

ARCTIC MISSION EXPERIENCE

Thank you for your interest in an Arctic Mission Experience (AME). Arctic Mission Adventure (AMA), a ministry of the Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is a 100% donor-funded ministry which could not operate without volunteer group like yours.



Your application will be reviewed, and you will be contacted by either the program or development director as soon as possible. Meanwhile here are planning items to consider as well as resources to explore.

OVERVIEW

Trip dates must get approval from the Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists before travel. (Yes, we've had groups arrive unexpectedly!) Your group will be appointed an Alaska Conference staff as your point of contact who will confirm details of your trip to Alaska.

Project **objectives** must clearly be defined and understood by your project lead, conference contact and the local organization, i.e., pastor, head teacher, camp director, etc.

All adults, ages 18 and over, who are participating in the AME must have a **background check**. The conference uses Sterling Volunteers as recommended by the North American Division. We suggest you have volunteers start this process immediately! If they have a background screening already in place, all the volunteer needs to do is "share" their report with the Alaska Conference.

All groups interested in participating in an AME should be prepared to **cover all aspects of the trip in terms of cost**, but more on that later!

LOGISTICS

Travel to and throughout Alaska is costly and easily disrupted during winter months. Speaking of winter, in Bush Alaska, winter weather can impact travel from October through April, quite a bit longer than what you may be used to. Your project lead will need to consider:

- Local Transportation:** How will your group move around the community? Bus? Rental Car? Snow machine? Four-Wheeler?

RESOURCES

Alaska.org

[Alaska Conference of SDA](#)

[Alaska Native Heritage Center](#)

[Arctic Mission Adventure Videos](#)

[Background Screening](#)

[COVID-19 Updates](#)

[Traveling Alaska](#)

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

[Anchorage](#)

[Bethel](#)

[Dillingham](#)

[Fairbanks](#)

[Gambell](#)

[Glennallen](#)

[Kotzebue](#)

[Nome](#)

[Savoonga](#)

[Selawik](#)

[Shungnak](#)

[Togiak](#)

[Wrangell](#)

❑ **Lodging:** Will your group stay in hotels? The local Adventist church or school? Make it a true “wilderness adventure” and camp out? While some of our hub communities—Nome, Dillingham, Barrow—may have hotels, smaller villages may have a church or plan to stay with members.

❑ **Meals:** Food in Bush Alaska is expensive, and choices are limited. For example, when the Alaska Conference hosts its annual Arctic Camp Meeting or Alaska Camps program, we purchase and transport food to many of our communities as it is less expensive. Is there a source of food at your destination? Can arrangements be made to have food delivered prior to your arrival? Walmart and Costco have a robust Alaska delivery system!

❑ **Materials:** Another issue to consider when your materials will arrive at your destination site. If your group would like to participate in a building project, do the materials need to be barged from Anchorage? If so, orders need to be placed in advanced (sometimes in the prior year) to ensure delivery. Perhaps you are doing something smaller, a Vacation Bible School. Be prepared to bring snacks, crafts, costumes—everything needed to hold a program—or work with your designated contact to have the items shipped.

❑ **Local Leadership:** Along with your conference contact, you will be working with local leadership. They are the “boots on the ground” in local communities. Local leadership may be a pastor, AMA worker, teacher, or head

elder. They will be key to working out the details of your project, i.e., where will VBS be held, where is the local store, how are items shipped to your community. Remember, they are a resource. Their role is to help facilitate your project and help trouble-shoot problems but are not responsible for the planning and implementation of your AME.

❑ **Sightseeing:** Most groups that travel to Alaska want to get in a bit of sight-seeing as part of their AME and there is a lot to see! You will want to see what is available in major cities (the cost will be less and transportation more readily available) before traveling on to your AME destination.

❑ **Pre-Planning Trip:** Ideally, a planning trip by the project lead would allow the group to answer many of the logistical aspects of travel. While not required, it would provide an idea of the project scope and location firsthand as Alaska is quite different from many parts of the U.S.

EXPENSES

Because the AMA Ministry is 100% donor-supported, funds are not available to groups wanting to participate in an AME. That said, we truly appreciate your interest and willingness to help reach the people of Alaska—we truly could not do it without you! So, let's get to it—here's what your group should expect to cover:

Transportation	Food
Lodging	Conference Application Fee
Pre-planning Travel	Materials*
Travel Insurance	Sightseeing Excursions

**Except for materials pre-arranged to be supplied by the Alaska Conference.*

Conference Project Fee: In addition to the items above, the conference requires a project participate fee of \$150.00 per person. In lieu of this fee, a group may opt to pay an overall project fee as determined by your conference contact.

ALASKA CONFERENCE PROVISIONS

So, as an AME visiting group you probably want to know what the Alaska Conference will provide—here's what you can expect:

- ✓ A conference contact and assignment of a local leader.
- ✓ A list of approved projects and associated expenses.
- ✓ Vetting of AME groups to ensure capability matches project or program.
- ✓ Meeting the group upon arrival to each locale to ensure they arrived at destination.
- ✓ Pre-arrangement with project lead as to what supplies the group will provide and what the conference will provide.
- ✓ Ensure conference-supplied materials are in place in a timely manner.
- ✓ Provide all AME participants with an AME t-shirt.

COVID-19

While the state of Alaska does not require vaccines, please note that the history of indigenous people of Alaska has been negatively affected since colonization in the late 1800's. As representatives of the Alaska Conference and the greater Seventh-day Adventist Church, our approach is one of consideration and grace.

Communities have the authority to prohibit unvaccinated individuals, require mask wearing and prohibit gatherings based on community needs.

Populations of villages can be very small—less than 300 people with no hospital facility—so coronavirus in a small community can be extremely challenging. We require all participants to adhere to conference and community COVID-19 guidelines. It is the responsibility of the traveling party to familiarize themselves with state, local and conference requirements.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Adventist Lifestyle: Each AME is a unique experience and during such, a great need for flexibility. We must also remember that we represent the Alaska Conference, the Adventist Church and greater yet as Christians, our Lord and Savior. As such, our words should be kind, and our attitude one of service and compassion. Course language and judgment should not be part of interactions. Of course, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other non-prescription drugs are not allowed.

Cultural Sensitivity: It is important when entering another culture to respect and understand traditions. The people of Alaska have successfully lived in a harsh, unforgiving climate for centuries. We invite you to read a short book, *Stop Talking*, developed by a team at the University of Alaska. While the book talks about teaching and learning, it provides a glimpse of the Alaska Native approach to life and help us to share the love of Christ. It is worth the read!

Read [Stop Talking](#)

Luggage: Check with your airline of choice for luggage weight and allowances for each portion of your itinerary. We have found less is more, particularly when traveling within Alaska. Most major hubs are served by Alaska Airlines, however flights from hubs to smaller villages can be more challenging and cargo limitations crucial.

Mosquitos & Other Insects: Alaska is known for its oversized mosquitos! To do battle with these beasts, remember bug repellent with at least 30% DEET concentration, wear long sleeves and pants, and avoid areas of standing water.

Travel with Minors: Although we travel throughout the U.S. with children without issue, we do recommend that you bring proof of parent-child relationship or other situations, i.e., divorced, legal guardian, etc.

FLEXIBILITY

A key attitude for those participating in a mission trip! While we plan as much as possible for a success trip, things always pop-up unexpectedly!

Worksite Safety: For those working construction projects, safety equipment needed will depend on the project scope and your assignment. Hard hats and closed-toe shoes may be required.

PACKING LIST

WARDROBE

- Long work pants
- T-shirts and/or long sleeve shirts
- Construction gloves
- Hard hat (depending on project)
- Sunglasses or safety glasses
- Sturdy shoes

ITEMS TO REMEMBER

- Negative COVID-19 PCR test results
- Minor consent paperwork
- Face mask(s) or covering(s)
- Prescribed medication and items like Tylenol, Band-Aids, Pepto Bismol, etc.
- Shoes and socks
- Underclothes
- Slacks
- Casual Shirt
- Hat for sun protection
- Sleepwear
- Light jacket or sweatshirt
- Personal toiletries (soap, toothpaste, etc)
- Hand sanitizer
- Insect repellent
- Sunblock
- Lip balm

- Water bottle
- Bible
- Cash

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Lightweight daypack
- Neck pillow/eye mask
- Journal and pens
- Earplugs
- Snacks
- Small instrument you play
- Binoculars
- Supplemental items for dietary needs

OPTIONAL OUTREACH ITEMS

- Money for purchasing local items (helps the village economy)
- School supplies: pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks, backpacks
- Christian books and pamphlets
- Christian song books
- Group toys (jump ropes, soccer balls w pumps, etc.)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toothbrushes and toothpastes
- Hair clips

