



12th Annual Jack Daniel's Operation Ride Home 2023 Holiday Season Frequently Asked Questions



Where are the participating locations?

The Armed Services YMCA and its 12 Branches are honored to partner with Jack Daniel's to facilitate the 12th Annual Jack Daniel's Operation Ride Home in 2023. Applicant's duty station must be a military installation in the United States served by one of the 12 Branches. For a listing, visit <https://oprighthouse.asymca.org>.

Who can apply for Jack Daniel's Operation Ride Home?

Operation Ride Home is open to currently serving E1-E5 service members, both single and married, travelling with their spouses/partners and/or dependent children ages 0-18. The program is specifically designed for military families who may not have the financial means to travel home for the holidays. The service member, spouse or military representative 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 such as deployment or TDY that keeps the service member from traveling home. In these cases, the spouse with military ID is eligible to travel home individually or with dependent children. Dependent children may not travel by themselves.

What if the service member is deployed?

If a service member is deployed, the spouse with military ID and dependent children ages 0-18 are eligible to receive travel assistance and travel independently of the service member. Dependent children may not travel by themselves.

Are there requirements for travel distances?

Yes, for air or vehicle travel, the destination must be at least 350 miles from the installation location. The choice to fly or drive is an individual decision made by the applicant.

When can I submit an application for Operation Ride Home?

Applications for the 2023 holiday travel open based on the dates provided by the ASYMCA Branch. Because the dates vary, please check the website for the dates and link to the application.

How are participants selected?

Participants are selected based on need and in coordination with installation command.

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 at the discretion of the ASYMCA Branch or Headquarters. However, if a Branch reaches its traveler limits, a waitlist will be created in the case that additional funds are made available.

How does the process work?

Visit www.asymca.org/oprighthouse for eligibility, application deadlines and a link to the application itself. For traveling service members, a Command Approval Form is required to submit an application. The Branch reviews submissions, makes determinations, and contacts approved applicants 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 local Branches, which are: Alaska; Camp Pendleton; El Paso; Fort Campbell; Fort Liberty; Fort Leonard Wood; Hampton Roads; Hawaii; Killeen; Lawton/Altus, Oklahoma; San Diego; and Twentynine Palms.

What if my travel costs are more than the stipend amount?

If air travel costs exceed the stipend amount of \$500 per approved traveler, the traveler must pay the difference. The traveler's billing information will be collected at the time the ticket is booked. While Operation Ride Home is structured to help facilitate travel and offset costs as much as possible, it may not cover 100% of travel costs. 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-approved travel agent. Airfare booked outside of this process will not be reimbursed.

What is the travel timeframe?

Once an application is approved, the dates of allowable travel are November 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024. This allows service members flexibility to travel home based on their approved leave dates.

Are international flights allowed?

Yes, the airfare stipend may be applied to any destination city including international travel; however, it does not change the maximum stipend amount. Any additional 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 will 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 may not be able to be accommodated.

Do you provide flights for family members to visit service members?

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

Will I receive travel assistance for vehicle travel?

Yes. One \$125 pre-paid gift card will be provided per immediate family member traveling in the vehicle. This amount is meant to help offset the costs of gas, food, and/or hotel accommodations.

I received travel assistance through Operation Ride Home previously, 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.

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 videos as a testimonial about their experience to demonstrate Operation Ride Home's value to the military community. On social media, please use #OperationRideHome.

Where do the funds come from that support this program?

Operation Ride Home is funded by the generous contributions of its Presenting Sponsor Jack Daniel's, its distributors, employees, and parent company Brown-Forman, as well as the general public. American Airlines, the official Airline Sponsor, also donates miles in support of the program.

How can the public participate to help send more military families home for the holidays?

Anyone can make monetary donations or donate airline miles at [this link](#).

If I have questions or comments about Operation Ride Home, who should I contact?

Email opridehome@asymca.org or contact your local ASYMCA Branch.

Appendix A: Armed Services YMCA locations & Installations Participating in Operation Ride Home

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