

A woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, is sitting and looking down at a black smartphone in her hands. She is wearing a silver necklace with a small pendant and several colorful beaded bracelets on her left wrist. To her left, a person wearing a blue baseball cap and a dark blue shirt is partially visible, also looking at a smartphone. The woman is holding a white piece of paper in her left hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with some equipment.

MALAWI

FAQ Electronics Guidance



Peace Corps

FAQ ELECTRONICS GUIDANCE

Introduction

As you prepare for your departure from the U.S. and arrival in Malawi, we know that one thing on your mind is likely communication. This document will share important information regarding electronics to help you prepare for your Peace Corps service in Malawi.

Does Peace Corps provide a cell phone?

Yes. At the start of your pre-service training (PST), Peace Corps/Malawi will provide you with a basic smart phone. These phones may not have some of the features you are used to, but they are fully functional and widely used throughout Malawi.

Can I bring my Smartphone?

Yes. But if you decide to bring a smartphone, be sure that your phone is unlocked prior to coming to Malawi. It is impossible to unlock the phone in Malawi, and working with US providers while in Malawi (even assuming they are still your provider) can be extremely difficult.

How do I pay for phone minutes and data ?

Peace Corps Volunteers will be able to purchase phone/data bundles from local vendors throughout Malawi. The primary phone service companies in Malawi are Airtel and Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM). Coverage can be better with one provider vs. the other at different Volunteer sites.

What is the Electric Current in Malawi?

The standard voltage in Malawi is 220/240V. An adapter is needed to convert US plugs to the Type G plugs used in Malawi. We recommend bringing one or two adapters with you to Malawi, but they can also be purchased in cities in Malawi. Most modern electronics, including cell phones, are dual voltage.

Should I bring a laptop? Is there Internet access ?

If you have a laptop computer, you are *strongly encouraged to bring it to complete required reports on the work that you conduct in partnership with your community.*

At the Peace Corps/Malawi office, Wi-Fi is available for those who bring their own devices. Desktop computers

are also available for Peace Corps Volunteers at the office.

Peace Corps does not provide internet in Volunteer residences. Volunteers will use their phone as a hotspot to access the internet (but service will generally be much slower and less reliable than what they are used to).

Please keep in mind that the Peace Corps has strict guidelines regarding Volunteer-created and maintained blogs and websites. These policies are outlined in the Volunteer Service Handbook and will be reviewed during pre-service training.

Can I call home from my host community ?

Calling the U.S. directly from a cellphone in Malawi can be expensive, so most Volunteers in Malawi use WhatsApp/FaceTime to communicate with family/friends in the U.S.

Most Malawians also use WhatsApp for daily communication. We recommend that you download WhatsApp to your smartphone before coming to Malawi and ask your friends/ family to do the same.

Does Peace Corps provide email accounts for Volunteers?

No. Volunteers will continue to use their personal email accounts during their service in the Peace Corps.

Will the Peace Corps reimburse me for my lost, stolen, or damaged electronics ?

No. Volunteers are encouraged to consider buying personal property insurance for their personal belongings *before coming to Malawi. Peace Corps does not reimburse for the loss, theft, or damage of personal items, such as smartphones, cameras, laptops, tablets, etc.*

