11th Annual Jack Daniel’s Operation Ride Home
2022 Holiday Season – Frequently Asked Questions

Where are the participating locations?
The Armed Services YMCA and its 12 Branch locations are honored to partner with Jack Daniel’s to facilitate the 11th Annual Jack Daniel’s Operation Ride Home. Applicant’s duty station must be a military installation in the United States served by one of the 12 Branches. For a listing, please page 4 for a full list or visit www.asymca.org/opridehome.

Who can apply for Jack Daniel’s Operation Ride Home?
Operation Ride Home is open to currently serving E1-E-5 service members, both single and married, travelling with their spouses and/or dependents children ages 0-18. The programs is specifically designed for military families who may not have the financial means to travel home for the holidays. The service member or spouse may apply.

Does the service member have to be one of the travelers?
No. While generally, the service member travels with their family, there may be instances where the service member may not be able to travel, but the family is still eligible and may be selected for the program.

What if the service member is deployed? Is the spouse or a dependent eligible to apply?
Yes, if the service member is deployed, the spouse and dependent children ages 0-18 of the E1-E5 service member is eligible to participate in Operation Ride Home.

Are there requirements for travel distances?
Yes, but only for vehicle travel, which destination must be at least 350 miles (one way) from the installation. There are not travel distance requirements for air travel. The choice to fly or drive is an individual decision made by the service member.

When do applications open up for Operation Ride Home?
Applications for 2022 holiday travel may be submitted starting September 1, 2022.

How are participants selected?
Participants are prioritized and selected based on need, in coordination with approval from their commands.

By filling out an application am I guaranteed free travel home for the holidays?
No. There may be more applications submitted than funds to fulfill the requests. In addition, applications can be declined based on the discretion of the Branch or Headquarters. However, if a Branch reaches its traveler limits, a waitlist will be created in the case that an approved applicant chooses not to participate.

How does the process work?
Service members or spouses may apply online at www.asymca.org/opridehome or through your local ASYMCA Branch. Applicants must use the Command Approval Form and have their immediate commander complete the form before submitting the application. The Branch reviews and approves applications and contacts approved service members to coordinate travel logistics.

Why is the program only available at certain installations?
We can only offer Operation Ride Home where the Armed Services YMCA has Branches.
What if my travel costs are more than the stipend amount?
If air travel costs exceed the stipend amount, the traveler must pay the difference. The traveler’s billing information will be collected upfront to pay for any additional costs. Operation Ride Home is structured to help facilitate travel and offset costs as much as possible, but not necessarily to provide “free” travel or cover 100% of travel costs. In order to ensure optimal benefit of the donated funds, the program follows guidelines established by the ASYMCA and Jack Daniel’s.

Can I book my own air travel and be reimbursed?
No. Approved applicants must not book their own airline tickets, or they will not receive the travel stipend. All air travel must be booked by the ASYMCA branch or ASYMCA travel agent. Airfare booked outside of this process will not be reimbursed.

What are the travel booking deadlines?
Flights will be booked in coordination with your local ASYMCA Branch, and pre-paid debit cards are individually distributed for vehicle travel.

Are international flights allowed?
Yes, the airfare stipend may be applied to international travel, however each traveler will still receive no more than the maximum flight assistance for each service and family member traveling. All remaining costs must be paid by the traveler.

If I’m flying and my ticket costs less than the stipend, will I receive the difference in cash?
No. If your ticket(s) is less than the allotted airfare stipend, the traveler with not receive the difference. Less expensive fares allow more troops and family members to participate in the program. The ASYMCA or authorized travel agents will book travel and will look for the most cost-effective flights. Requests for specific airlines/routes will not be accommodated; the priority is to meet the travel dates.

Do you provide flights for family members to visit service members?
No. The intent of Operation Ride Home is to send service members and their family from their duty station home for the holidays. Travel is not provided for family members to visit the service member.

Will I receive travel assistance for vehicle travel?
Yes. A pre-paid gift card will be provided for each traveler in the family. This amount is meant to help with gas, food, or hotel accommodations.

I received travel assistance through Operation Ride Home in a previous year, am I eligible again this year?
Yes. Applications are reviewed on an annual basis and prioritized according to need. Previous participation is not part of the selection criteria.

Do you provide cash assistance as part of this program?
No, cash is not distributed as part of this program. The ASYMCA books all flights directly to ensure the proper use of donated funds. For those driving, a pre-paid debit card will be provided to cover gas, food and accommodations.

If I am selected to participate, what is required of me?
If selected, and before travel is arranged, you must sign a waiver of liability. After travel has been arranged, we ask that the service member/family write a thank you note so that the ASYMCA and Jack Daniel’s can share the importance of this program with donors. We also ask program participants to share photos and brief video as a testimonial about their experience to demonstrate Operation Ride Home’s value to the military community. On social media, please use #OperationRideHome.
If I have questions about Operation Ride Home, who should I contact?
Visiting www.asymca.org/opridehome or contact the ASYMCA branch serving your installation (See page 4 for a full list).

Where do the funds come from that support this program?
Operation Ride Home is funded by the generous contributions of Jack Daniel’s, Jack Daniel’s Distributors, and the general public along with support from the Armed Services YMCA.

How can the public participate to help send more military families home for the holidays?
Anyone can make monetary donations or donate airline miles to the program and help more families at this link.

What if I have feedback or comments about the program?
Feel free to share your comments with us at feedback@asymca.org or to the Branch POC that supports your installation. We ask that you please respect the sponsor supporting this program.
Appendix A: Armed Services YMCA locations & Installations Participating in Operation Ride Home

** Members and families assigned to installations listed here are eligible to participate **