



Elks National Veterans Service Commission

FREEDOM GRANTS

In 2024-25, the ENVSC will award \$1,000 Freedom Grants to 1,000 Lodges for qualifying projects. We are excited that even more Lodges will now have access to grant funds specifically to serve our nation's veterans and/or military members in need! The process this year is different than in the past, so please read carefully.

WHAT QUALIFIES:

Freedom Grant projects must serve veterans and/or military members in need of support or services.

Projects must focus on one of these five areas: employment, homelessness and housing, current military members and their families, health, and educational support. These are broad categories and are intended as a guide for identifying local needs.

Here are some exciting examples of what other Lodges have accomplished with \$1,000 Freedom Grants.

- Auburn Opelika, Ala., Lodge No. 1834 hosted a barbecue and bingo games for 90 residents of the Tuskegee VA. Each veteran also received a gift bag with books and supplies.
- Kellogg, Idaho, Lodge No. 1841 purchased first aid kits, hygiene products, and daily necessities for 35 local veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Easton, Md., Lodge No. 1622 chartered a boat to take veterans with disabilities on a day-long, wheelchair-accessible fishing trip. Elks provided assistance, snacks, and a post-trip meal.

HOW IT WORKS:

Applications will be available online April 1 at 12:01 AM Central Time. Please ensure your initial application is detailed, complete, and follows all guidelines. Once an application is submitted, it is final. We will not follow up with questions. Applications will be reviewed and approved on a rolling basis. Lodges that are not in the first 1,000 qualifying grants will be placed on the waitlist.

PROJECT PLANNING TIPS:

Research what veterans in your community need. Coordinate with the nearest VA facility. Recruit volunteers. Talk to Veterans Service Officers in your area. Consider practical ways for your Lodge to help.

WHAT DOESN'T QUALIFY:

- Projects must serve at least 4 veterans in need and cannot focus on just one or two individual veterans.
- Appreciation dinners open to all veterans, like a community Veterans Day dinner, do not qualify.
- Monetary donations qualify if made to nonprofit organizations that specifically serve veterans in need.
- Donations to member organizations like the VFW and the American Legion must be specifically designated for a project that serves veterans in need. Funds can't go toward general operations.
- Projects must be locally focused. General donations to state and national organizations don't qualify.
- If you are purchasing home supplies for veterans, please use the Welcome Home Kit program.

Application Questions:

1. Describe your Lodge's project. How is your Lodge serving veterans or active-duty military personnel with this grant?
2. Why did your Lodge choose this project? How did you become aware of this need in the community?
3. What steps has your Lodge taken to plan or prepare for using this grant? How will Elks be involved?
4. Explain how this project will improve the lives of the individuals you are serving. What does the Lodge expect to accomplish?
 - *A budget is also required. See below for details.*

Restrictions: No more than 10% of the budget can be dedicated to administrative or publicity expenses, including t-shirts. Budget cannot include cash prizes. Grants may not be used to serve Lodge members. Meals served at Lodges must be provided at cost and can't include alcohol. Receipts issued by the Lodge must clearly show items were provided at cost.