



TRAVEL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

Bridge the Distance Fund seeks to maximize the number of patients we can serve while recognizing that medical travel often involves unique circumstances. All travel expenses are reviewed for reasonableness based on the patient's medical needs, travel itinerary, and available options at the time of booking.

Whenever possible, Bridge the Distance Fund provides assistance through electronic gift cards issued directly to approved travel providers (such as airlines, hotels, and short-term rental platforms). This allows patients to maintain control over their travel arrangements while reducing the financial burden of paying costs upfront.

To be good stewards of donor funds, Bridge the Distance Fund uses the following guidelines to review and approve travel costs.

How We Provide Assistance

Whenever possible, Bridge the Distance Fund provides assistance through electronic gift cards issued to approved travel providers (for example, Southwest Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Hilton, Marriott, Airbnb, or rental car companies). This allows patients to book and manage their own travel while reducing the need to pay expenses upfront.

In some circumstances, Bridge the Distance Fund may use another payment method when determined to be in the best interest of the patient and the program.

Eligible Travel Dates

Bridge the Distance Fund provides assistance only for travel directly related to the patient's approved cancer care.

For each approved trip:

- Arrival travel may occur on the day before or the day of the patient's first scheduled appointment.
- Return travel may occur on the day of or the day after the patient's last scheduled appointment.

Travel, lodging, rental car, and other eligible expenses outside this timeframe are not eligible for Bridge the Distance Fund assistance. Patients may choose to arrive earlier or remain at their destination longer, but they are responsible for expenses associated with those additional days.

For lodging, this means BTDF may generally cover lodging beginning the night before the first scheduled appointment through the night of the last scheduled appointment, when needed.

Relationships with Bridge the Distance Team Members and Donors

Having a personal, family, professional, or financial relationship with a Bridge the Distance Fund team member does not automatically make an applicant ineligible for assistance.

Applicants are asked to disclose these relationships so that Bridge the Distance Fund can appropriately manage potential conflicts of interest and ensure that grant decisions are made fairly and independently.

If a relationship is disclosed, the affiliated team member will not participate in the review or funding decision for that application. The application will otherwise be considered using the same eligibility requirements, review criteria, and funding guidelines applied to other applicants.

Documentation After Travel

To help Bridge the Distance Fund remain accountable to our donors and continue serving future patients, recipients are expected to provide documentation showing how approved travel assistance was used.

Within **30 days of completing travel**, recipients should submit receipts or proof of purchase for expenses paid using Bridge the Distance Fund assistance. Receipts or proof of purchase should be emailed to grants@bridgethedistance.org. Receipts or proof of purchase should clearly indicate the travel provider, transaction date, total cost, and specific services booked.

Examples include:

- Airline confirmation or receipt showing the completed booking
- Hotel or short-term rental confirmation or receipt
- Rental car receipt
- Rideshare receipt
- Fuel receipt(s) for approved fuel gift cards

Failure to provide requested documentation may affect eligibility for future assistance.

Any remaining balance on a travel gift card should be used only for future care-related travel. Recipients who no longer need the remaining balance are encouraged to contact Bridge the Distance Fund to discuss available options.

Airfare

Bridge the Distance Fund may provide funding toward the cost of the lowest reasonable airfare available at the time of booking for the patient only. At this time we cannot cover airfare of caregivers traveling with the patient.

We recognize that medical appointments and care schedules may require travel to be booked on short notice. These circumstances will be considered during grant review.

- Economy/Main Cabin fares are generally eligible

- Basic Economy is not required if it would create hardship (i.e. when flexibility to change flights is medically necessary or when traveling with young children or medical equipment)
- First Class, Business Class, Premium Economy, seat upgrades, and optional add-ons (priority boarding, lounge access, etc.) are not eligible unless pre-approved due to a documented medical necessity.

What to submit for final funding approval: itinerary that clearly shows the airline, passenger name, dates, seats, and cost.

Note: Bridge the Distance Fund may request additional documentation if the selected airfare appears significantly more expensive than other reasonable options available at the time of booking.

Lodging

Bridge the Distance Fund may provide financial assistance toward the cost of the lowest reasonable hotel or short-term rental available.

Lodging assistance is generally based on the [federal lodging per diem rate](#) for the care location.

Applicants requesting lodging rates above the federal lodging rate should provide a brief explanation (for example, proximity to the care facility, lack of lower-cost options, medical needs, or other circumstances).

What to submit for final funding approval: itinerary that clearly shows the company (hotel or rental company), room type, location, dates, and cost.

Note: Bridge the Distance Fund may request additional documentation if the selected lodging appears significantly more expensive than other reasonable options available at the time of booking.

Ground Transportation

PERSONAL VEHICLE TRAVEL

Bridge the Distance Fund may provide travel assistance for patients who use their personal vehicle to travel to and from appointments for cancer care.

Assistance is generally calculated using the current federal mileage rate as a benchmark for determining a reasonable funding amount. This does not represent mileage reimbursement. Approved assistance is typically provided through electronic gift cards to the applicant's preferred eligible fuel retailer. The current federal mileage rate will be used as a benchmark at the time the request is reviewed.

Personal vehicle travel assistance will be calculated using the shortest reasonable driving route as determined by Google Maps.

What to submit for final funding approval: Google maps showing the miles from your home to the care facility or lodging location in the care city.

Note: Applicants may request gift cards for participating fuel retailers such as Pilot Flying J, Love's, Circle K, QuikTrip, Buc-ee's, Kroger Fuel, Shell, ExxonMobil, BP, Marathon, or other available providers.

RENTAL CAR

Bridge the Distance Fund may provide assistance toward the cost of the lowest reasonable rental car available at the time of booking.

- Optional add-ons (GPS, satellite radio, prepaid fuel, etc.) are not eligible
- Standard, Full-Size, Midsize, and Compact car options are generally eligible
- Luxury, premium, specialty, sports, and oversized vehicles are not eligible unless pre-approved due to documented medical necessity OR because they are the lowest cost option at the time of booking

What to submit for final funding approval: itinerary that clearly shows the rental car company, type of car, pick up and drop off locations, dates, and cost

Note: Bridge the Distance Fund may request additional documentation if the selected rental car appears significantly more expensive than other reasonable options available at the time of booking.

RIDESHARE (UBER/LYFT)

Bridge the Distance Fund may provide assistance toward the cost of rideshare services (such as Uber or Lyft) when they are a reasonable transportation option related to the patient's cancer care.

Examples of eligible rides may include:

- Travel between the airport and lodging
- Travel between lodging and the care facility
- Travel to eligible appointments during the approved travel period

Personal trips unrelated to cancer (such as sightseeing, shopping, entertainment, or dining outside of care-related travel) are not eligible.

What to submit for final funding approval: Locations for anticipated rideshare travel, including number of trips and initial/final destinations for all trips (for example, "Round-trip Uber between lodging and MD Anderson for five days of appointments.")

Note: Bridge the Distance Fund may provide assistance through electronic gift cards or other approved payment methods. Funding is based on reasonable anticipated transportation needs and may not cover all rides requested.

Currently Ineligible Expenses

- Parking
- Tolls
- Meals
- Baggage fees (unless medically necessary)
- Travel insurance
- Optional upgrades

General Note

These guidelines are intended to assist applicants and do not guarantee funding for any particular expense or amount. Bridge the Distance Fund reserves the right to approve, deny, or partially fund requests based on available funding, program guidelines, and individual circumstances.

Whenever possible, approved assistance will be provided through electronic gift cards or other controlled payment methods selected by the program. Alternative payment methods may be used when appropriate.