



Serving our Nation's Veterans



Welcome!

To the 2017
State Veterans
Chair Training!





Our Mission

So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.

The mission of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission is to take this pledge and put it into action, to back this pledge with hours of not just service but service that makes an impact.

Because it's not enough to simply remember our veterans: it's the ENVSC's job to serve those veterans.

And when there are so many veterans in need, it's our job to focus on those veterans.





Focus on Results!

Good intentions are not enough. Be practical, considerate and well informed.

If your Lodge is using ENVSC funds to serve veterans and military members in need, it must focus on one of these five areas of increased need.

- Employment
- Homelessness and Housing
- Military Families
- Health (including mental health)
- Educational Support

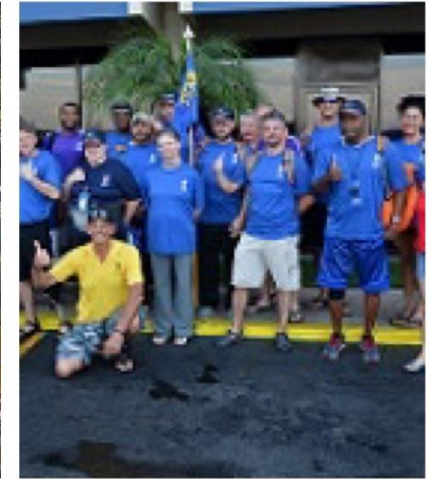




Additional Guidelines

In recent years, the Commission has affirmed that the focus of our programs at the national level should be on direct service military members and veterans in need.

- Unfortunately, there are many veterans/military members in need.
- This does not mean that projects like veterans memorials and ceremonies honoring the fallen are not important. It just means that national ENVSC funds cannot be used to fund them.
- We encourage state and local Lodges to fund these on their own if they choose.
- This includes memorials at VA facilities and elsewhere.





Today's Veterans

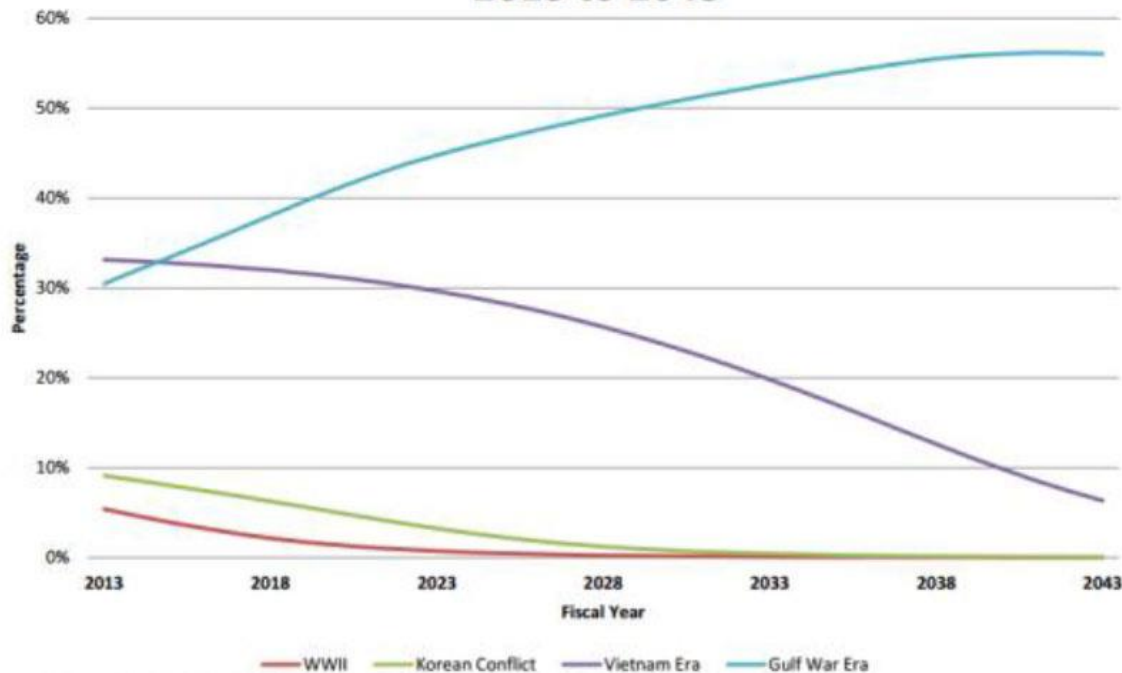
- Projected U.S. Population of Veterans: 21,999,000
- 9% of U.S. Veterans are female.
- 45.23% of Veterans are aged 65 or older
- Total enrollees in VA care system: 9.11 million
- 6.6 million Veterans received services from the VA in 2014
- 54% of veterans surveyed by Blue Star Families reported that their transition from service was difficult.





Veteran Population Now and in the Future

Projected Percent of Veteran Population by Period of Service 2013 to 2043



Source: Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projections Model (VetPop2014), Table 2L





Basic Duties of a State Veterans Chair

- Manage the VAVS program in your state, and recruit VAVS Reps and Deps
- Communicate with Lodge Veterans Chairs, District Deputies, and state-level volunteers about veterans service through emails, newsletters, state convention presentations, etc.
- Promote the Elks programs for veterans
- Run state-level veterans programs





The End





VA Voluntary Service

A facility-based volunteer program aimed at assisting hospitalized and recovering veterans, as well as any veterans seeking care at veterans facilities. Started by the VA in 1946, the Elks are on the Executive Committee for the national VAVS program, thanks to the large number of Elks volunteers stated in VA facilities.

- Stations volunteers in VA facilities across the nation.
- Volunteers are required to be certified by the national ENVSC office, and undergo training and registration at the local level.
- The Elks expanded upon this idea and our “VAVS” program also stations volunteers at State Veterans homes, Vets Centers, Fisher Houses, and more.
- Volunteers receive monthly stipends to help fund activities and support for veterans at their assigned facility.





VA Voluntary Service

The cornerstone of the ENVSC, this long-standing program provides reliable and consistent support to veterans.

- More than 550 Elks serve as Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Representatives (and Deputy Representatives), assisting hospitalized and recovering veterans.
- Reps are expected to visit their facilities at least monthly to spend time with veterans, plan events and recruit their Lodge's support.
- Deps provide additional support to Reps and veterans.



We have Reps in 334 facilities, including:

- 160 VA Medical Centers
- 125 State Veterans Facilities
- 37 Community Vets Centers
- 9 USOs
- And more!





VAVS Facilities

Know the facilities in your state!

- Know which Lodges are near and which Lodges support these facilities.
- VAMCs, CBOCs, Vets Centers, State Veterans Homes, CRRCs, etc. (Focus on VA facilities first, if possible.)
- How big are these facilities? Are the allocation amounts appropriate? Do they need to be changed?
- Are there other facilities that don't get support that could use it? Has a VA expanded recently?
- What are the local needs of veterans in your state?
 - For example, one-fifth of homeless veterans live in California.
 - Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans aged 20-34, at 17 percent.
 - More than half of the veterans in New Jersey are 65 and older.
 - Veterans in rural areas may have a harder time accessing services, and rely more on tele-health centers.





VAVS Reports

Check their reports each month! Things to look for:

- Are they visiting at least once a month? Are they spending time with vets? Are they attending VAVS meetings?
- Do the research to see if a volunteer is needed
- WE recently added a USO facility in Illinois and the volunteer is being told
- Are they spending funds well? Could funds be used more effectively?
- Do they bring other Elks to volunteer with them? Do they need extra support, like a Dep Rep to fill in for them sometime?
- Do they hold great events that other Reps could emulate? Could they give a presentation at a State convention for other Reps?
- Keep in touch with them, ask questions about their reports, follow up if something seems off, like them skipping visits – they could be sick, on or vacation, or dealing with a family issue.





Local VAVS Rep Responsibilities

- Complete orientation & training to become an RS volunteer
- Assist with improving the VAVS program
- Provide input/feedback to VA staff & VAVS Committee
- Recruit volunteers
- Promote donations of financial & material goods
- Advise & inform organization of VAVS and VA issues and concerns
- Attend and participate in VAVS meetings
- Serve on subcommittees and task groups
- Maintain organization's records (hours, donations)
- Coordinate facility activities and projects
- Conduct Annual Joint Reviews





VAVS Deputy Representatives

We want every facility to have at least one! Why?

- Support the Rep and help out at their activities
- Help to build support from local Lodge members and recruit them to volunteer
- Complement the Rep by holding additional activities or different types of activities
- Cover for Rep when they are out-of-town/sick/can't make a VAVS meeting/just need a break
- Keep Reps from burning out! It's easier to keep current volunteers happy than to replace them.





What to Look for When Recruiting Reps and Deps

- Sincere interest in the welfare of veteran patients and a desire to help them
- Leaders in their Lodge
- Good at planning activities
- Excellent at recruiting people to volunteer
- Works well with others
- Interested in being useful
- Listens to veterans and discovers their needs
- Dependability
- Computer-savvy enough to complete online reports, or the ability to work with someone to submit the report online for them
- Knowledge of the Elks (knowledge of the VA is also helpful, but can be learned)
- Ability to communicate and disseminate information





VAVS Rep Red Flags

- Poor attendance at VAVS Committee meetings
- No subcommittee involvement
- Lack of communication with local units in facility's coverage area
- Non-completion of Annual Joint Review
- Unable to resolve or deal with local program or personality problems
- No established goals
- No attempt arranging visits to the facility by organization's officers/members
- No attempt to involve VAVS at organization's state or local meetings
- Displays no initiative or evidence of leadership





Recruitment

Recruitment is always ongoing!

- Mention the program and the facilities on all state websites.
- Use social media to publicize the program, showcase what volunteers are doing, and recruit people to join!
- Make sure Lodges and new members in your state know what this program is, and why it's important.
- Recruit all groups of volunteers: recently retired members, new Elks members, families, scholarship recipients, etc.
- Be clear about the responsibilities of a VAVS Rep and a Dep Rep.





Why Volunteer?

- To gain work experience
- To learn new skills
- To meet new people
- To give something back
- To be of service to others
- Social Interaction



★ ★ BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING ★ ★

Studies have shown that volunteering on a regular basis has numerous personal health benefits! Increased physical and mental activity has been shown to add to life longevity and overall health. Social benefits include making new friends, being part of a team, and feeling needed as you make an impact on people's lives. Gain a sense of pride, satisfaction and achievement by giving back to society and serving those who have served!





Volunteer Recruitment Trends

These mirror trends in VA health care.

- Shift from inpatient to outpatient care.
- Care delivered closer to home whenever possible.
- Inpatients are “sicker” than before.
- More focus on wellness/preventive health.
- More reliance on technology (TeleHealth, My HealthVet)
- Focus on today’s needs and conditions.





Volunteer Recruitment Trends

What's important to today's volunteers?

Short term projects

Evenings & weekends

FLEXIBILITY

Family Volunteering Opportunities

Community-based and "virtual" assignments





Retention

Starts immediately after recruitment!

- Show volunteers they are appreciated.
 - Read and comment on their reports.
 - Give them resources to do their job well, share information about successful activities, be open to questions and new ideas.
 - Recognize their achievements and accomplishments.
 - Listen to their suggestions. Work together to solve problems. Offer them support.





Challenges

- Retention (aging organization population, demographics, etc.)
- Recognition
- Staff & volunteer education
- New volunteer assignments & opportunities
 - Episodic assignments
 - Opportunities beyond Mon – Fri, 8–4:30
- Staff accountability, responsibility & buy-in
- Training & orientation
- Scheduling of VAVS meetings, HIPAA, background checks, drivers physicals, fingerprints, etc.





Veteran Volunteer of the Year

Submit two names every year!

- One male and one female
- Provide context! Why are you choosing this person
- Send photos if possible
- This is one way we recognize the importance of our volunteer base.
- Recognition is important for retention!
- Submissions due to the State Chair by January 31, and selection due to the ENVSC by February 28. Please include an explanation of why your state chose these winners.
- [Congrats to this year's winners!](#)





Annual Joint Reviews

- Meet with your VAVS Chief (or equivalent volunteer manager) to complete this form every year by the end of April.
- It's the perfect chance to review your year, reflect on successes, identify ways to improve and set goals for the coming year.
- Required for all VAVS Reps stationed at VA facilities.
- A similar meeting is recommended for volunteers at non-VA facilities. No paperwork required.





New Online System

- All reports must now be submitted online.
- All Reps must register at elks.org, and are automatically granted access.
- Deadlines remain the same:
 - Reports due online by the 15th of the month following the calendar month covered on the report. This allows State Chairs time to review them before the 30th, when reports are considered late by the ENVSC office.
 - For example, an April report will be due on May 15th, a July report due on August 15th, etc.





FAQs/Troubleshooting

- All Reps must be registered at elks.org, so we can assign them access to the online form.
- All Dep Reps are encouraged to register as well.
- For each facility, the Rep, all registered Dep Reps and the State Chair have access to the report and can complete it.
- Reps who are unable to submit reports online should look for someone who can do it for them, ideally the Dep Rep.
- If the Rep would like a friend, family member or Lodge member to submit the report online for them, we must be notified so we can grant that person access to the system as an “online assistant”.
- If a Rep is unable to find someone locally to submit the report, they can send a paper report to the State Vets chair, in which case it is your responsibility to submit the report online.

[Check out our Online Report FAQs!](#)





Volunteer Outreach

Volunteers are our greatest asset! Our goal is to provide Elks with the information, tools and resources they need to stay engaged and take action.

- **Visit www.elks.org/vets to get the latest news!**
- While there, sign up to get our monthly e-newsletter. (Lodge Veterans Chairs and VAVS Reps and Deps already receive this.)
- The Elks Volunteer Resource Center has links to leather and glove order forms, Playing Cards order forms, Freedom Grant reports, resources lists for veterans in need, instructional guides, and more.
- Connect with your State Veterans Chair and volunteers in your state.

Follow us on social media!



Facebook/com/ENVSC



@ElksVetsService



@ElksVets





The End





Getting Started at the VA

- Many VA's have homeless programs with a Domiciliary. Be sure to include them and find out their special needs.
- The Community Living Center (CLC), formally known as the Nursing Home Care Unit, may include short term rehab and hospice units. CLC's also have day treatment units.
- Don't forget the local nursing home Veterans. Private nursing homes usually have a recreation director to work with.
- As a rule, VA hospitals have their outings during weekdays during working hours to avoid paying overtime.
- Do activities at VA health centers and Community Based Outpatient Clinics
- If your VA has a Fisher House, find out how you can help the families.





VAVS Activity Ideas



Christmas outreach

- Gifts to veterans at Veteran's Administration (VA) Hospitals and homeless veterans' shelters.

Annual VA Hospital Carnival

- Music, games, catered food, and special guests can attend!

Wii Homerun Derby

- Video game tournament, with prizes and appearances from local baseball team.

Ice Cream Social

- For veterans in residence at the VA or just visiting for the day. Schedule this once a month!





More VAVS Activity Ideas



Steak Luncheon for Hospitalized and Homeless Veterans

- Treat hospitalized and homeless veterans to a nice steak dinner.

Clothing Collection

- Donate clothing and supplies to VA facilities and other veterans facilities.

Super Bowl Party

- For residents of a VA Community Living Center.

Annual Baby Shower for Female Veterans

- Partner with the VA to support this party where moms and kids get the supplies they need.

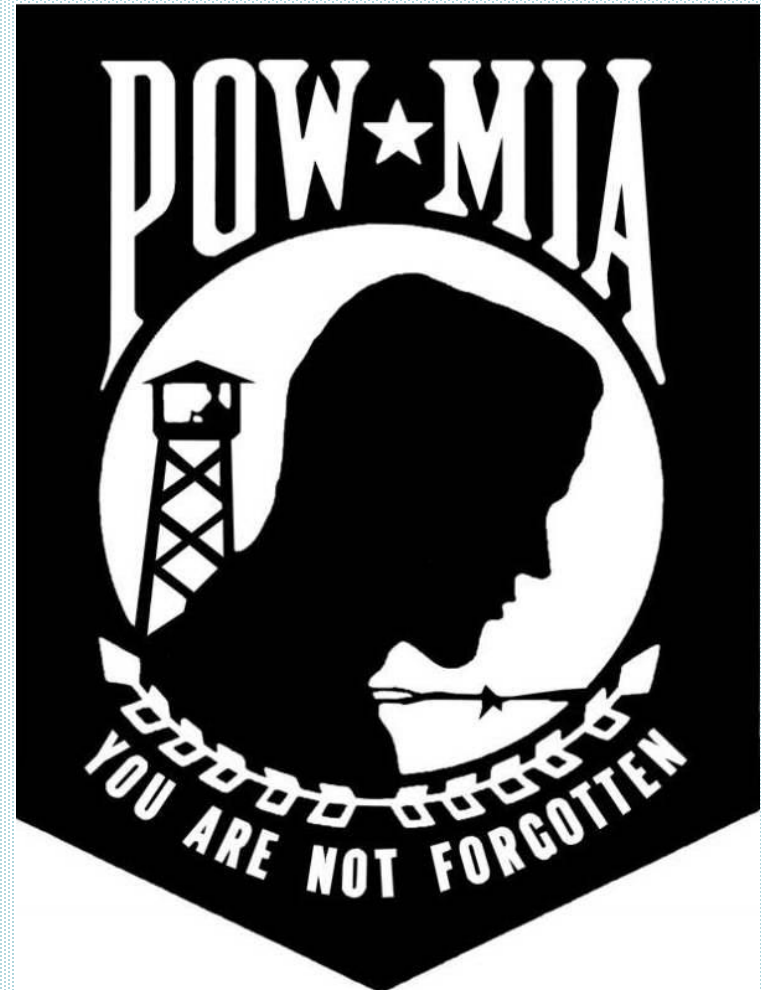




POW Outreach

Every VA has a POW Programs. Possible suggestions:

- Visit Lodge for a dinner or luncheon.
- Cater a Luncheon at VA before or after their meeting.
- Pizza, Subs or chicken. Sponsor fruit/cookies at meeting.
- Sponsor Bowling and Pizza.
- Sponsor tickets to sporting events in your area.
- Offer Lodge facility for summer picnic or other POW function





Keep Records!

CHILI DOG LUNCHEON AT THE DETROIT VA HOSPITAL

Purchase

- ___ 560 Hot Dogs and Buns.
- ___ 6 30 oz. mustard, 6 -30. oz. ketchup
- ___ 2 Big, Bags of chopped onions
- ___ 2 Large Relish
- ___ 5 Cans of hot dog chili
- ___ 500 hot dog paper trays
- ___ 300 Card board carriers
- ___ 500 napkins
- ___ 10 Coke, 8 Diet Coke, 4 7UP, 3 Diet 7UP 5 Orange 3 orange diet
- ___ 350 Cups
- ___ 2 large coolers of ice
- ___ 300 bags of Potato

Chips, single serving

Borrowed from the Lodge

- ___ 2 Pots to Boil Hot Dogs
- ___ An electric WOK to heat Chili)
- ___ 1 Large Crock Pot to serve Hot Chili
- ___ 3 Fish Fry trays for Serving Hot Dogs
- ___ 3 Tongs for kitchen use
- ___ 1 Ice scoop for drinks
- ___ 2 serving spoons for stirring
- ___ 2 small, square, serving tins, for Relish and Onion
- ___ 6 Towels
- ___ Plastic Aprons
- ___ Plastic Gloves
- ___ 2 Oven Mitts

- ___ 1 can opener
- ___ 4 sheets of Aluminum Foil for Pot tops and to scrub pots
- ___ Electric cord
- ___ Donation Box for Staff

Recap

We served ___ dogs to approx. ___ American Veterans and Hospital Staff

- Costs:
- Dogs and Buns: \$ Donation by _____
 - Other Stuff: \$ _____
 - Total \$ _____





Plan Ahead!

Christmas Gift Project

September 1

- Order 850 Decks of cards from Elks card program Tom Jamison, 12102 Chandlerville rd. Beardstown, IL. 62618-7679. Write request on letterhead to ship to lodge.
- Write article for newsletter requesting donations, and help wrapping.

October 20

- Call Gordy at Lake Erie Medical (1-800-254-2130, ext 148) to order 850 items
- 1. Roll on deodorant 5 oz., 9 cases of 96, 2. Alcohol free after shave 2 oz., 9 cases of 96, 3. Hand and body lotion, 4 oz, 15 cases of 60, 4. Mouthwash, alcohol free, 4 oz., 15 cases of 60. 5. Bath gel soap, 4 oz., 15 cases of 60. 6. Body powder,
- 2. K-Mart price and order 850 socks, crew, one size fits all. 850 bottles of VO-5 shampoo.
- 3. Federated wholesale. 1-800-346-0859 order 850 sugar free mints, 850 tissue pocket pack, 1 case toothbrush caps (1,000). Plastic bags (1,000)
- 4. Progressive dental, 734-420-2326, talk to Pat about Dr. Leone donating 850 toothpaste.

November 20

- 5. Morse dental, visit them and ask for 850 toothbrushes from Dr. Curtis, Plymouth
- 6. Call and order from Nashville wraps 1800-547- 9727, 3 rolls of what we ordered last year (item # XP3255H24). Give credit card number and get reimbursed.

December 1

- Get number of patients and tell date of delivery from:
- Detroit VA voluntary service - Camille 313-576-3332. We need 2 flatbed carts for delivery. We deliver in 2 groups. 150 gifts last year
- Ann Arbor voluntary service –Bev, Sandy or Jason 734-845-3467 we need 2 flatbeds for delivery. We go as 1 group. 140 gifts last year
- Battle Creek voluntary service 269-223-5497 We drop off only at building 10. 215 gifts last year Also George Scott of the Battle Creek Elks 269-231-0333 or 269-963-8386 to donate gifts to their lodge Veterans party. 60 gifts.
- Domiciliary - Rashid Colley – 313-576-1553 or 313-576-1551. 4777 Outer Dr., Detroit, Mi. 48234. 43 gifts last year.
- Piquette Square- Sherry Allen – 313-515-8372. 6221 Brush st. Detroit, mi. 48202. 140 gifts last year
- We also picked up 20 gifts sets for women vets at K mart. Devine savior also donated lap robes
- Promote wrapping session for members, community and families. Last year 95 wrapped. Wrap 40 gifts in paper bags and not plastic for the psych wards in Ann Arbor and Detroit. Have tape available. Precut rolls of paper into correct size for the package. Buy garbage bags with good strength to hold 10 gifts each.





The End





Adopt-a-Veteran

STATE ADOPT-A-VET CHAIRMAN

Appointing a separate Chair for the Adopt-A-Vet program would allow more time to build up the other Veteran programs.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- To encourage the development and expansion of the Adopt-A-Veteran program through suggested District reports, and State Association Reports.
- They would be expected to do mailings to the lodges, and write articles in the State Newsletter.

LODGE ADOPT-A-VET CHAIRMAN

The person for this job needs to have time to interact directly with the veterans. The Lodge, through fund raisers and donations, can reimburse for postage, phone, stationary supplies, or gifts. The person may want to go out and visit some of these shut-ins.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Send them a card on their birthday, holidays or any time.
- Give them gifts on holidays or birthdays
- Take them to dinner at the lodge or elsewhere.
- Visit them and just talk.
- Phone to check on them and chat.





Which veterans are adoptable?

- Individual Veterans in Veteran hospitals,
- Groups in the Hospital, such as the CLC, Women's, Psychiatric, Mental health, Day treatment, and hospice care units. Adopt a Ward.
- Veterans in assisted care facilities, nursing homes, convalescent homes, retirement and senior living centers.
- Any Veteran with limited, or no family contact who is lonely or shut in, or does not drive.
- Any Elk who qualifies in 1, 2, 3, or 4.
- Veterans in homeless shelters, and Hospital Domiciliary programs. Adopt the whole facility.
- Veterans can be adopted by more than one lodge, feel free to adopt from afar.





Where do I find veterans to adopt?

- V.A. Hospitals have strict privacy laws. You may have to physically visit the hospital and make up your own list.
- V.A. Hospital Nursing and Hospice unit may be adopted as a group
- Nursing homes, assisted living and some senior living facilities have an Activities Director or Social Services representative who can give you the names of the veterans in their facility.
- Churches, Veteran groups, American Legions, or VFW's may give you names of Veterans who are shut in or lonely.
- In your lodge! The veteran member who doesn't come out to the lodge any more, who is shut in, who doesn't drive, who has physical disabilities and limitations. Ask the secretary or an older member.
- Domiciliary and Homeless shelters; have a continuous drive for comfort items and clothing. Have them out for a meal or cater one at their facility. If they are not all Veterans, count the number or percent as determined by the staff of the facility as being adopted.
- Any WWII vet.





How do I get my Lodge to participate?

- Have an Adopt-A-Vet Chairman.
- Assign names to volunteers and committee members.
- "Button Hole" members; ask them to support the program. This can be done at meetings dinners or parties.
- Have a "Veterans Party " and ask attendees to take a name.
- Get schools, Churches, and other civic and Veteran groups to Adopt-A- Veteran, or contribute items, letters, and room decorations.
- Speak to the groups in your lodge, Ladies or PER's about adoption.
- Teenage children of Elks, Antlers program, Scout groups.
- The Exalted Ruler can create and appoint an Adopt-A-Vet Chairperson and Committee.





Now that I have adopted a Veteran, what do I do?

- Hospital groups: help the Elk Hospital chair put on activities.
- Sponsor Color tours, fishing, boat rides, Bowling, and Restaurant meals.
- Send them cards on birthdays and holidays.
- Drop notes to them or send vacation post cards.
- Give them small gifts of comfort items on holidays or birthdays.
- Take them to dinner or lunch at the lodge or elsewhere.
- Visit them and just chat about their service, their former job, sports, weather, and current events.
- Phone them to check on how they are doing.
- If you are adopting Homeless Veterans, have a continuous drive for clothing and comfort items.
- Some may have computer access and email.
- Drive member Adoptees to lodge meetings and other Lodge events.
- Have schools or school age children make room decorations for holidays
- Give them a desk top flag set for Flag day possibly include their service flag.
- Have a giving tree at Christmas.

How much will this cost? Maybe nothing! The costs of the program are usually picked up by the individual doing the adopting.



Veterans Leather Program

The Veterans Leather Program relies on the charity of hunters across the nation to donate hides.

- Elks and hunters donate hides which are tanned and finished into leather used for wheelchair gloves and therapy kits for veterans.
- VAVS Representatives can order gloves and craft kits for veterans they serve free or charge.
- Lodge Veterans Chairs can order craft kits for veterans they serve.
- All forms available at www.elks.org/vets/leather.cfm.





Veterans Leather Program

2016-17 Leather Program Statistics

- Elks donated 17,763 hides,
- Distributed nearly 3000 pairs of gloves
- Handed out 2,456 craft kits
- Donated 54,279 sq. feet of leather to therapy programs and 8,726 sq. feet directly to VA hospitals and clinics
- The states of Missouri, Iowa and Arkansas battled it out and came in first, second and third.
- Altogether, the value of the Veterans Leather Program for 2016-17 is \$429,305.85!



**Leather Program
volunteers attended VA
Adaptive Sports Events
and distributed 2,885
free wheelchair gloves
to the veteran athletes!**





The End





Freedom Grants

In 2017-18, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission will award 200 Freedom Grants of \$2,000 each.

- Freedom Grants are competitive and awarded to Lodges whose projects are judged to best serve the needs of today's veterans and/or active-duty military members.
- Applications online NOW and due July 31, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. Central Time.

Increase your Lodge's chance of approval!

- Elks participation is a must.
- Direct interaction with veterans/ military families is ideal.
 - Ongoing projects are better than one-time events.
 - Projects should focus on serving veterans in need.





Freedom Grants In Action



Elks at Eugene, Ore., Lodge No. 357 partnered with the VA to bring dental care to veterans attending the annual Stand Down. In addition to helping with organization and buying supplies, Elks staffed the full-day event, processed all the paperwork, assisted veterans and coordinated appointments.



Raleigh, NC, Lodge No. 735 partnered with Project Healing Waters to provide fly fishing supplies to veterans in recovery. Elks hosted meals during winter and provided space for veterans to learn to build their own fly fishing equipment.



Lake Hopatcong, NJ, Lodge No. 782 holds a year-long Operation Outreach program, with a Thanksgiving dinner and summer picnic for homeless veterans and veterans with disabilities. They also provide handmade blankets, clothing, and personal care items to the veterans.





Employment

- Many military members struggle to find employment when they return home. Help veterans adapt their military skills and find jobs in the local community.
- Veterans aged 18 to 34 have higher poverty rates than the general population, and the poverty rate for all veterans is increasing.





St. Helens, Ore., Lodge No. 1999

St. Helens Lodges uses a grant to support the Elks Veterans Bunker, a resource center for local veterans.

One of their main projects is to partner with the Farming for Freedom program, which provides veterans who are aspiring farmers with job training and matches them with job mentors.





Homelessness and Housing

- This a struggle for many who have served. As many as one in five homeless persons is a veteran.
- By reaching out to the homeless population in your community, you are supporting veterans.
- A 2014 study by HUD indicates that 11 percent of homeless adults are veterans.
- There are an estimated 39,000 veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States today.





Daytona Beach, FL, Lodge No. 1141

Daytona Beach Lodge partners with the Veterans Assistance Coalition to provide household appliances, bedding, kitchen equipment, and other items for veterans moving into new apartments.





Military Families

- have unique struggles—spouses may have trouble finding employment, families may struggle with finances, and children may need help with school transitions and coping with the absence of a parent.
- Multiple deployments, combat injuries, and the challenges of reintegration increase stress.
- 55 percent of the force is married and 40 percent have two children.
- 63 percent live in over 4,000 communities nationwide.





Elmwood Park-Paterson, N.J., Lodge No. 60

Elmwood Park-Paterson Lodge hosts dinners for veterans and recently returned military families.

Elks also partner with the County Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA to provide resources and information about easing the transition home.





Health

- Veterans with injuries have many needs, and health is a concern for many vets. Hospitalized, homebound and elderly veterans may have little support. Care kits, clothes, bus passes, and supplies are always needed. Personal contact is also needed, and much appreciated.
- There are 3.7 million veterans in the United States with a service-connected disability.
- Health is a broad category that includes mental health and independent living.





Florida Keys, Fla., Lodge No. 1872

Florida Keys, Fla.,
Lodge No. 1872 uses
its Impact Grant to
hold recreational
outings for veterans in
need, such as
homeless veterans,
injured veterans and
veterans with PTSD.





Educational Support

- Many recently returned veterans are at risk of dropping out. Student veterans need extra help to get an education, stay in school and focus on their future. Reach out to student veterans in the community and provide them with educational support.
- Veterans are more likely to drop out of college than their non-veteran counterparts.





Macomb, Ill., Lodge No. 1009

Macomb Lodge uses its Beacon Grant to support veterans at nearby Western Illinois University. Elks partner with the newly formed Veterans Resource Center on campus to plan events and support student veterans readjusting to civilian life.



- CIP Grants
 - Anniversary Grants
 - Beacon Grants
 - Gratitude Grants
 - Promise Grants
 - Impact Grants
 - Freedom Grants
 - Lodge Assistance Grants
- CIP Central
- CIP Resources
- Return to ENF

Elks Home > > ENF Homepage >



The Community Investments Program invests \$12.3 million in Elks communities across the country through Lodge grants that help Elks meet local needs. Learn more about each grant below!

CIP CENTRAL *Click here to find resources and stay informed*

BEACON GRANT

Ongoing activities

GRATITUDE GRANT

Meet local needs

PROMISE GRANT

Activities for youth

IMPACT GRANT

Large-scale service project

LODGE ASSISTANCE GRANT

Harnessing local support

FREEDOM GRANT

National Veterans Service Commission

 **NEW! ANNIVERSARY GRANT**

There are several other Lodge Grants available to your Lodge! Visit www.elks.org/cip to learn more and to access the applications.





The End





Welcome Home Initiative

In September 2015, the Elks signed a partnership with the VA and pledged to help end veteran homelessness. Join the fight against veteran homelessness! Not sure where to start?

- The VA: every VA Medical Center has at least one person on staff whose job is to focus on homeless veterans.
- Nonprofits: national groups like Volunteers of America, Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army have veterans outreach programs.
- Veterans Organizations: independent and local groups, vets rehabilitation and/or transitional centers and shelters.
- Cities and counties: many municipalities have Veterans Affairs departments.



[One Last Stand Video](#)





Where to Start

- The VA: every VA Medical Center has at least one person on staff whose job is to focus on homeless veterans
- Nonprofits: groups like Volunteers of America and the Salvation Army have veterans outreach programs.
- Veterans Organizations: independent groups, vets rehabilitation and/or transitional centers.
- Cities and counties: many municipalities have Veterans Affairs departments.

Or, contact the ENVSC office and we'll put you in touch with someone in your area!





Part 1: Welcome Home Kits

Most formerly homeless veterans move into their homes with nothing. Elks can help by building **Welcome Home Kits**.

- Gather things like sheets, towels, dishes and cleaning supplies. Items can be new or used, donated or purchased.
- Hold a supply drive in the community to collect common items.
- Partner with local veterans homes/centers, or contact the ENVSC to be put in touch with veterans in need of kits at your local VA.
- Submit your receipts and the ENVSC will reimburse your Lodge up to \$200 for each Welcome Home Kit you donate.
- [View this video to see the impact Cocoa Beach Lodge has made with the Welcome Home Kit program.](#)



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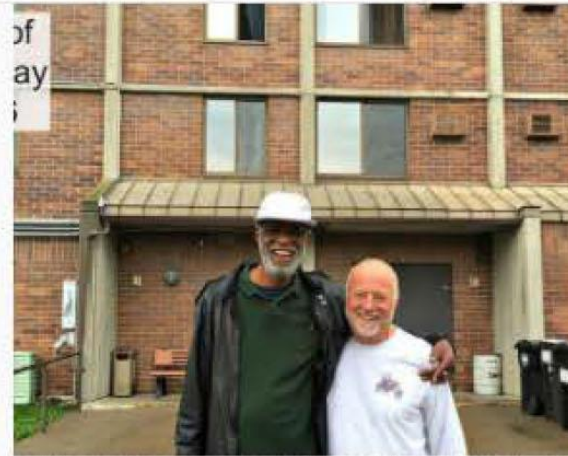
These Elks members provided Milton, the veteran in the middle, with a Welcome Home Kit full of household items to help him get moved into his new home in Minneapolis.

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You, the veteran holding the card reading "Welcome Home Soldier", was overjoyed as Elks helped him get moved into his new home.

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He, the veteran on the left, could not look happier. Elks members provided him with a Welcome Home Kit full of household items to get him settled in his new home.

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These are just a few of the Minnesota Elks that helped Rosa, the veteran in the middle, with essential items to get her established in her new home!

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The veteran's precious family just moved into a new home with the help of these wonderful Elks members.



He, the veteran in the middle, is shown smiling. Elks members provided him with a Welcome Home Kit full of household items to get him settled in his new home.





Part 2: Elks Emergency Assistance Program



This program is only available in the following cities:

Chicago New York
Seattle Miami-Dade
San Francisco San Diego
Los Angeles / Loma Linda
Washington, D.C.

Veterans registered with and receiving services from the Department of Veterans Affairs in these 8 areas can apply for one-time monetary assistance to prevent homelessness or secure a home.

- Uses include rent and security deposits, mortgage and utilities.
- Forms must be signed by the veteran and by a VA employee.
- Intended to help with prevention of homelessness, and to help veterans exit homelessness.
- Run out of the Chicago ENVSC-office.
- [The Innovators video!](#)





Part 3: Extra Focus on Areas of Greatest Need

Select Lodges are eligible for Welcome Home grants to serve veterans experiencing homelessness.

- Applications for these grants available online July 1 to May 31.
- These 8 urban areas were chosen by the VA because they have the highest number of homeless veterans.
- Lodges outside these areas are encouraged to use other Lodge Grants to serve homeless veterans.



This program is only available in the following cities:

Chicago

Seattle

San Diego

New York

Miami-Dade

Los Angeles

Washington, D.C.

San Francisco

Loma Linda



The End





Independent Partnerships



Bugles Across America

- This organization provides veterans and their families with a formal recognition of their service by providing live taps at veterans' funerals. The ENVSC provides financial support to help recruit, train and organize buglers across the country. Many Elks are volunteers!



Chicago Stand Downs

- Following our members' example, Elks HQ staff and Elks Scholarship recipients gather twice a year to help organize and volunteer at these summer and winter events for homeless veterans.



Re-Creation

- This performance group is dedicated to providing entertainment for veterans in veterans facilities across the country. The ENVSC provides financial support and covers the group's housing costs.





Adaptive Sports Events

Through these events, the VA and other partners offer veterans the chance to improve their health through sports and art, learn new skills and socialize with other veterans. The ENVSC assists by sponsoring 5 of these events. Local volunteers often volunteer, host dinners and provide their own support. Leather Program volunteers also attend to distribute gloves.

Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

Veterans Golden Age Games

Veterans Wheelchair Games

Veterans Summer Sports Clinic

Veterans Creative Arts Festival





The End

