



# Riders' Guide

October 2023

## **Welcome**

Thank you for riding with Bureau-Putnam Area Rural Transit, otherwise known as BPART, the public transportation service in Bureau and Putnam Counties in north central Illinois. All trips must begin or end in Bureau or Putnam County within BPART operating hours.

BPART can often coordinate transportation services to get you where you need to go, even if we don't travel in that county. We can link with neighboring providers in LaSalle, Lee/Ogle, Whiteside, Henry, and Marshall/Stark Counties to help you complete your travel needs.

BPART is a Medicaid approved transportation provider. Recipients should contact their Medicaid provider or BPART to learn how to arrange for transportation needs for medical appointments to be covered.

Hours of operation are Monday through Saturday from 6:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. BPART operates as a demand response service which means that rides must be scheduled through our dispatch center 24 hours in advance. The cut-off for rides is 12:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. All rides must be scheduled through a dispatcher. Voicemail, email or messages through our website or Facebook page are not accepted.

Same day service may be available for riders but is not guaranteed. We are happy to try to fit in a ride if a driver is available due to a last-minute cancellation, although we cannot make any promises.

As a rider, you are entitled to:

- Safe, reliable, and courteous transportation
- A clean and well-maintained vehicle that meets IDOT safety guidelines
- A licensed and fully trained driver
- Compliance with all vehicle and traffic laws and regulations
- Fair and reasonable transit fares
- Diligent and timely investigation of complaints

Please review our rider guide and let us know if you have any questions.

**Thank you for choosing BPART!**

## **Hours of Operation**

Rides are available Monday through Saturday between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., except these observed holidays. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, BPART will be closed on that Friday; if the holiday falls on a Sunday, BPART will be closed on that Monday:

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

### **Severe Weather Policy**

In case of inclement weather, BPART may limit hours of operation, routes available, or cancel services completely. When possible, dispatch personnel will contact riders to cancel. Any changes will also be posted on the BPART Facebook page and website. Passengers are responsible for snow removal to make their residences accessible for BPART. Drivers are not allowed to assist passengers through snow or ice that has not been shoveled. If a passenger schedules a ride knowing that a path has not been cleared, upon their arrival the driver will consider the trip a "no show."

### **Scheduling a Ride**

Rides can be scheduled between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Requests for rides are required 24 hours in advance and before 12:00 p.m. the business day before your ride is needed. When possible, please schedule in advance, especially if your ride is for an out of area trip (i.e., Peoria, Ottawa). Our dispatchers can be reached at (877) 874-8813. Rides are based on space and vehicle availability.

When calling to arrange a ride for yourself or someone else, please be prepared to give the following information:

- Your name and address
- Whether this is a single trip or multiple trips needed
- Your phone number and an emergency contact number
- Date and time ride is needed
- Address of your destination
- If you will have an escort/aide with you
- Additional information will be requested if your ride is to a medical appointment so we can ensure accurate billing to Medicaid or the appropriate management care organization (MCO).

### **Additional Important Information**

- Riders are responsible for maintaining a safe walkway free of snow, ice, or other debris.
- Drivers are not allowed to enter a rider's residence or destination.
- Drivers cannot take reservations from riders.

- Please have the correct fare amount. Drivers do not carry change and cannot accept tips; any amount more than the fare amount will be considered a donation.
- BPART does not provide emergency transportation services. Our drivers are not paramedics. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911.
- The maximum weight capacity of a lift on most vehicles is 1,000 pounds including the passenger, any mobility aid, medical equipment, or personal items.

### **Chaperone/Aide Policy**

Aides are not required to pay a fee to ride. BPART is a curb-to-curb service. If a rider is not able to enter/exit the vehicle alone, an aide can ride along to assist. An adult chaperone is required for children 12 and younger.

### **Service Animals**

Service animals are allowed on BPART vehicles in compliance with ADA regulations. A service animal is any animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The service animal must remain under the control of the rider and not present an immediate danger to the driver or riders. If you have a service animal that will accompany you, please let the dispatcher know when scheduling your ride. A driver can ask, "Is this a service animal?" and "What service has this animal been trained to perform?" Comfort animals and pets are not allowed.

### **Packages or Carry-Ons**

BPART is not responsible for any personal items or packages that are lost or stolen. Items must be secured during transport. Drivers are not responsible for carrying packages for passengers. We ask that you limit bags and other items to a manageable size and number to ensure plenty of room for you and other passengers. Medical oxygen may be transported with a rider but must be secured and cannot be placed in an aisle for safety purposes.

### **Rider Guidelines**

Please be aware of the following guidelines and general information about BPART.

- Passengers are always required to wear a seat belt unless a letter from a rider's physician states otherwise. A copy of this letter will be kept on file.
- For liability reasons, seat belts will remain on while the vehicle is in motion and for the duration of the ride. Upon request and permission, a driver may assist a rider in securing a seat belt.
- By law, safety seats are required for children under the age of 8. Seats must be provided by the parent/guardian.

- All electric/manual mobility aids are required to be secured by a BPART employee with proper devices. All passengers using wheelchairs and other mobility devices will be secured using a four-point tie-down system. When a wheelchair or mobility device is difficult to secure properly, the driver is expected to make every effort at securing before notifying the passenger and recommending that the passenger transfer to a regular seat. The driver will contact the dispatch office and document situations in which a wheelchair or mobility device could not be fully secured if a passenger chooses not to transfer to a regular seat.
- Passengers cannot demand a change in the schedule or request to be picked up first or last. Riders also are not to ask the driver to stop along the way to a scheduled destination.
- Drivers will only wait for 5 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time for riders to board.
- Passengers are not allowed to ride for recreational purposes (i.e., sightseeing, visiting with other riders).
- No rider shall play any radio, etc. unless it is played through an earphone or headset device, so it is inaudible to other passengers and the driver.
- Riders shall be considerate of all other passengers.
- No rider shall occupy more than 1 seat.
- While it is not BPART's objective to enforce personal hygiene standards on the public, any body odor that is deemed to be offensive or causes others to complain or vacate their space will be addressed with the offending individual.

There is NO:

- Eating
- Drinking (bottled water is allowed)
- Smoking, vaping, or use of tobacco products
- Standing
- Taking non-prescription drugs
- Riding under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Possession of weapons (firearms, knives, etc.)
- Transportation of any hazardous substances (gasoline, oil, acids, etc.)
- Improper dress (i.e., no shirt, no shoes)
- Damaging or defacing vehicles, interior or exterior
- Removing items from the vehicle not belonging to the rider

## **Incident Reporting**

BPART drivers who experience or observe disruptive or illegal behavior will report such an incident to the supervisor as soon as possible and will complete an incident report.

BPART may refuse service and/or contact local police for instances when a passenger engages in violence, is a danger to himself/herself or others, is seriously disruptive or is engaged in illegal activities.

## **Mobility Assistance**

With respect to the size and weight of a wheelchair, BPART will transport a wheelchair and its user if the lift can accommodate the size and weight of both and there is space on the vehicle, consistent with safety requirements according to the lift manufacturer.

For safety and liability purposes, BPART follows these guidelines:

- Passengers using a wheelchair can transfer to a seat in the vehicle if they request to do so and can transfer with no assistance from the driver.
- An individual who requires the lift may not be refused the opportunity to unload from the vehicle at any destination unless there is risk of equipment damage or temporary conditions making the unloading unsafe. Only in these situations will the passenger be denied the opportunity to exit the vehicle.
- Riders must ensure that the ramp and paths from their residence are properly paved and cleared of snow, ice, parked cars, trash, or other obstructions.
- BPART drivers are not responsible for assisting wheelchair passengers up and down steps.

## **Pick-Up/Return Rides**

Riders can expect transportation to arrive 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. The driver is required to wait 5 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time before departing. After that time, it will be considered a “no show.” Please be prompt and help us stay on schedule. On the day before the scheduled ride, you will receive an automated message to verify your ride. If you do not receive a call, please contact us at (877) 874-8813 to confirm.

## **Cancellations**

If your ride is no longer needed, please contact us as soon as possible but at least 1 hour in advance of the scheduled ride. If you do not cancel your ride within the allotted time, you will be considered a “no show.” Our dispatch office has voicemail to leave a message before or after office hours, if needed.

## **No Show Policy**

BPART reserves the right to deny rides if a passenger consistently misses scheduled trips. If a rider has two no shows in a 30-day period, riding privileges will be suspended for 30 days.

## **Comment and Complaint Procedure**

BPART is committed to being responsive to riders' needs. We encourage comments and recommendations. Please address all recommendations and/or complaints as follows:

Amber Biddix, Director of Transportation  
Gateway Services  
PO Box 535  
Princeton, IL 61356  
Phone: (877) 874-8813 Ext. 100  
Fax: (815) 875-8602

Riders with needs or questions not addressed in this handbook may call (877) 874-8813 during office hours Monday through Saturday. We will be happy to answer any questions. In the event you are not able to reach us, kindly leave contact information and we will return your call on the next business day.

Upon request, service information is available to the public in alternative formats. This handbook may be amended at any time.

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## **Fares**

The current fare schedule is listed below. All prices are one-way unless otherwise noted.

In town	\$ 2.50
In service area	\$ 4.00
Bureau/Putnam County to other counties	\$ 4.50
IVCC (student rate)	\$ 4.00
Peoria and Ottawa	\$15.00 (effective 8/1/2023)

Peoria trips are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of each month. Appointments must be made between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 p.m.

Ottawa trips are available on Mondays only.

IVCC pick-up/drop off times are 7:45 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 4:30 p.m.

Punch cards are available. Ask dispatch for details.

Debit/credit card purchases can be made through our accounting office by calling (815) 875-4548 Ext. 223 or (877) 874-8813 Ext. 100.

A suggested donation is recommended at the standard rate for riders aged 60 or older.

### **Public Notice Regarding Title VI Compliance**

BPART hereby gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related statutes. Title VI and related statutes prohibiting discrimination in Federally assisted programs require that no person in the United States of America shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to, discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discretionary practice regarding BPART's programs has the right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to BPART's Title VI Coordinator within sixty (60) days following the date of the alleged occurrence. For more information regarding civil rights complaints, please contact:

Amber Biddix, Director of Transportation  
Gateway Services  
406 S. Gosse Blvd., PO Box 535  
Princeton, IL 61356

**If this information is needed in another language, please contact us.**

Physical Address:  
535 Elm Place  
Suite 8 (lower level)  
Princeton, IL 61356  
(877) 874-8813  
[www.ridebpart.org](http://www.ridebpart.org)

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 535

Public transportation is possible through a grant between the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Bureau County. The County has an agreement with Gateway Services, Inc. to serve as administrator of BPART.