

Adopt A Family: Frequently Asked Questions



How do I get started?

We begin seeking sponsors for the Adopt-A-Family program in September each year. Please contact us at (403)527-8223 or via email to bridgitd@mhws.ca indicating the composition and size of the family you would ideally like to sponsor. If you are uncertain of the family size, please provide us with an approximate budget so that we can match appropriately. Once we have received that information, we will do our absolute best to match you with an appropriate family.

How are gift recipients chosen?

All MHWSS Adopt-a-Family recipients are currently receiving services with the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter and have been referred by a Support worker. Our staff members know each Adopt-a-Family recipient and are aware of their particular situations.

What might my family look like?

Our families range from single people to families with up to 7 children, and ages of the children range. Clients may be female or male. If you would prefer a specific family composition, please let us know. We cannot guarantee we will have a family matching that description, but will try our best to accommodate requests within reason.

What happens once I adopt my family?

Once you have been matched with your family, you will receive an email with a detailed "Wish List", including their hobbies and interests, clothing and shoe sizes for each family member, favorite colors, items they are wishing for and household needs.

Do I have to buy exactly what is on each family's Wish List?

Of course not. We ask families to complete their Wish Lists to give Sponsors some insight into each family's needs and wants, but you are under no obligation to purchase everything off their wish list.

What is the suggested gift value guideline?

We do not set any giving guidelines for donors but suggest you use your best judgement based on the family size. It is helpful to provide us with your budget so that we can match most appropriately.

Why do you sometimes ask for the gifts to be unwrapped?

If you are shopping for a family that has requested unwrapped gifts, this request was made so that parents and guardians can wrap their children's gifts and participate in the holiday spirit.

Can we include a food hamper?

We cannot accept any perishable food items due to our lack of refrigeration at our temporary depot location. If you would like to provide additional non-perishable food items for your family, you are welcome to, but gift cards to a grocery store are usually preferred as this allows the family to purchase groceries based on their family's individual needs.

Can we meet the family we have adopted for the holidays?

Unfortunately due to the confidential nature of our programs as well as the size of our matching program we are unable to accommodate arranging a meeting between the sponsor and the family.

Can I donate used items?

Adopt-a-Family gifts must be new. We may be able to accept your donations of other gently used items for use in other programs. Please contact us at (403)527-8223 for more information. If the family has requested a Christmas tree or decorations, gently used trees and decorations are acceptable.

If I can't adopt a family, how else can I help?

Financial donations of any amount are welcome and will be used to help our families year-round. We always have a list of needs for our other programs that we can provide to you. There are also many volunteer opportunities available, and you can contact us at (403)527-8223 for more information about these.

Can I just send gift cards for you to shop for the families?

You are welcome to purchase your family gift cards instead of physical gifts, but due to constraints on staff and volunteer time, we are unable to shop for each sponsored family. However, we can always use gift cards to shop for families who may not have been matched or for families who have arrived in the Shelter after sponsors and families were matched (we sometimes have families come in until Christmas). Gift cards are also appreciated for assisting our clients throughout the year. Gift card donations made directly to the Shelter are tax deductible.

Are my Adopt-A-Family donations tax deductible?

We can only issue a tax receipt for cash or gift card donations made directly to MHWSS. Gifts provided to the families are not eligible for a tax receipt.

Where and when are my gifts dropped off? What if I can't drop them off?

The depot location has to be secured from available vacant properties each year, however, all sponsors will receive correspondence once we have secured the location and have set the dates for drop-off. If you are unable to drop your gifts off, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange to pick them up.