

Travel Alive and the Crystal Fund FAQs

What is Travel Alive?

Travel Alive – a leader in the field of immersion travel, offers programs from two weeks to a year focusing on Spanish language acquisition, cultural immersion, volunteering, and study abroad opportunities in Nicaragua and Ecuador. Programs help participants develop in the areas leadership, adaptation, confidence, social consciousness, partnership and exchange, and cross-cultural friendship.

What is a Crystal Fund Grant?

The Crystal Charitable Fund – assists children and young adults with extreme financial need to: break out of poverty so they can live comfortable, productive lives; grow up to be examples to others and to provide leadership in helping others do the same; ultimately grow up to make a difference in bettering our world. The Crystal Fund provides grants (up to \$4,000) for extended “away from home” cultural, educational, or other experience that will provide a skill, knowledge and/or personal value as a means of support to the individual.

Who should apply for a Travel Alive and a Crystal Fund Grant?

You may qualify for a Crystal Fund Grant if:

- You are a high school student age 16-19
- You are a Greater Chicago area residents
- Your family income prohibits participation in this type of opportunity (generally falls below poverty levels or with special financial circumstances)
- You have demonstrated leadership potential
- You have some experience with the Spanish language (either through use at home or through classes in school)
- You have not had a significant, independent, travel abroad experience
- You want to gain international travel experience
- You want to experience life in a culture much different than their own

Can I travel with a friend or as part of an organized group?

The Crystal Fund Grant specifies that it is only for young people traveling independently. Their hope is that the experience will take you out of your normal comfort zone where you will have to adapt and become comfortable adjusting to a new environment. There will likely be other young people in the program you choose, but they will not be people you know prior to the program. You are very likely to get to know them better while sharing an adventure abroad.

How to apply for Travel Alive?

Applicants must apply for a Travel Alive program and apply for a Crystal Fund Grant. To get started:

- **Read about Travel Alive programs** at www.travelalive.com. Select the program you would most like to participate in and fill out the online application. (Selecting an international program that is right for you can be a real challenge. Contact a Travel Alive representative to speak to us about our programs. We are happy to help you make this important decision. You can email us at info@travelalive.com, or by call 866-830-3042)
- **Fill out and submit an online Travel Alive Application** (found at www.travelalive.com, click on “Apply Now” and then “online application”). Fill out the entire online application – in the field that asks if you are traveling with another person or group put *Crystal Fund Applicant*. Submit your application.

How to Apply for apply for a Crystal Fund Grant?

- **Fill out and submit Crystal Fund Application (Applicant Component)**. If you do not have one already download the Crystal Fund Application from our website (www.travelalive.com click on “Apply Now” and then on “Crystal Fund Application” – select the link to the downloadable application.
- **With the Applicant Component you must also submit an Agency Component**. The **Agency Component** must be filled out by a sponsor who can be a teacher, school administrator, church leader, community leader, or other adult who will vouch for your leadership potential and support your application.
- Complete all sections of both applications (Applicant and Agency Components) and mail to: **Travel Alive Crystal Fund Partnership, 725 Hayes Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302**. Your application will not be complete until all portions of the Crystal Fund application and all portions of the Travel Alive program application have been completed and submitted.

Is there an application deadline?

For programs beginning in June or July 2009 applications should be completed by February 15, 2009. For programs beginning any other time applications should be completed four (4) months prior to program start date.

Do I have to have someone recommend me for this program?

The Crystal Fund requires that an adult from the community sponsor each Crystal Fund applicant. This person should complete the *Agency Component* of the Crystal Fund Grant application. This person should be someone outside of your family who can speak positively about the applicant’s abilities and leadership potential, and verify that this type of experience is likely to have a positive impact on the applicant.

Will the Crystal Fund cover all of my expenses?

The Crystal Fund will cover expenses up to \$4,000 including program costs, air travel to the program country, passport fees, ground transportation to and from the program site, health insurance while abroad, room, board, and activity fees. The fund will not cover any expenses over \$4,000, personal expense while in the program, additional travel costs before, during, or after your program.

Applicants must apply for their own passport and pay for it themselves. Passport fees will be reimbursed after successful completion of the program as long as they have not gone over the \$4,000 limit. A receipt is required for any reimbursement.

Other possible expenses (not covered by the Crystal Fund) include entry tax into Nicaragua \$5, exit tax from Ecuador \$44, personal expenses such as meals outside of the program, snack food, optional travel, bus fares, taxi fares, personal items, etc.

A Travel Alive representative can help you plan your trip so that it is not likely to exceed the \$4,000 grant limit.

What if I have further questions about Travel Alive or the Crystal Fund?

For more information about all Travel Alive program visit www.travelalive.com. For more information about selecting the right program for you, applying for Travel Alive programs or the Crystal Fund email info@travelalive.com, or call 708-434-0448 or 866-380-3042.