



# Holiday Food and Gift Drives FAQ

**How does the Adopt-A-Family Program work?** Adopt-A-Family is a seasonal program matching families in need with caring sponsors across the community. Sponsors are provided with the family's Wish List and purchase gifts, clothing, and/or food to help brighten their holiday. Families are identified by late October and sponsors can begin expressing interest in participation shortly thereafter through our online Volunteer Hub. Once sponsors have registered on the Volunteer Hub, matches are typically made within 2-3 business days. Sponsors can request families based on the number of children (families range in size from 1 parent or guardian, 1 child to 2 parents or guardians and 6-7 children. United Way of Northeast Florida will try to give you a choice of families of the size requested and ask that a decision be made within 1-2 business days to ensure that families not selected are available for other sponsors to select.

**How are families selected to receive holiday donations?** Families are identified by counselors and teachers within our [Full Service Schools](#) (FSS) network and vetted by our FSS site coordinators. The families selected are experiencing extraordinary needs due to job loss, health issues, a house fire or other circumstances. Full Service Schools is a neighborhood-based partnership of over 40 organizations, including United Way of Northeast Florida, Duval County Public Schools, Duval County Health Department, Kids Hope Alliance, and St. Vincent's Mobile Health that provides therapeutic health and social services to children and families.

**What is the Thanksgiving Drive program and why does it have a separate registration?** Selected families often do not have the means to create a special Thanksgiving meal. As the Thanksgiving drive and the December Holiday Gift drive items require different delivery dates, we have two separate registrations on our Volunteer Hub page. Some families do request help for both Thanksgiving and for the December holidays. If you or your group would like to take care of a family for both holidays, please indicate it on the registration. We will send a list of suggested items for the Thanksgiving Drive separately.

**Do I have to buy everything on the family's Wish List?** No, it is understood that the wish list may include items that sponsors are unable to provide. United Way of Northeast Florida estimates that it costs approximately \$75-\$125 to sponsor each child in a family—please consider this when selecting the size and total number of families you would like to sponsor. Try to provide the same number of gifts and near same dollar value of gifts for each of the children in your adopted family.

**Do the gifts have to be new?** Yes, we do ask that all donations provided to families are new.

**Do I have to purchase gifts for the parent or guardian?** No—we do not have the same information on the parents/guardians as we do for the children. However, gift cards or other thoughtful presents will always be appreciated.



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**Do I wrap the gifts before delivering them?** Preferably no. Unwrapped presents for the children allow the parents or guardians to participate in wrapping presents. Donations of wrapping paper, tape, and bows are appreciated, however.

**Where do I drop off the gifts?** Because we have limited staff **we are unfortunately unable to pick up holiday donations.** You can help us immeasurably by dropping off your donations to the Full Service Schools site that the children of the family belong to. We will coordinate this drop off on or before the deadline, at your convenience. **Please do not drop off the gifts without coordinating a time first as office hours may vary at the site.**

**What is the deadline to drop off gifts?** Please deliver Thanksgiving Baskets by **Thursday, November 18** and your December holiday donations no later than **Wednesday, December 12** in order to ensure that they can be delivered to the families before schools release the students for Thanksgiving and winter breaks.

**What if I signed up as a sponsor but can no longer participate?** If for any reason you are unable to sponsor the family you were assigned, please contact us at [volunteer@uwnefl.org](mailto:volunteer@uwnefl.org) *immediately*. The sooner you contact us, the better the chance that the family can be matched to another sponsor.

**Are there any other ways I can help families this holiday season?** Yes! There are several general drives and other holiday activities that you can do to help children and families. Please have a look at the Holiday list [here](#).