

debFAQ

About Georgia

1. What language do they speak in Georgia?

The official language of Georgia is Georgian.

2. Is Georgia safe?

Absolutely! However, just like in any country, you should exercise some caution: be aware of your surroundings, keep an eye on your belongings, don't walk alone late at night, etc. TLG provides volunteer teachers with the training, information, and support that they need to stay safe during their time in Georgia.

3. Will I be placed in conflict regions?

No. Volunteers are not placed in any areas of recent conflict or in any areas that pose potential safety and security threats. All volunteers are placed in regions directly under the jurisdiction of the Georgian Government.

Application Process, Requirements, Eligibility, and Benefits

1. What requirements do I need in order to qualify to teach with TLG?

The minimum requirements for being accepted as a Volunteer into Teach and Learn with Georgia are as follows:

- Fluency in English
- Two years of post-secondary education
- Clean nationwide Criminal Record Check (CRC)
- Medical test clearance – HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, drugs
- Flexibility, an open-mind, and a willingness to make a difference!

2. How do I obtain medical documentation?

You will need to fill out a medical self-assessment form and provide your examining physician with the medical examination report form for them to fill out.

Alternatively, applicants can complete their medical examination in Georgia upon arrival. In this case, applicants only need to submit the medical self-assessment form prior to their arrival.

3. How do I obtain a criminal record check?

Criminal Record Checks (CRCs) need to be nationwide and must be no more than two months old by the intended date of arrival. If you have lived for a lengthy period of time in multiple countries, then multiple background checks may be

necessary. Each country has its own process for obtaining CRCs--please consult your government for specific advice.

4. Are there any guidelines or requests for letters of recommendation (LOR)?

There is not a specific recommendation letter form for TLG applicants. The authors of LORs should describe the applicant's general abilities and explain why he or she would make a good volunteer for Teach and Learn with Georgia. It must be written by a person who has been in professional and/or academic contact with the applicant. He or she can be an applicant's professor, supervisor, employer, etc.

5. What if my documents are not in English?

If your medical documents, certificates, CRCs, etc. are not in English, you need to provide an official notarized translation of the documents.

6. Can I apply with my friend/spouse/significant other?

TLG does its best to accommodate the needs of couples who come to Georgia together but due to the difficulty of finding families willing to host two volunteers, we cannot guarantee joint placements for couples. If a couple is placed together in one host family, they will be obligated to pay 250 GEL per month to the family. If we are unable to find a willing host family, we offer the following options:

- The couple will be placed in different host families but as close to each other as possible.
- The couple can find and rent an apartment or house on their own. TLG will assist with communicating with the landlord, but we cannot provide any financial support.

Friends can request to be placed in the same area as someone else who is applying, and TLG will do our best to place you close to each other

7. Can I bring my children?

No.

8. Can I bring pets?

No.

9. Is there visa support?

Citizens of many countries [do not need a visa](#) to arrive and stay in Georgia for up to 360 days. If an applicant does need a visa, however, TLG will send them a letter of invitation once he/she is accepted as a TLG Volunteer. The TLG Team will assist with obtaining a visa, but please note that we will not be able to reimburse visa-related fees.

10. What benefits does the program offer?

Teach and Learn with Georgia offers the following benefits to TLG Volunteers:

- Round Trip Tickets to and from Georgia
- Orientation Training Upon Arrival
- Medical Insurance Provided
- Housing and Living Accommodations
- Monthly Stipend of Georgian Lari*
- Vacation Round-trip Ticket if Volunteer Commits to Two Consecutive Semesters
- Mobile Phone on the TLG Corporate Network
- 24/7 Support from the TLG Staff

Upon successful completion of his/her contract, each Volunteer receives a letter of recommendation from TLG and a certificate signed by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia and the Director of the National Center for Teacher Professional Development signifying the Volunteer's dedication to the program.

*The monthly stipend is 625 GEL. After taxes, the net amount directly deposited into the volunteers' personal bank accounts is 500 GEL. Monthly, volunteers give their host families 100 GEL to cover food and utilities.

11. When can I join the program and when is the application due?

TLG Volunteer contracts have start dates throughout the year. Completed applications are due two weeks prior to the intended date of arrival. Please see the teaching term options for more information.

12. How long will my contract be?

Contracts can be signed for one or two semesters and can last anywhere from 3 to 15 months, depending on the number of semesters and the start date of the contract. Please see the Teaching Term Options for more information.

13. Is it possible to apply only for a summer position?

No.

14. Can I extend my contract once I am in Georgia?

Yes, you may extend your contract for one or two semesters at a time once you are in Georgia. Contract renewal is based upon a performance evaluation by the TLG Team.

15. What if I worked for TLG, left and now want to reapply?

We love welcoming back former TLG Volunteers! Volunteers whose contract ended under normal circumstances or for emergencies are eligible to reapply to TLG. Instead of resubmitting an entirely new application, you just need to give us an updated Criminal Background Check and updated Medical Documents. As with new applicants, CRCs and Medical Documents cannot be more than two months old by the intended date of arrival. Contact us at info@tlg.gov.ge with the subject line “Former TLG Volunteer Reapplying”.

Getting Prepared

1. How do the flights work?

Your flights are paid for by TLG. Once you are accepted to the program you must provide us with the two most convenient departure airports and we will book your flight from one of the two. Most of the time, flights depart two days before your intended start date. For example, if you are scheduled for a September 30th start date, your flight will most likely depart on September 28th.

Flight information typically comes the week of your departure and will be forwarded to you via email.

TLG will not pay for the costs of checking additional baggage or any additional expenses associated with your travel to Georgia. You are responsible for getting yourself to your departure airport(s).

2. Is it possible for TLG to give us money instead of a ticket?

No. Under no circumstances will TLG consider giving Volunteers money instead of a ticket.

3. Do I need to get any vaccinations?

We recommend consulting your physician to determine which vaccinations are recommended based on your health and past vaccination history. Because you will be working with children, you may want to consider making sure that your hepatitis and TB shots are up to date. If you plan on traveling to other countries, don't forget to ask your physician about any recommended vaccinations for those countries, too!

4. What documents should I bring to Georgia?

Upon your arrival in Georgia we will need to verify the original copies of your medical documents and your Criminal Record Check. If you did an online Criminal Background Check, the electronic copy will be sufficient. **Keep your boarding passes!**

5. Should I bring a gift for my host family or co teachers?

Although it is not necessary, it is a great idea to bring a few small gifts with you for your host family and co-teachers. It would be nice to bring something that represents where you are from. Common gifts are chocolates, wine, coffee mugs, t- shirts, etc.

6. How much money should I bring with me to Georgia?

TLG Volunteers receive their stipend at the end of each month, so you will need to bring enough money to get by in Georgia until your first monthly stipend is received. We recommend that you bring approximately one month's stipend to address any potential first month expenses, such as tourism, food, and transportation in Tbilisi during your first week, gifts for host family/co-teachers, school supplies, telephone minutes, internet, unforeseen expenses, travel, or things you may have forgotten to pack or bring to Georgia.

Keep in mind that if you need to purchase a visa to enter Georgia you should bring 100 GEL (~60 USD) for that, and if you intend to get your medical check done in Georgia you will need about 70 GEL (~45 USD).

7. What is the cost of living in Georgia?

The cost of living in Georgia is relatively low. A loaf of bread costs 0.8 GEL (0.40 USD) while a 500 ml bottle of water will cost approximately 0.6 GEL (0.35 USD).

8. Will I be able to use my credit card(s) in Georgia?

The use of credit cards in Georgia is rare. Some places in cities such as Tbilisi will be able to accept credit cards but most places will only accept cash. There are ATMs throughout all towns and in some villages.

9. Is it possible to save money while working for TLG?

Frugal living can allow TLG Volunteers to save a little money. Volunteers who live in rural areas typically spend less than Volunteers placed in cities. 500 GEL per month is an average wage in Georgia and as a result, Volunteers should not expect to be able to accrue great savings during their time in Georgia.

10. What is the average cost/minute for a cell phone call?

TLG Volunteers will get the cell phone and a phone number that is connected to the corporate network. TLG's corporate plan provides free calls to TLG Staff and other TLG Volunteers. This plan costs the Volunteer about 5 GEL each month. Other calls and

texts cost extra. The average cost per minute to other phone numbers is 0.24 GEL, international calls are more expensive.

11. Should I bring my laptop?

Yes, most TLG Volunteers do.

Arriving in Georgia

1. What happens when I arrive in Georgia?

Representatives of the TLG Staff will be at the airport to meet you and arrange your transportation to the training location.

2. Will a cellular phone be provided?

TLG Volunteers receive a cell phone upon arrival in Georgia. TLG Staff and other TLG Volunteers can be called free of charge from this phone. Volunteers must return their cell phones to TLG at the end of their contract.

3. How will I receive my stipend?

All TLG Volunteers will have a bank account opened for them before they arrive. Each month your stipend will be directly deposited into this bank account.

4. What kind of training will I receive?

Upon arrival, each group spends one week together in Tbilisi at Orientation Training. The main components of Orientation Training are Intercultural Training, Georgian Language Lessons, Teaching Methodologies, Volunteer Safety and Security, Safe Transportation, and Information Sessions. Information Sessions will be held with TLG's Medical, Legal, Academic and Non-Academic Teams as well as bank, medical insurance and cell phone provider representatives.

5. What is my stipend calculation start date?

You begin accruing your stipend from the first day of the Orientation Training. Your payment is calculated from the first day of your Orientation Training.

6. When will I meet my host family?

You will meet your host family on the final day of your training in Tbilisi.

Living and Teaching in Georgia

1. Can I decide where I want to live?

TLG is a nationwide program and due to the needs of each region we reserve the exclusive right to determine TLG Volunteer placement. Applicant placement

preferences will only be taken into account when they are absolutely necessary (i.e. medical).

2. Will I have internet access?

The majority of schools will be equipped with computers and internet access. Volunteers can bring their laptop computers; USB internet modems are available for you to purchase. The prices and coverage areas vary from company to company;

3. Can I receive mail or packages?

Before someone sends a package to you in Georgia, make sure to check all the rules and regulations regarding postal service. Please be advised that the rules and regulations are subject to change without warning. Please see the manual for more information.

4. I am a vegetarian – will this be a problem in Georgia?

Vegetarians are not very common in Georgia, but maintaining a vegetarian diet is definitely possible. Georgians eat lots of bread, cheese, fruits, vegetables, pasta, and nuts. If you explain to the family that you cannot eat meat, they will understand and try to cook meals that take your needs into consideration. Additionally, many restaurants offer a vegetarian “fasting menu” for religious reasons.

Schools

1. What grades will I teach?

TLG Volunteers will only work with the primary grades (1-6).

2. What is the actual time spent in the classroom during a typical week?

This varies greatly from school to school based on each school's needs. The maximum working hours are 30 hours a week, Monday to Friday (weekends off). These hours include planning time, either alone or with a local English teacher. Each TLG Volunteer will be paired with up to three Local English Teachers.

3. What will my main responsibilities be during classroom instruction?

TLG Volunteers will be co-teaching with a Local English Teacher in the classroom. They will be teaching primary school (grades 1 through 6). Volunteer’s primary responsibilities are to assist with speaking and listening lessons, although each Volunteer will be responsible for determining his/her working relationship with their Georgian co-teacher.

4. How many students will be in one class?

Class sizes vary; the average class size is twenty students.

5. Will I have access to materials such as printers, textbooks, and workbooks?

TLG Volunteers get a set of books, which they will teach with while they are in Georgia. The availability of any other materials depends on the size and location of the school. Most of the schools are equipped with computers, but resources to print/copy documents will be limited.

6. What school supplies/teaching aids should I bring?

Resources are extremely limited in Georgian schools. Flash cards, pencils, erasers and pencil sharpeners are some of the basic supplies recommended by former TLG Volunteers. We also recommend bringing pictures of your family, home, and country—anything that will help you to tell the students who you are and where you are from will be greatly appreciated. Most importantly, bring your creativity and eagerness to make a difference in the lives of your students!

7. Will I be in charge of creating my own lesson plans or will I follow a curriculum?

TLG Volunteers work with their co-teachers to develop lesson plans in accordance with the national curriculum in Georgia.

5. What should I wear at school?

While at school you should dress cleanly, conservatively, and professionally—not necessarily dress suits or coats and ties, but presenting a professional appearance according to Georgian cultural standards. This means dresses, skirts, and dress slacks for women (depending on the location; some schools in rural areas do not allow pants) and slacks and button-down shirts for men.

8. What form of transportation do most TLG Volunteers take to school?

Most TLG Volunteers walk to school as they will likely be placed in a host family near their school. Some Volunteers in larger towns and cities rely on public transportation to get to school.

9. How many other TLG Volunteers will be teaching at my school?

You will be the only TLG Volunteer at your school.

10. Is it easy to meet other TLG Volunteers in Georgia?

Yes. During your first week in Georgia you will attend Orientation Training with a number of other TLG Volunteers. You may or may not be placed in the same area.

11. What dates are the public schools in session?

- First semester: September 15th - December 24th
- Second semester: January 20th – June 15th

12. Are there additional professional opportunities when working with TLG?

Yes. Sometimes TLG Volunteers are asked to participate in publicity or media events such as advertisements or presentations. Furthermore, TLG does its best to inform TLG Volunteers of additional employment opportunities such as private teaching opportunities available in their region, or working with the TLG Staff directly.

13. Can I teach extra lessons to make additional money?

Teachers are allowed to take on additional lessons in their own time, but they must inform the TLG Staff beforehand. Teachers cannot teach their own school students for money.

14. When can I take time off for vacation?

TLG Volunteers will receive time off during the summer and winter holidays. Volunteers completing two semesters are entitled to 24 paid vacation days.

15. What are the official holidays in Georgia?

The official holidays for 2012 are as follows:

1 & 2 January - New Year's Day

7 January - Orthodox Christmas

19 January - Orthodox Epiphany

3 March - Mother's Day

8 March - International Women's Day

13 April – Good Friday

15 April - Easter Sunday

16 April - Easter Monday/ Memorial Day

9 April - Georgia's Independence

Restoration Day; Commemoration Day of the Deceased

9 May - Victory Day

12 May - St. Andrew's Day

26 May - Independence Day

28 August - The Virgin's Assumption

14 October - "Mtskhetoba "

23 November - St. George's day

16. Can I travel to another country while volunteering in Georgia?

As long as you properly inform your school, host family, and the TLG Staff, there are no travel restrictions during your free time. However, due to the safety reasons TLG Volunteers are strictly prohibited from traveling to the occupied territories, like so called South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Moreover, there are might be other off limits set by other countries and TLG Volunteers are kindly advised to check all information before they plan their trip to such countries.

Host Families

1. Where will I live?

Volunteers will be placed in host families in order to ensure maximum integration between different cultures. Although there are no restrictions on living independently, the program will not cover the costs of renting an apartment.

2. What type of accommodation will be provided?

TLG Volunteers stay with a Georgian host family. All host families are screened by the Georgian government, undergo a house inspection, and have a separate bedroom for their Volunteer.

3. Will I have running water and electricity?

TLG Volunteers should be ready for the challenge of living in a developing country. Parts of Georgia only have running water at certain times of day, and the power tends to go out frequently and unexpectedly. Understand that your host family's home may not be up to your current living standards.

4. Are the host families given any training regarding how to host Volunteers?

All host families receive a hand-out with detailed guidelines on how to host a Volunteer. Additionally, host families are asked to attend an informational meeting with the TLG Staff on the last day of their volunteers' Orientation Training.

5. Do I pay for my accommodation?

No, but you will have to pay 100 GEL per month (approx. \$60 USD) for utilities and meal expenses.

6. Do I pay my host family directly, or is it automatically taken out of my monthly stipend?

TLG Volunteers give 100 GEL from their monthly stipend to the host family. The money will not be taken out from their accounts automatically.

7. Will my host family speak English?

Not all host families will know English. Hosting a TLG Volunteer is an opportunity for the host family to improve their English and for Volunteers to study and learn the Georgian language.

8. Are we responsible for giving English lessons to the host family members?

You are responsible for giving English lessons to your family members for at least one hour, three times per week.

9. What kind of support will there be if I have a problem with my host family?

You should contact the TLG Staff if there is a problem with your host family. TLG will mediate between TLG Volunteers and their families. Only in extreme cases, will TLG Volunteers be moved to a new host family.

10. Is it possible for me to find my own housing?

Yes, you can find and rent an apartment or house on your own. TLG will assist with communicating with the landlord(s), but we cannot provide any financial support.