

Frequently Asked Questions

Volunteer Consultant Program



This document is a comprehensive resource for information regarding the Volunteer Consultant Program application and placement process. We recommend that you review the document in its entirety. If you have a specific question, you can go directly to the answer by viewing the topics below and clicking the appropriate link.

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- I have a question about the TechnoServe Volunteer Consultant Program. How can I contact TechnoServe?

I see that TechnoServe's headquarters is in the U.S. Is the Volunteer Consultant Program open to international applicants?

TechnoServe welcomes applicants of all backgrounds and nationalities. In any given year, more than half of the volunteer consultants placed may be from countries outside the U.S.

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I'm interested in learning more about typical volunteer consultant roles. What are the most common projects?

Typical projects consist of assessing value chains, industries and markets, and identifying opportunities to improve local economies; crafting business and funding strategies in partnership with one or more TechnoServe clients; strengthening the operations and/or organizational capacity of TechnoServe clients; researching and writing communication materials such as programmatic lessons learned; and designing innovative TechnoServe projects and proposals. Other, less frequent projects include but are not limited to exploring the use of new information and communication technology in our programs, evaluating long-term program impact and sustainability, designing and executing strategic research, and assessing financial and/or risk management for our clients and partners. Please view the document called "Sample Project Roles" on our website to review these project descriptions in more detail.

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I would like to see the list of project openings. Where can I review the specific opportunities available in my timeframe?

The Volunteer Consultant Program does not post specific project openings on our website. Roles are limited in number, and placements are highly competitive. The Volunteer Consultant Program team matches candidate skill sets closely with project requirements. Candidates are alerted if/when a potential match between skills and interests has been identified. At this point, a candidate will be sent additional information on the match or matches identified. When you apply to the Volunteer Consultant Program, you will have the chance to tell us about your experience, skills and interests, and share with us what you hope to gain – both professionally and personally – through the volunteer consultant experience. Your skills, interests and goals will be seriously considered as we explore whether a strong fit exists for you within our program.

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I would like to better understand the skills and capabilities required. Is there a typical volunteer consultant profile?

Volunteer consultants have a minimum of two years of full-time work experience and proven business skills applicable to our programs. Successful candidates typically have worked in client services at management consulting companies, investment firms, and industry leaders; demonstrate interest in living and working in

emerging markets; and bring stellar academic credentials. Key skills include – but go far beyond – proven strategic thinking, problem solving, communication and analytical capabilities. Volunteer consultants are resourceful, creative and passionate. They are equipped to handle ambiguity and navigate new cultures with enthusiasm.

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I am a professional with many years of business experience. Should I apply?

Yes. We have had volunteer consultants with 30+ years of experience who held senior-level management positions before joining the Volunteer Consultant Program. We would welcome your application.

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I need a certain amount of notice from TechnoServe. How far in advance would you recommend I apply?

We staff most projects between one and four months in advance of the agreed upon start dates. That being said, many successful candidates apply as many as six months ahead of their anticipated dates of availability. This is especially true if a candidate must first secure an employer's approval for a leave of absence. In the application, you will indicate the dates you are available to serve as a volunteer consultant with TechnoServe. You will also have the chance to share whether these dates are flexible or fixed and if you require a certain amount of notice from TechnoServe.

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I'm very interested in volunteering with TechnoServe but am available for less than 10 weeks. Should I still apply?

Most TechnoServe projects require at least a three-month commitment on the ground. In the summer months, we sometimes have 10-week positions available for MBA and graduate students. If you are available for less than 10 weeks, you may still apply, but please understand that the available opportunities will be limited. In some cases, shorter-term projects that are identified require financial contributions from the volunteer consultant to cover some, if not all, of his or her travel and in-country expenses.

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I have a specific geographic or project preference. How do I let you know about my preference(s)?

In the application, you will see a section called "Project Matching." Here we invite you to indicate specific preferences, if any, for the geographic region or country where you would like to volunteer. We also ask you to designate which one or two project types you feel best suited to, and in the essay section, to explain how your skills and capabilities align. Individual preferences on location and project type are taken into account. Please understand, however, that offers to join TechnoServe are ultimately subject to specific project needs.

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My significant other and I would like to volunteer consult together. Would this be possible?

Joint placements are possible but they are infrequent and cannot be guaranteed. If you are interested in applying with your significant other, please create two separate accounts and submit your individual applications in The ConCourse application platform. Please note your desire to be in the same location in the "Additional Information" section of the Personal Information page.

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I would like to be a volunteer consultant in Latin America but do not speak Spanish proficiently. Should I still apply?

With the exception of positions in Haiti and Brazil, a minimum of business-level proficiency in Spanish is required for all roles with our Latin America and Caribbean team. If you would not be able to effectively conduct business in Spanish, we would encourage you to consider applying for roles in Africa or India.

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A former volunteer consultant suggested I apply. Can I share the name with the Volunteer Consultant Program?

Yes, please do. In the application, we ask how you came to learn about the Volunteer Consultant program. Please note the source and list the specific name(s). We are always interested to hear about your connection to TechnoServe.

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I have already had the chance to send my resume to someone at TechnoServe. Do I need to apply formally?

Yes. Please indicate in The ConCourse application that you have been in touch with a member of the TechnoServe staff.

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I see I need to submit a form in The ConCourse platform. Is there anything else I must prepare or submit?

Yes. On the last page of the application, you will be prompted to upload two documents. The first is an up-to-date copy of your resume or CV. The second is a PDF or Word document with brief answers (up to 400 words) to the two required essay questions. These questions are detailed in the application.

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I have submitted my form and materials. When will someone review my application?

When you submit your application through The ConCourse application platform, you should receive an email confirmation. If you do not receive this email, please send an inquiry to volcon@tns.org, indicating the date and time you submitted the form. We review all incoming applications in their entirety, so please rest assured. We look forward to learning more about you, and if we establish your profile is a strong fit for a volunteer consulting role with TechnoServe, we will contact you.

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I am excited to get started. How long does the selection process take from beginning to end?

The timing will depend on a number of factors, including your availability, the projects we have available and preparatory steps such as obtaining a partner or client's input. In some cases, the process – from initial project match to confirmed offer – may take just a few weeks. In other cases, placement may take a few months. The Volunteer Consultant Program team will keep you updated along the way. Please understand that submitting your application does not guarantee a place in the program. The Volunteer Consultant Program is highly competitive.

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My availability or deadline has changed since I applied. How do I update this information in the database?

Please share your updated information via an email to the Volunteer Consultant Program at volcon@tns.org.

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I am curious about the selection process. How does TechnoServe match candidates with projects?

Projects emerge on a rolling basis. If the Volunteer Consultant Program staff identifies a project that aligns with your skills, interests and availability, a member of the team will email you to share an overview of the project. From there you would interview one or more times with the program team manager or country director. The interview, like the application, is an essential part of the selection process. The program team, in partnership with the Volunteer Consultant Program staff, will determine if an offer is appropriate.

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I'd like to do well in my interview(s) with TechnoServe. Do you have advice on how I can best prepare?

The interview process helps us get to know you, your talents, your goals, and your personality. Our aim is to find a role for you in which you will grow and excel. Each interviewer has his or her own style. In all cases, though, you will want to prepare for a mix of open-ended, behavioral, situational and/or case questions. If a statement of work has been shared in advance, you will want to review the expected deliverables and think through how you would

approach your work. The interview is also your opportunity to ask questions about the work, the team, the culture and the country in which you would be volunteering.

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The role I interviewed for didn't work out. Can I be considered for other volunteer consultant opportunities?

You will work with the Volunteer Consultant Program team to determine what projects, if any, align best with your skills and interests. From there, the team will be on the lookout for new potential matches.

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I am reviewing my budget. What costs will TechnoServe cover? What do I need to cover?

Most projects cover one round-trip international flight in economy class, in-country accommodation, daily per diem to cover meals and incidentals, required travel visas and vaccinations. All volunteer consultants working outside of their own countries are also given emergency evacuation insurance coverage with International SOS. Volunteer consultants are responsible for maintaining independent health insurance for the duration of their project. Please note that while TechnoServe covers the majority of these expenses for most projects, we do have some projects for which the budget cannot cover all such expenses. Indicating the expenses, if any, you would be willing to cover may open up additional TechnoServe project matches.

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I am a business or graduate school student looking for a summer internship. Do you have a formal program?

TechnoServe does not have a separate internship program for advanced degree candidates. However, many graduate students, especially MBA and MPP/MPA candidates, have spent their summers as volunteer consultants. Please apply to the Volunteer Consultant Program through The ConCourse application platform. If you are looking for a U.S.-based internship, please view the TechnoServe jobs page where specific openings would be listed.

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I cannot travel. Does TechnoServe offer remote projects?

Very rarely. From time to time, though, remote projects – i.e., projects that you would do from your home – do emerge. These projects depend on the needs of our teams in the field.

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I am a graduate student seeking a client for a capstone or other school project. Can I work with TechnoServe?

While we are sorry to miss the opportunity and thank you for your interest, TechnoServe is not currently accepting applications to partner with graduate student teams.

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I'd like to speak with the Volunteer Consultant Program team. Is it possible to arrange an informational interview?

We understand that you may wish to speak with a member of the team. However, due to the high volume of candidates and inquiries, we are not able to offer informational interviews. If you would like to be considered for an opportunity with the Volunteer Consultant Program, or learn more about specific project opportunities, please apply via The ConCourse application platform. We also encourage you to reach out to friends and colleagues who are program alumni. You may wish to do a search on LinkedIn to identify a connection.

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I have a question about the TechnoServe Volunteer Consultant Program. How can I contact TechnoServe?

If we have not answered your question through the information on our website or in this FAQ document, please send an email to volcon@tns.org. We will do our best to respond to you as soon as possible.

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