

Alternative Breaks: CU Volunteer Resource Center

What is Alternative Breaks? Alternative Breaks, a program of the Volunteer Resource Center, sends teams of college students to various parts of the country to work on community-based service projects during each college break. This program provides opportunities for students to learn about the problems faced by members of communities with whom they may otherwise have had little or no direct contact. This immersion in diverse environments enables students to experience, discuss, and understand social issues in a significant way, ultimately, moving students towards action to make a positive impact. Students either drive together from Boulder to their location. All costs for each trip are inclusive of food, lodging, side trips, a t-shirt, education and program fees. Students should not have to pay anything additional while they are on the trip.

CU Alternative Breaks program is a chapter member of Break Away. [Break Away: the Alternative Break Connection, Inc.](#) is a national nonprofit organization that supports the development of quality alternative break programs by providing training and information primarily to colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations interested in creating lifelong active citizens through these intensive service-learning programs. As part of a quality Alternative Break experience, participants will become more educated and experienced in all sides of social and environmental issues. Upon return, they will be empowered to make more informed decisions and take meaningful action that supports a greater good.

What is our vision? To create a society of active citizens: people who value the community as a priority when making life decisions.

Community Partners: We couldn't do the work we do without our community partners who are willing to provide us with service learning opportunities, education and sometimes even housing. Our community partners are located throughout the US and the world. You can view our current trips here: <https://www.colorado.edu/volunteer/alternative-breaks/2018-spring-trips>

Who Participates in an Alternative Break Trip?

Alternative Break trips could not run without the partnership and collective work of Participants, Site Leaders, and Community Partners. See below for a quick overview of each partnership along with role clarification for each group.

- **Participants** – Over 90 students participate in the AB program each year and are involved in educational meetings and a service activity before and after the AB trip. There are approximately 8-10 student participants on each trip.
 - **Site Leaders** – AB site leaders spend a year leading a team and facilitating meaningful discussions on social justice and social change. Site Leaders participate in a six-month long training process and are responsible for planning and facilitating learning before, during and after trips.
 - **Community Partners** – AB community partners interact directly with the community in which the AB will serve and serve as the host to our site leaders and participants during their alternative break. Community partners help organize the direct service, and serve as resources for education, orientation, and training.
 - **AB Coordinators** – AB Coordinators assist and develop the areas of marketing and recruitment, fundraising, outreach, training implementation, and event planning. The Coordinators are crucial to the continued student-centered focus and growth of the program.
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STUDENT PARTICIPANT: Eligible for PLC Lower Division Applied Leadership Experience

- **Diversity & Social Justice Education:** Students experience life and people in a community different from their own and collaborate with local people to directly confront social issues.
- **Substance Free Environment:** Students have a chance to spend a week in an alcohol and substance free environment, providing an intentional and safe environment.
- **Self-Discovery:** While learning about a diverse array of social issues, students will also learn about themselves and what it means to work in a team.
- **New concept of community:** Often, we think we know what the community needs without consulting the members of the community. Break programs allow us to examine our campus-centered focus in a positive way.
- **Building Bridges:** Students have the opportunity to meet and network with other CU students as well as professionals in the field to discuss and learn from one another about cultural, social and environmental issues.
- **Travel experience:** Students will not just see, but experience parts of the United States they may have not experienced before.
- **Personal satisfaction:** One of the greatest feelings in the world is the ability to look back over a week of hard work knowing that your efforts have made a difference.
- **New friendships:** Participants often make strong new friendships not only with other participants, but also with members of the community in which they are serving.
- **Participant Expectations:** Participate in ALL pre- and post-trip meetings, including pre-trip service, fundraising events/opportunities, and reorientations. Travel to and from the AB site with the group. Be open to processing (at your own comfort level) the Alternative Break experience individually and as a group through organized reflection, journaling, and other activities. Serve as a positive role model, representative, and ambassador of the University of Colorado-Boulder while on and off campus. Be respectful of diverse community and cultural norms and values that you may experience in community, including with members of the Alternative Breaks group. Commit to be an active contributor to your group and show respect for fellow group members, community partners, and community members with whom you serve. Be willing to explore diverse perspectives, opinions, and to advance cultural competency, understanding, and sensitivity. Embrace experiences working independently as well as with a group. Be organized, self-motivated, adaptable, and flexible. Refrain from the use or possession of alcohol or any controlled substances/drugs for the duration of the Alternative Breaks experience.
- **For PLC Lower Division ALE:** You must also have a ALE contract filled out and signed by you and a supervisor for the trip before leaving on the trip.
 - Goals and expectations must be set forth before leaving for trip
 - Unless location does not have Wifi access, you will be required to submit a mid-term memo and evaluation
 - If location is without Wifi, mid-point and endpoint memos and evaluations need to be submitted no later than 2 days after your return from the trip.
 - Final synthesis date should be set no later than two weeks after return from trip.

Contact: altbreak@colorado.edu or Alyssa Willet, Assistant Director - alyssa.willet@colorado.edu

SITE LEADERS: Eligible for PLC Upper Division Applied Leadership Experience

****2018/2019 Site Leader Applications Open in April 2018****

Access the application through the CU Alternative Breaks website:

<https://www.colorado.edu/volunteer/alternative-breaks>

Qualifications:

Site Leaders are student leaders at the core of the CU Alternative Breaks program. Site Leaders work together in pairs to facilitate participants through the group process, create safe spaces for learning and reflection, encourage and foster full participation, and implement the philosophies of the Volunteer Resource Center and Alternative Breaks program.

The qualifications to be a Site Leader are as follows:

- A cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher
- Current good standing status as an enrolled undergraduate or graduate student at CU Boulder
- Knowledge, passion and commitment for social issues and social change
- Demonstrated leadership on the CU Boulder campus or in local community
- Self-motivated and organized, including the ability to meet deadlines
- Ability to lead a group of peers by creating an energized, comfortable, safe, and inclusive environment

Expectations: Site Leaders have many responsibilities beyond their peers as trip participants. The Site Leader role is a ten-month commitment from September 2018 through April 2019. Site Leaders can expect to spend 6 hours per week planning and organizing trip logistics.

CU Alternative Breaks Site Leaders will:

- Commit to the mission of CU Alternative Break program and the Volunteer Resource Center and uphold our mission, values, goals
- Participate in Trip Leadership meetings with co-Site Leader
- Participate in recruitment and selection of trip participants
- Engage, plan, and facilitate 4 pre-trip group meetings in the spring for CU Alternative Break participants
- Participate in pre-trip community service, related to specific trip issue
- Commit to alcohol and drug free policy of CU Alternative Breaks
- Site Leaders will also be held to the Alternative Breaks Code of Conduct, Financial Agreement and detailed site leader duties
- Be able to take training and become a driver for your trip

For more information about the site leader role, visit our website at: www.colorado.edu/volunteer/ab/site-leader

Required Attendance:

Site Leaders are required to attend all events below. Meetings within a designated week will be scheduled in accordance with student/staff availability. All dates and times may be subject to change.

**** YOU MUST BE AVAILABLE WEDNESDAYS FROM 4-6pm. NO EXCEPTIONS.****

- Weekend Site Leader Retreat (Weekend in September 2018 - TBD)
- Weekly Site Leader Training (2 hours/ week. Wednesdays from 4-6 pm. You must not have an overlapping class or work schedule).
- Meetings beginning in September 2018 – April 2019.
- Participant Selection and Reveal Meeting for Spring/Summer Trips (Mid Jan./Early Feb.)
- Pre-Service with trip participants (Planned by Site Leader)
- Re-Orientation (April 2019 - usually one week after you return from your trip).
- Fundraising events (TBD)

Costs: Due to the amount of time site leaders spend training to lead the trips, there is no fee for trip leaders.

Trip Information: In 2018-2019, the Alternative Break program will have a list of established partnerships and topics from which admitted site leaders can choose.

Issue Areas: Issue areas are subject to change until final site leader selection. The following issue areas are focuses of past trips.

- Homelessness and Poverty
- Youth Science Education
- Environmental Conservation
- Rebuilding/ Natural Disaster
- Immigration/ Border Studies
- Health and Wellness
- Animal Welfare
- Human Trafficking
- LGBT Rights and Advocacy

- **For PLC Upper Division ALE:** You must also have a ALE contract filled out and signed by you and a supervisor for the trip before leaving on the trip.
 - Goals and expectations must be set forth before leaving for trip
 - Unless location does not have Wifi access, you will be required to submit a mid-term memo and evaluation
 - If location is without Wifi, mid-point and endpoint memos and evaluations need to be submitted no later than 2 days after your return from the trip.
 - Final synthesis date will be set as the semester ALE symposium. Check with ALE Coordinator for that date.

Contact: altbreak@colorado.edu or Alyssa Willet, Assistant Director - alyssa.willet@colorado.edu