

## 21 Questions to ask when deciding on a Mission Agency

### Pioneers Answers:

#### Mission Statement and Core Values

1. What is the mission statement of the organization?

*Pioneers mobilizes teams to glorify God among unreached peoples by initiating church planting movements in partnership with local churches.*

2. What are the core values? How are they demonstrated?

<b>Core Value</b>	<b>How It's Demonstrated</b>
<i>Passion for God</i>	<i>Living a lifestyle of worship, prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit.</i>
<i>Unreached Peoples</i>	<i>Working among those with the greatest need and least opportunity to hear the Gospel.</i>
<i>Church-planting Movements</i>	<i>Working towards self-propagating national churches.</i>
<i>The Local Church</i>	<i>Partnering with sending churches and national churches.</i>
<i>Team-Centered</i>	<i>Ensuring all members thrive on the field through accountability, support, encouragement and vision from teammates.</i>
<i>Innovation and Flexibility</i>	<i>Allowing teams to develop and implement ministry strategy relevant to the situation.</i>
<i>Ethos of Grace</i>	<i>Cultivating an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect.</i>
<i>Participatory Servant-Leadership</i>	<i>Having leadership on the field to serve members by implementing vision, managing conflict and helping others achieve God's purposes.</i>

Learn more about Pioneers at [www.pioneers.org](http://www.pioneers.org)

## Organization

3. What is their focus? In what part of the world do they work? With what people groups do they work?  
*Pioneers focuses on church planting among unreached peoples, with emphasis on five major unreached people blocs that are found around the world: **T** (Tribal) **H** (Hindu) **U** (Unreligious/Secular - many Chinese fall into this block) **M** (Muslim) **B** (Buddhist). Currently, there are approximately 146 people groups targeted by Pioneers teams.*
4. Is the agency a home or field-driven agency?  
*Pioneers is a field-driven agency. Pioneers seeks to help facilitate the calling that God has placed on an individual's life within the framework of team. Ministry strategy is developed by team within the overall vision of Pioneers.*
5. Do they have a lot of policies or rules?  
*As an organization, Pioneers doesn't have many policies or rules. Adaptation to different people and circumstances is more valued than sticking to stringent rules and guidelines. In addition, field-driven teams have the freedom to set standards for the team that are most appropriate in their particular ministry context. Field leadership hold teams accountable in setting appropriate standards.*
6. How big is the agency?  
*Pioneers currently has over 2400 personnel world-wide sent from mobilization bases in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Europe, Ghana, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. Other mobilization bases are emerging.*
7. How old is the agency?  
*Pioneers was started in 1979. The first few teams were sent to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Africa.*
8. What is their denominational affiliation?  
*Pioneers is an inter-denominational organization. Our Statement of Faith can be found on our website. **In matters not addressed by our Statement of Faith, Pioneers acknowledges differing points of view provided they are based on the Bible as the supreme authority, and that no interpretation or practice will undermine the work of the gospel or the unity among those with whom we serve. We seek to live, work, and relate to one another in a spirit of love and humility, as outlined in Romans 14, I Corinthians 13, and other passages.***

## Partnership with the Local Church

9. What role does the local church have in my overseas ministry?  
*The local church is a core value of Pioneers; we require that each of our members have a relationship with their local sending church. The local church is essential in providing accountability, encouragement, and prayer and financial support.*

## Partnership with Other Agencies

10. How does the agency work with other agencies?

*Teams seek to work with other agencies in assessing ministry needs and by coordinating efforts to meet those needs within the ministry context. There are many instances when Pioneers works in close proximity to members of other agencies.*

## Ministry

11. Do you always send people out in teams?

*Being team-centered is a core value and Pioneers prefers that all members serve on teams. However, in order to respond to new vision and opportunities, Pioneers will sometimes send out individuals. These individuals will commit to working with mobilization bases to mobilize more people to join them. Also, look for the article "How Our Teams Work" under Resources/Articles on our website.*

12. What form of church model is practiced on the field?

*Since Pioneers is field-driven, the church model is taught and practiced within the context of the field while maintaining traditional Biblical structures. In many cases, the cell church model is practiced.*

13. Does the agency encourage new ministry methods and innovative ideas for ministry?

*Yes, Innovation and Flexibility is a core value of Pioneers.*

14. Who decides what ministry I will be involved in?

*Within the framework of team, Pioneers empowers members to pursue the calling that God has placed on their lives.*

## Member Care

15. How are team members cared for on the field?

*The primary source of member care is the team leader, but teammates also help ensure the health, care and safety of their fellow members. Regional teams on the field are also active in providing member care. The Member Care department in each mobilization base provides care in special times of transition, change or crises and also during home assignments. It is also expected that the home fellowship of each member provides care through whatever means possible – emails, phone calls, packages, visits.*

16. How are missionaries held accountable?

*As with member care, accountability on the field occurs primarily within the framework of the team, but also on a variety of different levels. Team members are to hold each other accountable for life/ministry issues on a regular basis. Each year, team members are to complete an Annual Ministry Plan (AMP). Team leaders are responsible for holding team members accountable to the AMP. Area leaders, those the team leader report to, are approachable/available if communication breaks down or to help meet the needs of the team. Member Care is also available for accountability issues. Finally, accountability should also come from the local church.*

17. What is the retention rate in the past 5 years?

*94.36 % of our members have remained with Pioneers in the past five years.*

18. What is the growth rate in the past 5 years?

*In the USA Mobilization base, Pioneers has grown from approximately 700 personnel to over 1000 in the past five years. Currently, we send an average of one new missionary to the field every week.*

19. How are children cared for and educated?

*Education of children is at the discretion of the parent. Given the situation, parents may home school or send their kids to a national school, a Christian school or a boarding school. Pioneers' Third Culture Kid (TCK) Coordinator works in conjunction with the parents for the care and education of their children.*

## **Finances**

20. What percent of support goes to home office?

*Twelve percent of support goes to Pioneers operating expenses – ten percent to the home office and two percent to international leadership teams.*

21. Does all student loan and consumer debt need to be eliminated before leaving for the field?

*Under the regulations issued by the IRS, a non-profit organization can allow monthly payments to be made towards the loans incurred from college. Pioneers has chosen to allow between \$200-250 to be added to the monthly missionary budget to be paid toward student loans. This is not the case for consumer debt. All consumer debt must be eliminated before leaving for the field, but not necessarily before applying to the mission agency.*