



## ADOPT-A-FAMILY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Adopt-a-Family program?

A: Compass Family Services' Adopt-a-Family (AAF) program pairs individuals or groups from the community with families who lack the resources to buy holiday gifts. For many of these families, these gifts are the only ones they will receive this holiday season.

Q: How does the program work?

A: The Adopt-a-Family program matches individuals or a group of donors with a family/families who is/are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Donors provide gifts based on a wish list completed by the family. This year, we are offering a two ways for donors to fulfill wish lists:

1. Traditional Adopt-a-Family: Fulfill a family wish list of needed and wanted items, shop, wrap gifts, and drop off gifts to Compass in early December to be distributed to your adopted family or families
2. Gift Card Adopt-a-Family: Fulfill wish list requests for gift cards from specific retailers for your adopted family or families

Q: How are families chosen to be adopted?

A: Families in the Adopt-a-Family program are families already accessing services within Compass Family Services' twelve programs — Compass Family Shelter, Compass Childcare Support Services, Compass Family Resource Center, C-WORK, Central City Access Point, Compass Clara House, Compass Children's Center, Compass SF HOME, C-RENT, Compass Urgent Accommodation Vouchers, Compass Behavioral Health Services, The Margot, which is Compass' Permanent Supportive Housing program.

Q: How many families get adopted each year?

A: Last year, more than 550 families were adopted. We expect to serve approximately the same number of families this year.

Q: How can I participate?

A: Register on our web site – <https://www.compass-sf.org/adoptafamily2024>



Q: Is there a fee to participate?

A: We don't require a fee to participate in Adopt-a-Family. We strongly encourage donors to make a donation to Compass of \$150 per family adopted. Adopt-a-Family contributions help offset the significant cost of running the program and help to ensure that our client families receive the full range of services they need throughout the year, not just during the holidays. All donations to Compass Family Services are tax-deductible.

Q: How and when will I receive my family's wish list?

A: Families will begin to fill out their wish lists in late September. Wish lists will continue to come in through December. We will begin to send wish lists to donors in mid-October. As soon as we receive a wish list that meets your specifications, we will email it to you.

Q: How much are donors expected to spend on one family?

A: People/groups spend a minimum of approximately \$300 on a family of 2, however some donors choose to spend considerably more. When you receive the family wish list, it will include required items as well as wish list items that donors can choose to provide or not.

This year, specific requirements are:

- For each adult 18 years old and over – at least one gift card (\$100 minimum)
- For each child under 18 – three gifts (items listed on wish list will be from a variety of price ranges)
- One grocery gift card for the family (suggested estimate on price - \$25 per family member. For example, a family of four would be \$100.)

You are more than welcome to do more for your family if you choose to. However, you do not have to buy everything on the family's wish list. In addition to the gifts you purchase, you may also include stockings for each family member to make the holiday feel more festive.

Q. I was expecting a family in need to have necessities like socks and underwear on their wish lists. But the children in the family I'm adopting have asked for electronic games and brand-name shoes. What should I make of this?

A: Families living in poverty constantly do without, yet they live in a society that flaunts material wealth, brand names and luxury items at every turn. At Compass, we believe that a poor child, and even a poor adult, has as much of a right to wish for a gift that is not a basic necessity as does their middle-class counterpart. At the same time, we work with each family to create a wish list that is realistic. Please remember that, as a donor, you do not have to fulfill all of a



family's wishes. Sometimes children (and some parents) get carried away and ask for expensive items that may seem excessive, but remember it is the holidays and this is a wish list. Please do not be offended by this. *Donors are NOT obligated to buy anything beyond the required items.*

**Q. Can I also donate gently used items to my adopted family?**

**A:** While our families are very appreciative of donated items, the Adopt-a-Family program has doubled in size over the last few years and we just do not have enough space to store everything all at once during the busy holiday season. If you feel that the family you adopted could greatly benefit from a gently used item, please contact Kris Otridge at [kotridge@compass-sf.org](mailto:kotridge@compass-sf.org) as donated used items will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: What is the family ID number?**

**A:** Each wish list will have a unique number that identifies the family. It is extremely important to have **EVERY GIFT CLEARLY MARKED WITH THIS NUMBER**. It will help ensure that the right gifts get to the right family.

**The following frequently asked questions pertain only to Traditional Adopt-a-Family participants:**

**Q: How should I package and label the gifts?**


**A:** Please wrap and label all gifts. To ensure the gift cards for adults do not get lost, please put those in envelopes so they are not loose and write the family ID number on each envelope. To make certain the right boxes get to the right families, it is extremely important to label each gift.

All of your gifts are wrapped and placed inside boxes. All gifts should be labeled with the name of the recipient. The box should be labelled with: 1) the family ID#, 2) the primary caregiver's name. All of this information is provided on the wish list. Here is an example of how a box should be labelled:

**FAMILY ID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BOX** \_\_\_\_\_ **OF** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRIMARY CAREGIVER:** \_\_\_\_\_

 COMPASS FAMILY SERVICES  
Housing. Support. Hope.



Once all of your gifts are wrapped and labeled, place them in boxes. Please label the boxes with the family ID number and list how many boxes you have for the family. For example, label *1 of 2* or *1 of 4* or *2 of 2*, etc. If you have more than one family, please use separate boxes for each family.

Q. What if I can't drop my gifts off during the designated time?

A: Please make every effort to drop off your gifts during the allotted times. We will have volunteers and staff helping during drop-off to assist you with unloading. Families will start to receive their gifts the following week, so it is very important to drop off our drop off dates. There will be a one Saturday drop off on 12/7 and the last day to drop off is the December 12th. More information will be provided to you on specific times and days for gift drop-off (determined by which program your adopted family is in).

Q. How does the family receive the gifts?

A. Most families will pick up their gifts at a storage facility location in San Francisco where you will be dropping your gifts off. Gifts for families at Compass Clara House are dropped off and stored at the program location and then given to the families before the holiday. In some circumstances, Compass' case managers will deliver the gifts to a family if the family is unable to get to us. All gifts will be given to families between December 13th – 20th.

Q. I would like to meet the family I am adopting and take my children with me to drop off the gifts at their home. Is this possible?

A. Compass Family Services ensures the confidentiality of each family receiving services. We absolutely do not make meeting a donor a pre-condition for participating in AAF. For many families, facing circumstances where they are reliant on the kindness of strangers to provide holiday gifts for their children can elicit feelings of embarrassment and humiliation. On the other hand, there are some families that are happy to meet their donor, and are appreciative of the opportunity to convey their appreciation personally. If meeting the family you are adopting is important to you, please be sure to indicate this in your donor information form. We will do all we can to match you with a family that is open to a meeting.

Q. Who do I contact if I have questions?

A. Please contact our Adopt a Family team at [aaf@compass-sf.org](mailto:aaf@compass-sf.org)