

# ASP COVID-19 FAQ's

Reviewed January 2022

## What will the volunteer hosting protocols be for summer 2022?

We have been reviewing our protocols on an ongoing basis and have chosen to leave our protocols the same so far. We are currently hosting winter and spring volunteers with the same protocols in place that were used in summer and fall of 2021 because they were successful. Any final updates to the protocols before summer 2022 will be announced in late spring and will be based on the most current CDC recommendations at that time.

## Why do I still need to wear a mask if I'm vaccinated?

We have worked very hard to figure out how ASP can serve Appalachian communities again while trying to keep all participants and community members as safe as possible. It has been a difficult road and we are grateful to be welcomed back in 17 communities this year and for volunteers like you who are willing to serve!

ASP has engaged a COVID-19 advisory council of medical professionals to advise us on the best way to keep participants safe while serving with us. Based on their advice, we have decided to keep the masking protocols in place for the time being due to a number of factors:

- The communal living arrangements at ASP inherently produce a higher risk of disease spread and we want to limit that as much as possible.
- Multiple volunteer groups traveling from multiple parts of the country may be serving together and we want to mitigate the spread of the collective risk-profiles traveling with each group.
- We will have a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated participants. Wearing masks inside the center helps protect everyone regardless of vaccination status. Since volunteers will be unable to know everyone who is and isn't vaccinated at the center, this is the best way for us to ensure minimal spread for all statuses.
- The communities that we serve have asked us to be extra cautious with protocols as they are both welcoming and cautious about hosting traveling visitors at this time- especially since some of the communities we serve have under-sourced medical facilities. We have agreed upon protocols that community leaders and facility owners are comfortable with and we want to honor those agreements.

Please remember that we are navigating varying comfort levels of thousands of volunteers as well as trying to be as safe as possible in a communal living situation and respect the wishes of the communities we serve. Safety is always a top priority for ASP. Having multiple layers of protection against potential spread is something we have chosen to do this year to be able to serve safely. We are lucky that we are able to host volunteers as many of our fraternal organizations made the decision to cancel programming this summer to eliminate any risks.

Our hope is that as the summer goes on, we will be able to relax our masking protocols, but are unable to do so at this time. However, if we are able to relax them, you will be notified upon arrival at the center. We think it is best for Trip Coordinators to plan for and prepare all volunteers for the current protocols, just so there is no disappointment if we need to maintain that level of caution upon arrival.

We kindly ask that you ensure your group is willing to comply with the protocols before participating. We have tried to be very transparent about the protocols and we must hold all groups to the same expectations. Please know that our goal is safety and service- these protocols come from a place of love. As a nation, we have yet to reach herd immunity status and therefore, ASP is proceeding with extra caution due to the factors we mentioned in our last email. Our biggest fear is that a volunteer, homeowner or staff member would get terribly sick due to participation with ASP- we are doing our best to protect all involved.

### **What happens if someone tests positive or comes down with symptoms while we are at ASP?**

Should anyone exhibit symptoms or receive a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 while participating, ASP will follow current CDC and local/state guidelines for isolation, symptom tracking, and treatment. Anyone who exhibits symptoms or believes they have been exposed will be temporarily isolated at the ASP facility in a designated area while further assessments can be done (this should take less than 24 hours and could be as quick as a few minutes). Then, if the person is diagnosed, they would be asked to arrange their own isolation off site (hotel, back home, etc.). Once they have left the ASP facility, it would be up to them how they comply with quarantine and isolation recommendations.

Additionally, participants with ASP who are identified as having close contact with a diagnosed individual will be asked to quarantine off site (hotel, back home, etc.). Only those that have been in close contact with an infected individual would be required to quarantine, so the whole group would not need to leave. However, on a trip like ASP, we recognize the number of people who have been in close contact can expand quickly. If someone needs to quarantine, it effectively ends the trip for that individual, because ASP cannot provide quarantine space for the required length of time.

### **Are volunteers, including youth, responsible for sanitizing at the center? How can we ensure this will be accomplished effectively?**

Our current plan is to have an outside cleaning crew come through the center and sanitize high touch areas and common spaces each day while volunteers are on site as well as in between groups on the weekend. This will be in addition to more stringent chores expected at the center by the volunteers.

Part of the ASP experience is volunteers living in community and sharing responsibilities for chores while serving. Chores will continue to be divided amongst volunteer groups - including sanitizing. It is always our expectation that adult Group Leaders take responsibility for enforcement of rules and chores with their volunteers.

ASP is built on the belief that volunteers (especially youth) CAN and DO rise to the occasion and complete amazing tasks while with us! We ask for all volunteers to commit to assisting with ensuring the safety of all participants by diligently completing disinfection procedures as assigned. Of course, if the staff notice an issue with thoroughness, we will address that directly with the Group Leaders and appreciate their assistance in oversight. Additionally, volunteers will be given the opportunity for feedback to the staff throughout their time of service. We ask that any issues be brought to our attention quickly so we can address the matter.

### **How will ASP be handling COVID guidelines while we are at the center?**

Your health and safety are very important to us. ASP has established Volunteer Hosting Protocols for safely hosting volunteers. These protocols are being reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis and specifics may vary slightly from center to center. The staff will inform you of any center specific items in the weeks prior to your date of service and in detail once you arrive at the center. For a general overview of the guidelines, please see our COVID-19 web page ([www.asphome.org/covid](http://www.asphome.org/covid)) and [Quick Guide PDF](#).

### **Will ASP require a COVID-19 vaccine or test prior to serving?**

All volunteers age 65+, OR those defined as “increased risk” (See CDC site for details: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>) are required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 by no later than 14 days ahead of the ASP trip date. Verification must be provided to the Trip Coordinator on or before departure day.

All volunteers not yet fully vaccinated are required to be tested for COVID-19 within 4 days of their trip date. Verification of a negative test must be provided to the Trip Coordinator on or before departure day. (Testing is not required for those who have recovered from a documented case of COVID-19 within 90 days of the trip date as long as no symptoms are present.) Finally, we are asking volunteers to quarantine as much as possible between their test date and departure date.

Homeowners are asked to comply with the same self-screening guidelines prior to and during participation with ASP.

### **How far in advance will ASP decide to postpone or cancel our scheduled week?**

ASP staff are reviewing health authority, state, and local guidelines and recommendations daily to ensure safe volunteer hosting. You can see available trip options on our website ([www.asphome.org/volunteer](http://www.asphome.org/volunteer)). Any changes to scheduled groups will be communicated from the Volunteer Department as quickly as possible.

### **What would influence ASP to postpone or cancel our scheduled week?**

All trips will be hosted unless there are health authority, state, or local guidelines that prevent ASP from safely hosting volunteers. Groups are welcome to contact the Volunteer Department with questions regarding specific concerns or circumstances.

### **How will sleeping arrangements be modified to accommodate appropriate distancing and ventilation in sleeping areas?**

As recommended by the CDC and American Camp Association, all sleeping areas will be set up to limit the number of volunteers gathered in enclosed spaces and to account for at least 6 feet of physical distancing between the faces of volunteers while sleeping.

In places where it is feasible, we will ask staff and volunteers to open windows/doors upon occasion to air out facilities as much as possible.

Although we are not able to guarantee any ventilation modifications at the centers, since we do not own these facilities, groups are allowed to bring portable air purifiers with them.

### **Will we still have culture night? Will we still have a family picnic?**

Culture night and family picnics are a treasured part of ASP. As much as we are able, we are planning to host culture night and family picnics considering guidelines and recommendations, including physical distancing, as our centers and available gathering spaces allow.

### **Do we need to plan to provide our own disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, etc.?**

Proper sanitation and hygiene practices are important to reduce the likelihood of spread of the virus. We are asking all groups to supply each work crew with disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer and a thermometer to carry with them for daily use, especially at the worksite. At the Center, ASP will provide hand-washing stations, antibacterial soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and EPA approved disinfectants for cleaning surfaces. ASP will provide a touchless thermometer for daily temperature checks of each volunteer.

### **Will ASP provide masks for volunteers?**

For the safety of yourself and others, masks will be required during participation. ASP will provide some masks for use while working on site, and each volunteer is required to bring plenty of their own re-usable and/or disposable masks to ensure coverage at all times to supplement ASP's supply.

Masks should be CDC approved washable cloth or disposable paper masks. N-95 masks are preferred while working with construction dust.

### **Will we be doing only outdoor projects?**

We care deeply about addressing both interior and exterior repair needs at a home. However, for the safety of volunteers and the homeowners we serve, at this time, projects will be limited to exterior work unless interior work can be accomplished safely. Volunteers are asked not to enter a home unless it has been approved by the staff. Arrangements should be made for restroom breaks to be taken off site.

### **Will ASP be limiting the number of people during EG's?**

We believe it is important for spiritual and personal growth to debrief together after a day on site. We are planning to host Evening Gatherings (EG's) considering guidelines and recommendations, including physical distancing, as our centers and available gathering spaces allow. This may mean some creativity in how EG's are presented. We invite your openness and participation.

### **Are deposits refundable if a group decides to cancel due to COVID-19?**

We are diligently preparing for your trip and hope you will be able to safely join us! However, we know that your region may be reacting to differing circumstances on the ground. If a church or group originates from an area where the local or state health department has restricted activity or travel, ASP will assist in rescheduling the trip or refunding deposits if needed. If a church or group originates from an area where the municipality or state is open and operating with similar COVID-19 guidelines to ASP, then we will be unable to issue a refund.