

SWITCHBOARD VIRTUAL MISSIONS PROGRAM FAQ

Definition of “Missions”

What does Switchboard mean by “missions”? It seems like everyone has a different definition.

We recognize that “missions” can mean different things to different people. Switchboard defines this term broadly as cross-cultural work, ideally within unreached people groups. We aim to serve both traditional mission efforts and local church movements working toward the Great Commission.

Missional Focus & Alignment

How can Switchboard help us maintain a focused mission strategy?

From the start, Switchboard’s focus has been to support cross-cultural mission work, especially in unreached areas, aligning with local churches pursuing the same goal. Your church’s approach in using Switchboard can be customized according to your mission strategy; this could include encouraging your congregation and missionaries you send and support to join the platform and allowing Switchboard to connect the two.

Will Switchboard take volunteers away from my local church?

We hear you on this concern and want to assure you that we are here to partner alongside you. Switchboard’s goal is to provide access to more diverse service opportunities. We want to remove barriers to get church members off the sidelines and participating in the Great Commission, whether with an organization your local church is already familiar with or a missionary who’s not connected to your church.

Security Concerns

How secure is the Switchboard platform for missionaries in closed countries or high-risk environments?

No platform can be completely secure, but Switchboard uses industry best practices, including encryption, hashing and separate off-platform validation for personal identifiers. Missionaries can use aliases, aligning with their public-facing profiles on church websites, to enhance anonymity. For those in extremely high-risk areas, we advise consulting security professionals before using Switchboard to ensure safety. In such cases, Switchboard may not be suitable due to potential risks of exposure.

Cost & Monetization

What's the cost for churches, and how does Switchboard sustain itself beyond the current grant-funded model?

There is no cost for churches, volunteers or missionaries to use Switchboard or the Church Kit. As a nonprofit, Switchboard currently relies on grants and private donations. By mid-2025, we aim to introduce a social philanthropy model, encouraging low-dollar, community-based giving as users serve together on the platform. This will support long-term sustainability without burdening users with fees.

How Does Matching Work?

How does Switchboard match volunteers with opportunities to serve?

The matching process begins as our software identifies a subset of volunteers who have the required skill and complete profiles. The algorithm selects an initial group of four virtual volunteers, known as Kingdom Consultants and sends them a connection request. If one of them accepts, the match is made. If no one from that initial group is a good fit, the request is shown to new volunteers with similar skills. The system is simple but effective, with most matches happening within 30-45 minutes.

How are missionaries linked to their supporting or home churches on Switchboard?

During sign-up, missionaries are asked to list their home and supporting churches. However, if a missionary prefers not to be visibly connected to a specific church, he or she can use an alias and a general sign-up process.

How can we can showcase Switchboard to our church regularly?

Encouraging your congregation to take our brief skill assessment is a great way to help members see how their expertise can have an impact in advancing the gospel. Consider including a link to the assessment in your newsletter, feature it in your church membership agenda or embed it on your church website. Sharing stories from church members who've already served through Switchboard can also encourage others to get involved.

Can we highlight ministries that our church supports so that it is easier for our members to volunteer with these organizations?

Absolutely! We have found that volunteers are more engaged and willing to serve with organizations or causes about which they are already passionate, so highlighting needs in a ministry your church supports is a great way to get your congregation to volunteer. We can route volunteers from your congregation to any ministry that has created an account with Switchboard as a Great Commission Organization (GCO).

Can a church staff member serve as the administrator of our group on the platform?

We encourage each user to manage his or her own individual profile and serving journey. We want Switchboard to be a vehicle that creates a generous generation of serving without adding anything to your church staff's plate.

Can we limit our members' involvement to opportunities that align with our church's missions priorities?

The Switchboard platform aims to create connections across the global Body of Christ rather than in isolated silos. While we intend to curate matches that favor connections between a church's members and its missionaries, the platform remains open, allowing users to connect with opportunities that fit their skills, even if those opportunities are outside their specific church network.

Criteria for Great Commission Organizations (GCOs)

What are the criteria for Great Commission Organizations to use the platform? Are there limitations on the type of work they do?

Organizations seeking to post needs on Switchboard must have a Great Commission orientation, but this can encompass a wide range of work, including church planting, discipleship, justice and mercy efforts. Organizations focused on serving vulnerable populations, like orphans or trafficking victims, qualify as long as they integrate a discipleship or gospel-sharing component.

Onboarding and Rollouts

How much time will it take for our church to sign up and begin using Switchboard?

Getting started is as easy as taking a few minutes to create a profile for your church and telling your people about this great tool! Because missionaries, ministries and volunteers create their own profiles, and Switchboard is the connector between them, we take the heavy lifting off of your plate.

Can you share an example of a church that has successfully implemented Switchboard?

Austin Ridge Church launched Switchboard within a small group focused on faith and work. Participants who were unsure of how to serve found ways to engage globally using their unique experiences. For instance, a family with expertise in autism support connected with a similar family in the Middle East, providing a direct and meaningful impact.

Volunteering

What are the requirements for serving as a Kingdom Consultant?

Virtual volunteers must create a profile. As part of this process, they adhere to our three requirements:

- signing a declaration of faith
- confirming they are 18 years of age
- acknowledging that this is an entirely free platform. A volunteer cannot sign up for a volunteer role and then send the ministry an invoice.

I'm eager to serve! How soon can I get started?

Today! As soon as you make a Kingdom Consultant profile, you can immediately start perusing open virtual roles that match your skill set and filter by causes and regions.

How much time does this type of volunteering normally take?

Opportunities vary from a one-time hourlong consultation to a few hours a week on a recurring basis. The volunteer and the missionary together set expectations regarding the time involved.

I don't have any "technical" skills. Can I still serve as a Kingdom Consultant?

Absolutely. While we use technology for the connecting platform, the opportunities available fit a wide range of skill sets in dozens of categories, ranging from homeschooling to storytelling to social media to fluency in a different language. Switchboard is constantly adding new categories to the platform because each volunteer who creates a profile brings new skills. So we want to know about each of our volunteers' work experience, their life experience and their hobbies and passions so that we can match them with needs that are well-suited for them.

If you have further questions about how Switchboard connects your church to global ministry and serving the Great Commission, please contact us at info@globalswitchboard.io.

