



JESUIT VOLUNTEER CORPS

DARE TO CHANGE

DISCERNMENT FAQs

2021 ADMISSIONS SEASON

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AGENCY PLACEMENT SITES

What is the relationship between placement sites and JVC like? How do they become placement agencies or express interest in hosting a JV?

Agency partners need to apply every year to host a Jesuit Volunteer. This is to ensure that JVC has the most up to date information for the agencies and the JV role. Many of our partners (typically between 90-95%) have spent multiple years hosting a JV, but we do accept new partners from time to time for a variety of reasons (our community has moved and can accommodate additional volunteers, we're trying to diversify the types of roles JVs serve in for a specific city, etc.).

Do the supervisors at placement sites know about the community commitments that JVs have (spirituality nights, community nights, retreats, etc.)?

Yes, supervisors are aware of the additional commitments that JVs have when not at their site. Agencies go through an extensive process learning about the requirements of being a Jesuit Volunteer outside of the time JVs are serving at the agency. In addition, these requirements are explained in the Program Agreement that both JVs and agencies sign.

Do JVs work at nights or on weekends?

Some JV position do require night and weekend work. JVC limits the evening/weekend work to 1 night per week and 1 weekend per month in order for JVs to have time with their community members. Agencies are aware of this requirement during their application process and are required to outline why these hours are necessary for the JV in their role.

How does JVC define vital service?

Vital service means that Jesuit Volunteers are working with organizations and communities where there is significant need. Catholic Social Teaching stresses the importance of the Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable, which calls us to direct our attention to those most in need. JVs work with placement agencies in direct service capacities which advance the organization's work to serve marginalized and oppressed communities. As part of their Program Agreement with JVC, placement agencies affirm that they are requesting a JV to fill a need that they would not otherwise have the resources to hire for.

What possible service options are there? What type of work do JVs do at their placement? For example, how much time is spent directly with clients vs. doing administrative work?

JVs serve at placement agencies in one of the following fields: addiction recovery; children and youth services; community development; developmental/physical disabilities; education; employment; environmental stewardship; healthcare services; housing and social services; housing development; hunger relief; immigration and refugee services; legal services; ministry; shelter and transitional housing; or women's issues.

While the specifics of JV workloads vary from agency to agency, all JVC placements are direct service roles. This means that each JV's role focuses on working immediately with the marginalized communities and clients they are serving.

Are JVs ever under-prepared for their placement? Do JVs typically feel supported in their placement agencies?

JVC is intentional about selecting placement agencies that understand the background, mission, and commitments of Jesuit Volunteers. JVs receive the workplace training necessary to be successful in their placement role and engage in on-going communication with their supervisors about expectations and support. In addition to on-site relationships within their placement agency, JVs have access to a local support team that can assist them in coordinating additional support or capacity-building resources from their placement agency.

Are JVC placements eligible for AmeriCorps Education Awards?

JVC partners with the Notre Dame Mission Volunteers to offer access to AmeriCorps Education Awards for JVs serving in certain non-ministry, educational volunteer positions. If you are interested in learning more about which positions qualify, you can email admissions@jesuitvolunteers.org.

DISCERNMENT

What are some of the major factors I should be weighing as I discern?

JVC is a values-centric organization. First and foremost, you should be taking time to sit with our four values – spirituality, simple living, community, and social justice – and to ask yourself if you are comfortable with and committed to engaging and growing in these areas as a JV. JVC staff is here to support you as you discern whether or not JVC is the right fit for you.

What tools might help me in discerning a placement? For someone who is passionate about a number of social justice issues, do you have any tips or strategies to discern which type of placement would be the best fit for me?

In discerning a placement, it is important to be honest with yourself and examine what you feel yourself being pulled towards and what you feel apprehensive about. Neither of these reactions is good or bad in and of itself. You may feel pulled towards a particular area of service because you have developed skills that would be an asset in working with that community or because you have previous experience in that field. Apprehension may be an opportunity to expand yourself and explore the idea of working in a field that challenges you. It is a good idea to consider not just which placement would be the right fit for you, but in what ways you would or would not be the right fit for a particular organization.

JVC has a guide to discerning placement offers available at the following link:
<https://www.jesuitvolunteers.org/jvc-news/how-to-discern-your-placement-offer>.

In the process of Ignatian discernment, how can I recognize moments of bias within myself and practice detachment to make balanced decisions? How does one balance rational discernment and emotional discernment?

The key to Ignatian discernment is honesty with yourself. It can be difficult to recognize the attachments and moments of bias that prevent us from making free decisions. For this reason, it is important to listen to both our rational and emotional selves. One needs the capacity to understand, reason logically, compare, and weigh different considerations and form judgments based on rational arguments. Equally important, however, is the ability to listen to our feelings in that process of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of various considerations. By examining all of the information at our disposal, both rational and emotional, we can better understand our attachments and free ourselves to make a good decision.

What does it mean to practice apostolic availability?

Apostolic availability is a willingness to serve in the capacity and location in which you are needed. The JVC placement process is one of mutual discernment and the admissions team takes applicants' preferences into consideration when matching them with an agency and community. That being said, we ask that our volunteers remain open to serving in capacities and locations that they may not have expected when applying.

This category continues on the next page.

In the discernment process, how do you navigate different feelings about the different JVC values? For example, I feel very excited and drawn to one value, but less confident about my experience in another.

While JVs do commit to engaging with and growing in each of the four values of JVC – spirituality, simple living, community, and social justice – it is not an expectation that you must enter JVC with an equal comfort level with each value. A feeling of discomfort or unfamiliarity with a particular value may be an invitation to challenge and expand yourself in that regard. JVC's formation program reinforces each value through the use of foundational tools that allow Jesuit Volunteers to choose, in an informed and thoughtful way, whether and how to engage in and practice each value at the end of their term of service. As long as you are open to growth, JVC welcomes individuals from all backgrounds to explore these values as a Jesuit Volunteer.

MATCHING/INTERVIEW PROCESS

What goes into the matching process for placements? Will I be able to choose my site based on both my interests and location?

After participating in a first-round interview and small group discernment conversation, you will complete a community and placement survey to formally tell us where and how you'd like to serve. For 1 year US placements: we'll use this survey, as well as information provided in previous conversations, to match you with 5-8 potential placements that reflect your preferences for geography and type of service. From our list of 5-8 roles, you'll choose 2-3 options with which to interview. If you and an agency both agree that you'd like to move forward, we'll formally offer you a position with them.

What is JVC looking for when they consider us for a placement agency?

In matching you with a placement agency, JVC takes both your preferences and the requirements of the placement agency into consideration. JVC understands how important it is for our volunteers to serve in a location and type of service that matches their interests and priorities. Nearly all of our admitted applicants receive offers within their top region and preferred type of service. Several placement sites require additional professional certifications, a driver's license, or language skills. During our application process, volunteers complete a series of questions to determine their eligibility for those roles.

Who makes the final decision about which JV is paired with which organization?

JVC's admissions team makes this final decision based on the applicant's discernment process and interviews with placement agencies. After each interview, both the applicant and the agency submit feedback to JVC about whether or not they felt like it would be a good working relationship. If the applicant and the agency agree that they would like to move forward, our admissions team will make a formal offer to the applicant.

Is it okay for me to continue discerning JVC as I begin interviewing with placement sites? At what point do I have to make my final decision as to whether or not JVC is right for me?

It is absolutely okay to continue discerning JVC as you move through the interview process with placement agencies! Discernment is an ongoing process that evolves as we gather more information about the decisions we are making. We encourage applicants to be intentional about listening to themselves as they proceed through their interviews.

Applicants will have to make their final decision about committing to JVC when they receive a placement offer from our admissions team. We ask that applicants reflect on the following questions before accepting this final placement offer:

1. Am I able to commit to the JVC placement offer as it is stated for a full term of service?
2. Am I ready and willing to commit fully to JVC, withdrawing from any other application processes I am in (such as grad school or other service programs)?
3. Am I able to commit to engagement and growth in the areas of spirituality, simple living, community, and social justice during my time as a Jesuit Volunteer?

FINAL PLACEMENT PROCESS (AGENCIES & COMMUNITIES)

What determines the number of persons living in a house/apartment? How many volunteers typically live together during their year of service?

The number of agency placements that we accept (which determines the number of JVs in each community) depends on the number of bedroom spaces we have in the house. Some communities are as big as 8 and some have around 4.

What are the community houses like? Will I have a roommate? If so, how is that decided?

Housing is simple and is traditionally located in a lower-income neighborhood to provide opportunities for the JVs to live in solidarity with the people they serve. Residences have adequate bedrooms and communal living space for the expected number of JVs. Volunteer housing is located in areas where volunteers can readily access the transit system (where applicable) to get to and from their worksite, a shopping district, and other resources. All JV housing is ready for occupancy, which includes being furnished and with utilities in service. In locations where a JVC community is already established, volunteers tend to live in the same location year after year.

Depending on the number of bedrooms in your community house, you may have a roommate. If so, this is a decision to be made in community with one another as you are settling into your home after Orientation.

Is it possible that I will be in community with a volunteer I already know?

While it is possible that you could end up in a community with somebody that you already know, JVC is unable to arrange for two or more people to serve together. Each applicant applies to JVC as an individual and is considered for placement as such.

ORIENTATION/ONBOARDING

When and where does Orientation to JVC take place? What are the start and end dates of the JVC program year?

Orientation for the upcoming program year will take place in the beginning of August 2021. The first day of full-time service will begin shortly afterward in mid-August. The program dates for JVC run from the first weeks of August with orientation to the following July.

What is the transition from Orientation to service like? How long do JVs have to get to know one another and adjust to their new home before training starts?

JVC will arrange and cover the costs for travel and lodging from Orientation to each volunteer's city of service. After arriving in your city of service, you'll receive a local orientation from JVC staff, your agency supervisors, former Jesuit Volunteers, and your local support team.

A significant focus of your Orientation retreat will be to introduce you to your community mates and set you up for success as you begin to establish communal living standards. Upon arrival at your city of service, you will have time to acclimate to your new home and city, with assistance from your local formation team.

What are the biggest challenges JVs face in adjusting to their new placements and communities?

New JVs have a lot to adjust to after Orientation and it can take a little bit of time to settle into a comfortable rhythm in the workplace and in community. Typical challenges for new JVs include learning how to navigate the public transport system of their city of service, acclimating to a new work environment and team of co-workers, and establishing communal living standards. New JVs are supported in each of these challenges by their Local Formation Team, their placement agency, and one another.

All placement agencies will guide JVs through a thorough onboarding process that includes on-the-job training and communication with their supervisor. As part of their in-city orientation, Local Formation Teams will assist JVs with logistics such as preparing to commute to their workplace and setting up initial community agreements.

What are we allowed to bring with us for the year?

Jesuit Volunteers commit to practicing a simple lifestyle and to being present for others. When packing for JVC, we ask JVs to consider the ways that material possessions can cloud this commitment. JVs should pack essential items: prescription medications, one month's supply of toiletries, work clothing for one week and casual clothing for one week, reusable face coverings, towels/sheets (twin), and a backpack or small duffel bag for travel. JV houses are fully furnished homes and will already contain things like books, games, and cookware.

As part of the onboarding process for our Jesuit Volunteers, JVC will send out an updated packing list with more detailed instructions and suggestions. JVs are invited to practice discernment in packing with intentionality, limiting baggage to what is truly needed. Once you arrive in your service city, you can have friends or family ship additional items to you if necessary.

TRANSPORTATION

Does JVC arrange for travel to Orientation and service sites? At the end of the program, does JVC cover travel expenses for volunteers to return home?

All Jesuit Volunteers are responsible for travel to Orientation. JVC will cover all costs of travel and lodging from Orientation to each volunteer's city of service. If Orientation is held virtually, Jesuit Volunteers may be asked to cover the cost of travel directly to their city of service. At the end of the program year, JVC provides each volunteer with a relocation stipend.

Are JVs responsible for covering travel expenses for holidays and/or vacations?

Yes, JVs are responsible for covering the costs of any travel for vacations and/or holidays. JVC will cover all expenses associated with program-related travel, such as retreats and commuting for work, but JVs need to make their own arrangements for personal travel.

How do JVs commute from their community home to their placement agency? Is public transportation access provided?

Costs associated with travel to your placement site are covered by JVC. As part of their commitment to living in solidarity with the communities they are serving, JVs typically utilize public transportation to commute to and from their placement site. Some placement sites are within walking/biking distance of the JV community house.

Are JVs allowed to bring a personal car to their service site for commuting?

JVC discourages volunteers from bringing personal vehicles to their cities of service. Volunteers who bring unrequired personal cars will be wholly responsible for all costs associated with the vehicle, including insurance, registration fees, car payments, gas, maintenance, parking, and repairs. JVC will not reimburse the volunteer or community for expenses associated with this car outside of exceptional circumstances or unless used on JVC's behalf with advance approval.

Does JVC provide volunteers with access to a vehicle for community use (grocery shopping, errands, activities, etc.)?

JVC does not provide volunteers with a vehicle for community use, but all JV houses are located in areas where volunteers can readily access the transit system (where applicable) to get to and from their worksite, a shopping district, and other resources. If volunteers have brought an approved personal vehicle with them to JVC for commuting purposes, the community can use this vehicle for personal travel at their own expense. Jesuit Volunteers are invited to consider how access to a personal vehicle may hinder their ability to live in solidarity with the community they are serving.

PERSONAL STIPEND/BENEFITS

How much is the personal stipend for JVs?

Jesuit Volunteers serving in the United States receive a modest monthly stipend of \$100.

What expenses are JVs expected to use their personal stipend for? What expenses are covered by the community budget?

JVC provides for Jesuit Volunteers' housing, food, health insurance, transportation to and from program commitments, community items such as cleaning products, and menstrual products. JVs are expected to use their personal stipend for all other expenses (meals at restaurants, personal travel, activities around the city, etc.). Because of their limited budgets, JVs get creative with finding things to do with their free time. Previous communities leave resources for incoming JVs to help them find fun, affordable, and accessible options in their communities.

Are there any expenses that JVs are expected to cover with personal funds beyond the stipend?

JVC provides volunteers with funds to cover all essentials (housing, food, transportation) throughout their program year. The personal stipend allows volunteers to cover a limited amount of additional expenses. JVs are encouraged to consider how additional spending using personal funds beyond the stipend may hinder their ability to engage with the value of living simply.

Does JVC offer any financial resources to assist volunteers throughout the JV year?

If you anticipate external costs that would make the financial limitations of the JVC program year inaccessible, please talk to our admissions team about the RJV Hurley Fund. Each year JVC disburses need-based grants to incoming volunteers for whom financial realities would otherwise prohibit a year or two of service. Established through the generous support of Drs. John and Mary Ann Hurley in honor of their children's life-changing JVC experience, the RJV Hurley Fund provides each recipient with up to \$3,000 to mitigate barriers to joining or continuing as a Jesuit Volunteer.

Would I be using my stipend to purchase feminine care products?

In an effort to promote greater equity within the organization, Jesuit Volunteer Corps offers an additional stipend to menstruating JVs every quarter during the program year. This additional stipend is used to offset the costs of menstrual products.

Can I work a part-time job while doing JVC?

No. Jesuit Volunteers are asked to not seek additional employment during their JV year as it would inhibit their ability to engage fully with their placement agencies, their communities, and the value of living simply. In addition to the 40-hour work week of each placement agency, JVs have significant time commitments to building community both within their house and their neighborhood.

Can student and private loans be deferred while doing JVC?

For Jesuit Volunteers serving in the U.S., forbearance and deferment are available for most federally guaranteed student loans. Check with your lending institution to confirm eligibility and obtain the appropriate forms, which must be completed by you and JVC staff. If you are having difficulties with your lender, JVC staff will be able to assist you.

A more detailed Loan Deferment FAQ is available under “How do I handle my college loans?” at <https://www.jesuitvolunteers.org/volunteer-faq>.

What are the medical and/or mental health resources available to JVs? Am I allowed to stay on my own insurance?

JVs are allowed to stay on their own insurance plan if they choose to do so. U.S. based volunteers have access to JVC health insurance if they are unable to obtain insurance elsewhere. Details of the plan will be provided before the year of service begins. Anyone with a pre-existing condition or particular medical concerns may contact the JVC office for further information.

When a physical or mental health problem arises, how is this handled? What support do JVs have in navigating care?

Every U.S.-based volunteer will have access to a local support team, comprised of a staff member, alumni, and a spiritual adviser, within their city of service. This support team addresses health and safety issues, logistical hurdles, and other challenges if they arise. If a medical issue arises, volunteers should contact JVC staff and their local support team will assist them in receiving care. Additionally, JVC offers a Volunteer Assistance Program (VAP), a 24/7 hotline that JVs can access at any time. This service is available to all JVs regardless of their insurance provider.

Are JVs allowed to take time off at any point as long as it is cleared with their placement?

All U.S. based agencies agree to provide Jesuit Volunteers with at least 10 vacation days, in addition to time off for retreats and federal holidays. Service schedules depend on the job description, although most follow a 40-hour workweek with weekends off.

Why are JVs asked to minimize leisure travel and/or vacations? Can I visit my family around the holidays?

JVs can absolutely visit their family around the holidays, but they are expected to cover the costs of personal travel. JVC asks volunteers to minimize leisure travel and vacations in an effort to be fully present within their own community, to practice the value of living simply, and to commit to solidarity with the communities they are serving.

NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY/FRIENDS/SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

How do JVs manage their existing relationships with friends and family while being fully present in community? How do you recommend balancing these commitments? Will I be limited in my ability to communicate with friends and family?

Family and friends play an important role in your experience of JVC as they have helped shape who you are and will continue to support you through your JVC journey. It is important to make active choices that allow you to be present in community, but this does not mean that you shouldn't be present in your existing relationships. Feeling a lack of connection with your friends and family may actually make it more difficult for you to be truly present in community.

It is a good idea to discuss this with your community as you are establishing standards for communal living. The best way to balance these commitments is to be honest with yourself, your family, and your community and to set expectations for communication habits up front.

Is it okay for friends and family to visit me in my service city? Will I have opportunities to visit friends and family during breaks/holidays?

Yes! JVC understands that it is important to share your experience with your friends and loved ones. That being said, we do ask that you refrain from inviting them to your city of service until the second half of your term of service. This will allow you and your community-mates to adjust to the JVC experience and focus on community-building, service, and your new surroundings. As mentioned above, all Jesuit Volunteers will have at least 10 vacation days in addition to federal holidays off during their year of service. JVs are responsible for covering the costs of any travel for vacations and/or holidays.

SUPPORT NETWORKS DURING JVC

What is a Local Formation Team? What do these relationships look like? Are JVs responsible for initiating/arranging contact with them?

Every U.S.-based volunteer is supported by a Local Formation Team (LFT), comprised of former Jesuit Volunteers and a Jesuit/Spiritual Liaison. Members of your LFT are based in your city of service. The role of the LFT is to provide additional support to your community in living out the four values.

JVs will be introduced to their Local Formation Team as part of their orientation to their city of service. Local Formation Team members will maintain regular contact with JVs and can be contacted with any questions or challenges that arise.

How much contact does JVC staff have with JVs during their year?

JVC staff will be in regular contact with JVs throughout their program year to provide ongoing support. Your Local Formation Team will assist your community in arranging retreat and travel logistics, addressing any challenges that arise, and connecting you with any resources that you need. The entire JVC staff is dedicated to ensuring that you have the best possible experience as a Jesuit Volunteer and can be reached for any questions, challenges, or joys that you would like to share.

If I am interested in participating in spiritual direction as a JV, how do I get connected to this resource? Is it possible to have spiritual direction with someone from a faith tradition other than Catholicism?

Spiritual direction can be arranged through your Local Formation Team and spiritual liaison. JVC maintains relationships with certified spiritual directors across the country, available for either in-person or remote spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction is available to JVs of any faith tradition or spiritual background. JVs can discuss preferences and comfort levels with their Local Formation Teams to find a spiritual director that works for them.

What do relationships with Former Jesuit Volunteers (FJVs) look like? Are there regular meals/events with FJVs?

Most Former Jesuit Volunteers (FJVs) love to stay connected to the JVC community! JVC stays in contact with FJVs to keep them in the loop with news about their local communities and ways that they can support JVs throughout the program year. FJVs are involved with local JV communities in a variety of capacities, from meals and reflections to spiritual direction and professional support.

Each Local Formation Team has access to a roster of all FJVs living in the area of the community that they support and will reach out to them to arrange introductions, events, and ongoing relationships.

VALUES – SPIRITUALITY

In preparation for Spirituality Nights, will individual JVs each be assigned a night to lead or do all of the JVs in the community work collaboratively to plan each event?

This is up to your community! Throughout the year, JVs will have the opportunity to have certain spirituality nights led or suggested by their support team and spiritual liaisons, but beyond that it is up to each community to discuss how they plan to practice spirituality together. Some JV communities create a rotating schedule of spirituality night leadership, but it can also be a great opportunity for community-building to collaborate as a community or in small groups. This is a great topic for on-going conversation in your community as you figure out what works best for you.

What does a typical spirituality night look like? What are some examples of spirituality nights?

Spirituality nights are an opportunity for you to share your personal experience of God and/or spirituality with your community-mates. This can take almost any form and we encourage JV communities to be as creative as they would like in practicing their spirituality. Some examples of spirituality nights include reflection on spiritual texts or contemporary issues, leading one another through a prayer practice, sitting in intentional silence together, mindful eating or listening, etc.

What does spiritual formation look like as a JV?

Through in-person retreats and ongoing, guided reflection, our formation curriculum frames the service experience within four, interrelated values of the Jesuit tradition: spirituality, social justice, community, and simple living. Each value is reinforced through the use of foundational tools that allow Jesuit Volunteers to choose, in an informed and thoughtful way, whether and how to engage in and practice the values at the end of their term of service.

For those who might not affiliate with a religious tradition, what are they required to do in spirituality nights? How do we best enter into spirituality nights with others from different faith backgrounds?

All JVs are expected to participate in spirituality nights, as they are an important opportunity for community-building and personal formation during your JV year. That being said, JVC welcomes volunteers from any faith background, religious tradition, or spiritual practice. We encourage JVs to bring their authentic spiritual life into community, in whatever form that takes. We do ask that volunteers remain open to hearing and learning about Ignatian tools and principles and applying them where relevant.

One of the core elements of Ignatian spirituality is “finding God in all things.” In the context of spirituality nights, this means that we can learn from one another, deepen our spiritual life, and build stronger community by authentically engaging with spiritual practices and expressions other than our own.

Are we required to go to mass? Can we go to different churches?

JVs are expected to participate in mass during JVC retreats, but beyond this, it is up to each JV to determine whether and where they will attend religious services throughout their year. Many communities do commit to attending mass together as an opportunity for community-building, but you are certainly welcome to find the spiritual home that supports you best. Inviting your community mates to attend a religious service with you that they may not otherwise have sought out can be a great way to expand community and get to know one another better.

The covenant says "Regular, personal prayer or reflection in order to grow in my relationships with God and others." I do not pray and I do not believe in God, but I am happy and excited to reflect on myself and my relationships - could this be a problem?

Not at all! The Jesuit Volunteer Corps welcomes all passionate, young leaders, regardless of their familiarity with -- or prior interest in -- faith, religion, Catholicism, or Ignatian spirituality. We simply ask that volunteers remain open to hearing and learning about Ignatian tools and principles and applying them where relevant. The Jesuits have centuries of experience in solidarity, accompaniment, and reconciliation with poor and marginalized communities. We believe Jesuit frameworks for social analysis and reflection are relevant and useful to all on the front lines of social justice.

VALUES - SIMPLE LIVING

What tips do you have for us to live simply? How does living simply look different for different communities?

Living simply is a commitment to prioritizing people and relationships over material possessions and attachments. As you reflect on the value of simple living, JVC encourages you to focus on the ways that simplicity can free you to focus on that which is truly important to you instead of thinking about what you might be “giving up.” By reducing your attachment to material wants, you free yourself to make deliberate, intentional decisions about how to use your time, money, and talents.

In community, this value can manifest in a variety of ways depending on each individual's interpretation of simple living. Some communities commit to removing personal electronic devices and phones from communal areas to be more present with one another in those spaces. Another community might get involved with composting and sustainable shopping habits. It is important to discuss these commitments as a community to determine how you are going to implement this value in daily life.

Are we allowed to have items that may be paid for by ourselves or family, such as a shared gym membership or streaming service?

JVC encourages volunteers to live within the limits of their community budget and personal stipend, but ultimately this is a question for each individual to ask themselves. Does accessing this additional resource inhibit your ability to live in solidarity with the community that you are serving? Does it prevent you from living in solidarity with the other JVs living in your community? Again, JVC encourages you to orient your reflection towards freedom and consider the ways that you might be able to be more present in your year with JVC by limiting your use of services like this.

Are there any restrictions on the technology (phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) that we can bring with us to our site?

JVC is about balance and choosing to live simply. Many JVs find that when used in moderation, electronic devices can be helpful to them in communication, finding resources, or staying in touch with the issues of injustice in our world.

It is important to note that these devices can distract you from focusing on personal relationships and building community with other JVs. Portable electronics can also prevent you from living in solidarity with the community you are serving. We encourage you to reflect and discern what you will bring and why.

This category continues on the next page.

In terms of simple living, how do Jesuit volunteers handle the responsibility of shopping, cooking, and eating together?

JVs share a communal budget for groceries and are encouraged to have regular community meetings to discuss what this money is used for and what personal food items individuals will need to purchase with their stipend. Some examples of food-related questions for community simple living include whether or not to buy meat as a household, what foods are shared, and what criteria the household will focus on when shopping (cost, ethical sourcing, local vendors, etc.).

JVs share all household responsibilities as a community and this extends to cooking. Most JV communities create a rotating schedule of meal preparation to ensure that everyone has regular opportunities to cook for their community. JVC encourages communities to share community meals as an opportunity for relationship-building.

Why does JVC ask volunteers to commit to avoiding busyness? How does JVC define busyness?

As part of their commitment to simple living, JVC asks volunteers to resist the societal temptation to assign value to people and processes based on productivity. Busyness is a manifestation of a consumer culture that prioritizes material profit over human dignity and just community. Existing constantly in a state of busyness prevents us from being truly present with the people around us and with ourselves.

JVC values hard work, dedication, and active engagement. Jesuit Volunteers practice these characteristics in their work and in their communities, but commit to being present as they do so instead of rushing from one thing to the next.

VALUES – COMMUNITY

What is it like to live in intentional community? How is living in a community as a JV different than being roommates with people in college?

JVs live in co-ed communities of between 4 and 8 volunteers. As a Jesuit Volunteer community, you agree on regular times to be together as community, discuss how to make decisions and resolve conflict, agree on community meal times, and divide household responsibilities. All JVs are responsible to each other as members of the same community. Regular community meetings help keep communications channels open and expectations clear. In addition to the community nights, JVs commit to weekly spirituality nights, which is a chance to foster friendships and grow in faith together.

What does a typical community night look like?

Community nights will look different from house to house as each individual in a community contributes their voice to creating and leading opportunities for connection and relationship building. Some examples of community nights include community meals, game nights, crafting activities and art shares, adventures in the local area, and communal learning about social justice issues affecting your neighborhood.

How is spirituality incorporated into community life?

As a community, JVs commit to weekly spirituality nights, which are opportunities for each individual to share their personal spiritual background with one another and grow in faith and understanding together. Beyond these spirituality nights, many JV communities commit to attending mass together and/or incorporating regular spiritual practices into home life. Determining the specifics of engaging with spirituality as a community is a good topic for communal discernment and dialogue.

What are some challenges JVs have faced in the past with their community and how were they resolved?

Some examples of community challenges encountered by JVs include: deciding what kinds of food to purchase with community funds (Will our community buy meat? Are fitness products a communal or personal expense?); determining policies for visitors to the community (Who is allowed to stay in the house and for how long? How often will we have visitors?); and dividing household responsibilities (How do we maintain communal areas? How do we hold each other accountable for doing chores?).

An important part of living in community is engaging in regular communication to make decisions together and resolve any conflicts that arise. Most issues in communal living can be overcome as JVs learn to make decisions together. If there are any conflicts or disputes that JVs are having trouble navigating, JVC staff is available for support and mediation.

This category continues on the next page.

What is it like day-to-day living in a house with other people you have only known for a short time? How does living with other JVs in different service placements impact your experience?

While it is definitely an adjustment moving into a new home shortly after meeting your community in Orientation, the commitments of intentional community mean that JVs get to know one another deeply very early into their program year. During your Orientation retreat, you will have an opportunity to share your life experiences as well as your expectations, hopes, and fears about the program with your community-mates. As you settle into your city of service and begin establishing community routines and standards, you will have daily opportunities to build and deepen relationships with one another.

As a community, you will be sharing the unique experience of your JV year, including the different areas of service that each of you is serving in. Processing these diverse roles and experiences as a community is an opportunity to develop a more inclusive perspective on the social justice issues impacting the communities you are serving.

In our time away from work, should we be focusing on formation within our own community living space or engaging with the local community?

Many JVs make friends with coworkers, people in their neighborhood, or people they meet through church or other community activities. We encourage an active involvement in your community and city. As long as you are making active choices that allow you to be present to your community, it is helpful to branch out and build new relationships while in JVC.

What is it like living in a community with people who do not share my gender identity?

Adjusting to life in intentional community can certainly take some time and it is important to establish clear communication and to acknowledge differences in individuals' backgrounds that may play into how everybody shows up in community. That being said, most JVs do not report differences in gender identity as being a significant hurdle to overcome in developing community. Presence and attention in developing personal relationships are the most important factors in creating a supportive and comfortable community experience.

VALUES - SOCIAL JUSTICE

How will we work towards dismantling institutionalized systems of injustice?

JVC is energized to identify and advance the learning outcomes of volunteer cohorts in the area of racial justice; to train staff and board members to be advocates in this work; and to better equip JVC's community to lead lives dedicated to anti-racism, and ultimately towards dismantling oppressive structures.

For a comprehensive look at the work JVC has done and is currently doing to combat racial injustice and dismantle oppressive structures, visit the following link:
<https://www.jesuitvolunteers.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-at-jvc>

What impact do we have on the communities we enter as many of us do not have formal training or background in our placements?

While volunteers may not have previous formal training or professional experience in their fields of service, all JVs receive on-site training with their placement agency to ensure that they are well-prepared to meet the responsibilities of their role throughout their JV year. During the matching process, JVC pays close attention to the requirements and preferences of each placement site. When a JV receives a placement offer, it means that the placement agency has indicated that they believe that individual would be a good fit for their team. JVs provide vital service to these organizations in capacities that they would otherwise not have the resources to hire for.

Is JVC focused on creating a formation experience for the JVs or benefiting local partner agencies?

Both! These pursuits support one another. Jesuit Volunteers serve in capacity-building roles that advance the work done by their placement agencies to support marginalized and oppressed communities. JVs perform substantive, relational work with impact in the communities they are serving. As mentioned in the answer above, our process for matching volunteers with placement agencies is built to best honor the needs of the agencies. JVC is also a transformational experience for our volunteers in the context of their professional responsibilities, community life, and spiritual formation. The personal support, reflection space, and accountability built into the formation program better equip JVs to support the mission of their agency.

JV COMMUNITY LOGISTICS & BUDGET

What do evenings and weekends look like other than spiritual nights, community nights, business meetings, and church? What sorts of activities do community members usually do together?

Because of their limited budgets, JVs get creative with finding things to do with their free time. With the exception of planned community time, many JVs have nights and weekends free and are able to plan activities that allow them to explore their city and larger geographical area. Many JVs join the local Y, participate in a sports league, or get involved with community or church activities.

Does the community budget cover all groceries for the community? Do JVs share all ingredients, groceries, cooking supplies, etc.? Do we eat meals together?

JVC provides each community with a shared budget that should cover the costs of all groceries. JVs are expected to have community conversations about what ingredients they want to purchase and where they would like to do their shopping. JVs generally do share all groceries, but your community may decide to buy certain personal items for individuals if necessary. All JV houses are fully furnished and will have cookware and kitchen supplies available for you to use upon move-in.

Communal meals are an important part of living in intentional community. JVC recommends that volunteers share at least a few meals together every week.

Are there any recommendations for accommodating food allergies/sensitivities in community meal planning? Can individuals buy some personal items if they have specific needs?

Food allergies and sensitivities should be discussed during your in-city orientation as your community is establishing expectations. As a community, you will decide what groceries to purchase and what meals to make. It is important to take any allergies and sensitivities into consideration and proactively make a community plan that accommodates these needs. Individuals can buy personal items, but you should discuss whether this will be done with their personal stipend or included in the community budget. JVC expects the community budget to cover basic meals and groceries for the entire community. Individuals with dietary restrictions should not be expected to cover additional costs to meet this need. Compromises may need to be made to prioritize requirements over preferences.

What happens if we don't use the entire month's budget? Can we save it for the next month?

JV communities are responsible for managing their monthly grocery budgets. If your community does not use your entire monthly budget, you will be able to carry those funds over into the following month.

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Is it difficult to live on a shared budget? How do JVs manage conflict resolution with regard to shared spaces and resources?

It can definitely be a challenge to share a budget as a community, especially if individuals do not have previous experience with sharing resources. Living on a shared budget requires each individual in community to be intentional about clearly and respectfully communicating their expectations, needs, and issues as they arise.

An important part of living in community is engaging in regular communication to make decisions together and resolve any conflicts that arise. Most issues in communal living can be overcome as JVs learn to make decisions together. If there are any conflicts or disputes that JVs are having trouble navigating, JVC staff is available for support and mediation.

How does JVC keep the JVs safe in communities?

Volunteer neighborhoods vary significantly from rural to urban environments. In urban settings, JVs live in neighborhoods where crime, especially petty crime, can be commonplace. JVC works with volunteers to set expectations around personal safety and will quickly find solutions where threats to safety arise.

Does JVC pay for Wifi?

Yes! JVC covers the cost of all utilities for communities. JVs are encouraged to have community conversations about the prevalence of internet use in the home as it relates to their ability to be present with one another.

APOSTOLATE AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Could you please expand on apostolate groups and their purpose?

Jesuit Volunteers perform vital service in 16 core fields, accompanying poor and marginalized communities as they seek critical services, pastoral ministry, and quality education. JVC has created ongoing spaces for volunteers in each of these fields to support and learn from each other throughout their terms of service. Through collaboration and open discussion over the challenges and blessings of working in their fields, JVs are better positioned to provide high quality and responsive support to the communities who rely on them.

Could you please expand on affinity groups and their purpose?

JVC recognizes that volunteers with marginalized and underrepresented identities may need an intentional space to further process and hold conversations related to social justice, race, gender, and sexuality. All volunteers who identify as people of color and/or LGBTQ+ individuals are invited to join affinity groups facilitated by Former Jesuit Volunteers (FJVs) during Orientation and future retreats. JVC continues to offer this intentional space to volunteers via a virtual platform on a monthly basis throughout the JV experience.

FJV RESOURCES/OPPORTUNITIES

What do some of the graduate school options post-JVC look like?

Graduate schools across the country recognize the value of the unique experiences and skills that Jesuit Volunteers gain during their term of service. To see a complete list of the colleges and universities that have partnered with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps to offer full or partial tuition scholarships to JVC alumni, visit the following link:

<https://www.jesuitvolunteers.org/alumni-resources>

Can you explain the transition process out of the program in more detail?

Towards the end of the program year, JVs will attend their DisOrientation retreat, which serves as an opportunity both to process the experience of JVC and to prepare for the transition out of the program. JVC offers volunteers a relocation stipend to cover the costs of moving to their next destination, but volunteers are responsible for arranging this travel. JVC staff will make sure that JVs have access to documentation of their year of service and are connected to our networks of Former Jesuit Volunteers (FJVs).

Your experience of JVC does not end with your program year! The FJV community is a vast and vibrant network of thousands of individuals who have gone on to build a more just and hopeful world in their careers, families, and communities. FJVs support one another in professional networking, finding housing, building communities and friendships, and continuing to explore the four values in daily life.

RETREATS

What is the purpose of each retreat? What should I be expecting in terms of activities and topics?

Orientation is a four-day workshop at the start of the JVC program year in which volunteers learn about the Ignatian foundations of the program. The Community Day of Reflection is an opportunity for communities to focus on the value of intentional community in JVC, reflecting on where they are currently and identifying next steps in developing this community.

ReOrientation is structured around the Pastoral Circle, focusing on social justice and inviting each JV to reflect on the graces and challenges of their unique work and community environments. The Silent Retreat is an opportunity for JV's to deepen their experience of Ignatian spirituality. DisOrientation provides a forum for volunteers to reflect on their experiences of the year, explore the processes of closure and transition, and prepare to incorporate the four values after JVC.

How long is each retreat?

With the exception of the Day of Reflection, all JVC retreats last between four and six days.

What is the silent retreat like?

This retreat emphasizes Ignatian spirituality and gives volunteers the opportunity to deepen their experience in discernment, contemplation and the Spiritual Exercises. JVs develop a deeper understanding of how God has been working through their lives over the course of their JVC service year/s.

During the silent retreat, volunteers will have the opportunity to engage in spiritual direction and hear talks from speakers on the topics mentioned above, but the majority of time will be spent in personal contemplation and reflection. Support is available for volunteers who feel that prolonged silence will be a challenge.

HIGHLIGHTS/CHALLENGES/CULTURE

What are some of the greatest misconceptions about JVC that could potentially cloud an applicant's decision to become part of the organization?

The most common misconceptions that we encounter revolve around applicants being concerned that they do not fit the “JVC mold,” whether this means that they are worried that they are not spiritual enough, too religious, lacking experience with social justice work, etc. JVC is not looking for one profile of what a Jesuit Volunteer “should be.” If you are a young leader committed to justice and open to growth in the four values of spirituality, simple living, community, and social justice, we welcome you to be completely yourself as we go through this process of mutual discernment.

I wasn't one of the "service kids" in high school or college. Will I fit in with JVC?

There is no service resume prerequisite to joining JVC. While service experiences and immersion trips are wonderful opportunities that may inform an individual's decision to seek out the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, JVC understands that transformational experiences take place in a variety of contexts. We are a values-centric organization and our priority in the application process is finding individuals who are committed to engagement with and growth in our four values. We invite individuals from all backgrounds and previous experiences to speak from their unique formation journey.

What steps should I be taking during the next few months beyond the application process to prepare to join JVC? What advice do you have for volunteers to make their year the most meaningful and to grow the most during this time?

There are some practical, tangible things you can be doing to prepare for your JV year once you know where you will be serving. Prior to your orientation, we invite you to learn about the history of your city and community to better understand the context in which you will be serving. You may also want to brush up on any professional skills that you will be using in your placement agency, such as language or office skills.

Beyond these logistical items, the most important thing you can do to prepare for JVC is getting to know yourself. The more time you can spend in personal reflection and contemplation leading up to JVC, the more you will be able to engage with community fully and to grow throughout your year. As a final note, JVC invites you to enter into community life without expectations for your community-mates. Life in community will likely look very different than you imagine and you cannot anticipate the needs and rhythms of your community-mates before getting to know them. Preparing to bring yourself fully into community is the best way that you can prepare to meet others fully.

This category continues on the next page.

How diverse are the backgrounds of JVs (in terms of spirituality, ethnicity, gender, etc.)?

A little over half of our current JVs identify as Catholic, with the remainder identifying with a variety of Christian denominations and spiritual traditions. About ten percent of current JVs do not identify with any organized religion or faith tradition. Eighty percent of current JVs identify as white. Around two-thirds of our volunteers identify as women.

COVID-19

With regard to the COVID-19 situation, what extra measures are being taken to protect the health of JVs and those with whom they work, live, and serve?

It is JVC's top priority to ensure the health and safety of our JVs and their communities. JVC is taking steps to protect JVs and to help them process this experience, but specifics continue to change as the situation evolves. Please feel free to ask our admissions team any questions you have about JVC's response to COVID-19 and we will provide you with the most up-to-date information that we have.

How can JVs sustain the value of community during this pandemic?

The COVID-19 situation certainly poses additional challenges to community life, as each JV community must discuss, establish, and respect health and safety standards in the home and beyond. That being said, the external uncertainty and instability provoked by this pandemic make the work of creating and maintaining community an even more essential practice. JV communities may have to get creative to safely build community through the use of technology and social distancing practices. JVC staff is here to support communities as they navigate this situation and the challenges it poses.

Is there any possibility that JVC will put next year's program on hold?

No. As mentioned above, JVC continues to monitor the situation and make adjustments to better support our JVs through this turbulent time and to ensure their health and safety. The 2021-2022 domestic program year will not be put on hold. JVC will keep you informed with specific program details as you move through your application process.