



## Power of Attorney

Many JVs have questions regarding the handling of financial matters, such as filing for taxes (especially if you have been out of school/ working), or other concerns that may need attention during the course of the two years you are abroad. With the restraints of communication and other factors while living overseas, some volunteers have found it helpful to designate someone (typically a parent or guardian) to act on your behalf for such matters. In legal terms, this is known as **Power of Attorney**.

**Power of Attorney** is a legal instrument, in which you designate a trusted individual (called an “agent” in the legal wording) to act on your behalf. It would be an agreement drawn up by a lawyer, signed by you and witnessed by a notary public. Necessary forms and regulations differ from state to state. This is a common legal practice and is affordably priced. If you have concerns about personal matters, such as finances, tax returns, or other that you know will need attending to, then we encourage you to discuss the possibility of designating a parent or guardian with Power of Attorney.

Many JVs who have used this in the past find the process quite simple and helpful, though it is something you would initiate with your parent/guardian and a lawyer. **The JVC office does not facilitate the process; rather, we share this information based on the previous experience of volunteers who have found this beneficial.**

Questions have been raised in the past about Power of Attorney across international lines [For example, in the event that a volunteer is unable to make a health-related decision on one’s own]. It is our understanding, however limited, that most countries will honor the direction of a U.S. Power of Attorney, depending on the country where medical treatment is being received. Again, it is your responsibility to consider this process and initiate it for your own care.

If you are completing a Power of Attorney, it would be wise to bring a copy with you abroad and keep it in a place where your community mates would know how to reach it, who to contact, and how to contact them, in the event that you are unable to make a decision. *We will touch on health-care and emergency procedures in depth at Orientation; though it serves to illustrate here the importance of sharing Emergency Contact Information with your community mates immediately upon arrival to the country and keeping this information in a safe place.*

Below are some resources, if you would like to research this further. If you decide to do this, please ensure that one or both of your emergency contacts has a copy, should an emergency arise.

- Power of Attorney laws (and forms) vary from state to state / across international lines
- One is not required to be a lawyer to hold a Power of Attorney as an agent for someone else
- The content (and forms) differ depending on the specific purpose of the Power of Attorney
- The authority ceases at the death of person granting power

- Person granting power can revoke it and determines how long it lasts
- A 'Durable' Power of Attorney continues after incapacitation
- Conditions and triggering events can be specified in the language of the document
- A Power of Attorney can be broad or it can be restricted to a specific transaction

Excerpt from "Power of Attorney," by Michael E. Petrie. Web Law Review  
<http://www.eaglelink.com/law-review/poa-pet.htm>