

ALTERNATIVE

BREAK

2026-27 Application Guide

RIT

Division of Student Affairs
Center for Leadership
and Civic Engagement



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What is Alternative Break (AB)?

Alternative Break (AB) is an opportunity for RIT students to connect with communities around the world and work alongside community partners to co-create change. This document outlines everything you need to know before applying.

Students who participate in Alternative Break spend 5–9 days **engaging with a community through meaningful service, learning, and reflection**. Participants learn about critical challenges facing communities, interact with local leaders, and complete short-term projects with community agencies.

Why Participate?

- Spend your spring break becoming part of something bigger than yourself
- Learn about a new community—its strengths, assets, and challenges
- Build friendships and connections with other students
- Develop leadership, teamwork, and collaboration skills
- Travel to a new area for an immersive experience
- Optional 3-credit academic course available
 - AB participants are invited to enroll in **SOIS-300: Community Development- Alternative Break**, a 3-credit, online course. In this project driven and experiential learning course, students will challenge traditional service models by learning how to creatively and effectively work with communities to construct relationships that result in sustainable change. Students will bring these practices to life as they work alongside local and global communities on their Alternative Spring Break trips, through Capacity Inventories and Appreciative-Inquiry. Through this course, students gain an understanding of their own assets and how they can continue to be agents of change in the future.

2027 Trip Options

Note that trip locations and partners are subject to change. Each trip includes 9–12 students, a student leader, and 2 professional staff advisors. You will be asked to rank your trip choices in your application.

Serve901 | Memphis, TN*

Focus: Food insecurity and community food systems. Volunteer work may include gardening at urban farms, organizing food donations, and assisting clients at food banks.

Common Ground Relief | New Orleans, LA*

Focus: Coastal restoration and environmental sustainability. Volunteer work may include nursery work, tree planting, invasive species removal, and wetland restoration.

American Hiking Society | Cloudland Canyon State Park, GA*

Focus: Conservation and public lands. Volunteer work may include trail maintenance and outdoor conservation projects. Hiking is part of the experience.

Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity | Punta Gorda, FL

Focus: Housing insecurity. Volunteer work may include construction projects and supporting Habitat ReStore locations.

Project Horseshoe Farm | Greensboro, AL

Focus: Community health. Volunteer work may include supporting youth programs, community centers, seniors, and individuals in supportive housing.

*Trip may include ASL interpreters

Typical Day During the Trip – There Isn't One!

There is no single “typical” day on an Alternative Break trip, but most days include:

- 6–8 hours of community-based work
- Three meals prepared by you and your teammates
- Group bonding time
- Evening reflection and discussion

Time for **exploration and local learning experiences** is also built into the week.

Lodging

Lodging varies by trip and may include volunteer houses, cabins, community centers, or bunk houses. All lodging includes kitchens, bathrooms, and showers. Wi-Fi availability varies by site.

Program Cost and Funding

This year's trips cost **\$700 total**. A \$350 non-refundable deposit is due by December 4 after acceptance. Payments are made through CampusGroups. Scholarships and other funding are available. The remaining balance is due by March 1st at the close of the Crowdfunding campaign (details on next page).

Your program fee includes:

- Air and ground transportation
- Housing
- Food (dietary needs accommodated)
- Program t-shirt
- Liability insurance
- Volunteer and organizational fees
- Most exploration activities
- Service and project supplies

Scholarships and Financial Support

CLCE Scholarship

A scholarship application is included in the general AB application. To be eligible, students must be of medium or high financial need (determined by the FAFSA and financial aid office) and in good standing with the university (conduct, academically, and financially). Students who are selected will be notified in their acceptance letters. Scholarships can either cover:

- Half of your deposit (if of medium need)
- All of your deposit (if of high need)

Students who receive CLCE scholarship funds must meet with the Assistant Director to discuss expectations and sign a scholarship agreement.

Scholarships for International Students

International Student Services (ISS) may provide funding to eligible students on a case-by-case basis. Interested students should complete the scholarship application included in the general application. Funding will be applied to the \$350 trip deposit. Accepted international students will work with ISS to determine next steps.

Honors Funding

The Honors Program provides a \$500 scholarship for up to 30 Honors students to participate in AB. Eligible accepted students must submit a \$200 deposit on CampusGroups by December 4. Deposits are non-refundable (except in extreme/rare circumstances) but may be reimbursed using the Honors Grant after the trip.

Crowdfunding

All AB participants take part in crowdfunding to raise the remaining balance after the deposit. Funds raised go directly toward your trip. Any amount raised beyond your goal supports future AB scholarships. The Crowdfunding campaign will take place from February 1-26. Additional details will be provided to participating students in the spring semester.

Application Timeline (Subject to Change)

1. Applications open: August 28
2. Applications close: October 30
3. Decision letters sent: November 13
4. Accept/decline deadline and deposit due: December 4
5. Spring semester: orientations, crowdfunding, and trip preparation

Questions?

If you have questions about Alternative Break, reach out to Victoria Cirillo at vrcri@rit.edu or stop by the CLCE in the Campus Center (A610).

Click Here to Apply Today!!

