

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.

Beyond the Basket



PROJECT OVERVIEW

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



STEP 1

Get Started

A lot of 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 to 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. The past few years have brought feelings of isolation that a simple handwritten note can help alleviate.

Does your Lodge have a signature meal it's known for in the community? Include a recipe and all the ingredients!

Bed Building Projects



Bloomington, Ill., Lodge No. 281

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 increase sleep and its health benefits.



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 otherwise need this service themselves.

Reach out to 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



South Orange, N.J., Lodge No. 1154

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.

gardening classes. Consider reaching out to a local hardware store, service organizations, or horticulture programs at colleges for additional support. Connect with organizations that focus on youth to direct them to a healthy activity and to further the impact of the garden.



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



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!

Backpack Programs



Mankato, Minn., Lodge No. 225

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Families who are under-resourced may struggle with purchasing school supplies when sending their children back to school. That's where the Elks can step in. Host a backpack program to provide essential school supplies to children living in households below the poverty line.



STEP 1

Get Started

Contact local schools to find out what items set students up for success, and rely on them to identify students for the program. Talk to Lodge members to see who would be interested in purchasing and packaging supplies.



STEP 2

Make it a Success

A strong and dependable group of volunteers is essential to keeping your program organized and successful. Consider working with youth groups such as the Elks scholars or Antlers who may also be available to volunteer with the program.



STEP 3

Make it Your Own

After distributing the backpacks, consider hosting an Elks-led story time or tutoring session. Jumpstarting learning in the summer could help give the students you're working with another boost for success.

Consider doing multiple school supply drives during the course of the year. School supplies tend to dwindle toward the middle or end of the school year, so spacing out distributions will keep students equipped for the entire year.

Are there other materials your Lodge can provide? Reach out to your local library and see if they can provide informational materials about their resources.