

1. What is the RSJ Ukraine Volunteer Initiative?

The war in Ukraine has created one of the largest humanitarian crises in history. There is a burgeoning demand for volunteers who speak Russian and/or Ukrainian and who are skilled in mental health and educational fields. (See below). Thankfully, there is also a great desire by many Russian-Speaking Jews (RSJ) to travel to Europe and serve the refugees.

In response to this crisis, JFNA has created a volunteer hub. Through a centralized application process, it will place North American Jewish volunteers with Jewish and Israeli partner organizations working on the borders of Ukraine. The initial cohort of volunteers will be assigned through a unique collaboration between JFNA, the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Jewish Federations will provide financial support and recruit qualified applicants through our Russian-speaking Jewish (RSJ) networks. They will then be screened and selected through JDC's Jewish service platform, Entwine, before being placed at JAFI and JDC volunteer sites. Please note that placements with additional organizations will quite likely occur over time.

2. What type of volunteer is needed right now?

Priority will be given to professionals with skills in mental health, social work, and crisis management, as well as early childhood and informal education. In addition to relevant language skills (proficiency in speaking Russian and/or Ukrainian is, of course, a top priority) and experience in the fields listed above, volunteers should be extremely flexible, demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the complex situation on the ground, and be team players. Project management and administrative skills are a big plus.

3. When will this program start and how long can I serve? Tentative departure date for the initial cohort is April 4, 2022, and we anticipate cohorts leaving on a rolling basis thereafter. We will place volunteers for a minimum of two or three weeks, inclusive of travel time. There may also be opportunities, as time goes on, to serve for longer periods.

4. Locations of service. Current placements are in Poland, Moldova, Romania, and Hungary. This list will expand going forward.

5. What are the types of roles that volunteers are needed for? ** Note: This is not a complete set of roles, and roles will continue to be added and changed.*

Registration and follow-up coordinator

- Intake and registration of Aliyah candidates into the database
- Administrative support during every stage of the process, from admission to the facility to flight to Israel.

Logistics administrator

- Coordination with the hotel staff to take care of the basic needs of the refugees for food, shelter, medical care, etc.
- Arranging transportation between the facility to the consular inspection site and then to the airport.
- Coordination with the medical staff.

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Social worker

- Logistics and mental health support of Aliyah candidates who arrive as refugees at the Agency's facility.

Requirement: Russian speaker with experience in treating trauma (preferably five years of experience).

Informal educator

- Organizing activities for children and youth at the facility independently or as part of an educational staff.

6. What is the selection process? After you apply, you will be contacted by a JDC staff person to inform you if there is a currently available match for your profile. If so, you will be invited to begin the interview process, which will likely include two Zoom interviews. If you are selected, you will receive an email with your volunteer placement terms and conditions, including dates and location, points of contact, etc.

7. Travel Documents. Prior to their departure date, volunteers must have a valid passport that will be valid for at least six months after their return date. They must also bring other required documentation, including a visa where necessary, that is valid for all activities related to their service.

8. Accommodations. Volunteers will stay in local hotels, often “olim hotels,” which will be modest and shared with other volunteers.

9. Meals. Three meals per day will be provided. Volunteers in the Jewish Agency facility will eat with the refugees. Volunteers at other locations will also be provided with basic meals.

10. Orientation. Volunteers will be required to attend an Orientation over Zoom with JDC and JAFI staff prior to their departure.

11. Stipend. Volunteers will receive a post-service stipend of \$1,000 . The stipend will be paid after completion of your placement and post-service debrief; it is intended to offset expenses related to your service placement.

12. Insurance. Volunteers will be covered under JDC’s CIGNA international health insurance and ISOS emergency service. JDC will have no liability whatsoever in excess of the coverage provided by JDC.

13. COVID-19 Vaccination and Compliance. Prior to your departure date, volunteers are required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (two weeks after your second dose in a two-dose series, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine). Proof of vaccination must be provided prior to your departure date and volunteers are expected to comply with any COVID-19 procedures required by your country of origin prior to your departure and those required by any airline or system of transportation used to travel to your work site. At all times during your placement, volunteers must adhere to any and all testing, quarantine, or other COVID-19 related regulations, including mask wearing and social distancing set forth by the local government of your placement. You understand that these recommendations and requirements may change as the situation in each location continues to develop.

Please email Olga Markus, olga.markus@jfna.org, with any questions.