

INSTAGRANTS

Looking for project ideas? Consider adapting one of these highly successful Gratitude Grant projects for your community.

Funding the Arts



Elwood, Ind., Lodge No. 368

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Arts and music programs are often underfunded and can be the first to suffer from budget cuts. Elks can create opportunities for students to exercise their creative sides and express themselves through the arts.



STEP 1

Get Started

Determine where there is an opportunity for an arts program. If programs are offered by local schools, contact principals and teachers to see how they can be improved or supported. Is there an afterschool arts program in your community or a VA hospital in need of supplies for art therapy? Find the need!



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Consider focusing on different mediums. Supporting visual art, music, and dance programs helps students to explore and find their favorite way to be creative.



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Host [a musical instrument petting zoo](#) at your Lodge to help students choose their instrument. Or, at the end of the program cycle, hold an exhibition or performance night at the Lodge celebrating the artwork. It is a great way to show members the role the Lodge can play in the community, and it encourages students to be proud of their work.

Literacy Programs



Tahoe/Douglas, Nev., Lodge No. 2670

PROJECT OVERVIEW

According to the [National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance](#), 65% of fourth graders do not read at a proficient level. An estimated 61% of families living in households below the poverty line have no age-appropriate books in their homes. Foster a love for reading and increase literacy levels in your community by supporting a reading program.



STEP 1

Get Started

Determine the scope of your literacy project. Consider building and filling Little Free Libraries around your community. Start a large-print book club at your local nursing home. Provide braille books and audiobooks to schools or organizations that work with people who are blind. The possibilities are endless!

Instead of the Dictionary Project, provide children with stories they can sit down and read to foster an interest in literacy. Some children may respond better to graphic novels or audiobooks, and that's okay! There's no wrong way to read.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Consider inviting library representatives to your event to sign families up for library cards. Partner with schools and read to students after sponsoring a day at the Scholastic Book Fair.



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Many libraries have a summer reading program. Start a winter reading program! Provide rewards for participants who reach certain milestones to encourage reading goals all year long.

Physical Fitness and Sports Programs



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Physical fitness can reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improve mental health, and promote social connections. Youth who participate in sports programs develop important life skills, such as teamwork and communication, while adults benefit from stress relief, improved self-esteem, and enhanced quality of life. Elks can offer a wide range of sports programs that are accessible and inclusive.



STEP 1

Get Started

Physical activity can benefit many different populations. Focus your program on those most in need. Your Lodge can start a pickleball league for residents at nursing homes or veterans with PTSD. Or work with your school district to begin a sports program for children with disabilities. Take inspiration from [Santa Barbara, Calif., Lodge No. 613's](#) 2022-23 Beacon Grant and start a fishing program that teaches families facing food insecurity how to fish as a source for food.

Remember, CIP projects must have a charitable focus. Ensure that your project is doing all it can to assist people from marginalized communities.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Go beyond donating sports equipment. See if any Lodge members can coach a team. Or, host a Lodge outing and attend a game or event. Be your project's biggest cheerleaders!



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Have an outdoor space at your Lodge? Consider hosting a sporting event there. Or organize a sports equipment drive to get the community involved. At the end of the season, host a banquet to keep the team spirit thriving.

Animal Welfare



Mannington, W. Va., Lodge No. 388

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Animals play a vital role in our communities, providing companionship, emotional support, and joy to individuals of all ages. However, many animals face challenges such as neglect, abuse, or lack of access to necessary veterinary care. Elks can address these issues by providing support and resources to improve the well-being of animals in their community.



STEP 1

Get Started

Determine the scope of your animal welfare project. Consider organizing a low-cost spay and neuter clinic to help control the pet population, providing shelter and veterinary care for stray animals, or implementing pet therapy programs in nursing homes or hospitals. If your Lodge provides food baskets to families, include pet food! Pet food is not covered by SNAP benefits and is often overlooked at food pantries.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

Collaborate with local animal shelters and veterinary clinics to assess the most pressing needs.



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

Bridge connections between community partners. Does your Lodge's Veterans Committee know a veteran looking for a service animal? Connect them with an animal shelter! Use social media beyond the Lodge newsletter to get the word out about your initiative.

Host an adoption clinic at the Lodge, complete with educational workshops on responsible pet ownership and craft stations for new caregivers to make [collars and accessories](#). Mobilize your membership and organize a community drive to collect pet food, towels, litter and treats.