

INSTAGRANTS

Struggling to figure out what to do? We've made it easy. Consider adapting one of these highly successful Lodge grant projects for your community. Or get inspiration from our 20 project plans to [combat food insecurity](#), [assist individuals living below the poverty line](#), [serve veterans](#) or [benefit youth](#).

Assisting Veterans with Disabilities



Minot, N.D., Lodge No. 1089

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Veterans who have served our country often face unique challenges upon returning to civilian life, particularly those with disabilities. Lodges can provide support and resources to improve the quality of life for veterans facing physical or mental health challenges.



STEP 1

Get Started

According to the [ADA National Network](#), nearly a third of veterans report having a disability, including physical disabilities, traumatic brain injuries and PTSD. Consider initiatives such as providing accessible housing modifications, offering transportation assistance to medical appointments, or organizing recreational activities tailored to veterans with disabilities.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Develop partnerships with organizations and agencies that specialize in serving veterans

with disabilities. Is there a VA facility in your community? Disability advocacy groups? Cognitive therapy organizations? Identify the specific needs of the veterans in your community and contact agencies that meet those needs.



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Offer a variety of services and activities, such as peer support groups and weekly meals. Consider hosting workshops on financial literacy, job placement assistance, and VA benefits eligibility.

Create an adaptive sports league at the Lodge, or take veterans on an outdoors adventure with fishing, horseback riding, or kayaking.

Bed Building Projects



Santa Maria, Calif., Lodge No. 1538

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A good night's sleep is integral to everyone's health. According to the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#), sleep deprivation in children and teenagers is linked to poor academic performance and decreased cognitive function. Building beds for children without them can improve sleep and health.



STEP 1

Get Started

According to [Sleep in Heavenly Peace](#), more than two million children in the United States don't have a bed. Check in with partner organizations to see if the need is present in your community. Organizations like Sleep in Heavenly Peace have chapters across the country dedicated to teaching and mobilizing volunteers to build beds. Consider reaching out to see if there is a chapter near you.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

If there is not a Sleep in Heavenly Peace chapter near you, reach out to local organizations like Boys & Girls

Clubs, food pantries, schools and homeless shelters. They may know families in need of beds or could even need this service.

Contact local hardware stores and certified handymen to see if they are able to donate supplies, tools or their time!



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Look to see if there are any knitting groups in your area. Better yet, are there any knitting groups within your membership? Consider making blankets to complete the beds.

No knitters? No problem! [Making tie blankets](#) is a no-sew alternative that is both time- and cost-effective.

Local Gardens



Jackson, N.J., Lodge No. 2744

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In addition to increased access to fresh produce, community gardens provide several benefits, such as fostering positive community ties and improving neighborhood safety. By supporting local gardens, Elks help promote the health and well-being of their communities. Read how South Orange, N.J., Lodge No. 1154 implemented this project [here](#).



STEP 1

Get Started

Determine if there is an opportunity for a garden. Who will the garden support? Examples of groups that may benefit from a partnership include schools, food banks, hunger relief organizations, nonprofits, and churches that prepare meals for people facing food insecurity. Form committees to accomplish tasks such as construction, marketing, youth activities or equipment storage.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Partner with local organizations to assist with daily support of the garden, such as routine garden maintenance, virtual cooking demonstrations and

gardening classes. Consider reaching out to local hardware stores, service organizations, or horticulture programs at colleges for additional support. Connect with youth organizations for volunteers, providing youth a healthy activity and furthering the impact of the garden.



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Consider hosting online cooking classes to show how to prepare healthy meals with food from the garden. Or start a free seed library to establish the Lodge as a meeting spot within your community.

Host a monthly garden social for community members to gather during harvest months!

Beyond the Basket



Oakmont, Pa., Lodge No. 1668

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Many Lodges use the Beacon Grant to prepare Thanksgiving or Christmas food baskets for families facing food insecurity in their communities. The Beyond the Basket project encourages Lodges to participate in this food basket program all year long.



STEP 1

Get Started

People are eager to give back during the holiday season. According to [United Way](#), the demand for volunteer opportunities far exceeds the need for volunteers during the holiday season. This means that grant funds may be better utilized at different points of the year to avoid waste during the holidays. After all, food insecurity exists all year long.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Contact local organizations such as food pantries, schools, hospitals and nonprofits, which will help identify people facing food insecurity.

Make lists of food that every family needs for a nutritious meal, and have Lodge members purchase items in bulk. Package and distribute the baskets accordingly!



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

For a more personal touch, consider adding handwritten notes from Lodge members with the baskets. Feelings of isolation are strong, and a simple handwritten note can help alleviate them.

If your Lodge chooses to continue with a holiday project, we would encourage you to consider the information in [this visual](#) to do the most good.