BUILDING TRIP / FAQS

WHAT ARE BUILDING TRIPS?
A 4-day weekend where volunteers from outside of Latin America help build transitional houses together with the beneficiary family and local volunteers.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A BUILDING TRIP?
It takes two full days to build each transitional house. During the day, volunteers spend time building the transitional house with the family that will receive it. They will also have lunch together.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES?
- For individuals to get in touch with the reality of millions of families living in extreme poverty in the most excluded communities in Latin America.
- To actively participate in overcoming poverty in Latin America with energy, effort, and enthusiasm.
- To spend two days with a family and other volunteers building a transitional house that will become the family’s new home.
- To get to know other volunteers and families that work tirelessly to overcome the situation of poverty and create better opportunities for their communities.
- To connect with other TECHO US volunteers and build a community.

HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS BUILD A HOUSE?
Teams consisting of 8-10 volunteers, together with the family that will receive the house.

WILL TECHO STAFF BE PRESENT DURING THE ACTIVITY?
Each team (that is divided for the home), will have 1-2 local TECHO leaders, facilitating the construction. The TECHO staff for the construction will consist of hired Staff (local & International Directors present), and permanent local volunteers, that will be leading specific roles for the Build Weekend.

CAN I BUILD A HOUSE IF I DON’T HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE?
Yes you can! Houses are prefabricated and easy to build. Each team building a transitional house will have a TECHO staff member/permanent volunteer, as a guide. Just be ready to work as a team.

SHOULD I BRING ANY TOOLS TO THE BUILDING ACTIVITIES?
No, there is no need. TECHO will provide your team with everything you will need for the building activity. Kindly note that we use basic tools for safety.

WHAT HAPPENS IF IT RAINS?
The activity will be carried out even if it rains. The logistics are prepared to face rainy conditions! Also, families are very much looking forward to receiving their new home. We do everything we can to comply with our promise of a new home after weekend build.

IS IT SAFE FOR MY FAMILY AND I TO VISIT AND WORK IN THE COMMUNITY?
Yes, it is. TECHO builds transitional houses in communities where our team has a long history working in that area and residents are very familiar with our presence there. TECHO has built over 150,000 transitional houses with over 1MM volunteers, our goal is to work with communities, that are involved in the whole process, and that comply with key things. One of them, is ensuring safety for our volunteers.

Kindly note that each local team, has their own special safety instructions, so we all should be attentive and mindful.
WHAT DOES THE DONATION INCLUDE?
The donation includes:

• A commitment to support TECHO’s mission
• The materials and tools needed to build the house
• Transportation from the hotel (designated by TECHO) to the community, and from the community back to the hotel
• Basic lunch during the TECHO activity days

Additional costs not covered:

• Airfare and transportation from/to the airport
• Additional snacks
• Hotel reservation, all participants are required to plan their sleeping arrangements, all airfare arrangements should be planned for the 4th day <Monday>. Not Sunday night.

AIRFARE Arrangements
All transportation arrangements should be made to arrive on Friday (first day), and come back to the states on Monday (fourth day). Saturday and Sunday are full construction days.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

• Breakfast is included at the hotel group rate.
• Dinner is on your own - we will have some restaurants to recommend you in the area.
• Lunch will be provided on Saturday and Sunday at the community. TECHO will bring all the purified water to drink & cook lunch on site.
  • Lunch is very simple, for example: rice, grains and some protein. Safe drinking water will be provided. Please let us know if there is any dietary restriction we should follow. This is a very important moment to spend time with the beneficiary family and share stories and experiences with them, and get to know each other.
• You are welcome to bring your own snacks if needed** Suggested.
• PLEASE remember to always stay hydrated throughout all activities.

LANGUAGE
People in the communities speak Spanish. The TECHO team will aim to match up local volunteers who speak English within each group, but we want to note that language will not be a barrier. There will be a representative from the US team facilitating communication.

We want all of us to have a great time and have time to connect. You’ll be amazed what non-verbal communication can do! Also, reach out to your closest bilingual speaker if you need a translator. Let’s take it as an opportunity to learn from each other, and to also embrace the moment. The community residents will want to get to know you!

BATHROOM
There will be no public nor special restrooms at the building site. Volunteers will share the bathroom that the beneficiary families own and use on a daily basis. * Suggestion bring baby wipes, and hand sanitizer for personal use.
SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

TECHO builds in communities where our team has a history working in the area and residents are very familiar with our presence there. TECHO has built over 10,000 houses with over 1 MM volunteers.

To maintain this safety, it is very important to follow these recommendations:

• Every participant is welcome to buy their own international travelers insurance
• While in the community, always wear the TECHO t-shirt.
• We recommend not walking around the community alone.
• The group has to arrive at the same time. No one is allowed to arrive after the group or leave alone before the departure.
• Don’t bring unnecessary valuables. While there’s no problem bringing your phone and using it to take pictures during the construction, please put it away when outside of your team’s lot.
• Sometimes it is the case that the water at the community is not safe to drink, please only drink the water provided by TECHO.
Packing is always tricky when choosing what is absolutely essential to take, here are some key items you don’t want to leave behind. Remember traveling light is the best option (essentials only).

**YOU MUST HAVE:**

- Reusable plates, utensils and water bottle - for lunch (Ideally we will wash and reuse our dishes after meals prepared for us, however some times there is water shortages. Our goal is to also be sustainable and do not leave much trash behind).
- Health care insurance card
- Closed toe shoes - comfortable and sturdy, for example:
  - Sneakers/Converse
  - Hiking boots (Please note that the weather is hot during the day, so use breathable shoes.)
- Comfortable clothing. You cannot build in shorts. In order to prevent any accidents we recommend to have pants (loose fitting jeans) and long sleeve shirts in order to protect the skin
- Small backpack (to carry essentials during the day)
- Construction gloves
- Flashlight and/or headlight
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Baby wipes
- Hat/cap (for sun protection)
- Sweater, long sleeve shirts (something to keep you warm, especially at night)

**SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BRING:**

- Plastic bags (Ziplocks) for keeping things dry and clean and for separating wet and dirty stuff
- Construction helmet

**WHAT NOT TO BRING:**

- Any valuables that you could lose and not need (jewelry, laptops, cameras, electronic devices, etc.). However we suggest bringing your phone to record a small video to thank your donors while you are on site
- Alcohol and drugs are completely forbidden during the building trip at all times - no exceptions!