



# Elks National Veterans Service Commission

## Freedom Grant Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is eligible to apply?

All Lodges are eligible to apply for a Freedom Grant! Eligibility is not dependent on meeting the GER's per-member-giving goal for donations to the ENF.

### How much are Freedom Grants worth?

\$2,500.

### When will Freedom Grant applications become available?

2020-21 Freedom Grant applications are online starting April 1.

### How will the process work?

Grants will be awarded to 325 Lodges that submit applications with qualifying projects. Applications must be detailed, complete and follow all grant guidelines. Expect follow-up for applications that do not provide enough information. It is better to take time to craft a well-thought out and complete application than to rush through and leave out important details.

### What is a qualifying application?

Freedom Grants should be used for direct service to veterans and/or military members and their families. Grant projects must serve a population in need. Donations do not qualify, and meaningful involvement is required.

**Projects must focus on one of these five areas: employment, homelessness and housing, military families, health, and educational support.**

Qualifying applications will describe in detail:

- How many Elks will be involved and what they will do
- How the project addresses the needs of veterans and/or military members
- How the Lodge will budget the grant, including three or more expense categories

### How were the five areas of need identified?

We know that Elks have busy lives, and so we've done the research to help ensure that Elks' time and grant funds are used in the most effective ways.

These five areas were identified as being of the greatest need through research and data obtained from the government and Veterans Administration, through partnerships and collaboration with leading veterans service organizations, and through engagement with veterans and veterans advocates.

### Can a Freedom Grant be used as a donation?

Meaningful Elk involvement is a requirement for all Freedom Grant projects, and grant funds may not be used as donations or for fundraisers.

### Are there any other restrictions?

Grants may not be used for appreciations dinners, fundraisers or general community events. Grants may not be used for donations of funds or to distribute cash. If gift cards are included, the amount should be kept to a minimum and may not exceed \$500. Applications will be evaluated as they are received, until all Freedom Grants are awarded. If necessary, Lodges will receive follow up by email to request further information, or changes to part of the application.

### What if I don't submit my application in time and my Lodge doesn't get a Freedom Grant?

Lodges that do not receive Freedom Grants this year are encouraged to adapt their projects and apply for Community Investments Program Grants, like the Gratitude Grant or the Spotlight Grant. Visit [elks.org/cip](https://elks.org/cip) for more information about CIP Grants.



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**And**, don't forget about our other ENVSC programs! Look into using Welcome Home Kits to serve veterans exiting homelessness or partnering with your Voluntary Service Representative to serve veterans at a local facility. Visit [elks.org/vets](http://elks.org/vets) to learn more.

## **Can the Freedom Grant be used to fund a project my Lodge already holds?**

Like all Lodge grants, it should be used to expand the Lodge's charitable activities. Grants are not intended to help Lodges financially or to fund events that have been going on for years. Ideally, grants should be used to start new projects or expand current ones.

## **Can the Freedom be used in conjunction with other grants?**

Yes. Freedom Grant funds can be used in conjunction with a Gratitude, Spotlight, or Beacon Grant, as long as the activity meets the guidelines of each grant. Applications must be submitted separately. If combining grants, please mention this on each application, and ensure that the budgets on both grant applications correspond and are not the same. So, if the Lodge were to use the Freedom Grant with the Beacon Grant, the budget on both applications needs to be at or above the full amount of the combined grants.

## **Can I split the Freedom Grant between two or more projects?**

Yes, Freedom Grants can be used for more than one project. However, we encourage Lodges to focus on one or two things in order to make a bigger impact.

## **Where can I find more information about Freedom Grants?**

Complete Freedom Grant guidelines can be found here at [elks.org/vets](http://elks.org/vets).

## **My Lodge needs to change how we use our Freedom Grant. What should I do?**

Any and all changes to approved Freedom Grant activities **must** be approved by the ENVSC office in advance via email. Grant changes within appropriate guidelines can then be approved. If you have questions, feel free to contact the ENVSC office before submitting a proposal to revise the project.

## **My grant activity is complete. What now?**

Tell us about it! When the activity is complete and the grant funds are spent, it's time to submit a Final Report Form through the Grants Dashboard.

The Final Report Form should include itemized receipts and documentation of how all grant funds were spent, as well as information about the event. Attachments, photos, thank you notes, and other information is always welcome.

## **How can I spread the word to the community?**

Use the News Release Generator to spread the word about your Lodge's good deeds to the community. Visit our website to get started, [enf.elks.org/cipresources](http://enf.elks.org/cipresources).

*For the complete guidelines, please visit [elks.org/vets](http://elks.org/vets) or contact the ENVSC Office at [vets@elks.org](mailto:vets@elks.org) or 773.755.4736.*