Please be aware that we may have policies and practices not covered in this guide. After reading the entire handbook, please contact us with any questions you may have.
VOLUNTEER PATH

We are so glad you are looking into volunteering with us. Please use this document as you begin your volunteer process with us. The information contained here is vital to a seamless process. After you have read this handbook, please feel free to contact us with your questions if necessary.

We appreciate our volunteers tremendously! They are a vital part of what we do and how our clinic is funded. We recognize that your desire to help and to support our work here is your reason for coming. Your desire to help this community joined with ours is a powerful thing. Over the past few years we have learned so much from our community and those we serve, especially about the types of ‘assistance’ the community wants and needs. Haiti is full of strong, intelligent, amazing people who welcome assistance from friends and those who understand that community empowerment comes from within the community. Hence, our primary aim is to empower and train Haitian caregivers to continue to care for Haitians.

Many things are done differently in Haiti due to culture and unique challenges to providing care there, and we are continuously putting effort into improving the quality of care our midwives and staff provide to patients. We welcome feedback and encouragement. We especially welcome those who are dedicated to learning with and from those we work with: the community members. They are the experts, we are just here to support capacity building and community based empowerment.

We ask that you carefully consider what you hope to achieve here-- spending a week or two here can never truly address the issues at hand in this country. However, partnering with organizations that are Haitian operated and that have consistent manpower on the ground can truly make a difference. Our hope is that as volunteers spend some time with us here they would partner with us long term to help us continue to make a lasting change. You must come with an open heart to learn how and why things are done in Haiti that are very different from the US. Although many of our volunteers have valuable skills and experience to contribute, we encourage you to primarily come as a learner rather than a “doer”—our staff is very experienced in how to manage patient care in Haiti, as there are many challenges to consider that are difficult to understand on a short-term trip.

Please try to learn as much as you can before your trip. There is information and resources in this handbook as well as on the web, our website, our blog and on face book. If you have questions after reading this handbook please feel free to email us at volunteer@mamababyhaiti.org
MAKING THE DECISION:
Okay, so you want to volunteer? Please read carefully and follow all instructions. We ask that you read the handbook entirely before asking questions.

STEP 1: Read the handbook to better understand the work that MamaBaby does, and what your role as a volunteer would be. Pay close attention to the focus on serving and supporting the work, rather than seeking an experience as a “doer”.

STEP 2: AFTER reading the handbook, if you have any questions about volunteering or about open dates, contact us at volunteer@mamababyhaiti.org. If you are ready to move forward, download the application and waivers from our website.

STEP 3: APPLICATION- Fill out your application and waivers with all necessary information completed and attached. There are waivers that must be signed, scanned, and sent back to us. If there is a reason you cannot submit all documents at the same time please send your application with an explanation. We will tentatively accept your application and add you to the volunteer list.

• DATES: Please select 3 dates that work for you, and our volunteer coordinator will be in touch with you regarding your choice of dates. We prefer to keep our volunteer groups small, so please realize that if others are in front of you your second or third choices will be options. Our volunteer coordinator will notify you of accepted dates.

STEP 4: INTAKE INTERVIEW- A member of the board of directors, most likely our volunteer coordinator, will call you to discuss what you hope to achieve and our expectations of volunteers. This is a great time for all the general questions about volunteering abroad.

STEP 5: CONFIRMATION - After the interview, you will receive an email confirmation from our volunteer coordinator confirming your selected dates.

• Donation “fee” for volunteers: Please note that there is a deposit due immediately after confirmation. ½ of your fee is due at this time with the remaining ½ due 30 days before your trip. MBH is a small organization; we depend on donations to keep the birth center open. In order for us to hold your dates you must make this deposit. This will allow us to accept the appropriate number of volunteers without turning away someone else who would like to come. Please understand that there is cost to transporting, housing, and feeding our volunteers—hence why this donation is mandatory.
• Flights: You may purchase flights after your dates have been confirmed and you are prepared to pay the deposit. See below for further information.

STEP 6: TRAVEL PLANS- We strongly recommend you fly directly into Cap Haitien International Airport. Please know that we do not provide support for travel that does not have you landing directly in Cap Haitien. However, further in the handbook we will share information with you on the options to get here.
CHECK LIST:

These items must be submitted with your application, at least 30 days prior to expected travel.

_____ Completed and signed application and waivers

_____ Copy of Passport

_____ Copy of current CPR/NNR if you are a health care provider

_____ Copy of all credentials/licenses

_____ Medical Consent

_____ Volunteer Liability Release

_____ Check, money order, or Paypal receipt for fees due

Please Note:
Trips will not be confirmed until all forms, credentials and fees have been received by MBH.
LIFE AT THE BIRTH CENTER: We have many comforts in the birth center, but we are not in the U.S.! Here is an outline to help you get an idea of what to expect.

**Weekly routine:**
Sunday: No scheduled prenatal visits, slow day around the clinic with births as they come
Monday: Busiest day- new patient prenatal visits with HIV/Syphilis blood tests
Tuesday: Return Prenatal and Postpartum visits
Wednesday: Return Prenatal and Postpartum visits, vaccinations for infants
Thursday: Return Prenatal and Postpartum visits
Friday: Family Planning, Breastfeeding class. Birth center activities, stocking, cleaning, educational projects for midwives
Saturday: Free Day, Site seeing, Beach

*Please note that this is an outline of what a week may look like. Please be flexible to changes that may come up as each week may offer different scenarios.*

**Accommodations:** MamaBaby Haiti is housed in a large single-family-style home. The birth center occupies the downstairs, while staff and volunteer housing is on the second floor.

Volunteers share a small bunkroom with twin-sized bunk beds for 6-8 people, so be prepared to keep your belongings organized in your suitcase. Small lockers are available for passports and valuables; please bring your own small padlock. Please bring a set of twin sheets and a mosquito net for your own use if you would like to use one. We appreciate these items being left behind when you depart. Due to the hot weather, blankets are generally not necessary, but you may wish to bring a light blanket in the winter months (when temperatures drop to 70 degrees F at night). We have a pillow for each bunk, but you may wish to bring a pillow if you are particular, or sensitive to some pillow fillings.

The bunkroom windows open, and there are 1 or 2 large electric fans available when the city power is on, but you may wish to bring a small rechargeable or battery-powered fan, especially if visiting during the summer.

**Electricity:** City electric service can be unpredictable. Typically it is on in the early morning, but stops before lunchtime. If your electronic devices have a surge protector built in, you may wish to plug them in before falling asleep each night. You may also want to bring a power cord. The city power also pumps our water to the tank on the roof, so you may be asked to make sure that the shower buckets in the bathroom are full while the power is on.

When the city power is off, we can use our batteries or gas generator, but this power is limited to lights only, and is used conservatively for night time births. You will not be able to charge devices or run fans when the city power is off. Headlamps with extra batteries and solar lanterns are very useful at night. We encourage our volunteers to reduce the consumption of power and to keep the lights off as much as possible.
**Showering/Bathrooms:** Haitian culture strongly values cleanliness; Haitians commonly shower 3-4 times/day, and you rarely see them without their clothing freshly pressed. Our volunteers and live-in staff all share one bathroom, so we ask that you only shower 1-2 times each day, and try to limit your time in the bathroom. We sometimes have streaming water from a showerhead, but more often you will be taking bucket showers.

We have modern toilets, but, like in many countries, used toilet paper must be placed in the waste bin rather than flushed.

Downstairs in the birth center, there are two additional showers and toilets for patients. We discourage volunteers from using these bathrooms except in emergencies, as they are used by laboring women throughout the day and night, and may not be fully sanitized at any given moment.

**Water:** The tap water is not suitable for drinking or brushing teeth. Clean, filtered drinking water is available at all times from water dispensers both upstairs and downstairs. We recommend that you always carry a full water bottle with you; in our hot and busy birth center, it is easy to become dehydrated very quickly without realizing.

**Food:** Meals are included in your donated volunteer fee, and are served at approximately 8am, 1pm, and 7pm. A typical meal is carb-based with a small amount of richly flavored meat sauce. Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate to special diets or allergies as the ingredients available in Haiti are quite limited. If you have strict food restrictions, we encourage you to bring your own food (we will not be able to take you shopping at the market for this). It is very difficult to find specialty items in Haiti.

We encourage volunteers to bring snacks, such as protein bars, jerky sticks, a jar of peanut butter or nutella, a favorite breakfast cereal, dried fruit and nuts, fruit leather, etc. Fresh fruit is readily available, but be careful to eat only thick-peeled fruits (banana, orange, mango, papaya), and cut off the peel with a clean knife. If the cook prepares it for you it is safe to eat.

One thing that is very difficult to get in Haiti is fresh clean vegetables, especially greens. Every once in a while, a meal at MBH will be garnished with fresh green pepper and onion, but you may wish to bring something to compensate. Dried seaweed snacks (nori), powdered “green drinks” made of algae and wheatgrass and garden greens, baby food squeeze pouches of vegetables...even if you never eat these things at home, you might be very happy to have them here during a long stay.

**Laundry:** We have large buckets and clotheslines available for you to wash and dry your own laundry. Two of our staff, Monise or Jotane, will gladly wash your laundry for $5/load.
**Chores:** While we do not keep a “chore chart,” every volunteer is expected to help keep the birth center and living area clean, organized, and running smoothly. Tasks include clearing/washing dishes, wiping the table after meals, helping with meal prep, folding laundry, making birth room beds, straightening common areas, cleaning birth room walls, sanitizing and inspecting equipment for needed repairs, etc. These duties are taken seriously; our staff are extremely busy, and we rely on volunteers to do whatever they can.

**Communication:** Although there will be translators available for you to hire, we encourage you to learn as much Kreyol as possible before you arrive. Kreyol (Haitian Creole) is one of the official languages of Haiti and is spoken by the vast majority of the population. Kreyol is a Romance language, so if you speak French or Spanish, you may find it easy to learn.

French is the other official language and can be very useful in the birth center. Many of our staff and patients speak or understand French, and Haitian government/medical documents are usually written in French. However, even if you speak perfect French, we still encourage you to use Kreyol whenever possible. Knowledge of French is a class marker in Haiti; poorer or less educated patients may be hesitant to admit that they do not understand when you speak in French. Our patients rarely speak French, so even if you are a French speaker, you will likely need a translator.

**Safety:** There will be a brief orientation from our clinic manager upon your arrival. It is advised when traveling you keep your money in various pockets or in money wallets. Please stay aware of your surroundings at all times. Bringing a locking suitcase to leave some valuable in while you are away from the birth center is advised. We do not condone volunteers leaving the birth center without some sort of chaperone. We can help you arrange this.

**Conduct:**
- Midwives and student volunteers rotate on call, and should stay in the birth center while on call. If you are unable to participate in your rotation for any reason, inform the head midwife or clinic director.
- Do not go for walks alone. Always travel in pairs or groups, and check in with directors when coming and going.
- Smoking is not permitted at any time.
- We ask that you do not consume alcohol on the birth center premises.
- Do not invite guests into volunteer housing.
- Do not invite guests for meals. If you would like to provide a meal for someone you must check with the director or the house manager.
● Volunteers may not give money or gifts directly to patients. If you wish to donate a patient’s emergency hospital fee, or to buy food for a hungry patient, please speak with the birth center manager.

● MBH prohibits photography of patients in the clinical setting. Please consider if you have ever been photographed while visiting your doctor, and if so, that it was only with consent. You may take pictures of the birth center outside of clinic hours; please avoid photographing any people without their consent.

● Do not take photos from the clinic vehicle.

***If you take a photo with a Haitian friend, consider carefully how you might give your friend a copy, as they may request one after the photo is taken. There are small portable photo printers that can be purchased for $50 online, and if you would like to take a picture with someone and give them a copy on the spot, many people would love this!

***For presentations or fundraising, consider using the photos from MBH’s facebook page or website, as these photos were all taken for these purposes, with the informed consent of all participants.

Dress Code: Appropriate clothing is an important sign of respect and dignity in Haitian culture. Our dress code is set to respect the culture and maintain professionalism within the birth center.

• Healthcare: When working in the birth center or at off-site clinics, please keep a clean, neat and professional appearance. Scrubs and closed-toe shoes are required for participating in a birth or working in the prenatal clinic. Acceptable professional clothing includes: scrubs, collared shirt, casual blouse, MamaBaby Haiti t-shirt, lightweight casual pants or capris (knee length or longer), light-weight dress or skirt (knee length or longer). Please make sure tops are not low cut, and not spaghetti straps or tank tops. Sleeveless shirts are acceptable if modest.

• Leisure: Scrubs should not be worn while on leisure time. While upstairs in volunteer housing or while on the property, you may dress in casual outfits and t-shirts. Do not walk around barefoot, to avoid parasites that live in the soil.

CREDENTIALS (Medical, Midwifery, Nursing License, Certifications)
All healthcare volunteers must have current license and/or certification to practice within our birth center. Students and/or residents must practice under the supervision of a licensed practitioner. Our Haitian staff midwives are licensed professionals, and we sometimes have other volunteers who may range from a Naturopathic Doctor, CPM, CNM, LM, CM, or RN. However, we cannot guarantee that they will be present and able to provide clinical supervision during your stay. It is your responsibility to ensure that the necessary supervision will be
available if you are a student, or you may shadow our midwives and assist them with a translator.

**Patient care:** Many of our volunteers have significant skills and experience in the healthcare field. However, there are unique patient care challenges and situations that providers need to learn to manage in Haiti prior to performing patient care here. **This is why we require anyone who is going to provide direct patient care to first shadow our midwives for 3-5 days before providing patient care on their own (while continuing to consult with our midwives thereafter).** For this reason we strongly recommend that if you wish to be involved in direct patient care, that your trip be at least two weeks long—the first to be oriented while shadowing a midwife, and thereafter being available to see patients with a translator.

MamaBaby Haiti must have a copy of the following on file prior to your departure and you must also carry a copy when you travel to Haiti:

- Current licensure and/or certification
- Current CPR/Neonatal Resuscitation (for healthcare practitioners and students)
- Copy of Passport Photo page

We expect every healthcare volunteer to perform to the same standards required in the U.S. MamaBaby Haiti has policies and protocols that each volunteer is required to practice by while in the birth center. You may encounter patient care situations that you do not understand or agree with, and if it is urgent or life-threatening, we encourage you to respectfully discuss the situation with the midwives. If it is not, you may bring it to the attention of the board if you are concerned, and we will determine the best way to address it with our staff.

**DONATION FEE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The required donation fee for volunteers is used to provide your housing, meals, drinking water and transportation to and from the Cap Haitien airport/bus station. The standard donation per person is **$700 for the first week, and $450 for each week thereafter.** Any margin from the fee is used to pay for the rent and supplies of the clinic (gloves, gel, instruments) that are used on a daily basis. Please read below for details on what the donation includes:

**Transportation in Haiti:** You standard volunteer donation fee includes pick up and drop off at the Cap Haitien airport or bus station. Any other travel within Haiti is solely the volunteer’s responsibility.

**Internet access:** This is for limited use, as we have a data limit. Under no circumstance is it to be used to download movies, stream music, or engage in any web activity that consumes the bandwidth. Approved uses can include messaging, email, texting, viewing image light sites,
etc. It is not for uploading pictures, blog content, or lengthy web surfing. As it goes with Haitian internet, the speed/functionality of the access can vary greatly from day to day. Consider your time in Haiti as a break from screens!

**Translators:** Our clinic manager, Claudin, speaks very good English for you to be able to ask questions and get oriented. However, you will need to hire your own translator for daily use. We have a list of experienced translators, and their average daily pay is $15-$20 per day. You need to bring this in cash to pay them yourself—they are not MBH employees. **If you wish to be involved in clinical care, you must hire a translator—and you must decide if you want them to stay overnight as well.**

**TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**
Volunteers are responsible for their own airfare and travel to Haiti. We gladly welcome volunteers from all over the world, but as most of our volunteers come from the U.S., the international travel sections of this guide are aimed at U.S. citizens and residents.

Flights from the U.S. typically leave from Fort Lauderdale, Florida (FLL) or Miami, Florida (MIA). We recommend flying American Airlines into Cap Haitien (CAP), but other airlines fly into CAP as well, including IBC Air (1-866-422-7000).

You are responsible for your travel to Cap Haitian; we cannot pick you up from anywhere other than Cap Haitian.

**Fees and Documents:** All donation “fees” for volunteers must be paid no later than 30 days prior to your departure. If funds and documents have not been received 30 days prior to you departure, your trip may be cancelled. Please choose your dates and plan your trip carefully. Volunteer fees are a significant part of our budget, and we count on them to fund our birth center programming. Once payment is received, we cannot refund volunteer fees if your trip is cancelled (although we could likely apply unused fees to a future trip).

**Arrival and Departure:** List your preferred dates of travel on your application. Please DO NOT make travel arrangements until our coordinator finalizes your trip dates. We try to give you your preferred dates, but occasionally we must help you select a different date, to avoid an overload of volunteers. When your trip is confirmed, our volunteer coordinator will arrange your pick up and drop off at the Cap Haitien airport. Our birth center vehicle is used for both emergency hospital transports and volunteer transportation. Therefore, we must limit trips to the airport. We prefer for arrivals and departures to be scheduled on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. We understand that airline schedules may vary, but it works best for everyone involved if you could make the effort to arrive and depart on these days.

**Air travel:**
PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR AIRLINES ABOUT BAGGAGE FEES AND EMBARGOS. During the summer it is not uncommon for boxes to not be allowed—items must be in a suitcase or duffel bag. We may ask for you to carry some supplies down for the clinic, and most volunteers do end up paying for at least 1 extra bag on the way to Haiti.

DIRECTLY INTO CAP HAITIEN: The easiest safest way here is to fly directly into Cap Haitien. You can do this by getting from wherever you live to Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach or Miami by whatever airlines best suits you. From there flights with American Airlines or IBC into Cap Haitien are available. Be prepared to make your flights early on in your plans, as last minute arrangements do not exist. Depending on where you are coming from and available flights an overnight stay in Florida may be necessary. Miami has a hotel located in the airport (rooms from $115 and up) so you do not have to leave. We have also just slept in the airport; if this is your plan the Ft. Lauderdale airport is more suitable for this. If time permits you may consider a hotel shuttle to a hotel of your choice. Be aware that these airlines do not always have multiple flights per day, so plan well and check in on time for your flight.

TO PORT AU PRINCE: We do not pick up from Port au Prince. Many airlines fly to PAP; American, Spirit, and Jet Blue are a few. Flight times are usually limited and may cause an overnight stay in PAP if not planned carefully (we strongly advise against this). We are several hours from PAP so travel to Cap has to be arranged too. There are 2 options: Catch another flight (Tortug) from PAP to CAP, this usually runs $90 plus a $10 taxi to the other end of the airport. This can be accomplished on the same day you arrive in PAP. The other option is to arrive in PAP as early as possible (usually between 8:00-10:00 am) and then catch a bus from PAP to CAP. The last bus leaves at 2:00 pm; if you are not at the bus station by about 11:00 am you may not get a seat (which would then turn into an overnight stay). The cost of the bus ride is approximately $20 plus a $10 taxi ride from the airport to the bus station. We do not recommend these routes for inexperienced travelers, PAP is a very busy city that is difficult to navigate.

Dominican Republic: We do not pick up from Dominican Republic. Again this is not necessarily the best option. There are several airlines into the DR, but no airlines from any airport in the DR to Cap Haitien. Caraibe Tours is the bus line to get from the D.R. to CAP.

Tipping at the CAP Airport: The average annual Haitian income is $480 a year, so people can be very eager to carry your bags for a tip. The average tip at the airport is $1.00 per bag per person. It is up to you, but have your dollar bills in a separate pocket or hidden in your hand, as it is not wise to open your wallet and expose your money. If you do not have tip money in your pocket, wait until you are safely inside the vehicle before handing tips out and do so only through a partially opened window. You can also enlist the help of your driver and have him hand out the tips. It is not necessary to tip our staff.

Passport: Ensure that your passport will be valid for at least one month after your return to the U.S. If you do not already have a passport, plan ahead. The U.S. passport process can take
several weeks, and rush fees are often expensive. Applications are available online, at your local post-office, and at regional passport offices.

We recommend that you make several photocopies of your passport before travelling, leaving them in each of your bags, with each of your emergency contacts in the U.S., and keeping one on your person at all times while outside the birth center.

**Vaccines or other medical treatments:** We recommend that you see your health care provider at least 4-8 weeks before your trip to discuss vaccines and/or medications, including anti-malarials. MamaBaby Haiti **cannot be responsible for any illness you may encounter in Haiti.** Traveling to a developing country to provide care is at your own risk, and you must consider the dangers of pathogens including Hepatitis B, HIV, Zika, Typhoid, among others that may bring you harm. Please practice universal precautions to protect yourself, and consider what preventative actions you need to take to protect your own health.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions, malaria, Zika, and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC web site.

The CDC also provides specific travel and cholera information for Haiti at their Haiti Traveler’s Health and Cholera in Haiti web pages. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the World Health Organization (WHO) web site. The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including detailed country-specific health information. Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Haiti. For further information, please consult the CDC’s information on Tuberculosis.

**International Travel:** For most international travel, check-in is two hours prior to scheduled departure, but always check with your airline for their policies and recommendations. Taking a small international flight can seem more complicated than a domestic flight; try to arrive early, well-rested, and ready for small changes in your plans.

**Travel Insurance:** We **strongly** encourage you to research travel insurance for your trip to Haiti, especially if you have any health issues. While most trips are uneventful, it is very costly to get out of the country in an emergency. Even without preexisting medical conditions, accidents can happen. **MBH is in no way responsible for medical emergencies, or for obtaining medical assistance in the event of an emergency.** There are very limited emergency services in Cap Haitien. Without medical evacuation insurance, there will be no way to ensure you can be evacuated from Haiti in case of a medical emergency. Several of our volunteers have purchased travel insurance from the following company: [https://gallaghercharitable.ajg.com/](https://gallaghercharitable.ajg.com/)
**Arrival Fees:** The government of Haiti charges an arrival fee at the airport. As of January 2016, this fee was $10 U.S. per person. You may wish to have several $10 bills easily accessible on arrival.

**Departure Fees:** As of January 2015, there was not a departure fee at the airport.

**Baggage inspection upon arrival:** After collecting your bags off the belt, you will be asked to open your bags for inspection. If you are bringing clinic supplies or medications, we encourage you to mix them in with your clothes, so as to avoid hassle for “customs fees”. Very rarely do they actually ask for money, but if they do, you can say the items are for personal use, or if they are persistent, they usually will accept a $5 or $10 bill and send you on your way. If it becomes difficult dealing with them, ask for a receipt of the customs fee, and the amount will usually go down. Be kind but persistent about bargaining the price down—this is Haiti after all. But do not worry, very few of our volunteers are even asked for a customs fee.

To save on baggage fees for your return trip, bring clothes and toiletries that you can leave behind in Haiti. If you are bringing a second large bag of supplies, consider packing in a duffle bag that can be folded into your suitcase, or in a suitcase that can be left behind.

**SUPPLIES AND DONATIONS**
We request that all volunteers fundraise and/or bring medical supplies to help keep the birth center stocked. We rely on donations to pay for staff salaries and ongoing training, life-saving medications, electricity to charge our back-up batteries for night births, transportation and hospital fees for emergencies, clean water for the birth center, food for our patients, etc.

If you have contacts within the healthcare community, please look into collecting the more specialized equipment and medications on our supplies list (which will be provided to you before your trip). Even if you do not have access to professional healthcare supplies, many of our most-needed items are available online.

Many volunteers have had great success using social media fundraising platforms. Consider hosting a fundraising event (picnic, race, concert, party, bake sale, garage sale, etc.), or asking local schools, healthcare organizations, and faith communities for their support. Enthusiastically tell your friends and family what you are going to be doing here, and when you return, tell them what you’ve learned from your time at MamaBaby Haiti. People are much more likely to donate if they have a personal connection to our work, and you can be that connection. We appreciate any mentions on blogs, facebook, or twitter that draw attention to the great work of our midwives and staff.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**
**Culture:** It is advised that you do some reading up on Haitian history. This will help you to understand the beauty and the complexities of Haiti. It is also recommended that you read “Mountains Beyond Mountains” by Tracy Kidder. Respect is very important in Haitian culture. Say hello to people and introduce yourself before moving into conversation. Please be open to learning while you are visiting Haiti.

**Medical Facilities and Health Care:** Medical facilities in Haiti are scarce, and, for the most part, sub-standard. Life-threatening emergencies often require evacuation by air ambulance at the patient's expense. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment in advance for health services and many medications are not available. Please be aware of this for your own safety.

**Money:** American currency is widely accepted in Haiti, but we recommend you have cash in smaller bills ($1, $5), as making change is difficult. The official currency of Haiti is the gourde, which has a variable exchange rate (currently approximately 45 gourdes to the U.S. dollar). Many vendors give prices in the “Haitian dollar,” which is equal to 5 gourdes, so you may need to clarify if a price is in Haitian or U.S. dollars. Here is an article which explains further: [http://www.vagabondjourney.com/travelogue/what-is-a-haitian-dollar/](http://www.vagabondjourney.com/travelogue/what-is-a-haitian-dollar/). Our clinic manager can assist in exchanging money once you arrive.

**ATM:** There is an ATM in Cap Haitien, and our staff may be able to access it for you in an emergency. However, we do not recommend planning to access an ATM access while you are here. Our staff may not be able to make a special trip for ATM access, and the machine frequently has limits that are lower than most bank cards. It occasionally does not work also.

**Western Union:** There is a Western Union office in town, and it may be available in an emergency. Again, we do not recommend relying on this service.

**Travellers Checks:** Are not spendable in Haiti, do not bring them.

**EXPENSES**
You will have limited access to the local market/gas station, for the occasional cold drink, snack, or personal item. Prices will vary, but plan on imported items costing 2-3 times what you’d expect in the U.S.

Several trinket and art vendors tend to visit the birth center when there are volunteers on site. Popular souvenir purchases include small carved statues of pregnant women and mothers with children (roughly $5-30), paintings of Haitian marketplaces and landscapes ($10-100), friendship bracelets (.50-$2), embroidered linens, and tin folk art wall hangings. You certainly don’t have to buy anything, but these vendors may have carried heavy items a long way to the birth center, or may need to sell enough to cover their tap-tap fare to return home, so they can
be persistent in waiting until every volunteer has had a good look at their wares. Bargaining for prices is acceptable and expected, but as something of a “captive audience,” accept that you will not get the best price in the whole country on our doorstep.

While MBH does not lead tours for volunteers, we may be able to help you coordinate one or two outings during your stay. Past volunteers have taken day-trips (usually on weekends) to Northern Haiti’s most popular tourist destinations: the beach and the citadel.

There are several beaches within a short tap-tap or moto ride from the birth center. Some are more popular with tourists, have bars, wifi, etc., while others are more popular with locals. Depending on where you go, plan on spending $30-$75 per person for a day at the beach.

The Citadel is a fascinating and amazing historic site. It involves a long, steep hike up a cobblestone road. For those who wish, they can rent a horse to carry them up. There is a formal “tourist” fee at the site, and you usually pay a guide to take you. The Haitian government and the international community have invested a fair amount of money into making the Citadel a viable tourist site, and as a result, there are several villages along the path up the mountain that expected to rely on tourist dollars that never seem to come. You will be approached by many vendors and beggars throughout the journey. We recommend bringing $30-50 per person for a trip to The Citadel, part of which must cover a day hire of a driver to take you there (about 45 minutes away from MBH).

**STUDENT MIDWIVES INFORMATION**

Student Midwives: Students will need to devise their own record keeping. All charts are maintained at MBH in the event a student needs support for her documentation.

**Volunteer Advanced Student Midwife and Beginning Student Midwife**

Each school or training program has different documentation requirements, different supervision requirements and different birth central number requirements. MBH will not be responsible for knowing the requirements of your school or program. We cannot express strongly enough that you need to make sure we are a good fit for your educational needs.

Please read the following sections very carefully. We want to be sure you understand what we can offer you as a volunteer student.

We will not offer any continuity of care unless you are staying long term (> 1 month).

**Beginning Student Midwife Intensive:** Student will be given curriculum, hands on skills development training in beginning midwifery, physical assessment, attend prenatal, birth and postpartum visits. Beginning Student Midwives have attended less than 20 births as “Active
Participant”. CPR and NRP required. It is your responsibility to bring skills check off forms, forms for recording prenatales and births.

Beginning Student Midwife (non-intensive): We may not be able to document training, births attended or skills if you choose this option. This is strictly a “build your experience level” option. Student will receive direction and education. Depending on current staff (or Midwife volunteers) the student will assist at prenatal birth center and births. Student will not receive curriculum. We cannot document training, births attended or skills if you choose this option. This is strictly a “build your experience level” option. Student will receive direction and education as is available. CPR and NNR are required. Basic skills are required, such as taking blood pressure, temperature, and pulse. We also recommend reading *Heart and Hands* by Elizabeth Davis.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

Birth center Rotation: Midwives/students are expected to participate in rotation through various areas of the birth center. Prenatal and postpartum visits occur Monday-Thursday. Depending on the level of volunteers’ midwives may not perform prenatal visits daily, rather some will participate in postpartum, educational classes (for patients) or triage.

Birth Rotation: Midwives/students will be on an on call rotation. For the first 3 births you attend you will work with a Haitien midwife or a midwife that has been at the birth center for a while. We use a 1st on and an assistant system. On the schedule you will be listed as 1st on or assistant. If you cannot do your rotation or feel like you need time off please notify the birth center director as soon as possible.

Other Duties: Midwives/students may occasionally be asked to see “drop-in” patients. Midwives can also work in the supply area checking supply needs and reporting to the Birth center Director so that she may request supplies from upcoming volunteers. There will be training sessions with students and/or Haitien midwives.

Conduct: We know that midwifery practice can be a very personal thing to midwives. We do not all practice the same, nor do we all believe the same. You may see things here that are difficult to process. We ask that you be very careful in projecting attitudes or beliefs into your work here. You will be trained in how to conduct a birth and some of the clinic aspects are not up for discussion, however we do want to allow you to work in a way that you feel comfortable. In the event of ANY type of emergency, you are required to notify the birth center director or head midwife immediately. We expect our Haitian moms and babies to be cared for with the same standards you would use in the US.

**What to bring with you:**

- Insect Repellent
- Sunblock (30 SPF or higher)
Sunglasses
Sandals
Clinic shoes and/or walking shoes
Headlamp and/or flashlight
Batteries
Small padlock
Notebook for journaling
Box of writing pens (to share)
Earplugs
Small bag for outings
Personal Toiletries (soap, toothpaste*, toothbrush, feminine napkins*, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner)

Hygiene wipes
Towel (camping/light-weight)*
Washcloth or shower pouf
Flip flops for shower
Water bottle*
Snacks*
Copies of passport
Personal prescription medications
OTC Meds: Pepto bismol, Benadryl,
Emergen-C*, Tums, Ibuprofen, Tylenol,
Hydrocortisone cream (for bites),
Neosporin
Emergency Information
Please leave a copy of this page with your emergency contacts.

Important Contacts:
- If your family needs to contact you by phone for an emergency they may call our clinic manager, Claudin, +509-3824-8645.
- US contacts in case of emergency (Board of Directors of MBH):
  - Jennifer Gallardo, President 503-998-4627, email info@mamababyhaiti.org
  - Leah Rashidyan, Vice President 626-240-9467
  - Bethany Vinatieri, Volunteer Coordinator, 909-518-9411

NOTE: If you have an emergency or are the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. You can find this information at the Department of State’s list of embassies and consulates. This includes the loss or theft of a U.S. passport. The embassy/consulate staff can, for example, help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds may be transferred.

For emergency purposes (such as a lost passport or an evacuation) contact The Embassy of the United States-Port Au Prince-Haiti: The American Citizens Service unit can be reached at: 011-509-2229-8000 Monday through Friday between the hours of 1:00-3:00pm or you may send an email at: acspap@state.gov. If you are requiring emergency assistance outside of their normal hours please call: 011-509-2229-8000 to speak to the Marine Security Guard who will be able to connect you with a duty officer.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)/EMBASSY LOCATION: The U.S. Embassy/Consulate maintains an excellent program for Americans abroad, and we recommend that you enroll. STEP will keep you up-to-date on safety and emergency announcements, allow the U.S. government to more easily provide assistance in the case of a diplomatic or military emergency, and help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. https://step.state.gov/step/

Embassy of the United States Port-au-Prince Haiti
Boulevard du 15 October, Tabarre 41, Tabarre, Haiti
Telephone: (509) (2) 229-8000
Facsimile: (509) (2) 229-8027
Email: acspap@state.gov. After hours, weekend & holidays: Please call (509) (2) 229-8000

Customs forms upon arrival to Haiti, with the address you should use, along with all your personal information.