

FAQ'S

What is CAWST?

CAWST is a Canadian charity and licensed engineering firm. They address the global need for safe drinking water and sanitation by building local knowledge and skills on household solutions people can implement themselves. They were founded in 2001. For more information, visit <https://www.cawst.org/about/visionandmission>

What is the selection process?

H2O Innovation will do an initial screening of applications. Then, they will pass applications to CAWST and CAWST's partner organizations in order to develop a list of interviewees. Interviews will happen in early September with a panel representing CAWST, H2O Innovation and the relevant partner organization, and final selection decisions will be jointly made.

If selected, will I be trained about the mandate and volunteer project prior to the departure? What sort of preparations are required?

You can learn more about the mandate and volunteer projects in the webinar on August 7 at 2 pm EST / 11 am PST. Once selected, volunteers will start CAWST's standard pre-travel safety and security processes, including going to a travel health clinic and preparing travel documentation. One month ahead of travel, we will start orientation phone calls to introduce you to CAWST staff and the in-country partners you will be working with, and to start briefing you on the project you'll be contributing to. We will also provide pre-reading materials within this timeframe. To start your trip, you will join us in the CAWST office in Calgary, Alberta for 2-3 days to prepare for the placement. Then, you will fly to the destination. The first day you will likely continue getting oriented in-country with the partner organization, and then you'll begin your work.

Will a CAWST staff member be at the destination with me?

Yes, a CAWST member will accompany you to the destination and be a support to you throughout your placement. They will not be at your side the entire time, however. They will likely be working on other projects with the partner while you are there.

How many hours per week should I expect to work?

You should expect to work approximately 40 hours. However, the hours may be irregular and unpredictable; it is likely that you will be engaged with partners for more time than 40 hours (this could include meals or local sightseeing).

What costs should I expect to assume for the whole experience? / What out of pocket expenses will I be responsible for?

All costs directly associated with travel will be covered. All costs that you incur prior to the trip are considered personal expense, such as your vaccines if you need them, and personal supplies for your trip. Additionally, you will be responsible for any costs incurred associated with sightseeing.

Do I need to use vacation time for this trip?

No. The candidates will remain compensated at their regular rate while travelling for the CAWST volunteer project.

In what kind of accommodation will I be hosted? What are the meals and accommodation like?

The accommodation will likely be a guest house or hotel. The meals will be local, simple, fresh food. For example, in Honduras, this includes beans, tortillas and avocados.

What are the sleeping arrangements? Do I need to bring a sleeping bag / bug net?

You will have your own room and bed. You will likely be supplied with bedding and you may choose to bring a bug net or get one in-country.

Is Zambia a safe place to visit?

Zambia is generally very safe, but in the cities and tourist areas there's always a chance of being targeted by robbers or con artists. As always, you can reduce the risk considerably by being sensible. CAWST will provide training on health & safety in Zambia; CAWST uses the [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#) and the [UK Government Foreign Travel Advice](#) to assess travel safety.

Is Honduras a safe place to visit?

Honduras has a long history of military rule, corruption, poverty and crime which have rendered it one of the least developed and most unstable countries in Central America. And yes, it has somewhat of a negative global image. But, little of the Honduran violence affects tourists, and most visitors to the country are free to enjoy the national parks, small towns and ancient ruins of the Latin American country without incident. Honduras has a notorious reputation, but with respect to safety tips anybody can have a safe and happy time seeing the raw beauty and fascinating culture within this Central American country. CAWST will provide training on health & safety in Honduras; CAWST uses the [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#) to assess travel safety.

Will they speak English in Zambia and Honduras?

You will be working primarily in English in either country. In Zambia the official language is English, but there are many languages spoken there. In Honduras the official language is Spanish, but our partners there speak English.

Will there be free time for me to explore and/or sightsee?

Yes, but this is not a tourist trip. The primary purpose of the trip is to volunteer to contribute to the partner project that you are working on. You may have a rest day or two, or depending on schedules you may get a free afternoon/morning. CAWST and our partners will have suggestions of what to do with your free time and may join you.

What sort of vaccinations do I need in advance?

You will need to take responsibility and visit your doctor, and likely a travel clinic. You may need to get vaccines or medication to prepare for the trip.

What type of clothing/shoes should I expect to bring?

Comfortable clothing is the rule! Sport and light clothes and nothing too extravagant or expensive. Please make sure you don't bring any fancy jewelry's or accessories as it can be contradictory to the purpose of the trip. Remember, this is a humanitarian trip and not typical vacation! CAWST will provide a packing list to help the candidates pack for this special trip.

Will I be able to use my cell phone there? If not, are there ways to contact my family?

If your phone is unlocked, you can replace your Canadian SIM card with an inexpensive local one. This will allow you to purchase a phone and data plan for use in-country. Otherwise, there should be Wi-Fi available in many locations, including your accommodation, so you can contact family and friends at home.