

Alaska Wish Assists

Fact Sheet



CONTACT INFORMATION:

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Make-A-Wish® Alaska & Washington accepts wish assist requests from chapters looking to fulfill a wish to visit Alaska or needing assistance with a cruise transfer. For wishes to come to Alaska, the Alaska office will handle arrangements for transportation, lodging, and up to three activities. For wishes that involve a cruise transfer, the Alaska office will handle arrangements for lodging and transportation to the cruise port. Whenever possible, complimentary or discounted activities and accommodations will be obtained. Make-A-Wish Alaska & Washington will charge a wish assist fee at the conclusion of the wish, based on the wish assist fee structure. All wish expenses will either be charged to the credit card provided by the originating chapter or billed back to originating chapters after the completion of the wish.

Our Wish Coordinators are experienced in wish planning statewide with strong vendor relationships. We ask that you begin the wish planning process with the assigned coordinator with as much lead time as possible to obtain best rates and in-kinds. Please do not try to make arrangements or obtain discounts by directly contacting Alaska vendors. Doing so jeopardizes the relationships that the chapter has worked hard to develop and takes special care in nurturing. Because the tourism season in Alaska is very short and due to the limited number of vendors and resources, it is imperative that all lodging, transportation and activity arrangements for wishes be handled by our chapter at all times.

Accommodations and activities book up fast and a wish child's preference for lodging or excursions may not always be available. To ensure a wonderful Alaskan wish experience, requests should arrive as early as possible, and absolutely **no later than 90 days before arrival**. This extra lead time is due to the scarcity of resources such as rental cars and quality lodging.

Due to the large geographic size of Alaska, your wish families must choose from **one** of the following regions: Southcentral, Interior, or Southeast. At this time, we do not send wish families to the Far North or Southwest regions unless there is a specific reason this region is requested. Our Alaska office is available to answer additional questions about any region, but requests that these questions are sent via email.



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If your chapter chooses to plan an Alaska wish without the assistance of the Alaska office, you may do so but cannot use the Make-A-Wish name at any time to make reservations, request discounts, or ask for special services. Additionally, you are required to notify the Alaska office that you are sending a child to our territory outside of the wish assist process.

PROCESS:

1. Obtain 3 preferred dates for travel, at least 3 activity choices, and what region your family would like to visit from your wish family.
 - For questions regarding Alaska wishes such as regions, activities, and cost estimates, please refer to the Alaska Wish Assist Portal at <https://wish.org/akwa/AlaskaAssist> before reaching out to the Alaska Wish Assist Team.
2. Submit the wish via the Salesforce Portal. When submitting the wish, please select "To Go - Other" as the child's wish type and add Make-A-Wish Alaska & Washington as the assisting chapter.
 - A wish must be submitted at least **90 days prior** to the wish—the more lead time provided the better. For the wish to be accepted the following forms must be submitted:
 - i. Alaska Wish Assist Form
 - ii. Child's Medical Summary Form
 - iii. Wish Child Form or All About Me Form
 - Note: INCOMPLETE WISH FORMS will not be accepted and will not be processed. Failure to respond to a request for more information in the intake process or incomplete forms will result in the declining of the wish via Salesforce.
3. Once all required forms have been uploaded, the wish will be processed and assigned to a Wish Assist Coordinator within 72 hours of intake. If Salesforce lists 'Trina Cottingham' as the 'Wish Coordinator – Assisting' it has not yet been assigned. Do not assume a wish has been assigned, dates have been confirmed or is in process without confirmation from your Wish Assist Coordinator.
4. Your Wish Assist Coordinator will be in touch within 72 hours of being assigned. At this time, the coordinator will let you know the next steps for the wish including but not limited to date approval, activity confirmation, and permission to book flights.
 - Note: Due to limited flights, we do not make any arrangements until we receive flights from the originating chapter. We recommend booking flights as soon as dates and region is confirmed by your Wish Assist Coordinator to ensure a high-quality wish experience for your family.
5. Due to limited resources in Alaska, it is imperative that the wish process above be upheld and timely. Prompt response to all communication regarding the wish experience is appreciated and will allow us to plan the best wish for your wish family.

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WISH ASSIST FEE STRUCTURE:

- If the wish is for a standard Alaska wish, a \$300 wish assist fee is charged, which is payable at the time of invoicing.
- If a wish is for an Alaskan cruise, a \$75 cruise transfer fee is charged, which is payable at the time of invoicing. This fee is due to having to arrange lodging and transportation for the wish.
- If a wish is submitted within 90 days of arrival, the wish will be subject to an additional \$100 expedited wish assist fee.

RECOMMENDED TIMING FOR SUBMITTING REQUESTS:

Due to the limited tourism seasons in Alaska, it is highly encouraged that requests are submitted in Salesforce as soon as preferred dates are determined with families. As always, certain travel dates during peak seasons may be limited due to staff or vendor capacity.

LENGTH OF STAY:

Length of stay in Alaska should be between 5 – 7 nights. The recommended stay is 6 nights, but shorter or longer stays may be considered based on duration of travel, the originating chapter's proximity to Alaska and/or to accommodate a child's medical needs.

If a wish family chooses to extend their trip, the originating chapter MUST notify the Alaska office and the originating chapter will need to complete the Alaska & Washington Travel Extension Letter of Understanding. Families must not use the Make-A-Wish name or ask for discounts or donations during their stay.

PLEASE NOTE: EXTENSIONS ARE VERY DIFFICULT IN ALASKA AND THIS OPTION IS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED; PLEASE SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH THE ALASKA OFFICE BEFORE AGREEING TO TRIP EXTENSIONS.

WEATHER & SEASONS:

Alaska weather can vary depending on the time of year as well as the region a family is visiting. In the summer, temperatures can vary from mid-60s to high-80s. In the winter, temperatures can vary from The low-10s to mid-20s but it is not uncommon for temperatures to be in the negatives. We strongly recommend families check their preferred weather website prior to their trip to know what to pack. A recommended packing list for both the summer and winter seasons can be found in the Alaska Wish Assist Portal under the Forms section at <https://wish.org/akwa/AlaskaAssist>.

Many Alaska activities are season specific. Summer activities tend to be available from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Winter activities tend to be available November through March. A complete breakdown of what activities are available for each specific regions and seasons can be found in the Alaska Wish Assist Portal at <https://wish.org/akwa/AlaskaAssist>.

BLACKOUT DATES:

We will not be accepting wish dates that start, end, or overlap from December 23rd – January 2nd and July 2nd – July 8th.

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FLIGHTS & AIRPORTS:

You may book flights after receiving confirmation from your Alaska Wish Assists Coordinator of trip dates and which airport to fly into. Note that we cannot start planning a wish experience until we receive flights from the originating chapter.

Airport(s):

- Anchorage – Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (ANC)
- Fairbanks – Fairbanks International Airport (FAI)
- Juneau – Juneau International Airport (JNU)

MEDICAL FACILITIES:

Medical facilities in Alaska are limited. There are larger hospitals in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau with smaller clinics in Seward, Homer, Kenai and Denali. However, any specialized care may not be available.

TRANSPORTATION:

Due to the size of Alaska and limited vehicles for hire, we strongly urge families to have a rental car for their wish. Please visit the Alaska Wish Assists Portal for estimated costs.

Note: Due to Alaska Avis locations being independently owned, the ALI & LDW insurances are not included and are added onto every reservation. This costs an additional \$50/per day on top of the rental car cost. Additionally, Avis charges may not appear on your direct bill for up to 3 months post-wish. If you have questions about this, please contact our national Avis Representative.

LODGING/ACCOMMODATIONS:

The average room night cash cost of lodging in Alaska is \$250-\$500/per night, depending on season and location. Depending on availability and wish request, we may recommend booking the family at an Airbnb/VRBO or cabin instead of a traditional hotel. Please visit the Alaska Wish Assists Portal at <https://wish.org/akwa/AlaskaAssist> for more information about estimated costs and lodging types.

Note: Due to the nature of many locations in Alaska, lodging may lack handicap accessible rooms or other standard amenities.

ATTRACTIIONS:

Make-A-Wish Alaska & Washington will arrange up to 3 sponsored activities, depending on the wish kid's or chapter's desire indicated on the Alaska Wish Assists Form. Please visit the Alaska Wish Assists Portal at <https://wish.org/akwa/AlaskaAssist> for activity descriptions, locations, and estimated costs.

FAMILY EXPENSE MONEY:

The Chapter recommends a minimum spending allowance of \$100/person per day for the cost of food. We also recommend budgeting for gas and parking, tips for excursion guides, and souvenirs for the wish child. Please visit the Alaska Wish Assists Portal at <https://wish.org/akwa/AlaskaAssist> for recommendations for these expenses.

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ITINERARY:

Your Alaska Wish Assist Coordinator will make every effort to provide a detailed, print-ready trip itinerary approximately 12 calendar days prior to arrival as long as they have received timely responses to any activity inquiries made to the originating coordinator.

INVOICE:

Within 45 days after the completion of the wish, the originating chapter will receive an invoice for the wish assist fee and any trip-related expenses paid for by the Alaska & Washington chapter as well as an in-kind summary.

THANK YOU LETTERS:

In-kind donor acknowledgement letters should be addressed to the Alaska vendors noted in the in-kind summary and sent directly to the vendor as part of the wish closing process, unless otherwise indicated by the Alaska chapter. Please note that Alaska vendors run a high volume of wishes and maintaining these relationships depends on your support and acknowledgement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- If your chapter chooses to plan an Alaskan wish without the assistance of the Alaska office, you may not use the Make-A-Wish name at any time to make arrangements, request discounts, or ask for special services. Additionally, you are required to notify the Alaska office that you are sending a child to our territory.
- Expedited Wish Service
 - Requests received within 90 days prior to the arrival of the wish family are considered "rush" wishes and must be accompanied by a doctor's note verifying the need for the child to travel only at that time.
 - An expedited wish service fee of \$100 will be charged for wishes that are submitted with less than 90 days' notice, if the wish is not a celebrity wish or a medical rush wish.
 - All efforts to accommodate expedited or rush wishes will be made, however, because of the extreme popularity and limitations of seasonal tourism in Alaska, alternative timing or activities may have to be considered.
- Cancellations
 - A wish cancellation fee may be assessed unless a medical note or documentation is received.
 - Cancellations for accommodations and activities may be subject to charge without refund. All efforts will be made to ensure that minimal costs are incurred whenever possible, but vendor cancellation fees will be the responsibility of the originating chapter.
- Extension Policy
 - If a wish family chooses to extend their trip, the originating chapter must complete and submit the Alaska & Washington Travel Extension Letter of Understanding to the child's Salesforce record.

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- Make-A-Wish Alaska & Washington will not make any arrangements for wish families during their extension. All accommodations, transportation and activity arrangements must be made completely independent of the arrangements made for the wish.
- Please inform wish families that they are not permitted to use the Make-A-Wish name to make arrangements, request discounts, or ask for special services. This is vital to our delicate vendor relationships.
- Non-Comp Participation Policy
 - Non-sponsored travelers are responsible for making their own arrangements (accommodations, transportation, activities, and enhancements) at published rates.
 - Please inform non-comp participants that they are not permitted to use the Make-A-Wish name to make arrangements, request discounts, or ask for special services. This is vital to our delicate vendor relationships.
 - Any charges incurred by Make-A-Wish Alaska & Washington for non-sponsored participants will be invoiced to the originating chapter.
 - Please list any non-sponsored participants on the Alaska Wish Assist Form.