

2020 BIZAA Mission Trip FAQs

We hope you will consider joining us for the experience of a lifetime! Please see the most frequently asked questions about the trip below.

1. Who will lead the trip?

Okey Anyanwu, founder of *Basic Institute for Zonal African Advancement (BIZAA)*, will lead the trip. Okey was born and raised in Nigeria. He has an excellent knowledge of Nigerian social, economic, political, and religious realities. Okey lives in St. Michael, Minnesota with his wife and four children. He is currently the Director of Pastoral and Social Outreach at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Brooklyn Park, MN.

2. When will the next mission trip take place?

The 10-day trip will be from Thursday, March 19 through Sunday, March 29, 2020. This will be the 7th annual mission trip. BIZAA has had six other very successful mission trips every year (except 2019) since 2013.

3. How many are going on this trip?

In addition to Okey, we have space for up to 10 other missionaries.

4. Who can go on this mission trip?

All individuals over the age of 18 are welcome to make this mission trip, irrespective of faith background. While BIZAA is a non-denominational, faith-based organization, the international communities we serve have diversified religious backgrounds. Participants should be physically up for long days, very warm weather, and a moderate amount of walking each day.

5. Exactly where is the mission trip heading?

The trip will go to the southern eastern part of Nigeria, specifically into various communities in the Imo State of Nigeria. We expect that we'll be flying into either Port Harcourt or Lagos, Nigeria and then taking arranged transportation (either driving or local flight) from there to Imo State.

6. What will we be doing on the trip?

There are a variety of activities that we may be involved in, including but not limited to: interviewing children who've been identified and are being considered for educational sponsorship, meeting with community elders and leaders, handing out supplies brought (e.g. healthcare and toiletry items), assisting with medication and eyeglass dispensing, attending mass and welcoming ceremonies, meeting with local BIZAA leadership to get updates on sponsored children, and visiting schools and the technical college where BIZAA students attend school. Depending on the final trip agenda, there may be a half day available for sightseeing.

7. Do I need a visa to go to Nigeria?

As an American citizen, a visa will be necessary to enter Nigeria. BIZAA will help with the processing of this. To obtain this, you will need a passport with at least 6 months from the trip date remaining before it expires. You will need a passport photo and your passport will need to be mailed in, in order to obtain the visa. Please keep this in mind in case you have other international travel plans in the months preceding the trip. Okey will assist you with this process. The cost for obtaining a Nigerian visa is approximately

\$250 and the visa is generally good for travel to Nigeria for two years. The cost for the visa, if needed, is in addition to the cost for the mission trip itself. Visas are generally good for up to two years.

8. What is the cost of the mission trip?

The cost of the 2020 mission trip is \$4000. This includes your round-trip plane ticket, lodging, ground transportation, travel insurance, security services and food. The final payment and registration form is due to BIZAA by January 15, 2020. There is an additional charge of approximately \$250 if you need a current Nigeria visa. If you wish to solicit monetary support from others to help you pay for the trip, BIZAA has a sample support letter that you can personalize. Trip sponsors should write their checks to BIZAA with "Mission Trip" in the notation column. All donations are tax deductible. If you have frequent flier miles on the selected airline, there may be an opportunity to reduce the cost of the trip by approximately \$1000 if you obtain your own airline ticket, but this is not guaranteed and dependent upon the airline chosen to fly.

9. Where shall we be staying?

We have historically stayed at diocesan retreat and pastoral centers located in the communities we visit. We plan to do that again for this trip.

10. What kind of food will we be eating?

Most of the foods you will be familiar with, e.g. bread, tea, coffee, chicken, rice, beans, potatoes, fruits, cereals, etc. You are encouraged to experiment with some of the local foods, e.g. garri, fufu, and African yams. Please let us know if you have specific dietary restrictions that may be an issue.

11. Is the cost of this trip tax deductible?

BIZAA is a tax-exempt organization. You and/or your sponsors will receive a tax receipt for the cost of your trip to Nigeria. Previous guidance from the IRS has suggested that you can deduct travel expenses if the charitable work is "*real and substantial throughout the trip*", which this trip will be. For more information please consult your tax advisor or see more information at:

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tips-for-taxpayers-who-travel-for-charity-work>.

12. How long is the flight to Nigeria?

In the past we've flown Delta from Minneapolis to Atlanta, then on to Legos, Nigeria. The Atlanta to Legos leg is approximately 11 hours. Alternatively, we may fly through Europe, then on to Nigeria. Specific flight details are pending at this time. The shortest total travel time, depending on the route chosen, is approximately 20 hours.

13. What airlines fly to Nigeria?

There are numerous airlines that fly from the United States to Nigeria. British Airways, Lufthansa, Arik Air, United, Alitalia, Delta, KLM, Air France, and Ethiopian Airlines are some that do. In the past, the most common carrier chosen has been Delta. If we do fly Delta, we request that you establish a Delta SkyMiles account (free) so that in addition to the frequent flier miles you will earn personally, BIZAA can also benefit through the Delta SkyBonus program, which allows non-profit organizations to also earn miles.

Instructions for Adding BIZAA's SkyBonus Information to Your Delta Account

It's simple and only takes one minute! Simply log in to your Delta account at www.delta.com. Go into your PROFILE (see drop down menu under your name) and click OPEN for FLIGHT PREFERENCES. Next click EDIT in the SKYBONUS section and enter **BIZAA's SkyBonus account number (US0073695)**. Click SAVE CHANGES and you're done. Thank you for your support!

14. What currency is used in Nigeria?

Nigeria uses Naira. There are various websites that will give you current exchange rate. There may be an opportunity to do some site-seeing towards the end of the trip. If this happens, and you want to purchase personal items, we will assist in exchanging currency in Nigeria; otherwise, there probably isn't a need to exchange currency for the trip. On past trips, attendees have brought \$50 - \$100 for spending money but this is not required. If you do decide to bring spending money, \$50 and \$100 bills have the best exchange rate. Bills for exchange must have a series year of 2010 - 2019.

15. Can I use my credit card in Nigeria?

You can use your Visa or MasterCard in Nigeria, but obtain advice from the trip leader before doing so. Also, you should notify your credit card company in advance that you'll be traveling to Nigeria.

16. Is it safe to travel to Nigeria?

Every place in the world has some risk associated with travel there; however, the areas of Nigeria that we will be traveling have been historically safe. Thousands of Americans live in the country; however, for extra peace of mind, we will enlist the services of a 24-hour security team when we travel outside Lagos and into the local communities. You can access travel alert information at the US Department of State's website at: www.travel.state.gov.

17. Are there Muslims in Nigeria?

The southern part of Nigeria, where the mission trip will take place, is a Christian-dominated area with a near zero presence of Muslims/mosques. The Muslim-dominated areas of Nigeria are in the North, and about 14 to 16 hours away. In addition, we will have 24-hour security services for additional protection while in the local communities.

18. What kind of insurance coverage does BIZAA have for this trip?

We always purchase a comprehensive insurance coverage through our travelling agent. The policy covers medical emergencies, emergency evacuations, accidents, ticket refunds, loss of luggage, etc. The price of this insurance is included in the trip cost.

19. What kind of immunizations and health preparations do I need to make?

We recommend that you visit a clinic that specializes in international travel at least 3 months prior to the trip, to obtain suggested immunizations and personalized health information pertinent to your particular situation. You are responsible for the costs of these services. For more information regarding international travel clinics and health information for travelers please go to:

www.health.state.mn.us/immunize

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/mission_disaster/nigeria?s_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-001

If you have additional questions that are not answered, please email Terry Provo, mission trip coordinator, at terry@bizaa.org.