



IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
FAMILY-TO-FAMILY

Tips,  
Tools and  
Resources for  
Organizers

# Help Feed a Family in Need

**Help stop hunger in the U.S.** one family at a time. Join with friends to start a local chapter of Family-To-Family and send a monthly box of groceries to families in need. Individuals may also choose to sponsor a family through a monthly donation. It's a simple but profound connection between families.

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# Help Feed a Family in Need Overview

## The Problem

Often, families relying on food stamps and food banks encounter bare pantries by the end of the third week of each month. The Family-to-Family program augments Federal and local food aid to supply food for this crucial time.

## The Solution

Each month, one family sponsors another family with a monthly contribution to Family-to-Family, a non-profit, national hunger relief program that provides needy American families with basic life necessities during difficult times. Recipient families are vetted, and groceries provided, by Family-to-Family. Or, volunteers can form a local chapter to send monthly food boxes to families in need. Local chapters are given the tools, infrastructure and professional support of Family-to-Family.

## Time Commitment

As little as five minutes per month to maintain a personal connection with the sponsored family, or up to five hours a month to manage a chapter, once it's up and running.

## Special Considerations

This volunteer activity can be done by anyone. No special skills are needed. The minimum donation is about \$30 per month.

## Who Can Do This?

Individuals or groups can join the program and small groups of five to 10 families can start a chapter. Strong organizational skills are recommended for chapter initiation.

## Great Reasons To Do This Project

Sponsoring a family can be a meaningful way to teach empathy and caring because sending life's necessities is such a concrete way to give. It is also a great multi-generational activity for grandparents and grandkids to do together. Kids can help shop for the food, pack the box, draw a picture for their family or write a letter.

# For Individuals: How to Sponsor a Family

## Individuals or Families can Cyber-Sponsor a Family in Need

Sponsoring a family in need is easy with a monthly credit card donation that helps defray the cost of groceries. Family-to-Family matches families and encourages ongoing communication through letters or email. The recipients can check email or receive mail at their local outreach center when they pick up their food or grocery coupons. Here's how to get started:

Choose a community you'd like to help for a period of twelve months. View the [list of sponsored communities](#) at [Family-to-Family.org](#). Complete your online donation. All it takes is a minimum monthly credit or debit card donation of about \$30 that will pay for five to seven meals worth of groceries for the sponsor family every month.

After you complete your online donation, send an email to [famtofamforgood@gmail.com](mailto:famtofamforgood@gmail.com) with your name and address and chosen community, and Family-to-Family will send you the name of your sponsored family, information about them, and the address of the local community outreach center where you can communicate with your selected family.

Additional participation may include sending your sponsored family a monthly drive item (a non-food necessity like winter gloves, toothpaste or shampoo) or you can join the One Book At A Time program and send a gently used children's book each month to the family you're sponsoring. This helps to promote literacy and helps the family build a mini home library.



All funds are used for food except for a small credit card transaction fee.

# For Groups: How to Start a Chapter, Food Box Program

You may join one of the existing chapters (now located in 12 States), or start one of your own. You will need four other committed families plus yours to start a new chapter that will shop for, pack and send monthly food boxes, as well as sending letters to make a personal connection. Here are the basic steps:

- 1** Contact Family-to-Family at [famtofamforgood@gmail.com](mailto:famtofamforgood@gmail.com). Ask for the Chapter Chair introduction packet which includes all required directions, guidelines, references and requirements.
- 2** Establish a monthly drop-off location (like the Chapter chair's house or a religious community center).
- 3** Complete your paperwork and send it to [famtofamforgood@gmail.com](mailto:famtofamforgood@gmail.com), and they will schedule a call between you and Pam Koner, the founder of Family-to-Family.
- 4** Each family in your chapter will be linked with one family in the "receiving" community. This community will be located in another part of the country, in order to respect the privacy of all the families involved.
- 5** Go shopping! Family-To-Family provides a [shopping list](#). Each member family packs a carton of groceries and other basic life necessities for their recipient family every month. Involve children and grandchildren so they learn the importance of giving to those who are less fortunate. Donors should label the box clearly with the sponsor family's name.



**Tip for Chapter Chairs:**  
Try to match donors with families who have children of the same gender but a bit younger so the sponsoring family can also pass on gently-used clothing.

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## FOR GROUPS: HOW TO START A CHAPTER, FOOD BOX PROGRAM, continued

- 6 The chapter leader will ship the boxes to the community contact in the receiving community; they'll deliver them to the families unopened.

Note: Chapter families share the cost of shipping expenses with their chapter leader. Family-to-Family has a 30 percent discount with FedEx ground shipping. If you are interested in this option contact [famtofamforgood@gmail.com](mailto:famtofamforgood@gmail.com).

### Monthly Cost for Food Box Option

Approximately \$30 per month per family for food plus approximately \$15 for shipping (using shipping discount). Tip for Families: Reduce shipping costs by limiting the amount of cans in the box.

Note: Many groups ship food boxes for several months and then switch to the Chapter Cyber-Sponsorship option once they've developed a more personal relationship with their family. This will help avoid shipping costs.



#### Tip for Families

Develop a more personal connection by including a letter or photo in each box. Encourage children to send their gently-used toys or books.

FOR GROUPS: HOW TO START A CHAPTER, CYBER SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM, continued

# For Groups: How to Start a Chapter, Cyber - Sponsorship Program

A cyber-sponsorship program enables you to start a chapter of donating families without incurring shipping costs. Each family will provide enough funds so that Family-to-Family can purchase food for each sponsored family while maintaining a personal connection with their receiving family. The only difference between this program and the Food Box program described above is that this program enables the delivery of local produce and vegetables, and costs less to manage, as chapters alleviate shipping costs for food boxes. Contact Family-to-Family at [famtofamforgood@gmail.com](mailto:famtofamforgood@gmail.com) to get started!

## Monthly Cost for Cyber-Sponsorship Program

Members of the donating chapter donate \$30 per month for grocery purchases for their sponsored families.

In addition, families in the chapter are asked to shop for one item each month – the “monthly drive” item, (e.g. warm gloves, cold medicines, or toothbrushes). Each family drops off the monthly drive item (along with a letter to “their” family and the \$30 check to Family-to-Family) in a zip-lock bag with the sponsored family’s name on it, to a central location – usually the Chapter Chair’s home. The Chapter Chair then packs everyone’s purchase and, letters in a box and ships them to the community coordinator in the receiving community.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Family-to-Family: Help Feed a Family in Need

Family-to-Family is a non-profit, national hunger relief program that provides needy American families with basic life necessities during difficult times. Their mission is to connect families with more to profoundly poor, mainly rural families with much less. Visit [www.family-to-family.org](http://www.family-to-family.org) for additional information. AARP's collaboration with Family-to-Family is focused on encouraging Cyber-Sponsorship and new chapter development.

### How do you find communities to sponsor?

We base the sponsor communities mostly from U.S. Census Department poverty statistics. We also research the specific needs of the community through conversations with local school officials, food pantry directors, church leaders, or other outreach workers who have detailed knowledge of the area.

### How do you decide which families need the most help?

Local outreach workers identify families for sponsorship; families must live under the U.S. poverty line and/or be eligible for food stamps, or meet other specific poverty criteria established by local outreach organizations.

### What is involved in sponsoring a family?

We have three family donation programs and each is slightly different.

#### Option 1: Individual Cyber- Sponsorship:

Individuals or individual families sponsor a family through a monthly online donation to Family-To-Family and shop for and send monthly drive items (non-food basic necessities). Costs: Approximately \$30 per month for food plus about \$10 for optional non-food items, and the cost to ship those items.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, continued

**Option 2: Food Box Program for Chapters:**

Chapters of donating families each shop for and send a box of food to a community contact in the receiving community for a specific family each month. Costs: Approximately \$30 per month for food plus about \$10 for optional non-food extra items. Shipping costs are additional, approximately \$15 for the discounted FedEx ground shipping.

**Option 3: Cyber-Sponsorship for Chapters:**

Chapters of donating families donate \$30 per month for their receiving family to cover the cost of food. Donor families may also shop for and send monthly drive items (non-food basic necessities) for their selected families. Costs: Approximately \$30 per month for food plus about \$10 for optional non-food extra items. Shipping is free through donated FedEx shipping.



You can choose the community you'd like to help online when you sign up through the Cyber-Sponsorship program.

**Can I help families in my own community?**

In order to respect the privacy of both sponsoring and sponsored families, we do not match you with a family in need in your own community. Our program has found the most success by matching families at a distance (usually families living in different parts of the country).

If you are interested in helping local families, you can request to have a needy community designated as a Family-to-Family sponsored community. We recommend that you

- [locate a local food bank in your area](#).
- contact the food bank to find the local food pantries that they service
- email [famtofamforgood@gmail.com](mailto:famtofamforgood@gmail.com) with the pantry contact information so they can contact the pantry and explain the program.

### **Can I send a box of food to a family even if I'm not part of a chapter?**

We started the Cyber-Sponsorship program for individuals and individual families who wish to help but are not part of a local chapter. Through this program, a donor or an individual family can donate about \$30 a month to Family-to-Family for groceries purchased locally for a specific family. The chapter system is the most cost-effective way for Family-to-Family to manage the sending of food boxes.

### **Can I choose the community I'd like to help?**

Yes. Go to [www.family-to-family.org](http://www.family-to-family.org) to choose the sponsored communities you'd like to help. We will do our best to match you and your chapter's donors with families from that community (depending on availability).

### **How do I sponsor a family if I don't live near a drop-off location and don't want to start my own chapter?**

Sign up for the online Cyber-Sponsorship program to sponsor a family for one year in the community of your choice. You will commit to an automatically deducted monthly charge (Other than a small credit card transaction fee, 100% of your donation is used to purchase groceries.)

## **More Information**

[See Pam Koner: CNN Heroes - Special Reports from CNN.com](#)

Serving Our Neighbors – Video on Pam Koner from AARP Bulletin  
[www.bulletin.aarp.org](http://www.bulletin.aarp.org)

Family-to-Family Newsletter with additional programs and stories for helping families in need.

[www.family-to-family.org](http://www.family-to-family.org)