

# Nightlight® Christian Adoptions International Adoption Program Description Malawi



## GENERAL INFORMATION

Nightlight's Malawi program began in 2018. Malawi, a landlocked country in southeastern Africa, is defined by its topography of highlands split by the Great Rift Valley and enormous Lake Malawi. The lake's southern end falls within Lake Malawi National Park – sheltering diverse wildlife from colorful fish to baboons – and its clear waters are popular for diving and boating. Malawi is often referred to as the “Warm Heart” of Africa. The fees for an adoption from Malawi are reasonable, and we estimate that the process will take approximately 2 to 3 years from application to completion depending upon the type of child you are seeking to adopt.

Nightlight Christian Adoptions has partnered with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) in Malawi, providing care for abandoned and orphaned children. This organization also provides children with milk and necessary items while educating families on the care of their baby. Children in Malawi are often abandoned due to poverty related to social problems and the parents' illnesses. Families traveling to Malawi to adopt their children will receive a full and final adoption decree from the Malawi courts. Nightlight is committed to helping families prepare for the adoption of children from Malawi by providing educational information on possible developmental delays and health issues.

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about Malawi adoption and the country:

- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/Intercountry-Adoption-Country-Information/Malawi.html>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mi.html>

## CHILDREN AVAILABLE

Malawi adoption is a wonderful program for families desiring to adopt children 18 months old and older. Children up to age 15 are available for adoption. Children living in poverty and raised in institutional care often have both developmental and emotional needs. There are also children available for adoption that have minor and correctable to moderate and severe special needs. Children who would otherwise have little hope for a future can have a better life with the emotional and physical security that a loving family can offer, along with the availability of excellent medical care in the United States.

## ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

Most loving, stable families qualify to adopt from Malawi. However, certain factors could keep you from adopting in general or from Malawi in particular, as each country has its own rules as to who can adopt. Malawi prefers adoptive families that have a connection to the country of Malawi. The orphanage requires that families must be Christian families who attend church regularly. Before applying, please consult with Nightlight regarding any sensitive issues that may apply to you, such as a divorce, a mental health issue, or a criminal history.

## PROCESS

1. Make application to Nightlight Christian Adoptions.
2. Begin your **adoption home study** and submit **form I-600A** to USCIS.
3. Begin to assemble your **dossier**. We will give you detailed instructions.
4. Once USCIS has approved your adoption home study, you will receive your **I-171H pre-approval notice**.
5. Once your USCIS approval has been received, your dossier is complete, and a child is available for you, you will receive a referral of a child in Malawi.
6. Complete official referral review with Nightlight's Social Services Department
7. Once you have accepted a match of a child, you will await a court date. The time frame to be assigned a court date varies greatly. Some families have waited as much as 12 months for a court date and some have waiting a shorter time.
8. Once you receive a court date you will travel to Malawi and meet your child face-to-face. You will attend court a few days later.

9. The court ruling will be issued anywhere from a few days to one week after your hearing. (This varies by judge.)
10. You will then apply for your child's passport and file the I-600 with the US Embassy.
11. You will take your child to a US Embassy approved doctor for a final health visit.
12. The Embassy will conduct a thorough investigation to before choosing to issue your child a Visa.
13. You will return to the US Embassy for your final appointment, pick up your child's visa, and bring your child home! This trip is expected to take approximately 6 weeks.

### **TRAVEL & ADOPTION**

You receive a referral of a child from Nightlight Christian Adoptions. The referral will include a brief social history of the child, the current health and development of the child, and lab test results for HIV. We highly recommend that you have this information reviewed by a doctor who specializes in international adoption before you make a decision. Once you decide to accept a referral, and have returned the commitment form, you will be considered "matched" with the child. Your dossier will then be sent to the attorney in Malawi. The attorney will put together information on the child's file and add this information to your dossier to file with the court. Once you receive a court date, you will travel to Malawi. After the court order is issued, you will file your I-600 with the US Embassy and take your child for their visa medical appointment. Once these things are approved, the US Embassy will invite you to a final visa appointment. You will then travel home with your child. The adoption trip should be approximately 6 weeks long. The US Embassy will investigate all I-600 applications and the investigation can take up to 6 months.

### **POSTADOPTION**

Within 30 days of your arrival home, you must have a home visit by your home study provider. Your home study provider will prepare three post-placement reports and submit them to Nightlight; one report will be completed after the home study provider visits your home within 6 months of your child's arrival home and the others at 1 and 2 years after you arrive home with your child. In addition, you will be required to complete a self-report to be provided to the court every 12 months until your child turns 18 years old. These reports include your child's developmental progress and pictures. This is a very serious commitment; Nightlight is committed to showing the Malawi government and birth families that children adopted by US citizens are healthy and well cared for. Therefore, Nightlight charges a fee to monitor and process these post adoption reports and also requires families to pay for the cost of the post adoption report in advance.

### **COSTS**

The program fee for a Malawi adoption is \$17,350. Your additional costs will include home study, USCIS approval, notary & apostille fees, airfare, hotel, in country guide, and embassy fees as shown on the fee schedule. Your out-of-pocket expenses may further be reduced if you receive scholarships, grants or employer-provided adoption benefits. For additional fee information please see Exhibit A.

Please contact Lisa Whitaker at [Lisaw@nightlight.org](mailto:Lisaw@nightlight.org) or call our KY office (859-263-9964) with any questions.





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## Getting Started CHECKLIST

### 1. Fill out Application Documents

- Fill out the Online Application
- Read and Sign the Agreement for International Adoption Services
- Read and Sign the Social Media Policy
- Read and Sign the Complaint Procedure
- Read and Sign the “No Healthy Child Letter”
- Read and Sign the Consent to Release Confidential Information
- Read and sign the Privacy Practices
- Upload your family photo
- Pay the application fee

*\*Please Note: Keep the Complaint form for your records; you may want to make a copy of the Policy & Procedure to also keep for your records.*

### 2. Complete your Orientation

Once we review and accept your Application materials, we will send you an acceptance letter via e-mail. Shortly after that you will receive an invoice for the orientation phase and then begin your orientation with your adoption advisor.

### 3. Obtain a Home Study

- **If you live in Nightlight’s licensed area**, we will perform your home study. Once your application is approved, your adoption advisor will notify you how to get started on your home study with one of our Nightlight offices.
- **If you are out of Nightlight’s licensed area**, we will help you find a local agency.

Please read our [FAQs](#) before submitting your application. If you have any questions please call our office: at 502- 423-5780 or send us an e-mail at [info@nightlight.org](mailto:info@nightlight.org).

ATTACHMENT A  
NIGHTLIGHT® CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS  
INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS – FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

**Malawi**

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
<b>Application Phase</b>		\$500	<i>Due with application</i>
<b>Monitoring and Oversight fee charged by accrediting entity. Per child</b>		\$500	<i>Due upon signing the Agreement for International Services</i>
<b>Orientation Phase</b>		\$2,000	<i>Due upon receiving a Letter of Acceptance from Nightlight</i>
<b>Dossier Phase</b>		\$4,750	<i>Due upon submission of dossier</i>
<i>Nightlight Program Fee</i>	\$2,000		
<i>Foreign Fee #1</i>	\$2,750		
<b>Referral Phase</b>		\$3,500	
<i>Nightlight Program Fee</i>	\$2,000		
<i>Foreign Fee #2</i>	\$1,500		<i>Sibling additional fees: \$3,600 per child</i>
<b>Travel Phase</b>		\$6,100	
<i>Nightlight program fee</i>	\$3,000		
<i>Foreign Fee #3</i>	\$3,100		
<b>Total Program Fee</b>		<b>\$17,350</b>	
OTHER COSTS (ESTIMATED)	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
<b>U.S.-Based Fees</b>		\$4,440 – \$6,240	
<i>Home Study</i>	\$1,500-\$2,500		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Post Adoption Reports</i>	\$900-\$1,200		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Shipping and/or translating of post adoption reports</i>	\$0		<i>Costs may vary based on the number of children you are adopting, due at referral phase.</i>
<i>Home study supporting documents</i>	\$225		<i>Cost for criminal clearances, obtaining physicals, and other misc. expenses</i>
<i>Parent Education/Training</i>	\$100-\$300		<i>Estimated cost of online education courses</i>
<i>Home Study Review Fee</i>	\$300		<i>Review of home study prepared by an agency other than Nightlight</i>
<i>USCIS Fees</i>	\$865		<i>Includes I-800A application &amp; biometrics for 2 adults</i>
<i>Dossier Authentication/mailing</i>	\$350-\$650		<i>Estimate</i>
<i>Additional Mailing cost</i>	\$200		<i>Estimate</i>
<b>Other In-Country Adoption Costs</b>		\$11,950 – \$14,150	
<i>Airfare (2 adults)</i>	\$3,000-\$4,000		<i>Estimated for 2 adults</i>
<i>Airfare for child (one way)</i>	\$1,000		<i>Depends on the child's age.</i>
<i>Visas (for 2 Adults)</i>	\$150		
<i>Lodging and Accommodations</i>	\$1,500-\$2,500		<i>Estimated for 6 weeks</i>
<i>Food Expenses</i>	\$2,000		<i>Estimate for 6 weeks</i>
<i>Child's medical exam and visa</i>	\$400-\$600		
<i>Child birth certificate and passport</i>	\$600		<i>Per Child</i>
<i>Transportation and guide fee</i>	\$3,000		<i>Estimated for 6 weeks. Includes guide, fuel, and use of car</i>
<i>Birth family death certificate</i>	\$100		<i>Per death certificate (if applicable)</i>
<i>DNA testing</i>	\$200		
<b>Total Other Costs (Est.)</b>		<b>\$16,390 – \$20,390</b>	
<b>TOTAL FEES &amp; ESTIMATED EXPENSES</b>			
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$33,740 – \$37,740</b>	

The cost of operating an international adoption program is substantial and increasing with the additional compliance requirements under The Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption. The nature of international adoption makes it impossible to predict the exact costs you will incur, but we believe the estimates above are realistic. Although we strive to maintain a predictable fee schedule, unexpected increase in our costs may necessitate an increase in fees. Therefore, fees may be increased upon 90-day notice.

Program fees are paid in phases and are non-refundable. Nightlight establishes a budget for costs each year based on the number of adoptions it estimates completing, as well as revenue from grants and donations. Based on these estimates, we establish program fees to cover the costs of attorneys, facilitators, social workers, insurance, and other costs we incur. Of course it would be prohibitive to allocate all of the costs (payroll, rent, insurance, supplies, travel, etc.) to one adoption in one program. **A late fee of 12% annual (1% monthly) will be assessed for fees more than 30 days past due.**

**Please initial on both this page and the following page that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs.**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Adopting Parents:** \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment B  
 Nightlight Christian Adoptions  
 INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS – FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

**Malawi**

<b>SERVICES CATEGORIZED PER HAGUE REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>Malawi</b>
Home Study (including estimated out of pocket costs)	\$1,500 – 2,500
Adoption expenses in the US (includes personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, training and education, communications and publications costs and other costs associated with providing adoption services in the US)	\$10,000
Foreign country program expenses (includes personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, training and education, communications and publications costs and other costs associated with providing adoption services in the child's convention country)	\$6,850
Care of the child (the expected total fees and estimated expenses charged to PAP's for the care of the child in the country of origin prior to adoption, including, but not limited to costs for food, clothing, shelter, medical care, foster care, orphanage care and other services provided DIRECTLY to the child.	\$0
Translation and Document Expenses: the expected total fees and estimated expenses for obtaining any necessary documents, translation of documents related to the adoption and information on whether the PAP's will pay costs directly or to a 3rd party either in the US or Convention country or through the agency. Category includes but is not limited to, costs for obtaining, translating, copying records or documents required to complete the adoption, costs for Convention court documents, passport, adoption certificate and other documents related to the adoption, costs for notarization and certifications.	\$400-500
Contributions: any fixed contribution amount or percentage that the PAP expected or required to make to child protection or child welfare service programs in the Child's convention country or in the US along with an explanation of the intended use of the contribution and the manner in which the transaction will be recorded and accounted for.	\$0
Post placement (PP) and post adoption (PA) reports: the expected total fees and estimated expenses for any PP or PA reports that the agency or parents must prepare to comply with requirements of the expected country of origin (and NCA requirements)	\$900 – 1,200
Travel/Accommodation Expenses: Estimated 2 Adults, 1 child: includes hotel, food, fuel, and airfare estimates.	\$7,500 – 9,500
Third Party Expenses: includes USCIS fees, courier services, in-country guide, and child medical or visa costs if paid directly by the family rather than through Nightlight.	\$5,165 – 5,365

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