Young Adult Volunteers

Handbook

2026-2027

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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How to Use this Handbook

This handbook contains important information about your year of service with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program. It is a lot of information! Take your time and read carefully.

Some paragraphs contain links that will lead you to additional related information. If you are looking for information on a particular topic, you can use the Table of Contents on the previous page.

On the right side of every page, you will find additional details, reflection questions, and food for thought that connect to the topics and policies on that page.

Throughout the handbook, you will see information in purple and blue boxes. The blue boxes contain information that applies only to YAVs serving at international sites; the purple boxes contain information that applies only to YAVs serving at national sites. (If you printed this document in black and white, do not worry! The boxes are all labeled for quick identification.) If you are serving at a binational site, please read all the boxes.

As you read the handbook, you will learn about the policies and guidelines of the YAV program. You will also have an opportunity to engage with the core tenets and values of the program on a deeper level. Let's jump in!

Throughout this handbook, you can find additional details, reflection questions, and food for thought in this sidebar.

Each category is marked with its own symbol, illustrated below:

Additional Details

Reflection Questions

Food for Thought

Core Tenets of the YAV Program

Intentional Christian Community

You will explore what it means to be a Christian community with one another and your neighbors. While some YAVs will live in housing together and others spread throughout their country, you all will reflect together on your service and explore your relationship with God, the church, and your ministry in a broken world.

Leadership Development through Faith in Action

You will develop leadership by serving in marginalized communities alongside local people of faith responding to poverty, violence, and injustice in their communities, sharing the gospel through word and deed.

Vocational Discernment

Through theological reflection and spiritual practices, you will participate in the process of vocational discernment – unearthing God's desires for your life and work.

Simple Living

You are challenged to practice simple living – living an abundant life with less. Living simply pushes you to evaluate your true needs with your lifestyle and beliefs. We challenge one another to live more simply in response to an unsustainable human demand for natural resources.

Cross-Cultural Mission

You will intentionally explore the diversity of God's creation, living and working outside of your comfort zone. You will work to confront the systemic challenges of race, class, gender, and power while learning to examine your own lives and actions.

Program Definitions

You are appointed to serve in the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for a period of one year. Your presence is requested by, and you are under the supervision of, the partner church or church-related organization during the time of your service.

You are the beneficiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the partner church/organization, placement sites, local churches, and your community of support that are collaborating to make this opportunity possible.

Who is included and excluded in the life of your community? Why? At the end of your YAV year, what would you want your community to say about you?

What does "faith in action" mean to you? What does it mean to be a leader while exercising the humility needed to learn from the local context where you serve?

Which core value challenges you the most and why?

How do you identify with the phrase, "historically marginalized groups"? "Historically marginalized" does not just mean groups that have been marginalized in the past. If you have personally experienced historical marginalization, how do you think this will continue to manifest in your YAV year? If you are someone who belongs to groups that have been historically empowered, how do you think that part of your identity will impact your YAV year?

General Qualifications for YAV Service

- **Affiliation to a Christian community (a church, student fellowship, etc.), though not necessarily Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).**
- **Commitment to serve in culturally and religiously diverse contexts with sensitivity and appreciation for all people regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, mental or physical ability, or culture.**
- **Commitment to serve and engage in the anti-racism emphasis of the YAV program, standing with historically marginalized groups.**
- **Openness, flexibility, curiosity, and patience to explore and deepen one's faith in the context of community.**
- **The ability to adapt to uncertainty and ambiguity and a desire to simply "be" with people and with God.**
- **Commitment and willingness to live a simple lifestyle.**
- **Willingness to address physical/psychosocial/emotional health concerns and foster personal resilience.**
- **Willingness to learn a new language, culture, and context and have the courage to make mistakes.**
- **Some sites require a college degree and work experience in an area of expertise.**
- **For couples, both individuals must meet the qualifications and be accepted by the site. The YAV program is not able to place applicants with children or other dependents.**

Program and Placement Terminology, Roles

Program Terminology:

PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer Program - The YAV program is a program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

YAV - Young Adult Volunteer, YOU!

YAV Site - Your YAV site is where you serve. Sites work in partnership with a particular church or organization or with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through its relationships with several different denominations, independent churches, and/or organizations. The YAV sites and their partners are:

International Sites:

- **Cameroon – The Network for Fight Against Hunger (RELUFA)**
- **Peru - Evangelical Theological Educational Association**
- **Philippines - United Church of Christ in the Philippines**
- **South Korea - Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea**
- **US/Mexico Borderlands - Presbytery de Cristo and Frontera de Cristo**

National Sites:

- **Chinook (MT) - Glacier Presbytery**
- **Louisville (KY) – Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, and PC(USA)**
- **New Orleans (LA) - Presbytery of South Louisiana**
- **New York City (NY) - New York City Presbytery**

Think about what it means to be a responsible Christian in this complicated world. What spaces and people in your life help you to reflect on this (other volunteers, site coordinator, co-workers, supervisors, church, community, friends, family)? How can you prepare to learn from YAV program partners throughout your year of service?

Unfamiliar with the PC(USA) or want to learn more? See Appendix A for background information about PC(USA) beliefs and church structure.

Websites worth visiting:

YAV website:
PC(USA) YAV

YAV sites:
PC(USA) YAV Sites

Presbyteries and Synods:
Mid Councils

Site Coordinator - Your site coordinator is the person hired by your site's partner church/organization or the PC(USA) to oversee/facilitate your site. A site coordinator's responsibilities usually include:

- **Providing direction for the spiritual growth of YAVs at your site.**
- **Facilitating logistics for YAVs (such as visa procedures, site finances and payment of provided funds/living expenses, housing, site placements, arrivals and orientation, departures, and evaluation of volunteers).**
- **Caring for the overall well-being, support, and guidance of YAVs during the year of service. Your site coordinator, in consultation with Louisville YAV staff, is the primary person in making decisions about your placement and term of service, facilitating conflict resolution, and responding to crisis and emergency situations.**

Local Board (national sites) - For national sites, Boards of Directors are responsible for hiring the site coordinator, overseeing the management of the site, and making sure the site grows in good directions into the future.

Placement Agency - Your placement agency is the specific organization, church, or agency where you serve. It is the place you are expected to work and/or be present during your term of service in the program. Your placement agency, in coordination with your site coordinator, is responsible for providing a job description or placement expectations, supervision, and a process for integrating you into the life and work of the community.

Placement Supervisor - Your placement supervisor is the person(s) you are directly responsible to at the placement agency. This person(s) is responsible for providing supervision, direction, and guidance regarding your work, overseeing work assignment or placement expectations, and supporting your integration into the community in which the placement agency is located. Your placement supervisor is your first point of contact for addressing concerns and issues regarding your work.

YAV Office - The national office of the Young Adult Volunteers program located in Louisville, KY. The Louisville YAV staff consists of the Manager, Mission Associate, and Mission Specialist.

National Site Partnership - The YAV program partners with Presbyteries, congregations, and various other organizations/programs to conduct the YAV program in partnership.

A board is a group of people who volunteer their time to provide voices of leadership to the life of an organization.

YAV Office Contact Information:

Destini Hodges
Manager
YAV Program
destini.hodges@pcusa.org

Champaka Srinivasan
Mission Associate
YAV Program
champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org

Steffan Johnson
Mission Specialist
YAV Program
steffan.johnson@pcusa.org

Mailing Address:
Young Adult Volunteers
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

TOLL FREE TELEPHONE IN US: 1-888-728-7228

OFF-HOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: (502) 569-8444

Presbyteries - The Presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within the region. There are some national YAV sites that are hosted/partnered/sponsored by their presbyteries.

Other partners - The YAV program partners with other organizations and programs as well.

Phases of the YAV Year

You will move through four phases in preparing for and completing your year of service. Read this section carefully to learn what you are responsible for each of the phases.

~IYAVs only

Onboarding Phase

Once you have accepted the offer of placement from the YAV Office, you will enter the Onboarding Phase. During this time, you, the Louisville YAV staff, and your site coordinator will begin the work of preparing for your YAV year.

During the onboarding phase, email is the main mode of communication. It is important for you to pay attention to your inbox, so you do not miss important information. Do not use an email address that will change during your YAV year (example: school email).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What can happen if I fail to submit onboarding forms on time?
A: You will not be able to start your YAV year.

Q: What are the dates for Program-wide Orientation?
A: Late August

Q: What is "Verleen"?
A: It is where you submitted your online YAV application.

Required Forms

The YAV Office and your site will need you to fill out various forms. Some forms will be done online via Wufoo forms whereas there might be others that will require you to download, print, and fill out by hand. Pay close attention to the directions for each form. If you have any questions, contact the indicated staff person.

You will not be able to start your YAV year without submitting the following forms:

All YAV	International YAV (IYAV)
***Worshiping endorsement** ***Background check** ***Sexual Misconduct form** ***Proof of health insurance** ***Direct Deposit information** ***Form W-9**	***Copy of Passport**

The YAV Office or Site Board/Coordinator may communicate with you regarding additional required forms as needed.

Paperwork for living expenses and reimbursements:

YAVs: You will need to submit Form W-9 and direct deposit information (with a copy of a check or alternate documentation) to the YAV Office. Also check with your site coordinator for appropriate paperwork.

Background Check

You are required to go through a criminal background check before you can begin your year of service. Upon accepting your placement offer, you will be emailed a personalized link to an online form. Once you submit the form, a background check is conducted. If you have past events that might show up on the background check, inform the YAV Office prior to submitting the background check form.

Health Insurance

All YAVs must have health insurance coverage during their service year. Many YAVs with options choose to stay on family health insurance for medical and emergency evacuation coverage. (Emergency evacuation is required for IYAVs only.) Those without access to health insurance can enroll with the insurance offered and paid by the YAV Office.

If you are staying on your family insurance, you will need to submit proof of your insurance to the YAV Office (that displays your name, not just the name of the main insurer).

Questions about:
Verleen
Background checks
Health Insurance
Passport
Finance related forms - Form W-9
Direct deposit

Contact:
Champaka Srinivasan
champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org

If you need health insurance through the YAV program, indicate that by completing the insurance section of the online form (YAV Year Preparation Form).

Medication and Health Check-Up

You are responsible for making sure you are in appropriate physical and mental health for your YAV year. It is your responsibility to take a medical exam and make sure you have all the necessary medication for your year. We encourage you to share any significant medical or mental health history with the YAV Office and the site coordinator that could affect your YAV year. This will enable the site to develop medical/ mental health strategies and identify resources to support you during your year of service.

COVID shots: Check with your site coordinator if COVID shots are a requirement.

Passport Information

If you are serving at an international or binational site, you must have a US passport, valid for at least 6 months after your final return date. If you are serving at a national site, you may be required to have a passport or passport card - check with your site coordinator. If you do not have a passport or if it has expired, get a valid passport as soon as possible. You can begin this process by checking with officials at your local post office or visiting https://www.usa.gov/passport. The YAV program does not reimburse fees for obtaining a passport.

Visas (International YAVs)

You must have a **visa** to serve internationally, and you cannot begin the visa process until you have a valid US passport. Your passport must be valid for six months after the end of your term to satisfy many countries' visa requirements. For information about visa requirements in the country where you will be serving, please be in touch with your site coordinator. In some cases, you will need to obtain a visa before leaving the US; in others you may obtain a visa as you enter the country. Please carefully follow the instructions you receive from your site coordinator since visa requirements vary from country to country. The YAV program will reimburse visa fees.

Please send a copy of the first page of your passport (the one with your photograph on it) to Louisville YAV staff when requested. Take copies of this page with you when you go abroad and leave one with a family member in the US as well. If your passport is lost or stolen, it is easier to obtain a replacement if you have a copy of the first page.

If you need to apply for a new passport or renewal, find out when you can expect to receive your passport. You may need to consider using the expedited service. The extra fee will be worth it.

Immunization Information (for International YAVs)

Do good research before getting any **immunizations** – first, check with your site coordinator to see what vaccinations are required or recommended for living in the country where you will be serving. County public health department is often the best place to obtain affordable immunizations. Some vaccinations can be received after you enter the country (and will often be less expensive).

If your medical insurance will not cover the cost of needed immunizations, the YAV Office will reimburse you for the following immunizations: Polio booster, Hepatitis A series, Hepatitis B series, and Typhoid. To be reimbursed, you will need to provide an explanation of benefits from your insurance company and receipts for the immunizations. These scanned documents must be emailed to Champaka Champaka.Srivinasan@pcusa.org within 30 days of the date of medical service.

You must also be up to date on standard inoculations such as diphtheria/tetanus, MMR, etc. These vaccinations are not reimbursable from the YAV Office. Public health departments are often the easiest and least expensive option for immunizations – please check with them first.

Your site coordinator may instruct you to get other vaccinations beyond what are listed here. Any additional vaccinations *required* by your site coordinator will be reimbursed by the YAV Office. Your doctor, websites you consult, or travel clinics may *recommend* extra vaccinations beyond what are listed here or required by your site coordinator. If you decide to get any additional *recommended* vaccinations, they will be at your own expense (not reimbursed by the YAV Office).

If you are serving in an area where malaria is prevalent, consult your site coordinator and your doctor about taking malaria medication. Remember that malaria medication is often much cheaper in your country of service, so you will want to talk with your site coordinator before purchasing a year's worth of prescriptions.

Web Profile Page Content

Your information will be featured on the YAV national website. You will need to submit to the YAV Office and the site coordinator a high-resolution photo, a short bio of yourself, and the URL of your blog.

Fundraising

When can you start fundraising? The sooner, the better! As you share your excitement about your upcoming YAV year, make sure your supporters know that fundraising is an important part of the ministry you will be engaged in. Fundraising Toolkits

During your onboarding phase, you will be emailed fundraising resources from the YAV Office. These resources will have all the information you will need to be successful in fundraising. Louisville YAV staff (Destini Hodges) and your site coordinator are also available to help you.

If you feel stuck with fundraising, do not hesitate to reach out for help!

National YAVs: Please remember to check with your site coordinator for site-specific information on how and where your supporters can send funds to support your year.

Helpful websites:

Center for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/travel

World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/ith/en/

U.S. State Department Travel Site: http://travel.state.gov/

You will receive a separate email with instructions on how to submit your profile page contents and set up your blog.

Questions about profile page stuff: Champaka Srinivasan champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org

True or False?

If I feel stuck in fundraising, I can contact Destini Hodges

[TRUE – Destini Hodges is the staff person who works with all YAVs who are struggling with fundraising. She will be happy to talk with you about raising support]

If I am a NYAV, I get my fundraising report directly from Champaka Srinivasan.

[FALSE – Champaka provides direct fundraising report only to IYAVs. NYAVs get their report directly from their sites.]

Fundraising Deadlines

July 1 - Half of your fundraising minimum raised.
(National $2000, International $2500)

January 1 - Full amount of fundraising minimum completed.
(National $4000, International $5000)

Commissioning

Your sending congregation or faith community may wish to do a commissioning service for you. If you or your church need more information on commissioning, contact the YAV Office for available resources. For more information and samples of commissioning resources: YAV Resources

Orientation Phase

Program Orientation

Your YAV year officially begins with a week-long orientation with all the YAVs in your class (international and national). All first-year YAVs are required to be present for the entire orientation, which takes place in late August.

During this week, you will receive relevant information as well as make connections with other YAVs, especially YAVs serving at other sites. Upon completion of orientation, you will travel directly to your site. A few sites might ask you to move to your site first before attending national orientation – check with your site coordinator for specifics.

All expenses for national orientation are covered by the YAV Office. Your travel to orientation (and then to your site) will be arranged by the YAV Office according to the travel information provided by you on one of the onboarding forms. (See *Travel* information in the *Benefits* section for detailed information.)

On-Site Orientation

Once you arrive at your site, your site coordinator will provide local orientation which will help you become familiar with your new community context as well as site-specific policies. The length of local orientation can vary from site to site. Your site coordinator will provide you with more information on local orientation.

Service Phase

Site Placement

As a part of your YAV year, you will be placed at one or two placement agencies (some YAVs split their time between two agencies). You are responsible for understanding your role at the placement agency and keeping a clear

True or False?
Since the last fundraising deadline is not until January 1, I can take my time with fundraising.
[FALSE – Fundraising and connecting with your supporters will become significantly harder once you begin your YAV year. It is best to complete your fundraising BEFORE your YAV year begins.]

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: When does my YAV year begin?
A: Your YAV year begins with program-wide orientation. All YAVs will travel to their assigned sites upon completion of orientation.

Q: How do I get placed at site (work) placements?
A: Each site has its own way of matching YAVs with work placements. Check with your site coordinators for more information.

communication with your direct supervisor. Your site coordinator will check in with you and your supervisor throughout the year.

You are expected to fulfill your responsibilities. You will be expected to show up to work on time and be fully engaged. If emergencies come up that prevent you from fulfilling your basic duties, you are responsible for informing your supervisor and site coordinator.

Your placement supervisor will evaluate your work during and at the end of your service year. Evaluation results will be shared with your site coordinator.

Community Engagement

As a YAV, you have committed to fully participate in the work of building an intentional Christian community in a variety of ways and with a variety of groups. Depending on where you serve, you will have opportunities for building community with different groups of people including:

- **Other YAVs**
- **Your host family**
- **Local church or churches**
- **Neighborhood where your YAV group or host family lives**
- **Work site colleagues**

To read more about expectations and community engagement, see sections on Christian Faith and Life Community. (pages 16-17).

To fully participate in the YAV program, you need to make sure you are bringing the healthiest version of yourself. This requires you to consider various ways in which you can exercise good care for yourself. For that reason, you may be encouraged to seek additional resources during your YAV year (counseling, spiritual direction, medication, etc.).

Simple Living - Finance Matters

Simple living is one of the core values of the YAV program. You are given funds to cover your living expenses and are not a paid employee of the program. As you practice living simply, you will be responsible for following program policies and expectations around managing money and being a good steward. There are also important program policies around receiving gifts from outside the program, raising funds for projects at your placement, and outside employment.

The value of simple living impacts your life as a YAV beyond financial matters - things like traveling, receiving visitors, and visiting home. Make sure you read the whole policy section as you consider how all the policies are shaped by the YAV program's core tenets.

The ways you behave and live can be expressions of your call to service and reflections of your values. What do you want your way of living during your year of service to communicate about what is important to you? How can you honor simple living, cross-cultural mission, and the other core tenets in your day-to-day actions?

Who has been known to read YAV blogs in the past?
- People from YAV site placements
- Other YAVs
- Host family members
- Random PC(USA) pastors
- New YAV applicants
- Site coordinators
-The lady on the back pew of the church who corrects grammar
- Pastor from local church

What compromises are you going to make to care for the other people in your intentional community and the community as a whole? How will you express your needs to the community?

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For more about the Benefits offered by the YAV program, go to page 18; to jump into the Policies section, go to page 21.

Telling Your Story

Social Media and Online Presence

As you journey through your YAV experience, you will want to share your story with those who are supporting you (family and friends from home, new friends from the overall YAV program, Louisville YAV staff, your site coordinator, etc.). This is a powerful way of sharing your journey! Whether through your words in blogs and newsletters or digital media in the form of videos and pictures, remember that you are representing the voices of the YAV Office, local partnering church/organization, PC(USA), and most importantly, the community where you serve.

This last part is particularly important. As a storyteller, you are given power in how you tell the story and portray the people who appear. Before you take a picture of a person, you need to secure their consent to share their image. If you are writing a blog that mentions a work colleague or a member of your intentional community, give them the chance to read it first to offer insight and feedback. Remember that *not all stories are yours to tell.*

For specific social media policies, please see below.

Social Media Policy

The following section is adapted from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation social media Policy to give specific guidelines on the use of social media.

As a YAV, you are viewed by friends, family, and other followers of your personal social media accounts as a representative of the church and the national organization. Therefore, when using your personal social media accounts, please:

1. Be transparent and honest about your identity. On Twitter and similar mediums, you may want to include "The views I express are not necessarily those of the PC(USA)" in your bio.

2. Be respectful and mindful of the conversations you engage in. Any conversations that you participate in may reflect not only yourself but also the church, so post and comment accordingly.

3. Be accurate. Before posting, take a moment to research a story adequately and responsibly to be sure you have your facts correct. Rely on reputable news sources.

Lessons from past YAVs:

One of the biggest regrets YAVs often express at the end of their year is that they took too long to come out of their shell and engage with their new community (other YAVs, host family, neighborhood, etc.). If you are having a hard week, resist calling your family/friends back home for support, which only provides temporary relief. Try turning to your new community for support – consider asking a new friend for coffee or inviting a housemate to go for a walk.

Lessons from past YAVs:

Do not be a Netflix YAV! It is important to find time for yourself. Going for a run, journaling, and taking a short nap are all effective ways to restore yourself with some alone time. Spending many hours on Netflix or on the phone will make it harder for you to engage your community. If your "go to" place for rest is your phone or computer, consider keeping a daily log of how you are using your down time.

4. Maintain confidentiality and keep in mind that our Ethics Policy is applicable to online and offline YAV-related conversations. Consider if your posts about your YAV work is in line with what you would present at a conference.

5. Posting events, photos, videos: You may post about official Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) events on your personal page, but the best practice for page administrators is to post on the organization's page first. You may share with your own personal page or create an entirely new post, but you should tag your organization's page when doing so. This will encourage more people to like and interact with your page.

6. Be aware of liability. You can be held legally liable for what you post on your personal site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Be aware that you may also create liability for PL&W/A Corp based upon inappropriate (e.g., libelous) posts on your personal social media pages that relate to work duties and PL&W.

7. Protect your identity. Do not provide personal information (home address, telephone number, work telephone number, or email address). It is good practice to create a separate, non-work email address that is used only with your social media account.

Second year service

Many YAVs consider doing a second year of service. As you discern during your YAV year, you may decide that doing another YAV year makes sense as your next step. If you find yourself in that situation, wait until January 1 to submit your second-year application. You want to make sure you have had a chance to experience your first year.

If you discern a call to a second year of service with YAV, complete a new application. Log in to Verleen and indicate that you have already served. The second-year application requires recommendations from your site coordinator and placement supervisor. You will need to discern this call carefully with your site coordinator, especially if you want to serve at the same site. If you are currently serving nationally, you can consider international and national sites. If your first year was at an international site, you are invited to consider a national site for your second year. (Second year at the same IYAV site might be a possibility at some sites, depending on each site's requirements.) General eligibility for second-year service is contingent on your performance and growth during your first year.

End of Service Phase

End of Term guidelines: The general program calendar runs from the end of August to the end of July. Each site sets a specific end date for the completion of a YAV year, depending on placement site agreements, community expectations, and final retreat dates. Exceptions may exist on a case-by-case basis. Each YAV is responsible for confirming the end-of-term date with their site coordinator.

Travel Home

National YAVs: upon completion of a YAV year, the YAV Office will reimburse up to $300 of your return travel expenses. If you are sharing a ride, this reimbursement is per vehicle, not per person. For questions, contact Champaka Srinivasan.

International YAVs: The YAV Office will book return travel home to your city of origin. If you are traveling after your YAV year, or to a different destination, you will be eligible for reimbursement to the lowest cost travel to your city of origin. For pre-approval of such reimbursement, contact Champaka Srinivasan latest by Dec 31 if you are traveling after your YAV year.

Contact Champaka Srinivasan for all Travel Home reimbursements.

Transition retreat

Following your year of service, you can apply to attend the Transition retreat, a structured time to reflect on your YAV experience with YAV Alum facilitators, Louisville staff, and your fellow YAVs.

Expectations

As a Young Adult Volunteer, you live out your time of service within the context of God's call to the global church. You are called by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to a ministry of Christian witness, service, and learning as one person within the larger mission of the PC(USA) in partnership with other churches, communities, and organizations across the United States and around the world. In the community where you serve, you will be seen as a representative of the PC(USA), the local partner organization, and the program as a whole. All Young Adult Volunteers are expected to understand and follow the expectations and standards of behavior below.

Christian Faith and Life in Community

As a Young Adult Volunteer, you are called to explore how your faith can be lived out in the context of a Christian community. One opportunity you have through the program is to become part of an intentional Christian community with others at your YAV site – other YAVs, your host family, your neighbors, etc. With these people, you can explore what it means to do life together faithfully and with love. You are also expected to involve yourself in the regular life of the local worshiping community where you serve, building relationships with the larger family of God.

Other YAVs

Whether you are living with other YAVs or with a host family, a big part of your year will be about building and caring for the YAV community at your site. With guidance and support from your site coordinator, you will learn to engage with your YAV community through faith and intentionality.

Host Family

You may be living with host families during your YAV year. This means your faithful and intentional engagement will occur in the context of your host family. You are not a boarder or a renter. Your host family

Part of the call to life in intentional community requires balancing your individual needs and the needs of the community in which you live. How will you balance self-care without exercising entitlement?

What resources outside of YAV community will you take advantage of, for your emotional, physical, and mental health? Your site coordinator can help connect you to therapists, doctors, spiritual directors, etc.

How is your concept of "normal" a product of where and how you were raised? How might "normal" look different in a new context? Oftentimes, our first reaction to something that looks, tastes, or feels different than what we have known, is to call it "weird." Challenge yourself during your YAV year to turn "weird," into "something that is new to me," and see those moments as opportunities to understand local cultures better.

has opened their house and invited you in as a family member for a year. Your site coordinator will be a valuable resource in helping you to figure out how to positively contribute to your family in culturally appropriate ways.

Local Church Engagement
An important part of your YAV year is faith development. Exploring your relationship with the church is an important part of that. Some sites have built-in congregational engagement in their programming. Each YAV is responsible for finding a local place of worship and regular participation. Your site coordinator can help you find a local worshiping community.

Local Neighborhood
Your YAV year can be so much richer if you can find ways to engage with your neighborhood. At the beginning of your year, you might not be familiar with the cultural context of your new neighborhood. Do not assume that the norms of your culture, including understanding safety, will apply to your new context. Consult with your site coordinator on best practices for engaging with your neighborhood.

Lifestyle in the Context of the Larger Community

Being a YAV means committing to simple living during your year of service. "Simple" living can look very different to different people and in different contexts. Be guided by the way people live in the community where you are serving. You are expected to engage in the local community context of your YAV site by living in a way that is appropriate to that context. Try to experience and enjoy local lifestyles as you discern what "simple living" means to you and to your intentional community.

Relationships in Community of Service

You are expected to be sensitive to cultural, religious, and relational norms in the community where you are living and serving. Mutuality and respect should be guiding values for the way you relate to the people around you. As a member of this volunteer program, you may hold a position of power in the communities where you serve; your actions and behaviors may often be more visible (and more scrutinized) than you might expect. Recognize power dynamics at play and be conscientious as you grow into relationships with other YAVs as well as people outside the program.

Your relationships reflect on other YAVs, the local YAV site, the YAV program as a whole, your host organization or family, and the PC(USA). You are expected to work to learn about and respect local norms in social relationships and local cultural patterns. For example, behaviors or interactions that seem easy and "normal" to you may not be appropriate in the context where you serve. Romantic relationships bring an additional set of complications and complexities and often have effects far beyond the YAV considering them. *In general, it is recommended that you do not engage in romantic relationships during your year of service. Consult your placement*

Steps for addressing boundary concerns:

1) Consult with your site coordinator

2) If the situation involves your site coordinator, contact: Destini Hodges destini.hodges@pcusa.org.

3) If the situation involves Destini Hodges, contact: Abuse Prevention Hotline: 866-607-7233.

supervisor and site coordinator with questions about relationships that are romantic in nature or may be perceived as romantic.

Relationships with Co-Workers

You are expected to always treat your coworkers with respect. Your coworkers in service include other YAVs, mission personnel, site coordinators, placement supervisors, and host church/organization leaders and members. If you ever have any concerns about misconduct, talk about your concerns with your placement supervisor, the site coordinator, and the individuals involved. If concerns continue, or the situation involves your site coordinator, reach out to Destini Hodges destini.hodges@pcusa.org.

Commitment to Diversity

As a YAV, you are expected to be familiar with and support the YAV program's commitment to diversity and equity and seek to overcome racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of identity-based discrimination.

By becoming a YAV, you are committing to serve and engage in the anti-racism emphasis of the YAV program, which seeks to stand with historically marginalized groups. Throughout your YAV year, starting with program-wide orientation, you will be engaged in understanding how systems built on white privilege can continue to perpetuate marginalization and inequality and how people of faith can work to counteract that brokenness. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to explore your racial identity journey and critically analyze how you fit into these systems of white supremacy.

Commitment to the term of Service

When you accept an invitation to the YAV program, you commit to fulfilling the 11-month duration of your term of service. However, there may be circumstances that require you to leave your YAV year early. Choosing to leave the program early can have devastating effects on your intentional community, your work placement partnership, and the trust of the program within the local community. If you ask to leave early, you may only do so after engaging in prayerful discernment with your site coordinator and the YAV Office.
Please take note of the *Travel Expenses* section below to see how an early departure impacts travel costs.

Benefits

Living Expenses

During your YAV year, your lodging, food, and transportation costs will be covered by your local site. Each site will have its ways of covering these costs.

You will also be provided with a set amount of funds to help cover necessary personal expenses beyond food, housing, and transportation. Amounts can vary from site to site (based on factors such as local cost of living). These funds for both international and national YAVs are paid through their site for most sites.

What are some ways in which you hold power in the current system?

What are some ways in which you have been marginalized by the current system?

What are some ways in which you participate in perpetuating systemic racism?

What would it mean to build your YAV year budget purely based on the funds provided to you? How do you currently pay for your cell phone plan? How do your spending habits compare to those around you in your YAV community?

National YAVs: The provided funds will be paid directly by your YAV site. Ask your site coordinator for more information.

International YAVs: At most sites, the provided funds will be paid directly by your YAV site in local currency. Ask your site coordinator for more information.

Transportation

Your site coordinator will work with you to ensure you have safe, reliable, culturally appropriate transportation during your year of service.

Travel Expenses

The YAV Office covers the following travel expenses:

- **Travel to program-wide orientation in August before the service year begins.**
- **Travel from orientation to your YAV site to begin the service year.**
- **Returning travel expenses - travel back home from your YAV site at the end of your year of service.**

National YAVs: Your travel away from your YAV site after your year of service will be paid by you, with reimbursement available from the YAV Office up to $300. If you travel by car, mileage will be reimbursed up to $300 per car (not per person in the car).

International YAVs: Your air travel ticket from your site at the end of your YAV year will be purchased by the YAV Office. If you decide to change your destination or travel date for personal reasons, you will be responsible for making the arrangements and covering additional costs. In such cases, you will first need to obtain pre-approval from your site coordinator and Champaka Srinivasan, then you will purchase the ticket. You can then be reimbursed for the price of the ticket for going straight home from your site. Reimbursements in such cases will not be issued until after the actual travel date has passed.

In the case of early departure or dismissal from the YAV program (before the scheduled end of the year of service), travel arrangements must be negotiated *in advance* with your site coordinator, placement supervisor, and the YAV Office. YAVs who do not complete their full year of service may be responsible for returning travel expenses.

Transportation during your year of service can be quite different in each city/ country - and it can tell you a lot about local culture, customs, and preferences. Pay attention to how local folks get around where you are serving. Who is riding the bus with you in DC? Why do some people take an airplane from Lima to Tarapoto, and other people take a bus? What form of transportation in Chinook or Glasgow best fits your values as a YAV?

Always talk with Champaka Srinivasan first before any travel arrangements are made.

If you end up not using a ticket that the YAV Office has purchased for you, you will be required to reimburse the YAV Office for the cost of the unused ticket.

If you discern a call to a second year of service with YAV and are placed at a national site, the YAV Office will book your travel from home to your second-year site.

Health Insurance

You must have health insurance coverage during your year of service. Many YAVs choose to stay on their parents' health insurance for medical and emergency evacuation coverage. This is often the option that will provide the best coverage. If this is not an option for you, please let the YAV Office know. You will be enrolled with the insurance offered and paid for by the YAV Office.

Student Loans

If you have student loans, you should contact the lending company and ask if you are eligible to participate in a payment reduction program during your year of service. Financial aid for student loans is available through PC(USA) - check the sidebar for information on the Season of Service Loan Assistance Program (SSLA). To receive SSLA benefits, you must apply separately by their application deadline. (See sidebar for more information)

Vacation

Your YAV site has a policy that determines the number of days you can take off for vacation during your year of service. Ask your site coordinator for site-specific information. Any time you take away from your site should be scheduled around work and community commitments and only done with your site coordinator and placement supervisor's approval.

Reimbursements

You can request reimbursement for costs that you incur during any trip requested by the YAV Office (for example, travel to the site). The YAV Office will reimburse visa fees but NOT the cost for obtaining or renewing a U.S. passport.

If you need to request reimbursement, remember to:

- **Get your reimbursement pre-approved by the YAV Office.**
- **You must submit itemized receipts with your request.**
- **You must submit your request directly to Champaka Srinivasan at champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org within 30 days of the date on the receipt.**
- **The YAV Office will not reimburse alcohol/tobacco purchases. If purchasing an alcoholic beverage with a meal, ask for drinks to be on a separate bill.**

If you have student loans, you could be eligible to receive up to $250 per month (depending on documented need). Award amounts from SSLA are determined based on need and are only available for the actual months the payments are due. Your approved grant amount will be disbursed by the Financial Aid Office quarterly, directly to the lender.
If you are interested in this option, you must apply to the Financial Aid Office by their deadline.

To find out more: http://www.pcusa.org/loanassist

To apply: contact Champaka Srinivasan

An "itemized receipt" is a receipt that shows a list of items purchased. For example, a receipt from a restaurant that lists the specific items ordered, not just the total cost.

Housing

Your YAV site will provide housing for you. All YAV housing is designed to facilitate intentional community living. A part of community living is learning how to share living spaces with others. A single bedroom is not a guarantee. Many YAVs share bedrooms with others.

Policies

Raising Funds for Projects/Agencies

You may raise funds only for your fundraising. Before soliciting funds for projects and purposes outside of your own fundraising goal, you need to consult with your site coordinator for exceptions.

Support & Gifts from Outside Sources

Your family and friends might offer to give you extra spending money during your YAV year. It is your responsibility to educate your loved ones about your commitment to simple living. If your loved ones want to financially support you, ask them to contribute to your fundraising instead.

Sometimes, people you meet during your YAV year will want to show their support through gifts (money, items, meals, etc.). Always check with your site coordinator before accepting gifts. If you were unable to politely decline the gift, inform your site coordinator of the situation right away.

Outside Employment

Work for payment during your YAV year is not allowed. Even for a one-time paying gig, consult with your site coordinator.

Traveling & Receiving Visitors During YAV year

In general, you will be asked to limit your travel during your YAV year for a couple of reasons:

1. **Being frequently away from your community (even for day trips or weekend trips) will significantly interfere with your ability to be fully present with your community.**
2. **Frequent traveling does not align with simple living. Keep in mind that the ability to travel is a luxury that comes with privilege.**
3. **Many sites have restrictions on travel, particularly near the beginning of your time of service. Please consult with your site coordinator, especially if you expect to need to travel within the first 3 months of your term.**

ANY and ALL travel must be pre-approved by your site coordinator.

Traveling Outside the Country of Service

YAVs are not permitted to travel outside of the country of their site (unless that travel is planned by your site coordinator). If your work requests you to travel, you must first receive special approval from your site coordinator and the YAV Office. If you have been approved to travel internationally, be sure to inform the YAV Office one month before your travel. If you are

If you are able to travel or receive visitors (within program policies), consider the following questions as you make your decisions around travel/visitors:

- How do your choices reflect your commitment to simple living?

- How do your choices allow you to stand with those who do not have access to resources like ability to travel?

- Consider the photos you post on social media during your travel. What message do they send?

serving internationally and wish to do personal traveling, you may schedule your trip at the end of your YAV year with your site coordinator's approval.

Visiting Home

Some national YAVs may be able to travel home around Christmas time. If you decide to travel home during the winter holidays, you are responsible for associated costs. International YAVs are not permitted to travel home in the middle of their YAV year.

Receiving Visitors

Your family and friends may want to visit you at your YAV site. Ask them to visit you AFTER Christmas. The first half of your YAV year is a crucial time of adjustment. Visits from familiar faces can be more harmful to your experience in the long run. Before planning to receive visitors, consult with your site coordinator and housemates/host family.

Visitor Status in Country of Service (International YAVs only): There are many things to consider when you are traveling to a different country, such as declarations at customs, securing residence permits, and other visa or permit requirements. Check with your site coordinator to make sure you have all the information you need for your travel and year of service. You are expected to comply with the laws of national and local governments where you serve.

Taxes

You are responsible for filing your own federal, state, and local taxes during your year of service if you meet the criteria for filing. Ask your site coordinator or other local staff for more information if you have questions.

International YAVs: You will use pay statements issued by the site to file your taxes.

National YAVs: Any necessary paperwork for your taxes will be issued by your local site.

PC(USA)'s Standards of Ethical Conduct

As a YAV, you are participating in a ministry program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The YAV program is accountable to ethical conduct boundaries set by PC(USA).

Conduct with Minors

You may have interactions with minors (children and youth) in various contexts during your year of service - at your work placement, in your host family, at your church, in your neighborhood. Interactions you have with children and youth require special care, caution, and respect. You will receive training on appropriate

boundaries and interactions. Follow the guidelines and cultural norms in the community where you serve, within the guidelines of appropriate conduct, and ask your site coordinator if you have any questions. If you are going to be living or working with minors during your YAV year, be sure to read Guidelines for Interacting with Minors (Appendix B).

Sexual Misconduct

A volunteer service year often comes with complicated relationship boundaries. The relationships you will build with various people (site coordinator, other YAVs, supervisor(s), clients, host family members, neighbors, etc.) will often lead to engagement on personal and emotional levels. There will also be different levels of power differentials that will challenge you to think about these relationships. What seemed like clear boundaries may start to look blurred or gray after a while. Most misconduct grows out of poor judgment, resulting from not having paid close enough attention to how the parties involved in the relationship are protected against preventable harm.

If you find yourself in situations where you or someone else may have crossed boundaries, inform your site coordinator right away. If the situation involves the site coordinator, contact the Manager, YAV program, Destini Hodges destini.hodges@pcusa.org. If none of these are safe options for you, you can contact the Abuse Prevention Hotline (866-607-7233).

Anti-harrassment Policy

YAVs are prohibited from engaging in harassing/bulling, discriminatory, or retaliatory behavior. YAVs shall not engage in harassing (including bullying) or discriminatory behavior against others on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, pregnancy or related conditions, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, self-identified or perceived sex, transgender status, creed, disability status, citizenship status, veteran status or religion. If you experience harassing/bullying, discriminatory, or retaliatory conduct, from anyone, you should report it immediately to your site coordinator. If the situation involves the site coordinator, contact the Manager, YAV program, Destini Hodges destini.hodges@pcusa.org.

Personal Public Witness

During your YAV year, you might come across opportunities to publicly support various social justice issues. In doing so, you must remember that as a YAV, your actions can be seen as an extension of the YAV program, your local site, and the PC(USA). Consider the following guidelines.

- **When making a personal public statement, you need to make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not speaking for the YAV program, PC(USA), or your local program.**
- **When making a personal public witness, avoid any reference to your status as a YAV. If questioned, you can acknowledge your participation in the YAV program without using it to make a claim of authority. Accordingly, you are not allowed to use PC(USA) or YAV stationery to**

For full version of PC(USA)'s Standards of Ethical Conduct:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - Resources - Standards of Ethical Conduct (pcusa.org)

For PC(USA)'s Sexual Misconduct Policy:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - Resources - Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures (pcusa.org)

Abuse Prevention Hotline: 866-607-7233

(For when talking to your site coordinator or Louisville YAV staff is not an option.)

make a personal statement, claim expertise by virtue of being part of the YAV program, or hold press conferences on properties associated with the YAV program.

- **It is permissible, however, for you to identify your personal church affiliation while making a personal public witness. Thus, it is permissible for you to claim membership in a particular congregation or mid-council.**
- **You must inform your site coordinator, placement supervisor, and/or the YAV Office, when appropriate, of your personal public witness or dissent.**
- **In the event you feel that you cannot continue the necessary job functions for reasons of conscience, you may request, but not necessarily receive, a change of assignment or may exercise your right to resign the position.**

Alcohol Policy

Each YAV site, and the cultural context in which it lies, will have its own suggestions and guidelines around alcohol and drug use. Discuss this with your site coordinator during on-site orientation. Use of illegal drugs is prohibited. YAVs are expected to engage with alcohol and/or legal drugs in a responsible manner. YAVs found to be abusing alcohol and/or drugs may be subject to remedial action up to and including site transfer or removal from the YAV program.

Firearm Policy

The safety and well-being of YAVs in each site is a primary concern. It is against program policy for anyone to possess a firearm, ammunition, or other lethal weapon on the YAV site premises (except for law enforcement officials.)

Contingencies

There may be emergency situations that will require contingency plans to be developed by the site coordinator with the YAV, such as a pandemic or natural disaster. In those situations, please remain calm, assure your families, and be in constant touch with your site coordinator and Destini Hodges, Manager, YAV program (destini.hodges@pcusa.org) for daily updates and developing plans to move forward.

Appendix A - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 101

What we believe

Presbyterians trace their history to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation. Our heritage, and much of what we believe, began with the French lawyer John Calvin (1509-1564), whose writings crystallized much of the Reformed thinking that came before him. Calvin did much of his writing from Geneva, Switzerland. From there, the Reformed movement spread to other parts of Europe and the British Isles. Many of the early Presbyterians in America came from England, Scotland, and Ireland. The first American Presbytery was organized at Philadelphia in 1706. The first General Assembly was held in the same city in 1789. The first Assembly was convened by the Rev. John Witherspoon, the only minister to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Some of the principles articulated by John Calvin are still at the core of Presbyterian beliefs. Among these are the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, justification by grace through faith, and the priesthood of all believers. What these tenets mean is that God is the supreme authority throughout the universe. Our knowledge of God and God's purpose for humanity comes from the Bible, particularly what is revealed in the New Testament through the life of Jesus Christ. Our salvation (justification) through Jesus is God's generous gift to us and not the result of our accomplishments. It is everyone's job - ministers

and laypeople alike - to share this Good News with the entire world. That is also why the Presbyterian church is governed at all levels by a combination of clergy and members alike.

Definitions

Deacon - Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. Their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session. The ministry of deacons, as set forth in Scripture, is one of compassion, witness, and service.

Ruling Elders have responsibilities in leadership, governance, and worship. They discern God's calling for the life of a congregation and measure its faithfulness to that call. The PC(USA) resources ruling elders through its Leadership Formation program so congregational leaders can grow through their service and minister in innovative ways to their communities.

Teaching Elders (also called Ministers of Word and Sacrament or pastors) - Ministers were traditionally called teaching elders. Identifying ministers by their teaching role emphasizes the importance of the "teaching church."

Session - The Session is the council for the congregation composed of ruling elders and all installed pastors and associate pastors.

Presbytery - The Presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a designated geographic area and is composed of all the congregations and ministers within that district.

Synod - The Synod is the intermediate council serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its designated region. Synods consist of all the Presbyteries in the region.

General Assembly (GA) - The General Assembly is the council of the whole church, and it is representative of the unity of the Synods, Presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

For further reading:
PC(USA) Website - https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/who-we-are
Presbyterian News Service - the official news service of the PC(USA) provides stories about the church at http://www.pcusa.org/news/

Appendix B - Guidelines for Interacting with Minors

Young Adult Volunteers Program - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

In this section, we will refer to both children and minors. 'Minor' is a legal term, meaning below the age of 18, but 'Child' could be more ambiguous, depending on the capacity and ability of the individual(s) in question. Regardless, the YAV program expects adherence to these policies.

The YAV program seeks to embody its faith by recognizing that all children are children of God and that every child is to be protected from abuse and exploitation. Even if you do not live with a host family, you will likely come in contact with minors daily in the place where you live and serve. They may live in your neighborhood, or you may work with minors in your placement. As you enter a new context, you must remember your privileges as a United States citizen (particularly in international contexts) and the inherent power imbalance present between you and any minors you come into contact with.

First, in some cultures, people from the US may be viewed as having more "power" or benefits and advantages than the average person in that culture. People from the US are viewed as being wealthier, better educated, and in some cases having more influence than the people from other cultures. As a young adult and a YAV, you may not feel or recognize that power, but that is how you will often be perceived. The power you are perceived to have may cause some folks, including children, to want to be your friend and, even unconsciously, to gain benefits from that friendship. That is where you must set up clear boundaries both for your personal and working space with respect to minors.

Second, children often look up to older children and young adults. Minors will likely want to spend time with you and hang out with you as though you were an older sibling. While this can be a positive aspect of the new relationship, as the adult in the relationship, you must set up clear boundaries to ensure these relationships stay in healthy, life-giving patterns.

Third, while setting up boundaries may feel like you are limiting the growth of the relationship, this will be your chance to role model what good, healthy boundaries look like. The children will often look up to you and take cues from your examples.

Guidelines – the Don'ts

Here are some guidelines for you to follow in your living space:

1. **Do not enter the bedroom of a minor, even if invited by the minor, unless a parent or older relative is also present.**

2. **Do not invite a minor into your bedroom or living space where you two are alone without another YAV, roommate, or a parent of the minor or adult family member.**

3. **Never be in a room alone with a minor with a closed door, even if there are adult members in the vicinity. Always keep the door open.**

4. **Never be alone with a minor. If you are with a minor, always have another YAV, a roommate, or an adult family member with you.**

5. **Never get physical with a child. Do not hit, kick, punch, poke, or otherwise physically hurt a child, even if you are engaged in innocent horseplay. This may be considered a form of child abuse.**

6. **If you are faced with behavioral issues with a child, do not use corporal punishment such as swatting, spanking, or verbal abuse. Always consult a parent or another adult family member who knows the child well and allow that person to handle the situation.**

7. **In general, you should avoid the following types of physical contact and conduct with minors:**

    a. **Full body hugs or lengthy embraces**
    b. **Kisses on the mouth**
    c. **Touching buttocks, chests, or genital areas**
    d. **Showing affection in isolated areas of the living area**
    e. **Sleeping in bed or anywhere else (ex. couch, floor) with a minor**
    f. **Touching knees or legs of a minor**
    g. **Wrestling with a minor**
    h. **Tickling a minor**
    i. **Piggyback rides**

j. **Any type of massage given by a minor to you**
k. **Any type of massage given by you to a minor**
l. **Any form of unwanted affection**
m. **Compliments that relate to physique or body development (e.g., "You are really developing...")**

8. **Do not bully a child or threaten a minor with physical harm.**

9. **Never, EVER, engage in any form of sexual contact with a minor. This includes (but is not limited to) any form of sexual intercourse and sexual relationship, petting, sexual touching above or below clothing, and snuggling under blankets or covers.**

10. **Never engage in sexual conversations with a minor.**

11. **Do not show inappropriate sexual photographs, videos, or inappropriate internet content to minors or with a minor present.**

12. **Do not date a minor.**

13. **Do not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or any drugs while in the presence of minors.**

14. **If you suspect an abusive behavior towards a child by another adult, do not address the situation alone. Always consult with your site coordinator immediately first to determine the appropriate course of action. Different cultures have different definitions of abusive behavior. Some cultures may instruct you to keep silent in the face of an abusive situation. You must consult your site coordinator to make sure culturally appropriate actions are taken.**

Guidelines – the Do's

1. **If you have an issue with a minor, let your supervisor and site coordinator know immediately, preferably via email, so there is a written record of your report and concerns.**

2. **If a minor touches you inappropriately or engages in inappropriate sexual conversation, extricate yourself from the situation immediately; then, report it promptly to your supervisor and site coordinator.**

3. **Always be appropriately dressed in the presence of minors. Appropriate attire may be defined differently in different cultures. Consult your site coordinator if you are unsure.**

4. **Appropriate forms of contact and affection with a minor can include:**

    a. **Side hugs**
    b. **'A' frame hugs (i.e., shoulders touch but waist is out).**
    c. **Pats on the shoulder or back**
    d. **Handshakes**
    e. **'High-fives' and hand slapping**
    f. **Verbal praise**
    g. **Arms around shoulders**

h. **Holding hands during prayer**

5. **If you suspect an abusive behavior towards a child by another adult, do not address the situation alone. Always consult with your site coordinator immediately first to determine the appropriate course of action. Different cultures have different definitions of abusive behavior. Some cultures may instruct you to keep silent in the face of an abusive situation. The safety of the child is of upmost concern, and you must consult your site coordinator to make sure culturally appropriate actions are taken to ensure the safety of the child.**

6. **If other adults in the cultural contexts insist or give you permission to loosen these boundaries, do not act on them but first consult with your site coordinator to determine how to respond to that offer of permission.**

Babysitting Policy

Keep in mind that someone in your YAV community (church members, supervisors, neighbors) might ask you to babysit. Before you agree to do so, you must clear this with your site coordinator. YAVs should not be babysitting for pay. YAV policy prohibits volunteers from taking on extra income-earning opportunities during their YAV year. If you do engage in babysitting, make it clear to the parents/guardians that it is outside of your YAV responsibilities. It is important to note that you are in the community as a visitor and because of an appointment from PC(USA). When you agree to babysit for someone casually outside of your YAV work context, the boundaries can get blurred and confused easily. When possible, avoid babysitting for those who are directly related to your work. If you end up engaging in such babysitting, only do so in the presence of another adult or YAV present. Finally, you should still exercise the various guidelines suggested in this document to provide a baseline of protection for yourself and the minors in question.

Appendix C - Guidelines for YAVs living with families

Living with families during your YAV year of service can provide a space for growth and mutual learning while building deeper relationships with your host family members. It is an opportunity to practice the YAV program's core tenets of intentional Christian community, simple living, and cross-cultural mission.

A fundamental value to adopt is one of gratitude. Host families have opened their homes to the YAVs, providing a base of social support and cultural anchor for the YAVs, especially in the first months of the service year. We recognize that cultural differences may pose challenges to the YAVs and their host families. But mutual respect and open lines of communication should be upheld. Consult your site coordinator if these lines are broken.

To help navigate through this experience, YAVs who live with families shall undergo training or orientation by the site coordinator or supervisor to be better equipped for the cultural adjustments and to address other issues that YAVs might face with this living arrangement. One of the most useful life skills is to observe and inquire what families do and how and to take your cues from that.

As discussed in Appendix B, self-awareness of privilege and the power dynamics between yourself and your host family will be crucial in creating healthy relationships. (see Guidelines for Interacting with Minors)

Here are some practical guidelines to consider when living with a family:

1. **Food: Unless you are allergic to certain food items, eating what your host family serves is a gesture of gratitude and respect. Sharing food is often a practice of communion. You may likewise be invited to cook for the family as part of the cultural exchange. In accepting this invitation, please be mindful of what locally available resources are and the costs.**
2. **Cleaning: Always offer to help family members with household cleaning chores (after meals, yards, and shared areas). This is an effective way to demonstrate solidarity in sharing responsibilities. Make sure you clean your room.**
3. **Dressing and hygiene: Observe what are culturally appropriate clothing and dress accordingly. Dressing may differ from what is worn inside the house and on other social occasions such as going to church, work, parties, and others. Hygiene practices, including bathing, are embedded in cultural and environmental settings (e.g., standards of cleanliness, available water). Consult your supervisor and/or site coordinator about this.**
4. **Boundaries: In some cultures, boundaries are not noticeably clear or always enforced. Find respectful ways to communicate these boundaries in relation to your room and personal things, among others. If a minor oversteps these boundaries, let the parents know. If the infringement comes from the adults, discuss it with your site coordinator.**
5. **Interacting with minors in the family: See Appendix B for detailed guidelines.**
6. **Safety: If a YAV finds grounds for feeling unsafe in their host families, talk immediately to your supervisor and/or site coordinator.**