**MVS template border crossing material**

These letters are set up for Canadians and would need to be adapted for MVS participants from other countries. In the past we were informed that Canadians could enter on B-1 visas, so that is what the letter requests.

It is helpful to send the following border crossing material paragraphs to the confirmed MVS participant to explain the process, along with the letters included on the next two pages. The MVS participant should review the letter and note any personal information changes needed (e.g., birthplace). A paper copy of the letters can then be sent to them.

Note that it would be helpful to put the letters on congregation/host organization letterhead and include a phone number with the signature name for the letter, in case a border agent has questions. Yellow highlights show the variable sections of the letter that need to be changed for each participant.

**Border crossing materials** - Attached are some letters for you to use when crossing the border. Please look over the first page and let me know if you see anything incorrect or that needs to be changed. The second page of the letter is just more specific information about MVS in general. This is also often not needed, but we supply it anyway just in case they have more questions about the program.

Once the letters are correct, I will mail you a couple of copies if you let me know what address to send them to.

There’s nothing else you need to do ahead of time assuming you have a passport. You should be able to get the visa either at the border or in the airport when talking with the border agent. This type of visa is usually just good for six months and then it will need to be renewed. Most Canadians have just traveled back home at some point around December or January and then when they return, they get another six-month stay. Some MVS participants have also been able to ask the border agent for a full year by explaining what they are doing. Not everyone is comfortable asking for that in the moment, but it’s usually worth a shot.

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will introduce you to [First name Last name] of [home city, province] and advise you of [pronoun] appointment by Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) for a period of voluntary service in the United States.

[First name] has been accepted as a volunteer church participant in the Mennonite Voluntary Service unit administered by [the Host], a non-profit 501(c)3 organization (if applicable), [tax id number if available].

[First name] was born on [birth date] in [birth city, province] and is a Canadian citizen. [Pronoun] permanent address in Canada is [street address, city, province, postal code]. [First name] will be serving with MVS in [Unit city]. [Pronoun] address will be [Unit street address]. In return for [pronoun] services, [pronoun] will be provided with room, board, and a small allowance for incidental expenses. [First name] will be serving in this capacity for one year beginning [beginning date].

[First name] will be serving full-time at [Placement agency] as a [position title]. [Placement agency name and sentence describing what they do like the following: "This agency works in partnership with families to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty through assisting homeless and low-income families to secure and maintain stable housing”]. Some of [First name’s] responsibilities will include [list of work responsibilities like the following: “reviewing housing applications, conducting housing clinics, obtaining documentation, and following up with previously assisted clients to ensure they remain stably housed.”]

MVS is an affiliation of approximately seven congregations and on average has five to 10 international volunteers each year, all of whom have returned to their home country immediately following their service term. These volunteers perform non-competitive, temporary services for which they will receive subsistence and a small incidental expense allowance and will have necessary financial needs taken care of while in the program. [Unit] guarantees that [First name] will not become a public charge and will return to Canada before [pronoun] allowed stay in the United States expires.

With this, we request [First name Last name] be admitted to the United States on the B-1 visa as a nonimmigrant temporary visitor in order to complete [pronoun] term with our program.

Sincerely

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

**Additional information about the Mennonite Voluntary Service program.**

Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) participants, ages 20+, live in community with others, serve full-time with community organizations addressing the symptoms and root causes of injustice, and actively participate in the life of their neighborhood and host congregation. Participants generally serve in the program for one or two years.

MVS has seven units located around the United States and Puerto Rico. Each unit is supported by a Mennonite congregation and includes local supervision and care. While units are supported by Mennonite congregations, participants of all faith backgrounds are welcome in the MVS program.

In return for their service, [Unit] guarantees that participants will have their financial needs taken care of while in the program by providing housing, utilities, food, health care, and local transportation. To help cover all other incidental expenses, the participants receive a small $60-80 monthly allowance.

MVS participants are not employed by the agency they serve with but are instead considered volunteers.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely