

Arkansas Tornado Clean-up Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your heart to send a team to Ravenden Springs, AR to help clean up the Bible Training Center there after two tornadoes caused widespread damage the last two years. This FAQ is designed to answer questions your team might have regarding a mission trip with ReachGlobal Crisis Response and the EFCA Central District team.

We are working with Pastor Philip Pinto who runs the training center and pastors an EFCA church in Cherokee Village, AR

Pilgrimage Christian Center/Cedar Springs Camp
1002 Lower Guntharp Rd
Ravenden Springs, AR 72460

When are teams going?

We are hosting 7 teams total starting in late April and running through the beginning of July. You can find out dates by contacting Dave Clarke (dave.clarke@efca.org) or contacting ReachGlobal Crisis Response at respond@efca.org.

Where would we stay?

Please drive to the training center in Ravenden Springs to meet the staff. You will be staying at the training center and having all meals and programming there.

What is the cost?

- The mission trip fee is \$200 per volunteer for the half-week trip (Wednesday evening through Saturday half-day). The fee for the remaining full-week trips is \$395 (Monday evening through Friday half-day). For all trips, the fee includes a nonrefundable and nontransferable \$50 deposit per person.
- These fees help to cover the costs of meals, tools, equipment, and staff.

How large a team can the site hold?

We can have teams of up to 25 people.

What should each volunteer bring?

Clothes that they do not mind getting dirty; clothes to wear after the workday; sleeping bag, blanket, pillow, and air mattress; sleepwear; toiletries; towel & washcloth; mosquito repellent and spending money for lunches and snacks. Your team leader will provide a more complete packing list for reference. Volunteers will receive a green ReachGlobal Crisis Response t-shirt to wear to the worksite daily.

Are there showers?

Yes

Are there laundry facilities?

Yes – both at the home of the Pastor and a laundromat in a town 20 minutes away.

Are Internet, WiFi and cell-phone coverage available?

The training center has WiFi and Internet as well as a landline, but cell coverage is not available in the area.

What would we be doing?

As much as possible, we want to focus on intentional disciple-making, so we always want to focus on people and relationships over work/projects. That said, we will obviously help with physical needs, as that frequently opens doors for relational ministry opportunities. We will be serving the training center and coming alongside the church that Pastor Philip pastors in Cherokee Village. We will also have the opportunity to work with youth who are part of a homeschool network served by the training center. We hope to be an encouragement and witness for Christ as we serve both physically and relationally.

A large part of the work will be cleaning up fallen trees, limbs and sticks which will range from raking and picking up to using chainsaws and a skid steer/tractor for larger trees. There is a small sawmill onsite that we may also use to cut larger trees into usable lumber. Along with the tree work, there are also some light carpentry repairs needed and possibly some electrical conduit and wiring work at the shop. Beyond this, we will also need some people on each team to take responsibility for planning, shopping and preparing breakfast and dinner for the team daily.

What are meals like?

- For the half-week trip, breakfast is provided Thursday through Saturday and dinner Thursday and Friday
- For the full-week trips, breakfast is provided Tuesday through Friday and dinner Tuesday through Thursday
- You are responsible for packing lunches for each workday
- Dietary Restrictions – Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate special diets, nor can we guarantee an allergy free environment. You are welcome to bring your own food to ensure that you have no issues.

Do we need to bring our own tools?

Either way is fine. We have the tools that are needed for the jobs but having more or the ones most familiar to your own hand is better, especially for specialty work like carpentry or electrical. We ask that you mark your tools and keep track of them throughout the week. If you plan to bring a chainsaw, we will ask you to wear full personal protective equipment while operating on the worksite.

What are the age restrictions?

- Children need to be 14 years of age or older.
- For youth groups, we ask for a 1 to 5 ratio of student to adults. All students must have parent/leader of the same gender in the bunkroom.
- Men and women are in separate bunkrooms.

What age limits apply?

Any children must be 14 years of age or older and accompanied by a parent or guardian. We separate genders for sleeping, so we encourage that if a child is serving, their parent of the same gender accompanies them. For youth groups, we ask that the team consist of a minimum of one adult supervisor for every five volunteers.

How long would it take to organize teams and get them down there?

Teams have pulled together things together in a week but, in most cases, teams usually take about 6 to 8 weeks to get paperwork and plans together, as well as spending time together to pray and bond as a team. We can make available pre-arrival devotional materials if helpful.

Does it matter what day the team arrives and what day they head back home?

Yes, if serving a full week, teams are asked to arrive together on Monday evening at 5:30-6:00 PM, and they should return home after the half-day workday on Friday. A Friday departure is required to allow us to prepare for the next weekly team on Saturday and a Sabbath day for the staff on Sundays.

If serving a half week, the teams arrive together on Wednesday at 5:30-6:00 PM. They will work all day Thursday and Friday and leave after the half-day workday on Saturday.

In all cases, we ask teams to do a thorough cleaning in preparation for the next team in the spirit of leaving things better than we found them.

Are there stores close by to purchase our food items?

Not close by, but there are stores in Pocahontas (25 minutes) and Ravenden (15 minutes). We recommend that you pick up lunch food in Pocahontas before you arrive to the training center.

What are the other requirements for the team members?

A desire to be the hands and feet of God to everyone we are serving and come into contact with from the church and community.

What are particularly needed skills right now?

The most needed thing right now is a willingness to serve. We have supervisors who will show volunteers how to complete certain tasks. For this site, having some people on the team who can safely operate a chainsaw as well as a skid steer or small tractor is also helpful along with people who have some basic carpentry skills and expertise in running electrical wiring/conduit.

Can we bring an RV or trailer to stay in while we are serving?

NO – this site can't accommodate trailers or campers.

Can I fly there?

The closest regional airport is Jonesboro Municipal Airport about an hour & 15 minutes away. The closest major airport is Memphis International Airport about 2 ½ hours away. You would need to make arrangements for a rental car to travel to the training center.

Are there any vehicles that we can borrow while there?

No. We have no ministry vehicles available. We encourage you to drive your own vehicle or secure a rental car prior to making any flight arrangements if you plan to fly.

Please contact Dave Clarke, Central District Crisis Response Champion, if you have any questions at Dave.Clarke@efca.org.