

# Sewa Chicago Chapter LEAD Program

## Frequently asked Questions

### What is the LEAD program and purpose of it?

- LEAD (Leadership, Education and Development) Program is a Sewa International Volunteer Development Program for Current & Incoming High School students.
- It is designed for the holistic development of teenagers. It provides a platform for the participants to serve the greater community and experience the joy of giving.
- It introduces socially conscious leadership in youngsters.

### How do we Register & Pay the Fees?

- Simply click on this link below and fill up the details; it will take you to a secure payment link at the end: <https://sewausa.org/event-4236768>
- Kindly note that the last date for registration is 25-Apr-2021. There are limited seats available on a first-come first-serve basis.
- Fees are \$50 per student and \$75 if there are multiple students from the same family.

### What are the benefits to the participant?

- Develop overall personality.
- Meet socially-aware community leaders.
- Develop leadership skills (Most of the programs will be led by the participants with guidance from Sewa coordinators).
- Develop teamwork and organizational skills.
- Develop new skills.
- Improve self esteem.
- Enjoy bonding with and learning from peers.
- Experience joy of selfless service with lots of fun along the way.
- Serve community and Sewa Projects.
- Gain volunteer hours.
- Achieve Sewa recognition certificate.
- Achieve US President's Volunteer Service Award.

### Who can participate in the LEAD program?

- High School Students (current or incoming) - current 8th, 9th, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11th & 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Students and Parents need to be sincerely committed to the program.
- Parental involvement is required as needed.
- Sewa is a Hindu faith-based organization, but provides equal opportunity to people of all racial, ethnic, religious and gender backgrounds to participate.

### What is the duration of the Program & what are the important dates / time?

- **May 1 to Aug 7, 2021**
- Program Kickoff: **Sat, May 1, 2021** Time: **TBD**
- Need commitment to 50 hours of volunteering (~3-4 hrs./week)

### What are some of the key activities planned for the program?

While our calendar of events is still being finalized, below is a sample of the key activities planned:

- Sewa Chicago Area Initiatives:
  - Cleaning up Highways
  - Work with Food Banks
  - Teach Underserved Communities
  - Run Bikeathon / Walkathon with SDM (Sewa for Diabetes Movement)
  - Create DIY initiative to address community needs.
- Sewa Chicago Education:
  - College Application & Financing
  - STEM
  - Interaction with community leaders
- Fundraising to support Sewa Projects:
  - Sewa International's Toilet and Hygiene Project for the Girl Child (<https://toilets-sewausa.org/>)

### Can I suggest a volunteer activity on my own?

Yes, and we do strongly encourage that you bring ideas to be included in the program.

### Why is Sewa charging fees for this program?

Registration fees are used pay for program costs; any balance will be utilized for other Sewa causes. Here is the list of items which are paid for with the fees:

- Sewa T-shirts to each participant.
- ID card with lanyard.
- Refreshments, food, water, etc.
- Facility booking.
- Transportation.
- Software expenses.
- Presidential award kit.

### Will the activities be Virtual or Physical? How will physical events be managed in the current pandemic situation?

Most of the development activities will be virtual, but service events where we can maintain safe distance like highway cleaning, hiking etc. will be physical. All safety precautions will be followed with only healthy participants without any symptoms allowed to participate. As the situation improves, appropriate decisions will be made.

**PLEASE NOTE:** LEAD coordinators reserve the right to change the time, place etc. for any activity depending on the situation like weather / health etc.

### Who is the LEAD Coordinator?

Nags Rajaram (312) 371 3537  
Email ID: [chicago@sewausa.org](mailto:chicago@sewausa.org)

**PLEASE NOTE:** All our LEAD coordinators have gone through background checks.

### **Can I participate over summer break only (June-July)?**

Although majority of the activities will be over summer, it will be very unlikely to cover our goal of 50 hrs. of volunteering. Therefore, it is recommended to be active for the entire duration of the program. The activities planned are for more than 50 hrs. and so you will have a choice to select activities based on your availability. Our activities are planned considering the school schedule of high schoolers.

### **How many hours minimum do I have to spend on any project that I choose?**

There is no choice of projects, but activities supporting multiple projects, so plan to spend a minimum of 50 hours of volunteering.

### **How do I log volunteer hours?**

Once you have registered for the program, please create an account on the Sewa USA website - <https://sewausa.org>. Using this account, you can start logging hours for this program and get them approved by one of the Sewa coordinators.

### **Can my friends / family participate in LEAD activities without registering for the LEAD program?**

Your friends & family members can participate in activities which are open to the public etc. We highly encourage Parents, Family & Friends to get connected with Sewa International – Chicago Chapter as a volunteer and contribute to serving the society.

### **What are the details of Certificates and President's Volunteer Service Awards?**

- We are glad to present Sewa's recognition certificate by the President of Sewa International USA to all the participants who fulfill the set criteria irrespective of residence status of USA.
- President's Volunteer Service Award (We will try to nominate the participants depending on eligibility and total volunteer hours, but this should not be a criterion for participation)
  - Only US Citizens and Permanent Residents are eligible for the US Presidential Award.
  - Award type is as per the rules of the government. Refer to this link for the details -> <https://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/eligibility>
  - For both Sewa's recognition letter and US Presidential award, eligible volunteer hours are within the current calendar year only.
  - Hours cannot be rolled over to next year.
  - Services performed within Sewa LEAD program only will be counted.
  - Number of hours for activities including attending meetings will be decided by LEAD Coordinators.