How-To: Organize a Relief Trip

Organizing a relief trip can be challenging, but these trips can make a meaningful difference in communities affected by natural disasters. This short guide provides tips and suggestions to make the process easier. After reviewing this guide, fill-in the Relief Trip Form (Form D-2) to begin planning your relief trip.

- **Determine the purpose of your trip.**
  - Some trips are focused on clean-up while others on repairing or rebuilding. Is your trip a recovery or rebuild trip? Where will you go? What organization will you partner with on-the-ground? What needs do they have? What support can they provide to your group (food, lodging, supplies)?

- **Plan activities.**
  - Write two to three clear goals for the trip. Be as specific as you can. For example:
    - Wash clothes or tear out flooded homes
    - Distribute supplies
    - Teach or tutor displaced students
    - Install flooring, walls, cabinetry, insulation, etc.
    - Work on a food crew

- **Secure permissions and authorizations.**
  - Will those going on your trip need to sign liability waivers? What about media authorization forms? If you are traveling on a sponsored trip, have you obtained permission from your sponsoring organization? For international travel, will you need visas?

- **Identify partner organizations or individuals.**
  - Create a list of potential partners. Why might they be an ideal partner? Do their goals and mission align with yours? Partners could be other student organizations, community organizations or campus centers or institutes. Request a phone or face-to-face meeting to talk about a possible partnership. Involve partners in planning the trip. Make sure they are aware of all trip details.

- **Create a trip budget.**
  - How much will your trip cost? Costs associated with a relief trip include, but are not limited to travel, lodging, food, beverages and supplies. Consider purchasing traveler’s insurance for international travel. Plan for unexpected expenses.

- **Secure sponsors.**
  - How will you finance your trip? Trip sponsors could be individuals, campus units, organizations or businesses.
  - Please note that there could be tax implications for you or your student organization. If you have questions regarding tax-related matters that arise from fundraising activities, you may consult Carolina Student Legal Services [http://studentlegalservices.web.unc.edu/](http://studentlegalservices.web.unc.edu/).

- **Complete a trip itinerary.**
  - Create a detailed plan of your trip that includes departure dates and times, planned activities, contact information for your on-the-ground partner, members of your group and other trip details.

- **Document the trip.**
  - Take lots of photos and videos while on your trip. Consider jotting down impactful moments you witness or keep a journal describing your experiences. Use these to help raise awareness and for future organizing.

- **Wrap up trip.**
  - Host a group reflection at the end of your trip. Discuss how each person feels about their experience. Was the trip a success? What could you have done better or different? What needs still exist? How else can your group help?