**Turning Houses into Homes**

Veterans are the backbone of this country. They put their lives on hold and risk everything to ensure that Americans can remain safe, secure and free. However, when veterans return home, they don’t always get the support they deserve. Not in our communities.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Lodge No. 91 is working to address this issue.

Using an Impact Grant worth up to $10,000 from the ENF’s Community Investments Program, the Chattanooga Lodge makes minor home improvements for local veterans, completely free of charge. The *Home Sweet Home* Impact Grant project has been making a difference in the community for five years.

“The veterans who have benefitted from Home Sweet Home are frequently living in unsafe conditions,” says Grants Coordinator Elizabeth McWilliams. “They have nowhere to turn for assistance with home repairs except our Lodge. The work our Elk volunteers have done in these homes has tremendously improved the lives of our valued veterans.”

This year, approximately 35 Lodge members are taking part in the project, traveling up to 50 miles away to serve the greater Chattanooga area. Projects have included building new decks, replacing windows and doors, fixing electrical issues, and even treating for roaches.

“We work with community partners and other volunteers from the area, but the Elks take the lead on all home improvement projects,” says McWilliams. “We analyze the needs of each job, research pricing for materials, pick up orders, organize the volunteers, and complete the work.”

The Chattanooga Lodge has strict requirements to ensure that they are serving the veterans who are most in need. The veterans must show their income, prove that they own the house, and show proof of being honorably discharged. Once the approval process is complete, the Lodge members are ready to jump into action.

“It is our goal to help as many local veterans as possible,” says McWilliams. “It's just one way we can give back to those who have given so much for our freedom.”

If members of your Lodge are ready to jump into action too, apply for CIP grants! With Beacon, Spotlight, and Gratitude Grants, Lodges can receive up to $11,000 to prevent veteran homelessness, help fight hunger, or address other specific needs of the community. Applications close January 21, 2026; don’t delay!

*For 2025-26, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly $18 million to fund the Community Investments Program. Lodges meet local needs through CIP grants that offer Elks opportunities to serve their community in ways that will raise the Lodge’s profile, energize the membership, encourage former members to return to the fold, and gain the notice of people who want to be part of an organization that’s doing great things. To learn more about the Community Investments Program, please visit* ***elks.org/CIP***.