

These are the three issues with domestic missions that I have encountered:

1. You need legal permission from that state's Board of Optometry. They must permit allow out-of-state OD's to practice, even for free, or you may be considered practicing without a license. Contact RAM at [ramusa.org](http://ramusa.org) to get the short list of states which allow this out-of-state OD's to do philanthropic work. Otherwise, you might try getting an invitation to work on an American Indian reservation which is exempt from those state laws and frequently are the poorest counties in the country.

2. Optometry must be practiced to "standard of care". So dispensing used eyeglasses is not allowed and OTC readers may be perceived inadequate. Also, you may need to use portable phoropters if trial frame refractions are not considered adequate. Again, check with the state Board where you plan to work. and also check that your malpractice insurance will cover you in the other state. This makes the clinic more expensive to do for free.

3. You might not be popular with the local OD's. Unless you are doing some sort of financial means testing of the patients, i.e. targeting only Medi-care patients or VISION/USA patients the local OD's will feel that you are seeing patients who potentially would have seen them. In Central America, it's not such an issue but in the US it may be. just be forewarned and offer to pass the patient records (which you are otherwise legally obliged to keep for seven years) to a local OD, in exchange for their cooperation and any necessary follow-up referrals, glasses re-dos, ect...

Again, we all know that this work is needed in the US as well as abroad but it unfortunately carries a bit more liability here. No good deed goes unpunished.

Kind regards,

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