**Note: The following frequently asked questions are provided by the Hopkins Lodge based on their experience thus far in the program and may not be applicable to all situations.**

**What is the purpose of the program?**

To help veterans establish a new home by providing a welcome home kit containing items needed for day to day living. The veteran may often be coming directly from a shelter and have only the clothes on his/her back. The contents of the kit may vary but may include: furniture, kitchenware, cleaning supplies, towels, bedding, microwave and more.

**How do we identify veterans in need?**

Often there is a local Veterans Administration (VA) office or similar veterans’ organization that is working to house homeless veterans. The Grand Lodge National Veteran Service Commission (NVSC) can help you identify a local resource to identify veterans in need. Contact the Grand Lodge at **vets@elks.org**

**How much funding does the Grand Lodge provide?**

The Grand Lodge through NVSC is providing **$200 per veteran**.

**How much does our Lodge need to contribute?**

There are no requirements at this time for lodge specific contributions. However, lodges are encouraged to contribute goods, monies and/or services to help these veterans in need.

**Is there a limit to how many veterans we can serve?**

There are no limits on the number of veterans to be served by a lodge under this program.

**Do the items have to be new? Can used items be used?**

Kits can be comprised of new and/or used items. Low cost retailers such as Walmart, Target and Dollar Tree are a great way to stretch your dollar on new items. Our VA resource was providing new beds for the vets as well as utilizing another local charity for furniture. Thus our focus was more on day to day living needs.

**Do the Kits have to be the same for every veteran?**

No, the kits can be tailored to the needs of each veteran. We have found most veterans need the whole kit and caboodle while other veterans only need a few supplemental items.

**Why are these veterans homeless?**

There is no single reason why a veteran is homeless. In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness – extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care – a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks. Additionally, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, placing some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment. In the Twin Cities in particular there is an extreme shortage of affordable housing.

**Don’t these veterans have jobs?**

Some of them have become recently employed. Some are living on disability. Some have medical problems that preclude them from employment. Each veteran has his/her own story as to how they became homeless.