

FAQ Program 2017/18



1. At what kind of school will I be placed?

Placements may be at either public, subsidized or private schools and occur in Chile's Central, Near North, and Southern Zones (but not in the Far North or Austral Zones).

2. What kind of experience and skills do I need to have?

While it is not required that applicants have formal teaching experience, you should be able to demonstrate some experience teaching or tutoring. Summer camp work experience or other group leadership may be applicable as well. Experience working in teams and self-control capacity to work with children and adolescents are a must. Social skills (sense of adaptability, flexibility, open mind to observe and understand cultural differences, capacity to explore and try new cultural patterns and to share time and space with others) plus organizational skills are a must to take into account when relating to people and society in Chile.

Basic Spanish ability and previous travel experience is preferred. Applicants should have completed a bachelor's degree program.

3. When will I receive my placement?

Placements are generally offered within a few weeks of applying but this can depend on the time of application and whether school is currently in session.

4. Can I be placed with a friend or partner?

Placements with friends or partner cannot be guaranteed since available school positions may vary from place to place and applicants' profiles may not necessarily fit into the interests of schools. Most host families usually host single participants as well.

5. What will I be my main teaching responsibilities at school and with my host family?

As a School Teaching Assistant in Chile you will provide 20 hours of direct teaching to students at a local school assisting the main English language teacher, with the primary aim of developing speaking and listening skills. Very often the class is divided (half of the students with volunteer and other half with main teacher). You will also may be required to help develop lessons, extracurricular activities and/or workshops in English at the school. Teaching Assistants are expected to be organized, motivated and flexible. Maintaining a professional appearance and demeanor is important as you will be a role model in the school community, observed by local teachers and students alike. The volunteer must also understand that her presence is highly valued by the school but it is not the school's main concern so a proactive attitude and capacity to handle frustration are absolutely necessary. As a reciprocity to host families, you are expected to also contribute with 10 hours of English language teaching or practice to one or more family members per week.

6. What kind of support is available to me during the program?

Each location has a regional coordinator available to help with the transition and any concerns within normal patterns of host culture and described program conditions. Host families are knowledgeable, welcoming and very willing to help as well. Finally, our International Cooperator remains available for support and maintains a 24-hour emergency number. Every School also assigns a person in charge of supervising the volunteer's program and work at school.

7. What are the host families like?

Host families come in different shapes and forms. Chilean families are welcoming, caring and willing to make your stay a nice one, but they usually expect a volunteer to integrate into family activities and life and not to be an isolated demanding person. They very often will do their best to make you feel happy. They would be very interested in learning more about you, your family and interests. You will be in South America where family life and sharing is very important. Families are located usually close to schools or belong to the same school community thus having different socioeconomic backgrounds. Always, host families expect you to feel part of the family and to respect their house rules. Host families are not hotels so be open to offer some help in the house chores from time to time and to keep your room clean and tidy at all times.

8. What will the food be like?

Typical meals in Chile consist mainly of lots of meat, especially beef and chicken, rice and potatoes, fresh fruit and vegetables from the fields of Central Chile and lots of bread. Food in Chile is not spicy at all compared, for instance, to Mexico or other countries in the region. It is very mild. Even though seafood could be the common daily meal in Chile with its 5.000 km long coast, it is not. Fresh farmer's markets are a common practice everywhere in the country. Socially speaking food is a way to show affection and love more than a functional thing to do. It is important to mention that most families love sharing meal times and family gatherings around food. **It is not common for Chileans to accommodate for special diets such as vegetarians, vegans, kosher or other types** so if you are not willing to adapt or to buy your products to make your own meals that could mean a possible delay finding a host family. Breakfast is usually light, a cup of tea or coffee and a sandwich. Lunch is the most important meal of the day. Many families have an afternoon break for 'onces', tea or coffee and a sandwich and or a pastry. Dinner is usually light and in many cases is not a full meal or a combination of onces and something else.

9. What will I earn?

School will contribute with a monthly stipend of 90,000 CLP. This is equivalent to about \$139/month and therefore is not intended to cover personal costs, but rather meant as a contribution. Families provide a private room and two meals per day.

10. What happens when I arrive?

From the Santiago airport you will be transported to the home of your first host family, with whom you will reside during a one-week orientation program. This orientation time is a preparation to ease the immersion process into Chilean culture, language and school dynamics.

11. Should I obtain a TEFL certification before the program?

While this is not generally required it is helpful, especially if you intend to teach abroad as a career, or in another location in the near future. If you do not have much prior teaching/tutoring experience then we would recommend considering a TEFL course.

12. Is it safe in Chile?

Most Chileans are not scared of their own country and run free everywhere. Political and economic stability make a whole difference compared to other countries in the region. Chileans trust and respect social institutions and the police. Chile's corruption level is very low, among the first 22 less corrupted countries in the world, only behind Uruguay as the less corrupted countries in the region and only two places below the USA. A recommendation is always necessary to be made about care of personal belongings when living or staying in big cities anywhere in the world like Chile's capital, Santiago, where 7.000.000 people live.

13. How much money should I bring?

This is very subjective, but if your idea of South America is that everything is cheap and for free, you are completely wrong. Chile is not a cheap country to live but compared to other countries like the States the cost of living could be less. Basically, it depends on your life style.

More than bringing cash, it would be better to bring a credit or debit card to be used in the ATM machines which are extensively available.

Some average costs as reference in **Santiago**.

- One-way subway or public bus ride US\$ 1,02.- (rush hour)
- Can of coke. US\$ 1.5.-
- Big Mac US\$ 8 (including French fries and soft drink)
- Chilean Hot Dog US\$ 3 (sausage, avocado, tomato, mayonnaise, sauerkraut)
- Bread 1 klg = US\$ 2.-
- Bananas 1 Klg= US\$ 1.-
- Eating out at a restaurant US\$ 25.- (main course, dessert, drink)
- Eating out, daily menu for lunch US\$ 6-8 (set menu)
- A bottle of beer at a bar US\$ 3,5.-
- Bottled water 5 lts container US\$ 2.-
- One-way Colectivo ride (shared cabs) From US\$ 1,50 to 2 app (depends on distance)
- Taxi ride in Santiago = Paid by taximeter. Initial flat rate to use car U\$ 0.45 then add US\$ 0,23 for every 200 mts. ride (taxi drivers are not tipped)

Cost of living is usually a bit cheaper in regions

14. Do I have to pay bills?

You will not need to contribute to bills with your host family, but you should respect the home by conserving energy as much as possible.

15. Am I entitled to take holidays/breaks?

Schools take your commitment very seriously and need to know that you are dependable in upholding specific responsibilities as a teaching assistant. They rely on you so it is important that you don't miss school days to travel. You will have National Holidays, Saturdays and Sundays off and you are free to plan on travel before or after the program. If you don't feel well, you are of course expected to let the school know if you need to miss a day.

16. Should I take Spanish language lessons to prepare for the program?

A basic level of Spanish is very much preferred and we would encourage any participant to continue practicing leading up to the program. Any Spanish you can draw from will be helpful at the school and throughout your time in Chile.

17. What kind of visa will I need?

You may enter Chile without a visa if you are from the US or the UK . You need to hold a valid passport to enter Chile as a tourist. You will have a 90-day period to stay. After this, you may extend your tourist permit by paying US\$ 100 or exit and reenter the country to have another 90-day period extension. If you prefer you could apply for a temporary visa, as well before coming stating that you will be a volunteer in Chile. EIL Chile will issue an acceptance letter into the program.

18. Will I have access to the internet?

Internet is widely available in Chile; however, it is not a requirement for host families to have it. There are many public places including most of the schools where you can have access.

19. Are my flight costs covered by my program fee?

Airfare is not included in the cost of the program so you will need to budget for this.

20. Are my domestic trips to school or any other places covered by the program fee?

No. You should pay for all your domestic transportation during your service time except for the domestic round trip tickets from Santiago to your final placement location and the arrival airport transfer which are covered by the program fee. Departure transfer from Santiago city to International airport at the end of program is your responsibility.

21. Can I bring my family with me on the program?

This program is not conducive to bringing family. If family/friends would like to visit we would recommend planning some travel after your program has finished. Otherwise, meeting up on weekends or during scheduled holiday breaks may be another option.

22. How can I be connected to my host family and locals?

So as not to incur in costly international roaming for telephone calls or wi-fi connections from your foreign mobile companies, it is highly recommended that you either check if your mobile phone is unblocked to accept new SimCards from other companies or that you simply get a new cheap mobile set from a local company upon arrival in Chile.