



## Elks National Veterans Service Commission

# FREEDOM GRANTS

In 2025-26, 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 active-duty military members and their families.

### 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. Please ensure your initial application is detailed, complete, and follows all guidelines. There is no need to rush. Applications arrive over a series of months and will be reviewed and approved on a rolling basis.

### 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.

### BASIC GUIDELINES:

- Projects must serve at least 4 veterans in need to maximize outcomes.
- Think local. General donations to state and national organizations don't 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.
- Appreciation dinners open to all veterans, like a community Veterans Day dinner, do not qualify.

### Application Questions:

1. Describe your Lodge's project. How is your Lodge serving veterans or active-duty military personnel with this grant?
2. How did you become aware of this need in the community? If your Lodge is working with a project partner, please describe them and list their name.
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. Receipts from meals served at Lodges must reflect they were provided at cost and can't include alcohol.