

What is the European Voluntary Service (EVS)?

EVS is a volunteer programme that is open to all young people aged between 18 and 30 living legally in one of the 27 programme countries of the European Union (plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey). The programme enables young people to volunteer in one of the many approved hosting organisations (there are several thousand in total) in participating countries for between 2 and 12 months. The EU cover all the costs of the programme i.e. travel, insurance, accommodation, pocket money etc and on arrival training is given by each National Agency.

The programme works by sending organisations helping volunteers to make contact with accredited hosting organisations on a number of website databases. Organisations select the volunteers that they would like to host on the basis of the interest that the volunteer brings to the project. You are not expected to have qualifications in any particular area and you cannot be excluded because you don't have such a qualification. In the end, however, the organisation will select the volunteer(s) it will work with so it is important to select project that you are genuinely interested in. You should also take care to make it clear to potential hosts that you are very interested in their work and would like to contribute to the organisation.

How to find a placement

There are a number of websites that will allow you to search for vacancies within the EVS programme. These include:

1. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/mobility/european-voluntary-service_en.htm is the EU official pages for the EVS programme. Read this to get more info on the overall programme.
2. http://europa.eu/youth/evs_database is the European Commission's official EVS project search database. This lists all valid accredited host organisations (several thousand of them) but does not give you any indication whether there is a vacancy in any of them. To do this you will need to contact the organisations that interest you directly using the contact details displayed on this database. You are then depending on the organisation in question coming back to you to let you know. Unfortunately this system does not work as well as it could. Often volunteers report that they have not received any response from organisations which leaves them back at square one. It would be worth exploring other ways of finding a project in addition to this database.
3. www.youthnetworks.eu is an independent search database that is much smaller but much more up-to-date than the above site. Volunteers and organisations can register their details on this site and it is possible for both groups to search for partners for their EVS projects. In other words it is possible for volunteers to search for available placements and also it is possible for organisations to search for volunteers who are available to come to their project. This site rewards organisations and volunteers who are most active in conducting their searches so it is important to use this site regularly

to keep being noticed. **Eolas Soileir can enrol you as a volunteer on their website and search engine –just let us know.**

How do I put my project together?

An EVS project is comprised of three partners:

1. Host organisation – where you will spend your EVS
2. Sending organisation – a support organisation in Ireland that will help you before, during and after your project. VSI is a recognised sending organisation.
3. Volunteer –that’s you!

When can I apply for my project and when can I start?

In most cases, once you have found a project that you would like to volunteer with and if they have agreed to host you then the hosting organisation will make an application to a National Agency There are 3 deadlines each year

(check http://www.leargas.ie/programme_deadlines.php?prog_code=7128)

and, if approved, you can start to volunteer 3 months after each deadline. For example if you want to start your placement in January then you will have to apply by the 1st October deadline.

This really means that you should begin to plan your EVS project as early as possible so that you have the best chance of being accepted by an organisation that you are interested in.

Participating Countries:

See :

<https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/about/participating-countries>