

# Lodge Grants: Serving Those Who Served





# Passion Into Action

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Elks pledge to never forget our nation's veterans. In 2014-15, 743 different grants were used for projects served veterans and military members in need. It's clear that Elks have a passion for this cause, and have put that passion into action.

We've done the research to provide you with the guidance you need to effectively serve veterans and/or active-duty military members.

**Every veteran at some point in time in their lives was willing to give everything for our freedom, so I think everyone should at some point in time in their lives be willing to give something to those veterans.**  
**- Pat Gleason, Chief of Voluntary Service, Jesse Brown VA Medical Center**



# Today's Veterans

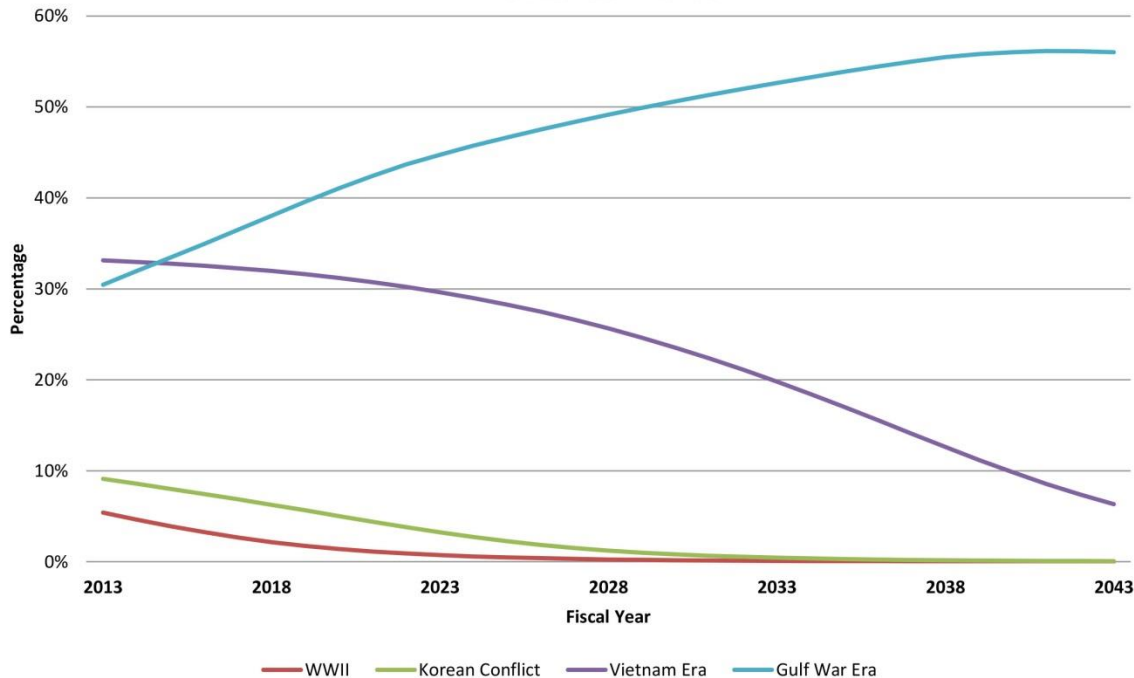
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- Projected U.S. Population of Veterans: 21,999,000
  - 9% of U.S. Veterans are female
- 45.23% of Veterans are aged 65 or older
- Total enrollees in VA care system: 9.11 million
- 6.6 million Veterans received services from the VA in 2014
- 54% of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



# Today's Veterans

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



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





# Think Local

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- Find local needs. Contact the experts. Reach out to nearby clinics, nursing homes, military hospitals and bases, transitional centers, the USO, Fisher House, and other organizations that support veterans and military members in need.
- Don't start from scratch and don't duplicate services. Learn what is already available, which programs are working, and what more could be done.
- Ask how the Elks' active support can help.



# Focus on Results

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

If your Lodge is using a Beacon, Freedom or Gratitude Grant 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
- Educational Support



# Employment

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- 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.





# Red Lodge 'Beartooth', Mont., Lodge No. 534

Red Lodge uses an Impact Grant to partner with the Yellow Ribbon Committee. Together, they provide veterans in Montana and the surrounding area with the assistance they need to transition to civilian life. Through the Veteran Education and Job Training project, Elks host a series of two-day workshops where they assist veterans with networking skills, resume-building, job training and interview techniques.







# Homelessness and Housing

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## Homelessness and Housing

- is a struggle for many who have served, and 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.



## Tallahassee, Fla., Lodge No. 937

Tallahassee Lodge uses its Gratitude Grant to assist homeless veterans. Elks collect donations, and purchase supplies such as clothing and health and comfort items. Then, they distribute these items to homeless veterans who attend the North Florida Stand Down.



Some Other Lodge also uses its grant to volunteer at a Stand Down for homeless veterans.



# Military Families

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## 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.
- Fifty five percent of the force is married and 40 percent have two children.
- 63 percent live in over 4,000 communities nationwide.



# Tyler, Texas, Lodge No. 215

Tyler Lodge uses its Beacon Grant each year to hold events for children of fallen soldiers. Elks partner with Gold Star Mothers to plan trips that will allow youth to spend time with other children and families in the same situation.





# Health

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Health (including mental health and independent living)

- 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.





## Brenham, Texas, Lodge No. 979

Brenham Lodge uses its Freedom Grant to partner with a local PTSD therapy group for veterans. Elks plan social outings like fishing trips to help veterans relax and feel comfortable spending time with each other.



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

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- 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.





# Be a Friend

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- Social Opportunities
  - Welcome veterans into your Lodge and in the community. Many younger veterans are uncomfortable with overt displays of appreciation, but are still looking to build relationships and find support.
- Veterans are a resource in the community.
  - Veterans are service-minded individuals. Invite them to lend a hand with your Lodge's charitable activities!



# Questions?

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**Need more help? Contact the Lodge Grants office. We'll help you turn your idea into a great project!**



**773/755-4730**



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