPENSATION

1. Once selected, volunteers will be provided with the following compensations:
 - a. Room and Board, which will include:
 - i. A comfortable room at the Perkin Lenca hotel (an easy fifteen-minute walk from the school).
 - ii. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the Perkin Lenca restaurant.
 - iii. Lunch provided at the school during the work week.
 - iv. All food is prepared according to strict sanitary standards and any water used is purified; everything you are provided to eat and drink will be completely safe for a western stomach.
 - b. Transportation to and from San Salvador (the only airport in the country).
 - c. Full access to the school's and foundation's resources and support.
2. The foundation will work with you to raise money for the cost of air travel, although the cost is surprisingly minimal for international air travel.
3. The foundation is not responsible for:
 - a. Pocket money/sightseeing.
 - b. Any visa costs (more information provided below).
 - c. Travel insurance (more information provided below).

APPLICATION PROCESS

- 1. Fill out the PEOF Application Form:** The first step is to fill out our short application form which can be found on our [website](#). Send us the completed copy electronically.
- 2. Participate in an application interview:** If your application suggests you would be a good fit for our organization, you will be selected to take part in an interview with our volunteer coordinator and/or other key members of the foundation.
- 3. Keep in touch:** Keep an eye on your email for our final decision as it shouldn't be more than a week or two after your interview takes place!
- 4. Develop your project proposal and get ready for your trip:** There are a few more things we will be needing from you after your acceptance, so check out our *Once Accepted* section for more information. Additionally, you should make sure to be well prepared for your trip. More information is available below and in our supplemental document, *A Volunteer's Guide to El Salvador*.

ONCE ACCEPTED

If you've gotten this far, congratulations! You're almost done, but there are a few things to get done to prepare for your trip and the start of work with PEOF.

BASIC PREPARATIONS

The following list is not exhaustive, but it is a good overview of some of the basic personal preparations that you should have completed before you come down.

1. **Notify your bank:** This is an easy step but one that can have serious repercussions if not taken. Many banks will track or even suspend payments made in unexpected places, so let your bank know the dates and destination of your travel. This can be done online for most banks.
2. **Bring cash:** El Salvador uses U.S. currency. Most places, especially in the rural region of Morazan, prefer or only accept cash payments and ATM withdrawal is really only something you can do in the nearest city, about 40 minutes away. Bring small bills (nothing larger than a \$20) as anything bigger may not be accepted and may mark you as a particularly wealthy person. Perquin is safe, but its best to take precautions. Be aware that dollar bills are rare in El Salvador and the \$1 coin is better received.
3. **Your Passport:** Passports must be valid for at least 90 days but it is recommended to travel with 6 months' validity. If your passport is close to expiring, it is recommended to renew it in advance of coming down. If you do not have a passport and need to get one, be aware that the process may take up to three months, so you should begin as soon as possible. Your passport must also have at least one blank page for a travel visa stamp. Before coming to El Salvador, it is also imperative that you make a copy of your passport and have a printed and electronic copy of it.
4. **Visa Requirements:** Visas are not required for a stay of less than 90 days, although you must pay a \$10 fee upon entrance of the country for a travel visa (have a \$10 bill; they may not give you change for anything bigger). If you plan to stay longer than 90 days, you should consider applying for a work visa, an inexpensive and relatively painless procedure. See our supplemental document for information on this process.
5. **Register with the US Embassy:** Another easy process that gives you quite a few benefits. Not only does it inform you of travel alerts and warnings for your destination country, it also makes it easier for the US Embassy to contact you in case of an emergency situation in the country. Enroll [here](#).

6. Do your research: For detailed country information on El Salvador, the State Department's [country report](#) and the BBC's [country profile](#) are both fantastic resources. Not only do these resources impart an important cultural knowledge, they also provide more pragmatic information including information on required vaccinations, safety tips, and the like.
7. Get Vaccinated! At the time of this writing, no special vaccinations are suggested by the State Department for travel to El Salvador, but you should still speak to your doctor regarding any preventative medical measures that you should take.
8. Research and obtain travel insurance. Some good websites are:
 - a. InsureMyTrip.com: <http://www.insuremytrip.com/>
 - b. Travel Guard: <http://www.travelguard.com/>
 - c. Tesco Bank: www.tescobank.com/insurance/travelins/index.html

CONTACT US

After being accepted, it is important that you stay in contact with us until your arrival. This helps us know when to expect you and allows us to organize transportation from the airport to Perquin.

- a. Email us your complete travel itinerary (your airline ticket) and a copy of your passport.
- b. Complete and send the PEOF information form.
- c. Keep in contact with us to help develop your project proposal and to arrange for any materials that we may be able to provide to help you with your project.

USE OUR SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

Check out our volunteer's guide to El Salvador! This handy document contains information about suggested gear and clothing to bring, tips for travel and living in the country, and background cultural knowledge. We also have documents pertaining to work permit information.