



Volunteering can give seniors interesting travel opportunities, while at the same time offer the satisfaction of helping others. Some programs pay travel expenses, some also provide free room and board. Others also pay basic wages or stipends.

Senior volunteers for overseas programs shouldn't expect to live in penthouse luxury, nor laze away afternoons by the pool. More satisfying, they'll help and share the unique everyday lifestyles of the people in areas where they'll be working. If you're interested in signing up for short-term summer volunteer jobs, get an application in by mid- May. If you opt for a long-term assignment, such as with the Peace Corps, expect your posting to come after you've completed all preliminary requirements.

The Peace Corps, more than 55 years since its inception by President Kennedy, is the grand-daddy of all overseas volunteer programs. For enrollees in good health, there's no age limit for seniors who want to help, and are willing to commit for programs that range from one to two years.

When President Jimmy Carter's mother was in her 80s, she was a Peace Corps volunteer in India for two years. Now in his 90s, Carter still works at building and repairing houses for the poor with Habitat for Humanity.

The government organization that oversees many similar programs is called the Freedom Corps. For those who want shorter terms of commitment, including days, weeks or months, the Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP) has a variety of programs.

The aptly named Geekcorps seeks computer-savvy volunteers who can help children and adults of third-world countries learn the basics of computers and the internet. The program pays

travel and living expenses, as well as a basic wage. Assignments are from one to six months.

The International Executive Service Corps (IESC) can use retired management experts to organize ambitious projects and get things done right and within budget. IESC encourages private enterprise in many areas of the world. Travel expenses are reimbursed, and in some cases, incentive stipends are available.

These volunteer activities require a strong sense of duty and intent to pitch in where needed. For more general info on volunteering, check listings on the internet and other sources, such as Transitions Abroad, the True Travelers Society and the Idealist.