**ENF Month: Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities**

October is ENF Month, a time to celebrate the ways the Elks National Foundation accomplishes its mission of helping Elks build stronger communities. But how does the ENF do this?

By investing in the communities where Elks live and work.

In the 2025-26 fiscal year, the ENF is allocating $44.4 million to programs that improve the quality of life in local Elks communities, help the state Elks associations accomplish their charitable objectives, meet the needs of today's veterans, and provide our youth with lifelong skills.

The largest of these programs is the Community Investments Program. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the CIP has grown from a modest budget of $350,000 to nearly $18 million, allowing each Lodge the opportunity to receive up to $11,000 in small grants.

“Over the past 20 years, we have awarded nearly 60,000 CIP grants,” said ENF Director Jim O’Kelley at the Opening Ceremony of the 2025 Elks National Convention. “These grants have funded projects that deeply and profoundly changed the lives of countless children, veterans, and other members of the community.”

CIP grants require Elks to identify the unique needs of their communities, form a plan, and address the needs through Elks-led, volunteer-based projects. Similarly, state Elks associations tackle the needs of the community through charitable programs. The ENF will contribute $11.5 million to State Grants this year, making it the second largest appropriation in the budget.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission provides aid and comfort to America’s veterans in need. To ensure that the sacrifices of these veterans are never forgotten, the ENF allocation to the ENVSC will increase by 12.7% this year to $6.4 million, the largest increase for any ENF appropriation this fiscal year. The allocation includes $3.8 million for the Welcome Home initiative to end veteran homelessness.

“[The Welcome Home Kit initiative] reminds me that there are people who really care, and that’s all I can ask for,” says Ashley, a Marine Corps veteran who received a Welcome Home Kit for her new apartment. “Hopefully, in the future we can continue to do that for other veterans.”

While the ENVSC provides for those who have paved the way for the country of today, through scholarships, the ENF builds relationships with the leaders of tomorrow. Nearly $5 million will be awarded to some of the brightest young minds as they pursue their academic dreams and build connections with the Elks in their communities.

“I am incredibly honored to be selected for a scholarship from the Elks National Foundation,” says Kathryn Murchison, a 2025 Legacy Awards winner sponsored by Presque Isle, Maine, Lodge No. 1954. “Receiving this scholarship means so much to me—not only as a student, but as the daughter of an Elk. This award represents more than financial support; it’s a recognition of hard work, family legacy, and the values of community and service that the Elks stand for.”

Scholarships aren’t the only way the ENF provides for the next generation. Through the Hoop Shoot, the ENF is unleashing gritty kids who understand the importance of hard work, determination and perseverance. This year, nearly $1.5 million will be allocated to this national free throw program. The ENF also allocated more than $1 million for the Drug Awareness Program, a 12.2% increase over last year.

Through these programs, the ENF continues its mission of helping Elks build stronger communities year-round. To see the full breakdown of grants and appropriations, visit secure.elks.org/appropriations.

*A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Elks National Foundation helps Elks build stronger communities through programs that support youth, serve veterans, and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. For more information on the ENF, visit* ***elks.org/enf***.