

Dear Warmshowers Community –

We hope you are safe and healthy. Although we can't be on our bikes touring the world right now, we are all eagerly looking to the future. The team at Warmshowers has exciting changes to share with you that will help us continue to provide you with unforgettable experiences of connection and exploration when we all get rolling again. For existing Warmshowers users, these will be welcome upgrades to our technology, and we can't wait to roll them out (pardon the pun!)

Before we dive into our changes and improvements, we wanted to share a little about our history with you to provide some helpful context.

### ***Our story***

Warmshowers started from a passion that became a simple spreadsheet of welcoming hosts across the United States. Over the years, this passion has grown, and the technology has evolved from that spreadsheet to a web-based platform that now supports over 135,000 registered users worldwide. Initially, our operations were 100% volunteer-based and thanks to the generosity of user donations; we brought on part-time paid staffers who, along with our volunteers, worked tirelessly to develop our web platform. We had high hopes that user donations would help us pay for upgrades in technology and administrator costs, but less than 10% of registered users donate to support the community. We are grateful for every single donation, as it has helped us grow and support adventurous travelers around the world with free access to kind and generous hosts. We very much want to keep that spirit of accessibility and connectivity alive as we continue to grow. So, we plan to do just that for you, our original users.

### ***What's new?***

We have ambitious plans to improve our technology, including new apps, streamlined interfacing with our blog, increased translation, new help desk features, and keeping the system stable by removing inactive users and providing greater opportunity for collaboration with other technologies. We need to manage security and communications. We want to provide a network that allows you to easily identify a host nearby, anywhere your bike may take you. This requires funding, and with only a few regular donors, combined with the current state of the world, our donations are at risk. Therefore, Warmshowers is at risk. With our large database and continued growth, we need to address the upgrades with a high level of professional development as opposed to patch-work fixes that, when layered upon one another, do not create the best technology solutions.

What does this mean for our users? Well, for NEW users, we will now have a modest one-time registration fee of \$30.00 USD for lifetime access to our network. This fee will **not** be charged to existing active users, who can choose or are still encouraged to support us through continued donations. Even with this one-time fee for new users, your donations are still critical for our continued success. Every dollar counts and we are very grateful for your contributions. You can still access our hosts through our website for **free** as you have. And, hospitality remains **free** for all users, so you should never be charged by any Warmshowers host for your stay.

The fee will allow us to make critical updates to our technology systems, including an iOS and Android App, managed in-house, for easier access when YOU are on the road or for hosts to have easy access to through their mobile device, from anywhere in the globe. Remember, you can always use our website through your browser for FREE, as you always have.

Just like you, we are all passionate cyclists and generous hosts. We each love Warmshowers and invest our time, energy and money into it. We don't make decisions lightly. But without solid funding, Warmshowers WILL NOT survive.

Warmshowers' mission is to help connect people with a passion for bicycle touring and hosting around the world so that no matter where you find yourself on a bike, there is a host with a *warm shower* to welcome you. Through these shared experiences, we create connections that can break down stereotypes, walls, and fears and make the world a smaller place. We hope you stay healthy and we look forward to seeing you out on the road again soon.

For comments or questions regarding this change, please email: [feedback@warmshowers.org](mailto:feedback@warmshowers.org).