



**2020**

# **MISSIONS MANUAL**

**STEP OUT. CHANGE. BE CHANGED.**

Version 1.0

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction to Rio](#) ..... 2  
[Rio Panama Core Team](#) ..... 3  
[Rio Local Partners](#) ..... 4

## **Information to be Prepared for the Mission Field**

[Preparing the Mission Team](#) ..... 5  
[What to Expect](#) ..... 6  
[Sample Schedule](#) ..... 7  
[Information & FAQ's](#) ..... 8  
[Things to Remember While in the Field](#) ..... 11

## **Tools & Forms for Team Leaders**

[Team Leader Tips](#) ..... 13  
[Emergency Protocol](#) ..... 16  
[Hospitals & Emergency Situations](#) ..... 18  
[Discipline Policy](#) ..... 20  
[Team Leader Assignment Checklist](#) ..... 21  
[Readiness Checklist - Leader](#) ..... 22  
[Cost Breakdown & Calculation Form](#) ..... 24  
[4/5 Ways to Deposit Your Team Funds](#) ..... 26  
[Point Person](#) ..... 27

## **Tools & Forms for Team Members**

[Readiness Checklist - Member](#) ..... 28  
[Medical Health Questionnaire](#) ..... 30  
[Contract and Acknowledgement of Risk](#) ..... 32  
[Suggested Packing List](#) ..... 34  
[Recommended Team Supply List](#) ..... 35  
[First Aid Kit Suggestions](#) ..... 36  
[Physicians Medical Approval](#) ..... 37

## Who We Are

Rio is a team of missionaries, local partners, and international partners who together want to glorify God by growing his local church. It started with 2 people, Dan and Jessica Cotton who had a heart to support poor off the grid Christians, and has grown to include the Davis family and hundreds of other short term groups through the years.

## Mission

The mission of Rio is to make true disciples and increase the capacity of the global Church of Jesus Christ.

## Vision

The vision of Rio is to *Cultivate* relationships with local Panamanian believers in poor and marginalized communities. *Connect* like-minded groups with these visionaries to provide resources and encouragement. *Change* the worldview of both sides in the process as we bring vision to life, build the church, and unlock discipleship.

## Goals

The goals of Rio include: Building the physical church through joint projects with locals and helping meet material needs together such as clean water, food availability, access in the form of bridges and transportation, and sustainable energy in communities that are off the grid. Evangelism, pastor training, discipleship seminars, and relationship building are priorities of Rio. We look to accomplish these goals through short term mission trips and long-term sustainable partnerships.

## Your Mission Purpose

The purpose of our trips is to **serve** the local communities and partners of Rio Missions. This could include working in Arraijan through kids'/teen activities, work projects and evangelism. This could also include work with Pastor Correa in Coclé, Pastor Luis in La Gigi and at Casa Providencia Orphanage in Colon.

*\*\*This may change based on the needs/availability of our local partners.*

WE ARE RIO and together we will build the global church & make disciples!

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## Rio Missions Core Team



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www.riopanama.com



riomissionspanama



Rio Missions Y Casa Paraiso



www.casaparaíso.org

**Dan & Jess Cotton** *Founders/Director/Administrator*



Dan and Jess are founders and administrators of Rio Missions Panama. Jessica's focus is on administration, finance, and booking responsibilities. Dan serves as the Director/CEO and leads teams in the field. Together they care for Casa Paraiso missions base and have their home on the grounds of the facility.

**Pete & Lisa Davis** *Director of Operations/Administrator*



Pete and Lisa joined Rio Missions full time July 2019. Pete is the Director of Operations for Rio Missions and Casa Paraiso and Lisa will be assisting with administrative needs. After many years of volunteering with Rio Missions, we are thrilled to welcome them aboard!

**Casa Paraiso Core Team**



**Hilario Cruz** - Maintenance and development of Casa Paraiso and Rio

**Eridia Garcia** - Base maintenance and preparedness

**Nehreida Martinez** - Base maintenance and preparedness

## Rio's Local Partners

Rio has ongoing relationships with a variety of communities throughout Panama.



**Local Partners:** Pastor Luis Herrera and church  
**Area:** Bajo Grande, Veraguas Province  
**Distance from Casa Paraiso:** 5 hours  
**Potential Projects:** Evangelism, Pastor and leadership training, Worship training, Finish outdoor classroom concrete slab and roof, Bridge work.



**Local Partners:** Pastor Correa  
**Area:** Calabazos: Coclé Province  
**Distance from Casa Paraiso:** 2:45 hours  
**Potential Projects:** Reconstruct concrete pillar and wall of church, Discipleship and leadership training, Construction projects in mountain churches, Evangelism, Sports tournament in mountains



**Local Partners:** Salvation Army Church  
**Area:** Paraiso, Panama Province  
**Distance from Casa Paraiso:** 5 min  
**Potential Projects:** Refurbish youth center, Evangelism, pastor's house repairs, Discipleship, Community service evangelism (house projects for elderly)



**Local Partners:** Pastors Julio and Gabriella  
**Area:** Dos Mil, Arraijan  
**Distance from Casa Paraiso:** 20 min  
**Potential Projects:** Finish construction of community center, kids' evangelistic programs, teen programs and activities, assisting church members with home improvements (concrete floors, building beds for family, plumbing and clean water.)



**Local Partners:** Heart's Cry Ministries/Malambo  
**Area:** Colon @ Casa Providencia  
**Distance from Casa Paraiso:** 50 minutes  
**Potential Projects:** working with special needs orphans at Casa Providencia, construction projects to finish orphanage phase 2, visit various orphanages in Panama City to work with children.  
<https://www.heartscrychildren.com/casa-providencia>

## Preparing the Mission Team

Congratulations, you are embarking on a mission that will have a lasting impact on your life. Thank you for volunteering your time, effort and resources. *If you have NOT applied and received confirmation for your mission trip date, please return to our [website](#) and follow the directions to schedule your trip.* Please read Rio's Missions Manual for detailed information regarding our policies and additional resources to prepare for your trip.

Once approved, the following forms must be completed and submitted to RIO.

1. Team leaders need to provide information on each team member to aid in housing and project planning. Complete the "[Casa Paraiso Pre-Trip Form](#)" found on our web page [www.riopanama.com](http://www.riopanama.com). This form provides us with contact information in the unlikely event we need to reach their emergency contact while they are serving in Panama and so that we may furnish team members with information on our ministry after they return.
2. All team members must sign the "[RIO Contract and Acknowledgement of Risk](#)" (pg.32) form and complete the "[Medical Health Questionnaire](#)" (pg. 30) form. Team leaders must submit their signed Contract (scan and email signed copy) to [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com) but retain the team member contracts and health history forms until completion of the trip. Although there are often reports of security issues, RIO has conducted trips for over 7 years without major incident. Our partners and friends in Panama will advise us if political/social conditions are not favourable. Although all efforts will be made to accommodate team requests for project and travel opportunities, no activity will be approved unless deemed safe and appropriate by our Panamanian leaders.
3. Read the [Team Leader Tips](#) (pg. 13) for additional information on preparing for a mission trip. We encourage all team members to read the Missions Manual, most are applicable to all missions – a few are prepared specifically for medical teams. Even if you have been on a mission to Panama before, time and conditions change, the manual will reflect the most current information. (Revisions dates included, please read the most current manual prior to subsequent trips, a quick review of ALL of the manual is encouraged).

### Checklist of Requirements to complete for mission team/trip "approval":

- 1. [Casa Paraiso Pre-Trip Form](#)
- 2. [Contract and Acknowledgement of Risk Form](#) (pg. 32) – submit leader's form, retain members' forms.
- 3. [Medical Health Questionnaire Form](#) (pg. 30) – team leader retains forms.
- 4. Current Passport – team members carry a copy and provide leaders with a copy.
- 5. (Medical teams) Current medical license - team members carry medical license and provide team leader with a copy.
- 6. Proof of short-term international travellers' insurance

## What to Expect

**Lodging:** Casa Paraiso is a gated Missions Base with comfortable beds, central air, drinkable water, hot showers, Wi-Fi, and indoor and outdoor meeting areas. Visit [www.casaparisopanama.org](http://www.casaparisopanama.org) for pictures and description of accommodations.

**Trip Funds:** Rio will collect your **trip funds** before you come or upon arrival and will handle all money for the duration of the trip (see [cost breakdown form](#) (pg. 24) for more info).

**Currency:** There may be times when you would like to buy souvenirs so remember: **Panama uses the US Dollar. Do NOT bring \$100 bills.** Vendors and stores may not accept them.

**Transit:** Rio Missions has a fleet of vehicles that enables a variety of missions throughout Panama. We have a 15-passenger van, a 4wd pickup, and a 7 passenger SUV. Some groups might have a need to rent an additional vehicle or hire a driver. Traffic is bad in Panama so transit to and from worksites is challenging. Expect 1 hour of transit each way, every day, although some sites may be closer.

**Language:** *Spanish* is the native language. Practice up so you can communicate in a basic way. Rio will have translators to help. Google Translate is an awesome app to help!

**Climate:** It is hot (95F), muggy and rainy in the afternoons from May-Dec and hot, dry, and breezy from Jan-April. Bring sunscreen and bug spray.

**Food:** If you have dietary restrictions, please plan accordingly and pack food that can help supplement your in-country meals. We will eat simple breakfasts, pack lunches, and eat some Panamanian Food for dinner along with some other varieties. Pack snacks if you would like to have things to eat between meals. *You and your team will receive a digital questionnaire at a later date where you can indicate your dietary restrictions.*

**Linens:** **Bath towels and linens are provided at Casa Paraiso.** Please pack your own beach towel (if needed) and toiletries.

**Electricity:** Panama has US standard outlet connections, so all electronics are compatible.

## Sample Schedule

*This is only a sample schedule and will vary per team and work scheduled*

Refer to the list [Rio's Local Partners](#) (pg. 4) to preview possible work projects and begin praying for these communities.

**Day 1:** Travel day, airport pick up and settle in at Casa Paraiso Missions Base

**Day 2:** Orientation, Breakfast, Work Project in village, lunch in the field, Dinner at CP

**Day 3:** Breakfast, Work Project in Village, Lunch in field, Dinner at CP, Team Devotions

**Day 4:** Breakfast, Work Project in Village, Lunch in field, jungle hike, Dinner at CP, Team Devotions

**Day 5:** Breakfast, Canal Visitor's Center, Work Project in Village, Lunch in field, Dinner at CP, Team Devotions

**Day 6:** Breakfast, Morning Devotions, Work Project in Village, Lunch in field, Dinner in Casco Viejo (Old City Panama)

**Day 7:** Breakfast, airport, departure

\*If you are interested in staying longer than the scheduled trip, you are welcome to handle your own logistics/personal accommodations for additional travel/sightseeing days.

\*\*There are opportunities for fishing and surfing with a Rio Guide, so please contact us for pricing and availability if you are interested in staying beyond your scheduled trip.  
([algodon77@gmail.com](mailto:algodon77@gmail.com))



## Information & FAQ's For Mission Teams

RIO makes every effort to safeguard the safety and well-being of our teams and to promote the success of your individual mission trip and our ministry in Panama. The RIO's Mission Manual are the primary means by which we provide information, please review these guidelines prior to every trip. Every volunteer is asked to honor our guidelines and respect the leadership of our Panamanian pastors and RIO staff.

RIO is committed to helping you have a safe and meaningful experience. The following resources will provide the information needed to prepare for your trip (and answer the most commonly asked questions!)

**Getting there:** Teams are responsible for making their airline reservations and travel arrangements. Airfare fluctuates between \$500 and \$800 per ticket. It is best to purchase your tickets as soon as possible to obtain the best rate. Mid-week flights are often the cheapest. All team members must travel on the same flight. RIO staff will meet you at the airport and assist with transportation to your accommodations. Saturday and Sundays are transition days with many teams arriving and departing; please send us your flight number and scheduled time of arrival as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for pick up. *We prefer travellers to NOT use Spirit Airlines due to their flight times, baggage restrictions, and unreliability.*

**Passport:** A current passport is required to enter Panama and for re-entry into the U.S., Visas are not required. Carry a copy of your passport (separate from your passport and not in checked luggage) and provide a copy to your team leader. Green Card holders (U.S. Resident aliens) must take their green card; you will not be allowed to leave Panama without it.

**Panamanian Immigration and Customs:** You have to provide an address of where you are staying; use the Casa Paraiso address: 611 Calle Espalaba, Paraiso, Ancon, Panama, Panama.

**Mission Trip Insurance:** Rio Missions Panama requires that short term teams purchase insurance for each team member, for the duration of their time in Panama. This protects team members from incurring the costs of emergencies overseas. Policies must be purchased through [www.missionsafe.com](http://www.missionsafe.com) specializes in Christian short term mission trip coverage.

**Immunizations:** [CDC](http://www.cdc.gov) (Centers for Disease Control) recommends the following immunizations, though **not** required by Rio Missions:

- Dtap (Diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus) within 5 years. If you've had a Td (tetanus) booster as an adult, you still need a Dtap booster (even in the States, a pertussis booster is recommended)
- Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B

**First Aid Kits:** Each team should have an emergency kit, which should contain all the medications you need for most common illnesses, pain medication, antibiotics and bandaging materials ([First Aid Kit Suggestions](#), pg. 36) Please keep this kit with you at all times!

**Health Protection:** Remember to bring all personal prescription and over the counter medications. Use insect repellent (DEET 30) and sunscreen; wait 15 minutes between applying sunscreen and insect repellent (some sunscreens increase absorption of Deet). Try to stay hydrated especially if you have diarrhea or nausea. Remember to drink plenty of fluids. Heat exhaustion and in some cases, heat stroke comes on very quickly in this hot, humid climate. Be prepared and do not over exert yourself when working. Report any illness to your team leader immediately!

**Mission Projects:** Volunteer teams collaborate with RIO to work with medical, construction, VBS, school and vocational projects. Although some teams may complete short-term projects, most will contribute to ongoing projects that require coordination between our leaders, staff and volunteer organizations. Flexibility is vital as plans may change based on current needs, resources or unexpected problems. Scheduled workdays are Monday through Saturday, with limited opportunities to complete jobs/tasks on the weekend.

**Site-Seeing and Shopping:** Teams are encouraged to explore Panama; opportunities are available to tour Panama City (day trips only, transportation for after-hours excursions is not available). A retail shop is located at the Causeway featuring products from the vocational program as well as local metal, stone and wooden crafts. All sales benefit the co-operative and its members.

**Publicity:** Photographs and videos of RIO's work in Panama may result in the use of volunteers' and teams' images in print and electronic publications promoting RIO. Personal data will not be disclosed and every effort is made to protect individual privacy. No image will be used for profit and no volunteer will be paid or rewarded for use of their image. We ask teams to share their mission photos to help highlight the needs and work done by RIO email photos to [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com).

**Copyright:** No one may use RIO's name or logo on products produced for distribution without permission; please contact Jessica Cotton at [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com) for more information about our policies.

**Contact Information:** Please contact us at the email addresses below in the footer and on the website.

**Individual Volunteers:** RIO does NOT accept individual volunteers for short-term missions but if you want to participate in a mission trip to Panama, we will make every effort to find a place for you within a team. In order to do this, your schedule must be flexible. Email us at [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com) with possible dates and areas of interest. Once partnered with a team, we ask that you participate with the team as much as possible and follow the direction of the team leader once in Panama. All costs and conditions remain the same as for a team. Bear in mind that many teams are at maximum size and may not be able to accommodate additional people. We recommend that you do NOT make airline reservations or other arrangements until after we have confirmed your placement on a team. If you have completed the above steps and have not received an acknowledgement within one month after submitting your request, please contact [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com)

**Cost:** \$735 +/- (based on a 7-day trip) + cost of airline ticket

Trip Costs: \$735 includes your meals, lodging, transportation, and ministry expenses for the length of the trip. Additional cash may be brought in country if you would like to buy souvenirs or other items during your trip. See [Cost Breakdown Form](#) (pg. 24) for more detailed information.

Airline Tickets: Flights to Panama typically range from \$450-\$900 depending on the time of year, airline, and departure city.

## Things To Remember While In The Field

- 1. Protect your passport at all times.** Make two copies prior to departure. Give one copy to the group leader, keep the second copy in a safe place separate from your passport and checked luggage.
- 2. The most common problem is petty theft.** Please leave expensive jewellery at home; do not carry expensive items in your hand or on your person. Carry your backpack in front of you in crowded tourist areas. Leave passports and other documents, credit cards, and cell phones at the housing site. We cannot be responsible for stolen or lost items.
- 3. Do not leave the group without permission from the team leader and RIO staff.** When traveling away from the group, always travel in groups of two or more team members. Never travel without a Panamanian or RIO escort. The team leader and RIO staff will make final decisions regarding group needs and activities.
- 4. Please listen to the team leader and RIO staff when he/she is giving directions,** they are ultimately responsible for your safety. Ask questions, if you don't understand instructions or information provided, others in the group may be confused as well!
- 5. As representatives of a Christian based mission organization and out of respect for the Panamanian culture, please refrain from conduct viewed as offensive:** such as public displays of affection, tobacco use, consumption of alcoholic beverages, or "colorful" language in the clinics, schools, churches and communities. Conduct within the group setting should also reflect the modest and respectful character of a disciple of Christ. Group members should refrain from inappropriate displays of affection, lewd comments, racial or religious jokes, inappropriate media or games, etc....
- 6. Please wear modest clothing while working in schools, churches, and communities.** Rio adheres to a general policy of modesty, neatness of appearance, and context appropriate attire. Teams are encouraged to wear comfortable athletic clothing during their work and travel in Panama. Any questionable attire in appearance or message will not be permitted and we reserve the right to ask team members to change. Even teams staying off campus are representatives of RIO, it is important that we do not distract the people from the message we want to convey, and to respect cultural and church customs.
- 7. Be safe when drinking water.** Only use water provided for by Rio for drinking, taking medication and filling water bottles. Carry anti-bacterial wipes to clean the contact surfaces of soda bottles, etc. Always check the source of ice prior to using it in a drink.
- 8. Be careful what you eat!** Food served at Casa Paraiso is safe, but be extremely cautious eating from local sources. Food offered by locals from their homes may or may not be safe so check with a Rio team leader or rep for guidance. It is OK to say "no gracias" when offered food.
- 9. Please let your group leader know if you become ill while traveling or working in Panama.** He or she or we will have antibiotics and other medicines available if

such a need arises. The harsh environmental conditions will amplify illness – it is best to not tough it out as the condition could worsen and prevent you from serving.

10. **Your ultimate purpose for being in the mission field is to share the love of God.** Get to know our Panamanian hosts. Meet people with a smile, a handshake and a “Buenos Dias .” (good morning).

11. **Feel free to take photos, but be respectful of the people around you.** Remember the dignity and right to privacy of the Panamanian people. Always ask permission before taking someone’s picture. Be considerate of patients in the clinic, they may be reluctant to say no for fear of not receiving treatment. Be subtle with your photo taking in the market areas. Sometimes people photographed expect money for this privilege.

12. **Keep mind that flexibility is vital;** each trip is an unique experience when one considers the individual needs of the Panamanian people and the dynamics of each volunteer team.

13. **Never promise anything to a Panamanian friend.** We discourage individual gifts, including gifts for the children.. If you would like to give an individual gift or donation, talk with the RIO staff members or one of the pastors. If pastors or community members ask for donations after you have returned to your home country, please get approval from RIO before agreeing.

14. **Do not pet or trust a stray dogs or cats even if they appear friendly.**

15. **Keep a safe distance from all snakes, spiders, and insects.**

## Team Leader Tips

We are excited that you are joining us! If you have not already done so, read the “Missions Manual” for tips on preparing for your mission trip, even if you have been on a mission trip to Panama before, time and conditions change and the guidelines and resource material will reflect the most current information.

**Getting Ready to Go:** Have your team members sign the [“Contract and Acknowledgement of Risks”](#) (pg. 32) and [“Medical Health Questionnaire”](#) (pg. 30) forms, retain until after your trip. Remind team members that they need a current passport and should take a copy of their passport. U.S. Resident aliens must bring their green card. Medical team members will also need to take a current copy of their medical license(s). Encourage team members to participate in all aspects of preparation for the trip. Divide responsibilities up according to each member’s interest, time and talents.

**Stay in Touch:** Keep in contact with RIO staff for current information regarding your project. Medical teams should contact us directly for clinic/medical needs and order medications. A phone conversation with RIO’s staff is usually helpful and welcomed! If you have questions regarding available supplies, resources or policies in Panama please contact RIO: do NOT contact any Panamanian official, health care provider or supplier directly.

**Prepare Your Team:** Make sure team members have appropriate immunizations and malaria prophylaxis. Review CDC travel guidelines at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) for current recommendations. Assign a team member(s) to outfit a team First Aid Kit (see [“Suggestions for First Aid Kits”](#) pg. 36). The team must purchase short term or group travel insurance in the event of significant illness or injury. Rates for this coverage are very reasonable and be sure it covers medical evacuation back to the U.S. (See [“Information for Mission Team”](#) pg. 8 for more information)

**Think of Yourself as a Good-Will Ambassador:** Whether you agree or not, your team is regarded as a ministry of U.S. representatives. Encourage team members to avoid behaviors that reinforce the stereotype of North Americans as rude, arrogant, condescending, or wasteful people. Dress appropriately to avoid offense. Many Panamanians understand English, be mindful of critical comments made in the streets and on the work site. Encourage team members to use local greetings and phrases such as Buenos Dias (Good Morning) and Gracias (Thank-you). Smile and shake hands with people as much as possible. Remember that any action of a team member can result in a lasting positive or negative impact to the ministry long after the team is gone.

**Maintain a Cooperative Team Spirit:** If team members cannot get along, it negatively affects the morale of the whole team and ultimately the success of the mission. Remind members to maintain the attitude that you are volunteering your time not only to give, but also to benefit, from the experience. Be prepared for the fact that some of your colleagues may have a very different work ethic than yours or seemingly act less committed. Encourage everyone to focus on his or her own experience and not the actions of their colleagues; remember everyone handles the mission experience differently.

**Be Flexible:** Working in any developing nation is challenging; things will change, and change again. Proposed projects may be altered or cancelled as unexpected problems arise and/or priorities and needs change. Try to remember that no matter how limited the facilities or resources of the location are, this is likely the best the locals have and it works for them. Remind your team that this is not about you: it is about doing the most good for the most people in a short time. Encourage them to think of this experience as an opportunity to expand their abilities to think - and work - outside “the box” and to develop new strategies to provide good care or services with limited resources.

**Have Realistic Expectations:** Never promise more than your team can deliver. When planning a medical clinic, under-estimate the number of patients you can treat, if you see more patients than promised, satisfaction will be high. Construction projects often take longer than expected and may not be completed in a week’s time; encourage your team to measure success in the quality of the job done rather than amount of work completed. Recognize and accept that local people may or may not show their gratitude or recognize your hard work.

**Maintain Professional Standards:** Team members must practice within their scope of practice or expertise while serving in Panama. Although it may seem harmless for a non-provider to provide medical advice or distribute commonly used medications or for a non-licensed person to perform electrical or other specialized work, one bad outcome can jeopardize not only the success of your trip, but could negatively affect our medical and/or building programs. As a rule: If you cannot do it in the States, you cannot do it in Panama! Individuals or teams who do not adhere to these guidelines may be asked to leave or not allowed to return!

**Enforce Security:** Crowd control cannot be overemphasized. Even if you help many people, leaving an angry or dissatisfied mob at the end of the day will erase any good from earlier efforts. Good intentions but poor outcomes will only cause problems for future mission teams and the coordinating church. Never promise personal support to a family or individual. Never do “giveaways” in a crowd—this can create instant chaos! Do not allow team members to give away things such as water, food, candy, or empty water bottles; give these and other surplus supplies to one of the pastors/teachers for distribution after you leave.

**Setting a Good Example:** A successful mission does not just mean seeing many patients or completing projects; it is also about leaving the communities with a good impression. Taking the time to thank the field and church staff and the translators helps ensure that future teams are welcome and get the help they need for their mission to be a success. Occasionally a team may wish to share or provide a lunch for the translators but we ask teams NOT to give gifts or additional money. It is impossible to ensure all Rio volunteers are treated fairly if teams single out translators for special treatment. Leaving the work site/clinic and pharmacy in a “better than you found it” condition also helps. Our field coordinators have a lot of work to do – cleaning up after your team is not one of them! An end of trip inventory of supplies and medicines is not only encouraged but is vital to Rio’s ability to adequately anticipate and provide assistance for future teams.

**Anticipate "Re-Entry" Culture Shock:** Encourage team members to schedule extra time at the end of the trip before returning to work to unwind and digest the experience. Extra time can also provide an oft-needed cushion in the event of travel delays. Warn team members that friends and relatives may have little interest in accounts of their experiences. It is impossible to describe the day-to-day hardships of the Panamanian people to others but this experience may help you gain a lasting sense of perspective on your own challenges.

**Set Aside A “Debriefing” Time:** Spend time each evening as a group to discuss the day’s events and offer encouragement and praise as needed. Compare notes on the project or clinic operation and discuss problems or difficulties encountered and possible solutions so that the following day can be more efficient and successful. The medical teams should update the providers on medications that are running low. Devotions or prayers are often helpful during this time to encourage and boost team morale. Be alert to team members who may be emotionally overwhelmed by the day’s experience.

**Take a Team Photograph:** In addition to the compassionate nature of the mission, this is also an opportunity to see a part of the world or problems you may not have seen otherwise, and to gain insight into a different way of life. This experience may renew enthusiasm in your work environment or practice and forge bonds with your teammates unlike those you experience with colleagues in the States. Taking a photograph is a tangible way to capture some of the lessons and camaraderie you and other team members may want to remember from the mission experience.



## Emergency Protocol

### Chain of Command:

Prior to any service or travel, Rio Missions will appoint 1 main leader, 1 co-leader, and 1-2 Rio Rep(s) for each group. In addition to trip leaders, emergency contacts (board members) will be provided in case of leadership void. In the event that the leader, sub leader, and assistant are unable to make decisions, emergency contacts should be informed of the situation and their instructions are to be followed. In the event that emergency contacts are not able to be reached, the group will then appoint a leader and follow his/her instruction in accordance with the RMP protocol listed below.

The RMP trip leader will inform the group of the location of the first aid kit, emergency manual, and other safety equipment before any service or travel.

Group: _____	Trip Dates: _____ To _____
Leader: _____	Co-Leader: _____
Rio Rep: _____	Rio Rep: _____

### In Case of Minor Medical Emergency/Illness:

- Notify trip leader and/or sub leader immediately
- Leader will analyze, evaluate, and treat according to American Red Cross normal first aid protocol (See leader's printed manual in first aid kit)
- If patient prefers to self-treat, approval should be given by leader
- Leader will follow up with patient and recommend course of action
- Leader will document incident on report form

### In Case of Major Medical Emergency/Illness:

- Notify trip leader and/or sub leader immediately
- Leader will analyze, evaluate, and provide or delegate triage of injury or illness in compliance with American Red Cross procedure (See leader's printed manual)
- See [Hospitals & Emergency Situations](#) (pg. 18) of this manual for nearest clinic / hospital
- Patient will be taken by leader to clinic/hospital for evaluation
- Leader will follow up with treatment and help obtain necessary medicine and or medical equipment
- Leader will document incident on report form

### **In Case of Missing Person:**

- Notify trip leader and /or sub leader immediately upon suspicion of missing person
- \*The guideline will be 30 min after expected time of return (unless water activity in which case the guideline will be 15 min after expected time of return)
- Leader will question all other team members in order to determine the location of the missing individual
- If no information regarding the missing team member is gained, leader will send groups of no less than two people to begin search
- Search groups will have a return time and return to a home base to be determined by the leader
- If the individual is not found by the group search teams, local authorities will be notified and group members may or may not help authorities search
- Once local/regional authorities begin search, trip leader will contact sending agency or missing person's family
- Search will continue indefinitely and trip leader will communicate frequent updates with team and sending agency/family
- Leader will fill out incident report

### **In Case of Political/Legal Emergency:**

- Notify trip leader/or sub leader immediately
- Leader will speak with local authorities to obtain information about the action in question and location of detention of individual
- Leader will contact US Embassy (or embassy of detainee) and/or local legal counsel and provide information and await instruction
- Leader will follow Embassy/local counsel instruction
- Leader will inform sending agency/family of the situation and update as needed
- Leader will fill out incident report

### **In Case of Conduct Unbecoming of a Christian Missions Team Member:**

- Notify trip leader/ sub leader immediately
- Trip leader will assess the behavior and if not observed directly will question the member and recommend an action plan based on RMP [code of conduct](#) and [disciplinary protocol](#)
- If the member in question complies with action plan the trip member may continue with the trip activities
- If the member does not comply with action plan, leader will notify board and may elect to remove the individual from the trip and may send the member home (to home country) at the cost of the individual.
- Leader will fill out incident report

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## Hospitals & Emergency Situations

### Hospitals in Panama City

The two BEST hospitals closest to us are:

#### HOSPITAL PUNTA PACIFICA

[www.hospitalpuntapacifica.com](http://www.hospitalpuntapacifica.com)

[info@hpp.com.pa](mailto:info@hpp.com.pa)

Boulevard Pacifica and Via Punta Darien

Panama City, Panama

204-8000

Fax: 204-8010

Emergency: 204-8185/204-8184 204-8000 Fax: 204-8010 Emergency: 204-8185/204-8184

#### CENTRO MEDICO PAITILLA

[clininfo@psi.net.pa](mailto:clininfo@psi.net.pa)

Avenida Balboa and 53rd Street, Marbella

Panama City, Panama

265-8800

Fax: 265-8861

Emergency: 265-8888

Doctors' Offices: 269-5222

### Arrested or Detained:

Please notify the American Citizen Services Unit at 011-507-317-5000 or in Panama 317-5000 when you or a friend or family member is arrested or detained. Detained Americans will generally be visited by a U.S. Consul within 48 hours.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., is the point of contact for family members in the United States who are concerned about an American citizen family member who has been arrested abroad. You can reach OCS by calling 1-888-407-4747. Family members in Panama may call the ACS Unit at 317-5030 or e-mail [Panama-ACS@state.gov](mailto:Panama-ACS@state.gov).

### Abduction:

From the United States to Panama: If your child has been abducted from the United States to Panama, you should file an application with the U.S. Central Authority at:

Department of State, Office of Children's Issues

SA-29, 2201 C Street, NW

U.S. Department of State

Washington, DC 20520

Telephone number: 1-888-407-4747

Fax number: (202) 736-9132

From Panama to the United States: If your child has been abducted from Panama to the United States, you should file an application with the Panama Central Authority at:

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

(Dirección de Asuntos Jurídicos y Tratados)

San Felipe. Calle 3. Palacio Bolívar. Ciudad de Panamá.

Zona Postal San Felipe, Calle 3. Palacio Bolívar. Edificio 26, Panamá 4, Panamá.

Tel. (507) 511-4228

Fax (507) 511-4008

Guidance and instructions on completing the application form:

[http://travel.state.gov/abduction/resources/hagueinstruct/hagueinstruct\\_3857.html](http://travel.state.gov/abduction/resources/hagueinstruct/hagueinstruct_3857.html).

**Natural Disasters or Civil Unrest:**

We are following US Embassy alerts and protocols for any of these issues. From the US your family can obtain information about any of these issues, should they ever arise from the US Embassy in Panama. They can also contact the US State Department.

U.S. Embassy Panama

Avenida Demetrio Basilio Lakas,

Building No.783

Clayton, Panama

Telephone+(507)-317-5000

Emergency After-Hours Telephone+(507)317-5000

Fax+(507)317-5568

Email Panama-ACS@state.gov

Alerts and Warnings - Bureau of Consular Affairs - US Department of State

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

Travel Warnings are updated on this site.

## Discipline Policy

This discipline policy is in place to protect all members of the group and will be acted upon by the discretion of authority based on the severity of the infraction, though otherwise followed in sequential order.

1. Warning from team leader
2. If behavior is repeated, individual will be asked to refrain from missions activities
3. If individual remains defiant or divisive, plans may be made for the removal of that person from the country at the cost of the individual
4. Individual may be removed from country with no refund of trip costs.

# Team Leader Assignment Checklist

## PRE-FIELD

### 4-6 MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE

Date Due	Completed
_____ Prepare trip proposal for approval ( <i>contact us at <a href="http://www.riopanama.com">www.riopanama.com</a></i> ) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Determine trip requirements ( <i>review Rio's Missions Manual</i> ) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Publicize trip and screen applicants .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Collect necessary paperwork .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Track accomplishment of trip requirements .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Distribute fundraising information .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Track team support progress .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Schedule team meetings/training .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <a href="#">Purchase airfare</a> (pg. 8) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Communicate with host as needed .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 1-2 MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE

_____ Conduct team meetings/training .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <a href="#">Send funds to the field</a> (pg. 26) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Register team on State Department website .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Purchase <a href="#">insurance</a> for team (pg. 8) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 1-2 WEEKS BEFORE DEPARTURE

_____ Begin Spiritual Journal .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Church commissioning Service .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Update prayer team by phone and/or email .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Arrange transportation to/from airport .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <a href="#">Medical Health Questionnaire</a> collected (pg. 30) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <a href="#">Point Person</a> assigned and information given (pg. 27) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

## ON-FIELD

Date Due	Completed
_____ Communicate daily with host .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Track funds/expenses .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Daily team debriefing meeting .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Conduct trip debriefing/individual evaluation forms .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

## POST-FIELD

### 2-4 WEEKS AFTER RETURN

Date Due	Completed
_____ Complete post-trip evaluation form .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Follow-through with host .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Church mission team report .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Conduct post-trip follow through meetings .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Readiness Checklist - Leader

Everything you need to prepare yourself and your team for your trip to Panama is listed here. Kindly verify that everything on this list is taken care of prior to your arrival. Please obtain a folder and keep all required documents from your group to bring down to Panama. All necessary documents are available in the links below and in the Guidelines packet.

**Passports:** Check expiration dates and physical condition of each passport. *Passports must NOT expire within 6 months of return date.*

- Make 2 copies of each passport
  - team leader to bring 1 copy in folder
  - 1 copy for member to bring (NOT in checked luggage)

**Group Travel Insurance\*:** [Travel insurance](#) (pg. 8) **must** be purchased for team. Print confirmation of purchase along with all policy information and team leader brings in folder.

- Printout of purchase confirmation
- Printout of Policy Information

**Guidelines & Emergency Protocol:** Team leader reviews Rio Missions Manual and Emergency Manual with group prior to trip. Each team member initials that they have read and understand both documents and team leader brings documentation in folder.

- Reviewed with Group
- ALL members have initialed (bring in folder)

**Waiver:** Each team member needs to print, read, sign and initial the [Rio Contract and Acknowledgement of Risk](#) and team leader brings in folder.

- All members signed waivers in folder

**Health History\*\*:** Each team member needs to print, fill out and sign [Medical Health Questionnaire](#) form and team leader brings in folder.

- ALL members completed Medical Health Questionnaire in folder

**Address Info:** Provide Casa Paraiso address to each team member for filling out immigration forms upon arrival. (printout attached)

- Provided each member with Casa Paraiso address

**Point Person\*\*\*:** Leave Casa Paraiso, Rio, and member emergency contact info with designated Point Person back home in case of an emergency situation.

- Complete the [Point Person](#) form and bring in folder.

Provide the point person with the following:

- [Point person sheet](#) (pg. 27)
- [Emergency Protocol](#) (pg. 16)
- [Medical Health Questionnaires](#) (pg. 30) for ALL members of the group
- Copy of [group insurance policy](#) information
- Assist in text message with Whatsapp
- Provide Garmin information (if necessary)

**Luggage:** Check airline for baggage allowance and weight. *If your ministry trip involves traveling from Casa Paraiso, please pack in soft sided bags/duffels.*

**Casa Paraiso:** If your team is staying at Casa Paraiso, the [Casa Paraiso Pre-Trip Form](#) has to be filled out prior to arrival.

- Pre-Trip Form completed

**Pray:** We encourage you to seek the Lord diligently in prayer as you prepare to come to Panama and during your stay!

**\*\*Optional:** Here is a very extensive [travel safe checklist](#) to help you further prepare.\*\*

### **\*Group Travel Insurance**

Rio Missions Panama requires that short term teams purchase insurance for each team member, for the duration of their time in Panama. This protects team members from incurring the costs of emergencies overseas. Travel and the nature of the work that is done on trips presents risks and Rio strives to be proactive in providing the best care for our groups. Policies must be purchased through [Mission Safe](#) who specializes in Christian short term mission trip coverage. [www.missionsafe.com](http://www.missionsafe.com)

### **\*\*Health History**

Please have each team member print and fill out the [Medical Health Questionnaire](#) (pg. 30). Rio Missions strongly recommends that each team member has a physical examination or the approval of their primary care physician before committing to the trip. Anyone over the age of 60 MUST have the [Physicians Approval](#) (pg. 37) form completed. *Heart conditions, pulmonary conditions, musculoskeletal conditions, and psychological conditions are examples of medical issues that are not conducive to a positive missions experience for you or your group.*

### **\*\*\*Point Person Concept**

The point person is someone who will **NOT** be on your international trip team and will serve as the link between the families and or sending agency and the team members. Please view the [Point Person](#) document for further instructions.

#### **Base Address**

Rio Missions Panama  
611 Calle Espalabra  
Paraiso, Ancon  
Panama Providence

**\*\*You will need this address for immigration\*\***



## Cost Breakdown

Rio Missions Panama is honored to be partnering with you and your team! The following financial breakdown was designed to help all sides prepare for the journey!

*NOTE THAT THIS IS A STANDARD COST BREAKDOWN, SUBJECT TO CHANGE! This is for your budgeting purposes. The per person cost is based on an anticipated 7-day group trip with a group of 10 +/- people. Arrival and departure days count as 1/2 day.*

**Pre-Trip Costs:** *This is the responsibility of the team. Rio will not assist with this process.*

Airfare: \$750 +/- pp (Varies greatly based on time of year and availability) Groups must arrive on the same flight, and we discourage layovers under 2 hours. If teams need to travel on separate flights, transportation to and from the airport is at the individual's expense.

Travel Insurance: \$2.50 per person, per day (Varies – see [www.missionsafe.com](http://www.missionsafe.com))

**In-Country Costs:** Per person - per day (**Total: \$105 pp per day**)

Lodging: \$25 per night @ [Casa Paraiso Missions Base](#)

Food: \$20 meals/water.

Transportation: \$15 (gas, van rentals, drivers, tolls, maintenance)

Misc.: \$15 (This includes tip for translators, drivers, materials for ministry/construction work, unexpected events, etc.)

Excursions: \$5 (This includes one extra activity such as Canal Museum visit)

Donation: \$25 (This covers costs for Rio Administration and the in-country missionaries running the trip and planning expenses)

**Extra Costs:** These include activities that are outside of the missions' trip Budget, purpose, and goals. As mentioned above, there is money in the budget for one of the activities below. If you want to do more than one, please bring extra funds and let us know so we can plan ahead!

Group Excursion: Varies depending on group desire/availability.

Examples:

\$20 pp Canal Museum <https://visitcanaldepanama.com/en/centro-de-visitantes-de-miraflores/>

\$30 pp Rainforest Discovery Center <http://www.pipelineroad.org/>

\$35 pp Panama Canal Railway (One-way trip to Colon)

\$30 pp Trip to Indigenous Wounan Indian Village

Tourism Purchases: Varies per person. Recommended \$30--75 pp to buy items for friends and family

\*\*If there is a surplus at the end of the trip, the funds get rolled into the Rio Missions ministry operating budget to equip and maintain the ministry for the long-term. We thank you in advance for your support and partnership!

**Cost Summary Per Person:** *This is an estimate based on a 10 person group.*

Cost per day \$105 x 7 days = \$735 total in-country costs per person

\$735 pp x 10 people = \$7,350 total In-Country Group Costs

\$105 pp x \_\_\_\_\_ days x \_\_\_\_\_ people = \_\_\_\_\_ In-County Group Cost

We recommend the leader collects all trip funds two weeks before the trip.

**Rio Missions will handle all funds once the team is in Panama.**

We ask that some of the funds be brought to Panama in Cash (\$20's only, as bigger bills are hard to function with here) and the rest be deposited in Rio Missions' Non-profit account in the States to be used to pay expenses charged with our non-profit credit card. Rio Missions is a registered U.S. 501c3 non-profit and can issue tax receipts.

**Total Trip Cost Calculator**

Airfare .....	est. \$750 +/-.....	\$ _____
Insurance .....	est. \$2.50 x _____ days.....	\$ _____
In-Country Cost.....	\$105 x _____ days.....	\$ _____
Extra Cost .....		\$ _____
Other .....		\$ _____
<b>Total</b> .....		<b>\$ _____</b>

\*\*\*\*Below information will be provided to the team leader by a Rio Administrator\*\*\*\*

Funds to be brought in Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Funds to be deposited into Rio's Chase Account\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please deposit trip funds by: \_\_\_\_\_

\*see below for deposit instructions

## 4 Ways To Deposit Your Team Funds

### 1. Write A Check Payable to Rio Collective

*(that is the official title of the ministry)*

Please mail all checks to our US non-profit address:

Rio Collective Inc  
1017 First Ave,  
Asbury Park, NJ  
07712

### 2. Use ZELLE

Most major banks are using this **free** transfer service to send money from one bank to another. All you need is a registered Zelle account with your bank and *our email address*. Some banks have limits as to how much you can transfer, so check ahead of time.

**casaparisopanama@gmail.com**

### 3. Direct Wire Transfer

This typically costs the sending and receiving banks \$15+

Our US CHASE BANK account

- Rio Collective Account #**236501232**
- Rio Collective Routing # for CHASE BANK: **021202337**

### 4. Make A Deposit in Person: *You can visit your local Chase Bank and make a deposit using the account # and address found above.*

Please email us at [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com) and indicate how and when you made the deposit for your trip.

# Point Person

The Point Person will be selected by the team leader and expected to monitor all forms of communication during the duration of the team’s trip. All itinerary plans including airline and flight info, on the ground schedule, etc. should be communicated to the point person before the team leaves. This individual will act as a funnel on both sides of the trip. All family, work, and general emergency information from the US to Panama should be communicated through the Point Person. When the team is in Panama, all emergency or logistical information will be communicated to the Point Person who will then disseminate the information to the related persons in the US. We want to have open and free communication in the case of important logistical changes and emergency situations. Having this information filter through the Point Person will ensure that everyone is reached in an efficient and organized way.

The team leader should provide the Point Person with the following:

- Team members [Medical Health Questionnaire](#) (pg. 30)
- Airline info and ground transportation plans upon departure and arrival
- Itinerary of plans in Panama (*emailed*)
- RIO Contact information (*see below*)
- Garmin Contact (*supplied as needed*)
- Assistance in sending a test message via Whatsapp

*\*\* (Whatsapp is preferred for free international communication)*

### Point Person

Name: _____	Name of Group: _____
Location: _____	Trip Dates: _____ To _____
Cell #: _____	Other #: _____
Email: _____	Instagram: _____
Whatsapp: _____	Facebook: _____

### Emergency Contacts

**Jess Cotton** [cassaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:cassaparisopanama@gmail.com)  
 Panama & Whatsapp: (011) 507 6996-2976  
 Vonage: (732) 749-8152

**Dan Cotton** [algodon77@gmail.com](mailto:algodon77@gmail.com)  
 Panama & Whatsapp: (011) 507 6996-2976  
 Vonage: (732) 749-8152

**Lisa Davis** [go2lisadavis@gmail.com](mailto:go2lisadavis@gmail.com)  
 Panama & Whatsapp: (011) 507 6400-0703  
 Vonage: (609) 755-0303

**Pete Davis** [greenroomvision@gmail.com](mailto:greenroomvision@gmail.com)  
 Panama & Whatsapp: (011) 507 6562-3353  
 Vonage: (609) 755-0303

### Base Address

Rio Missions Panama • 611 Calle Espalabra • Paraiso, Ancon • Panama Providence

## Readiness Checklist – Member

Everything you need to prepare yourself and your team for your trip to Panama is listed here. Kindly verify that everything on this list is taken care of prior to your arrival. Please carefully complete ALL items and turn in the necessary documents to your leader. All necessary documents are available in the links below and in the Missions Manual.

**Passports:** Check expiration dates and physical condition of each passport. *Passports must NOT expire within 6 months of return date.*

- Make 2 copies of you passport
  - Give one to your team leader
  - Pack 1 copy in a safe place (NOT in checked luggage)

**Group Travel Insurance\*:** Travel insurance **must** be purchased for team. Print confirmation of purchase along with all policy information and team leader brings in folder.

- Printout of purchase confirmation
- Printout of Policy Information
- Give to team leader

**Guidelines & Emergency Protocol:** Team leader reviews Rio Missions Manual and Emergency Manual with group prior to trip. Each team member initials that they have read and understand both documents and team leader brings documentation in folder.

- Initial manual and emergency protocol after reviewing with leader

**Waiver:** Each team member needs to print, read, sign and initial the Rio [Contact and Acknowledgement of Risk](#) (pg. 32) and team leader brings in folder.

- Give SIGNED wavier to leader

**Health History\*\*:** Each team member needs to print, fill out and sign [Medical Health Questionnaire](#) (pg. 30) form and team leader brings in folder.

- Complete Health History
- Give Health History to Team leader

**Address Info:** Provide Casa Paraiso address to each team member for filling out immigration forms upon arrival. (printout attached)

- Received Casa Paraiso address card
- Put in carry-on bag

**Luggage:** Check airline for baggage allowance and weight. *If your ministry trip involves traveling from Casa Paraiso, please pack in soft sided bags/duffels.*

**Pray:** We encourage you to seek the Lord diligently in prayer as you prepare to come to Panama and during your stay!

**\*\*Optional:** Here is a very extensive [travel safe checklist](#) to help you further prepare.\*\*

### **\*Group Travel Insurance**

Rio Missions Panama requires that short term teams purchase insurance for each team member, for the duration of their time in Panama. This protects team members from incurring the costs of emergencies overseas. Travel and the nature of the work that is done on trips presents risks and Rio strives to be proactive in providing the best care for our groups. Policies must be purchased through [Mission Safe](http://www.missionsafe.com) who specializes in Christian short term mission trip coverage. [www.missionsafe.com](http://www.missionsafe.com)

### **\*\*Health History**

Please fill out the [Medical Health Questionnaire](#) (pg. 30). Rio Missions strongly recommends that each team member has a physical examination or the approval of their primary care physician before committing to the trip. Anyone over the age of 60 MUST have the [Physicians Approval](#) (pg. 37) form completed. *Heart conditions, pulmonary conditions, musculoskeletal conditions, and psychological conditions are examples of medical issues that are not conducive to a positive missions experience for you or your group.*

### **Point Person Concept**

The point person is someone who will **NOT** be on your international trip team and will serve as the link between the families and or sending agency and the team members. Your team leader will select a point person.

#### **Base Address**

Rio Missions Panama  
611 Calle Espalabra  
Paraiso, Ancon  
Panama Providence

*\*\*You will need this address for immigration\*\**

## Medical Health Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:  Male  Female

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Last Physical: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Last Tetanus: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are 60 years old or more please also complete [Physician Approval](#) (pg. 37)

Have you purchased the required traveler's insurance for your trip?  Yes  No  
*Please provide proof of traveler's insurance to your group leader*

Have you ever been diagnosed with Malaria or Dengue Fever?  Yes  No  
*If yes please circle to indicate diagnosed type*

Is anyone in your immediate family dealing with a major medical issue while you are in Panama?  Yes (*explain*)  No

Do you have experience as a medical care giver or certifications in first aid/CPR?  
 Yes (*list*)  No

Please describe any chronic medical conditions or major medical events including surgeries:

List any major allergies to food or substances (medications):

List any medications that you will be bringing/taking during the trip:

\*\*\*\*\*Complete both pages\*\*\*\*\*

List any mental health issues that you have been treated for or suffer from:

.

Are there any other medical issues that we should know about as we host you in Panama?

**Emergency Contact(s)** *minimum of 2 contacts required*

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign to attest all information is true and accurate:

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Complete and Return to Group Leader**

*\*This information will be kept confidential and will be disposed of properly after the end of the trip\**



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## Contract & Acknowledgment of Risk

I request permission to participate as a volunteer in the RIO Collective, Inc. mission program and the activities related thereto (the “activities”). I have read the RIO Collective, Inc. Mission Guidelines. I acknowledge and agree to the following (initial each one):

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that there are risks associated with the activities and travel to, from, and while in Panama, including possible serious adverse health effects, injury, or death, and the risk of being a victim of criminal and/or political violence. Knowing these risks, I freely and voluntarily agree to assume all of the risks associated with my participation in the activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to notify the team leadership if I learn of anything that would alter the risks to other team members or me at any time. I understand that I may experience conditions that I am not used to and will notify the team leader if there are concerns regarding my health and fitness. I understand that it is my responsibility to visit my physician to discuss my health status, ability to participate in the activities and to obtain the appropriate vaccines and preventative medications as recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). I agree to abide by any request made by RIO Collective, Inc. to cease being a part of the mission due to concerns about my health and well-being or impact on team members.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that RIO Collective, Inc. is not financially responsible for any of expenses associated with the activities; I accept that if for any reason I cannot participate in the activities, RIO Collective, Inc. will not refund any moneys I previously paid in connection therewith. I also understand additional costs incurred due to things beyond RIO Collective, Inc.'s control will be charged to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to act in a responsible way while in Panama and to follow the directions of the team and RIO Collective, Inc. leadership to minimize risks to myself and other members of the team.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree not to undertake tasks or projects outside of my abilities. I agree not to provide medications, medical advice, or medical care outside of my scope of practice or perform any experimental treatments or procedures on the Panamanian people.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must be respectful and protect the inherent dignity and privacy of the Panamanian people under all circumstances.

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge that RIO Collective, Inc. is an evangelical Christian non-profit organization and strives to reflect God’s grace in the world. I agree to be culturally sensitive and act in a manner that reflects the norms expected by the Christian community regardless of my personal beliefs.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the laws of the State of New Jersey shall govern this Release and any legal action relating to or arising out of, this Release shall be commenced exclusively in New Jersey.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to allow RIO Collective, Inc., to release personal information about me to the U.S. State Department or other agencies if RIO Collective, Inc. believes that such release would be in my best interests.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree (on my behalf, and on behalf of my successors, representatives, executors, heirs, and assigns) to release, discharge, and covenant not to sue RIO Collective, Inc. and related and affiliated companies, and the officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, successors, and assigns of each of the foregoing entities (collectively, its “affiliates”) from any liability, causes of action, claims or damages for personal injury, property damage and wrongful death, whether foreseeable or not, arising from or attributable to my participation in the activities, whether or not such liability arises from action or inaction of RIO Collective, Inc. and its affiliates in connection with the activities or the locations in which they take place. This Acknowledgement of Risk Waiver and Release (this “Release”) applies to any and all causes of actions, claims or demands that I may have against RIO Collective, Inc. or its affiliates as a consequence of any type of damage (whether personal or property), loss, death, or injury regardless of whether the cause of action, claim, or demand is in negligence, tort, contract, or other legal basis (other than intentional conduct). I further agree to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend RIO Collective, Inc. and its affiliates from any and all liability, causes of action, claims, or damages of any third party in connection with my participation in the activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I affirm that I am over 18 years old and competent to enter into this Release. I certify that I am physically fit to travel to and from Panama and participate in all activities. I understand the potential for risk and agree to abide by RIO Collective, Inc.'s guidelines and the team leader’s direction. I understand that failure to honor the guidelines may result in termination of the mission and my eviction from RIO Collective, Inc. facilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I affirm that I am over 15 years old and have my parent’s permission to enter into this Release. I certify that I am physically fit to travel to and from Panama and participate in all activities. My parents and I understand the potential for risk; I agree to abide by RIO Collective, Inc.'s guidelines and the team leader’s direction. I understand that failure to honor the guidelines may result in termination of the mission and my eviction from RIO Collective, Inc. facilities.

**Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent/Guardian of minor** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Members:** Please submit all of the signed Contract and Waiver to your group leader prior to your trip. **Team Leaders:** Please submit all of the signed Contract and Waivers to the RIO Collective, Inc. team/guesthouse coordinator in Panama or by scanning and emailing it to [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com).

## Suggested Packing List

- 1. Shoes: one pair suitable for work (closed shoes rec. for safety) & one for church
- 2. Clothing: sleepwear, shirts, pants, shorts, socks, underwear, and modest swimsuit (for beach/ pool only). *Laundry is available so no need to pack extra clothing*  
Women: knee length skirt and shirt or dress (with sleeves) for church, shorts or slacks for clinic/worksite  
Men: short sleeve shirt & slacks for church/work site.
- 3. Hat and sunglasses
- 4. Contacts, contact container (and PLENTY of solution)
- 5. Toiletries (soap, toothbrush/paste, shampoo, deodorant) *please limit curling irons, dryers, & electric razors*
- 6. Washcloths (twin sheets are provided and towels are available in limited supply.)
- 7. Sunscreen - at least SFP 15 or higher and waterproof
- 8. Insect Repellent w/deet 30
- 9. Lip balm & eye drops (liquid tears)
- 10. Antibacterial hand wash/gel
- 11. Personal medications (suggest Tylenol, Imodium and antacids in addition to prescription medications)
- 12. Antibacterial wipes (recommended to clean the tops of bottle, cans etc. before drinking)
- 13. Earplugs for after hours (roosters & dogs often start crowing/barking at 3 am)
- 14. Cell phone – there is little need for multiple cell phones in Panama, we suggest only one for team use. Contact your cell company for details and instructions on international plans.
- 15. Refillable water bottle
- 16. Personal snacks (granola, protein bars, peanut butter crackers, tuna packets, etc.)
- 17. Copy of your passport & your PASSPORT
- 18. Copy of your Green Card & your GREENCARD
- 19. Driver's license (needed to use a credit card)
- 20. Spending money, VISA & MC (accepted in some stores - consider pre-paid credit cards)
- 21. Bible, devotional and journal items
- 22. Copy of Medical license(s) for medical personnel

*Do not bring expensive jewelry, computers and other valuable items to Panama; we cannot be responsible for stolen or lost items or damage to electronics due to electricity surges.*

## Recommended Team Supply List

In addition to supplies needed for your project, the following items may be helpful to have while on the mission field. Although we do have access to a local grocery and hardware store, items in Panama are usually much more expensive than in the U.S. Teams often leave surplus supplies, these supplies are welcome and will be stored for use by visiting teams but we cannot hold these items for your use on future trips. We also request that all supplies be “de-bulked” as much as possible, remove all cellophane wrappers, take bottles out of boxes, etc.

### GENERAL SUPPLIES

- 1. Batteries, 1 pack each AAs, AAAs, Cs, and Ds
- 2. Clorox or antibacterial wipes
- 3. First Aid Kit (see [Suggestions for First Aid Kit](#))
- 4. Gatorade powder (very expensive to purchase in Panama)
- 5. Good quality work gloves & safety glasses if involved in building projects
- 6. Project supplies: paintbrushes, small hand tools, craft supplies for VBS/schools etc.
- 7. Office supplies: Ink pens, sharpies, scissors, safety pens & mini-sewing kits
- 8. Snacks
- 9. Tape: duct and scotch
- 10. Thank-you cards or token from sending organization
- 11. Ziploc Bags: 1-2 boxes each gallon and quart (more for medical teams)
- 12. Two way radios or walkie-talkies \* optional (in some sites stations may be spaced some distance apart, hand held communication devices save steps and time!)

In addition, the schools always needs drawing pads, Crayola brand crayons (Rose Art brand crayons melt!), pens and pencils, markers, glue sticks, school scissors, stickers (pictures, not words unless in Spanish) Lego or other building block type toys, puzzles (large size pieces), and hygiene kits (toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap).

For a complete list of the most current needs, contact [casaparisopanama@gmail.com](mailto:casaparisopanama@gmail.com) prior to your trip.

## First Aid Kit Suggestions

We strongly encourage all teams to travel with a well-stocked First Aid Kit. We have been fortunate that our teams rarely encounter serious medical problem but every day mishaps and illnesses do happen. The most common illnesses are dehydration, heat stroke or exhaustion, and gastrointestinal illness due to consumption of unsafe food or water. If you get sick and do not have a team physician (or they are unable to treat you adequately), we have access to local MDs and local hospitals in Panama that offer a limited level of medical care. If necessary, medical evacuation to the nearest facility in the U. S. may be required in case of an extreme medical emergency. All team members MUST purchase medical evacuation insurance. Team leaders must have each team member complete a [Medical Health Questionnaire](#) with current medical, allergy and emergency contact information in the event of illness/injury in Panama.

### SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR FIRST AID KIT

- Antiseptic Wipes
- Arm Slings (1-2)
- Bandages
  - Adhesive Band-Aids (in assorted sizes)
  - Adhesive Tape
  - Coban (in assorted sizes)
  - 3" & 4" Ace Wrap Bandage
  - Sterile Gauze (4" x 4", 3" x 3" pads)
- Butterfly bandages
- Instant Cold Compress
- Iodine or similar prep pads
- Medications
  - Antacids
  - Anti-nausea
  - Anti-diarrheal (Imodium)
  - Bacitracin Antibiotic Ointment
  - Cipro 500 mg (30 tablets)
  - Epi vial or pen
  - Hydrocortisone Ointment
  - NSAIDS – Ibuprofen, Tylenol or Aleve
  - Prescription pain medication \* optional
  - Silvadene ointment
- Non-Latex Gloves
- Re-hydration salts or Gatorade
- Scissors - Bandage Scissors & sharp scissors
- Suture Kit with Needles and/or glue
- Thermometer (Non-Mercury/Non-Glass)
- Tweezers

## Physicians Medical Release

<p>If you 60 years old or more, ask your physician to read and complete this form and check one of the boxes below to indicate your readiness for travel and trip participation.</p>					
<p><b>Trip participant to complete the following:</b></p>					
<p><b>Patient's Name</b></p>					
<p><b>Trip County</b></p>				<p><b>Trip Dates</b></p>	
<p><b>Physician to review and complete the following:</b>          Rio Missions Panama. is a nonprofit organization committed to building the global church in Panama. Christian holistic development of children in poverty through sponsorship. Rio Missions Panama offers group trips to participate in the physical and spiritual work of the mission.           Rio Missions Panama trips typically include travel into poor <b>areas of the developing country of Panama</b>. Conditions are frequently uncomfortable and physically and emotionally challenging, including <b>extended periods of walking on rough/unpaved paths, demanding climbs</b>, and rigorous physical labor (such as mixing cement) <b>long travel times requiring use of modern and primitive, private and public transportation services</b> which <b>may lack accommodations for people with physical disabilities</b>. <b>Dietary and climate changes</b> also add to the physical and emotional intensity of our trips, and due to the nature of long periods of travel, experiencing <b>lack of sleep</b> is customary. Some areas may be remote and <b>medical, including psychological care may not be immediately available</b> in the particular area visited. Please be considerate of these factors as you evaluate the participant's readiness for such conditions.           Rio Missions Panama reserves the right to decline participation for any person as a trip member for any reason which affects the operation of the trip or the rights and enjoyment of the other trip members.</p>					
<p><b>Physician's Name:</b></p>					
<p><b>Address</b></p>					
<p><b>City</b></p>		<p><b>State</b></p>		<p><b>Zip</b></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> I have reviewed the Patient's medical history, conducted an evaluation current health, and I recommend that the Patient is eligible for travel and itinerary participation.</p>					
<p><input type="checkbox"/> I have prescribed a medical plan for the Patient to meet and I recommend that the Patient is eligible for travel and itinerary participation.</p>					
<p><input type="checkbox"/> I have reviewed the Patient's medical history and I do not recommend that the Patient is eligible for travel and to participate at this time.</p>					
<p><i>**Please complete both pages of the form**</i></p>					

Please add any other information or comments about the Patient's overall health that you would like Compassion to know prior to approval for travel and trip participation:

<b>Physician's Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	
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***Once the form is completed, please send us a copy via email. We recommend that you keep your original on file. If you have questions, please contact us at any of the listed ways below.***