



# InstaGrants

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*Beacon Grant Edition*

Consider this, Beacon Grants offer Elks an opportunity to engage a local community by actively serving those in need. Struggling to figure out what to do? We've made it easy. Consider adapting one of these highly successful Lodge grant projects in your own community.

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**Project #1: Welcome Home Kits:** Lodges all across Elkdom are working hard to provide homeless veterans and veterans living in transitional housing with much needed supplies.

### **How to get started.**

Reach out to a local organization that focuses on serving veterans or people who are experiencing homelessness such as your local VA, homeless shelters, or transitional housing facilities.

### **How to make this project a success.**

Identify needed items, shop for items, package items, deliver to local veterans as supplies are needed. [Check out the ENVSC webpage for more details on how to best serve veterans!](#)

### **How to make it your own.**

Put your Lodge's own spin on it by adding a monthly dinner or monthly check-ins to help with household repairs. Providing needed supplies is important but continuing to engage veterans in need is equally as important.

**Elks in Action:** Springfield, Ill., Lodge No. 158 partners with their Veterans Assistance Commission and Salvation Army Veterans Support Services to help veterans moving from transitional housing to permanent homes. Elks shop for household necessities, personal hygiene items, and clothing. Then they package the items, deliver them and help with transportation on moving day.

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**Project #2: Cooking Up Some Fun:** Healthy eating isn't hard when your local Elks Lodge equips you with the skills and know-how!

### **How to get started.**

Start by contacting your local school or social service organization such as the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, YMCA, or similar youth group to see if a need for such a program exists.

### **How to make this project a success.**

Secure a location such as a local restaurant or high-school, shop for food, set-up, interact with students, and clean-up.

### **How to make it your own.**

Add a competition at the end where students and Elks mentors compete in a “Top Chef” event. It’ll be a fun and creative way to exhibit the skills the students have learned. Prizes might include helpful kitchen items or produce.

**Elks in Action:** Juneau, Alaska, Lodge No. 420 holds cooking classes at a local high school for members of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Aside from shopping for the ingredients and securing the location, Elks are on hand to help with set up, clean-up, and to act as cooking mentors throughout the class. On top of that, they enlist local high schoolers as additional volunteers.

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**Project #3: Beyond the Basket:** Does your Lodge already host a holiday food basket program? Consider joining other Lodges that are helping to fight hunger all year long. This is an easy way to expand an existing project or start a brand new project that targets families in need all year long, and not just during the holidays.

### **How to get started.**

Ask your local food pantry or school if food basket or weekend/summer backpack programs already exist. If they do, ask if there is a need to expand the reach. If not, ask about ways your Lodge can partner with them to deliver food to those who most need it.

### **How to make this project a success.**

Shop, package, and deliver multiple times throughout the year. Whether you have five or 50 volunteers, supplying those in need with food is an easy project to take-on.

### **How to make it your own.**

Choose how the project will look and how often it will occur. Will you use baskets, bags, or backpacks? Will this be a once a month project, every weekend, or throughout the summer? Will you add any other components such as a book trade, hygiene supplies or clothing?

**Elks in Action:** Portsmouth, N.H., Lodge No. 97 is working with End 68 Hours of Hunger to do just that—combat hunger that many children face over the weekend. The Lodge oversees this program from October to June. Each week Elks help to package groceries and then deliver the supplies to the six local schools that participate in the program.

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**Project #4: Containing the Problem:** Is your Lodge committed to keeping the community safe from the dangers of drugs and alcohol? Consider making your community safer by crafting a Drug Awareness program in conjunction with a Drug Take Back container.

### **How to get started.**

Begin by checking with your local law enforcement, hospitals, or government to see if any similar programs exist in your county or state. Then, develop a plan to work in conjunction with this organization or implement a new program if one doesn’t exist.

### **How to make this project a success.**

Focus on the programmatic aspects of the project. After the box is established, strengthen the project by starting a dialogue with the local community. Reach out to parents, grandparents and other adults in the community in conjunction with your partner organization to promote and draw awareness to the program.

### **How to make it your own.**

Create a program around the box! Make it interactive and able to speak to a range of age groups. Think outside of a normal presentation. Consider sports leagues, art classes, movie nights, dance classes or other events that engage the community while focusing on alleviating drug abuse.

**Elks in Action:** Clark Fork Valley, Mont., Lodge No. 2757 conducted a month long campaign to get prescription drugs out of homes in their community. Members hosted a series of events at the elementary school, they speak at the high school and worked with the schools to invite parents and families to a Drug Awareness dinner at the Lodge.

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**Project #5: A Social Responsibility:** Often those with disabilities are not afforded the same social opportunities that others may take for granted. Thankfully, Elks Lodges are stepping in where schools and social service agencies leave off by hosting parties, activity days, and field trips.

### **How to get started.**

Talk to your local schools or a social service organization such as the ARC to see what activities their participants may be interested in.

### **How to make this project a success.**

Make sure to contact all local organizations that serve people with disabilities. Shop for appropriate gifts and items they may need. Actively participate in each event! The most important part of this project is interacting with guests.

### **How to make it your own.**

Choose activities that align with your Lodge and those you are serving. Does your Lodge love karaoke? Host a quarterly karaoke party! Is your Lodge more interested in sports? Host a day of activities and/or take the group to a sporting game.

**Elks in Action:** Plymouth, Mass., Lodge No. 1476 hosts social activities for the members of the local ARC. Throughout the year, they host two dances and a summer picnic for ARC members and their families. Lodge members are completely in charge of the events from shopping for food and gifts, to selecting a DJ, setting up the event, and most importantly—interacting with guests.

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