

AMIGOS Tool Descriptions

1. Program Guides (Spanish and English)

- a. The Program Guide (both versions!) is your most important summer resources. This Guide is produced in both Spanish and English, so that you do not have to translate material for your activities and so that you can plan simultaneously with youth in your community. It contains all information on how to get started in your community, design and facilitate learning activities, steps of the CBI process, how to run community meetings and so much more. Most questions you will have about how start on your summer projects will be answered by opening your Program Guide. It is however a starting point and one resource. You should be actively looking for additional resources before and throughout your summer.

2. Volunteer Country Materials (VCMs)

- a. VCMs are the source of project specific information given to AMIGOS Volunteers pre-summer. This resource contains:
 - i. history of AMIGOS in the host country,
 - ii. description of the project's work area,
 - iii. background information for our partner agencies,
 - iv. overview of your role as a Volunteer in this project,
 - v. summer timeline,
 - vi. local expressions/words,
 - vii. typical food,
 - viii. educational topics (for you to research and bring materials),
 - ix. suggested reading list/movie list/website list,
 - x. postal information
 - xi. money and personal expenses
 - xii. appropriate host gifts
 - xiii. travel logistics/visa information
 - xiv. communications
 - xv. **your OFFICIAL packing list,**
 - xvi. and information on the Project Staff.

3. Volunteer Health, Safety & Travel Guidelines

- a. This resource has details for how to keep yourself healthy as a Volunteer and how to know when to activate your CALM plan. This will include tips on staying physically and mentally healthy, recommended first aid kit, AMIGOS health and safety procedures, how to report health and safety issues and staying healthy once you return home.
- b. This guide also has all the specifics for traveling to Latin America. Information such as important phone numbers, what to wear when traveling, where to go in the airport for more information, and how to go through customs.

4. Health Log

- a. Your personal log of your health during the summer. You should record any relevant information in your weekly health log. When your supervisor visits, you will review all entries with him/her each week. It is important to document your health and symptoms as they occur. Just as here in the US not all illnesses are serious enough to see a doctor, but you should write down all symptoms like headaches, minor upset stomach, etc.

5. Weekly Self Assessment

- a. This form is your personal assessment of all aspects of your time in the program. These include health, food/housing/personal safety, partner relations, project progress, and community participation. Each week you will fill out a form and review the status of each item with your Project Supervisor.

6. PSup description

- a. Your Project Supervisor will be in charge of 8-10 volunteers in 3-5 host communities for the summer program. These communities will make up your route. PSups arrive in Latin America several weeks before Volunteers to set up volunteer housing and food. Once you are in your host community, your PSup will deliver any mail check up on your mental and physical health, provide solutions to conflicts within the community, and help you plan to meet your program goals. PSups, like all AMIGOS Project Staff must be Volunteers prior to applying for the position. They are selected, trained and support by the International Office staff.

7. CALM Plan

- a. This your summer version of 911. This is your community's specific emergency plan and it only works when you are in your community, which is why AMIGOS Volunteers cannot leave their communities without prior permission from their Project Staff. The CALM Plan has emergency contact information for local, regional, national and international levels. You must carry your CALM plan at ALL times during the summer. The acronym CALM stands for Calm, Assist, Lift and Medical, which are the steps you should follow in handling an emergency situation.

8. Letter of Personal Coping Skills

- a. A personal and private document filled out during or after the Safeguarding Your Mental Health training module. It is a record of how you deal with stress at home and reminder of the coping skills that work well for you. Additionally, you agree to reach out for help if these coping skills are not sufficient for you at any time during your AMIGOS experience.

9. Partner(s) description

- a. You will be working closely with your partner(s) throughout the summer on all aspects of your project. In your community, you will be paired with one or two other AMIGOS Volunteers. You may or may not live together but you will most likely have a rotating meal schedule together. Your partnership will be working with community members to facilitate learning activities, steps of the CBI and any other project that you have time for. Your partner will likely be another US Volunteer, but may be an AMIGOS Volunteer from anywhere in Latin America. You and your partner are responsible for watching out for one another. Effective communication between your partnership is essential for a good summer project.

10. Host family description

- a. Host families offer their homes to AMIGOS Volunteers free of charge. They do not receive monetary payment for this service, but they do it out of a desire to live jointly with youth from another culture and to share our culture and tradition with others. They enjoy the benefits of the supplies and energy that the volunteers bring to the community. Often they are leaders within the community and they will be great resources of information as you get to know your way around. Don't be shy, be curious and start conversations even if you are shy about speaking in Spanish. However, remember as an AMIGO Volunteer you are guest. Be polite, clean up after yourself, help around the house, eat your food (it is often the only gift the family can afford to give you). Many Volunteers establish close and lasting bonds with their host families.