What are the expectations of an engagement trip participant?

Every student plays an important part in the success of a Spring Break Engagement Trip. Before the trips, there will be large and small group meetings and activities, as well as fundraising. There will be a **Meet & Greet** just after participant selection in order for groups to become acquainted. Second semester, there will be an **Education Night** that will bring together all groups to learn more about this year’s social issues. There will also be a **Send Off** celebration for all the trips right before Spring Break. In addition, trip leaders will organize a few small group meetings, bonding activities, and local volunteer opportunities. Trip leaders and participants are encouraged to lower their trip costs through group fundraising, which has the potential to make each student’s trip more affordable. The amount of money fundraised depends on the effort that each group puts in. More information about all of these events will be available at the Meet & Greet.

During the trips, every student will be expected to work hard, be open to new ideas, contribute to the group, and have a positive attitude. Part of an Engagement Trip is learning how to live simply and be aware of your personal impact on the community. Reflection about what you do and learn is an important part of the trips, which will require thoughtful and respectful participation. At the lodging sites, all students will help cook and clean up. Willingness to build a cohesive group and to be present and engaged will help develop friendships that you will have throughout your time at Whitman, and make your SBST experience that much more memorable!

I haven't done a lot of long-term volunteering or volunteer trips before. Is that okay?

Absolutely, no experience is required! Engagement Trip programs are designed for anyone interested in getting to know communities outside the "Whitman bubble" while meeting new friends and fellow students. Our trips will include both participants with a lot of community service experience and folks who are brand new to it.

What should I bring?

Accepted students will receive a detailed packing list before the trip. Essentially, students will need work clothes, a good pair of work shoes (closed-toe, hard-soled), clothes for after work, toiletries, a towel, pillow, sleeping bag and pad (if possible), and a great attitude!

What is the cost of the trip and when is the payment due?

Trip cost will vary by location. Estimated trip cost will be available with the applications along with details about the payment schedule. Also note that we ask for your participation in pre-trip fundraisers.

Are pro-rated trips available?

Pro-rated trips are at this time unavailable. The Community Service Office and the SEC are working with the Financial Aid Office and the Dean of Students Office to determine the
availability of aid, but cannot confirm anything now. However, participants and leaders are expected to engage in group fundraising efforts which can significantly reduce trip costs.

**Can I have some more information about my day-to-day experience on a trip?**

Sure! Each trip’s particular itinerary will be included in a pre-trip packet that participants will receive from their group leaders before trips go out. Participants are generally housed in local churches (or other low-cost alternatives) and will be driven by trip leaders to their work site every day. Activities will vary between doing direct service and participating in educational sessions to learn more about the social issue. Participants and leaders will prepare most meals together as a group at your sleeping location. There will also be opportunities to go out and eat and explore the town in which you are staying. All meals are included in the program fee.

**How do schedule and travel plans work? When and where do Spring Break Engagement Trips end?**

The service trips interns will make travel arrangements. Details will be posted by the time the participant application is available.

**How does the program address safety issues?**

All participants are covered under Whitman’s insurance policy. Trip leaders will receive training throughout the school year and will be First Aid certified by the Red Cross. As none of the locations are remote, trip leaders will always have cell phone contact. For out-of-region trips, as much local knowledge as possible will be consulted and provided to leaders to ensure they are prepared to navigate those cities.

**What is the drug and alcohol policy?**

No drugs or alcohol are allowed on Engagement Trips because they inhibit full participation with the group and the service project. Anyone who uses drugs or alcohol will be sent home at his/her own expense.