

STAND DOWN

The original Stand Down for homeless veterans was modeled after the Stand Down concept used during the Vietnam War. This was meant to provide a safe retreat for units returning from combat operations to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care, mail and receive letters, and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in a safe environment. Stand Downs provided soldiers the opportunity to renew their spirit, health and overall sense of well-being.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Stand Downs are 1-3 day events coordinated by local VA Medical Centers and other service providers to offer various services and resources such as clothing, health screenings, dental care, and benefits counseling for veterans experiencing homelessness.



STEP 1 Get Started

If there's already a Stand Down event in your community, this is your Lodge's opportunity to get involved in a big way. Contact the Stand Down point of contact to get started. If your community does not hold a Stand Down, create one!

To qualify for funding, Elks must be actively involved in volunteering at the Stand Down, and funds should be used to provide vital supplies or services for the veterans. For example, Elks can actively support dental services by volunteering to set up the area, scheduling appointments, or providing kits with dental hygiene supplies to veterans as they complete their visit.



STEP 2 Research the Need

Do your research! Talk to other volunteers about what they've learned from participating in past Stand Downs. Keep in mind that some items, like dress shirts or extra-large clothing, are often donated less frequently.



STEP 3 Make it Your Own

Distribute supplies in a reusable backpack or tote bag with your Lodge's name on it. To offer continued support, include invitations to meals or other events that your Lodge will provide for veterans in need.