

5 Post-Pandemic Gap Year Programs

When we hear the words “gap year,” most people picture a year of volunteer work or international travel before going to college. However, college students can also take a gap year between graduating and getting a job. Many see this break as an opportunity for one last hurrah before entering the workforce, but gap years and gap year programs can be so much more than that.

From teaching English in Tokyo to saving sharks in the Caribbean, your unique 365-day adventure can challenge you in new ways and help you discover new skills, talents and passions. It can also provide you with a fresh perspective, valuable experience and a clearer vision of your future career.

If the life-changing nature of gap year programs appeal to you, you might want to sign up right away. However, with so many countries still in lock down and quarantine orders still in effect it may be wise to wait until after the pandemic to take a gap year. Until then, you can spend some time learning about your options and which program is right for you. Check out each company's website for the latest COVID updates. Many programs are opening up.

1. International Volunteer HQ

Are you looking for volunteer opportunities? Check out [International Volunteer HQ](#). This organization offers the largest range of top-rated programs and has placed [more than 110,000 volunteers](#) abroad since its inception 12 years ago. Choose projects across a wide variety of sectors including — but not limited to — childcare, teaching, community development, construction and conservation. The majority of IVHQ's volunteer abroad programs have reopened in countries where it is safe to do so and they have a flexible booking policy in place.

2. Pacific Discovery

Experience authentic cultural immersion, make meaningful connections and develop your leadership skills with [Pacific Discovery](#). This organization provides [experiential education opportunities](#), volunteer and community service projects and transferable academic credit options. Broaden cross cultural understanding and learn new skills through hands-on physical involvement and guided reflections. Share these experiences with your group mates — and recruiters when you apply for your dream job.

3. Projects Abroad

Help make a difference in local communities and learn new skills with Projects Abroad. Founded in 1992, this large volunteer organization sends [more than 50,000 people](#) on international projects each year. Sign up for a gap year service project or overseas internship and travel to one of five

countries for an unforgettable experience. The best part about traveling with Projects Abroad is that they shop around for insurance, plan airport pickups and arrange accommodations for you.

4. African Impact

Are you passionate about spending a whole year in one place? [Volunteer in Africa](#) with African Impact, the largest provider of volunteer projects on the continent. Discover more about the world and yourself as you volunteer on wildlife reserves and serve children in tribal villages. Choose from more than 70 opportunities and gain work experience with a professional gap year program internship. No matter which project you choose, you're sure to leave inspired and content knowing you made a real impact.

5. Youth International

If you're looking for a more immersive or personalized experience, join [Youth International](#) for a one-of-a-kind gap year. Live in homes with local people, stay in hostels or sleep in the wild while out on safari. Enjoy typical local fare and prepare for a more rugged style of travel as you learn how to be a budget-savvy and mindful traveler. Participate in community service work, educational programs and more to earn college credit and gain valuable experience.

When to Take a Gap Year

In most cases, taking a gap year after college is the easiest and most hassle-free way to gain real world experience before settling down. However, you can choose to take a gap year midway through your college career. Doing so may help you gain more college credits to [raise your GPA](#) and even graduate sooner than if you'd stayed at home. Just make sure your university allows you to take a gap year before booking your trip.

Once you receive the green light — and the pandemic is finally over — you can pick a program and go! Whether you finish college first, or book a gap year halfway or after graduation, it'll surely be worth the wait.

For More:

- On our site: [Living with a Family of Sami Reindeer Herders](#)
- On our site: [Scientific Tourism: Do Something Extraordinary](#)
- Also on our site: [A Sikh Langar in India: Where a Meal is Community](#)

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