



Serving
Our
Nation's
Veterans
for
75 Years



2020-21: Elks Supporting Veterans in a Crisis

- Even though they couldn't physically be there, our Voluntary Service Representatives and Deputy Representatives still found a way to volunteer 32,775 hours in 356 facilities over the past year. They served a total of 232,423 veterans.
- After a slight delay while we all understood what pandemic restrictions mean, we awarded \$2,500 Freedom Grants to 325 Elks Lodges. 3,833 Elks volunteered 21,121 volunteer hours to serve 36,371 veterans and military members.
- Thanks to the Elks Emergency Assistance Program, 410 veterans exited or prevented homelessness in 2020-21. Each of these veterans received help with rent, security deposits or utilities to be stably and safely housed during a pandemic.
- An additional 1,490 veterans that exited homelessness received Welcome Home Kits from the Elks, giving them the supplies they needed to stay healthy and housed.
- Elks donated a total of 16,277 hides last year. With Veterans Adaptive Sports events and competitions canceled, we distributed only 649 gloves last year. Craft kits, however, were in demand. We donated 122,252 square feet of leather to HHV, valued at \$550,134. And, our volunteers managed to distribute 8,810 kits to veterans in facilities!



It has been quite a year. But we persevered. In fact, even in a pandemic, we put up some impressive numbers! The total value of Elks service to veterans is estimated to be more than \$35 million in 2020-21.





**We've been
persevering for
75 years.**





And now, the world premiere of the
ENVSC's 75th Anniversary Video!

Elks in Action

“Looking back, it was a slow process, with the addition of 1 thing each year that inspired or motivated us to do another 1 thing the following year. We went from "The Elks? That's that bar that holds Bingo" to "The Elks? These are the guys we call when we need something done for our Veterans!"

- Thomas Kramin, Minnesota
State Veterans Chair



Welcome Home

- Started in 2015, Welcome Home is our newest program. Inspired by then GER John Amen's visit to Washington, D.C., the VA Secretary asked the Elks to join the fight against veteran homelessness. In the fall of 2015, the Elks signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the VA that officially launched this program.
- Since then, Elks have provided 5,871 Welcome Home Kits to veterans exiting homelessness. 194 Lodges across 39 states have participated.
- The Elks Emergency Assistance Fund has helped 2,539 veterans exit or prevent homelessness. The average amount of assistance given to a veteran is \$1,627. Over the life of the program, 39% of funds have gone to rent, 30% to utilities, and 15% to security deposits. The remainder of the fund has covered other needs that pose barriers to sustainable housing, such as medical expenses or transportation.
- We launched the Focus Grant program to help Lodges in the 10 cities with the highest number of homeless veterans meet the demand for services. 73 Elks Lodges to host projects that directly serve veterans experiencing homelessness. Our members work directly with VA staff or SSVF partners, and projects vary according to need. These projects directly serve more than 4,500 veterans each year.



Elks in Action

“In the last 6 years I have been so energized by the direction the Elks have gone in helping those who are currently or formerly homeless. We have after 5 1/2 years just delivered our 1154th kit to a Veteran and family. Can you believe that!

We had a Veteran named Steven, referred to us by his case manager. He and his wife were being helped with a small cottage in a bad area by a paid group who placed them there and the government paid them. When I met this couple they literally had nothing. No bed, no food, and hardly another item. Just a picnic bench to sit on.

We were able to provide him with food for months, a new bed, furniture and everything needed for their home. We helped with paying his bills until his finalized determination of 100% came back which took over 8 months. It has been 2 years now and he and his wife have moved getting a house of their own. I still get cards from them thanking our committee and the Elks for everything.

- Don Tonachio, New Jersey State Veterans Chair





Freedom Grants

- Started in 2011, Freedom Grants were started to offer Lodges access to funds specifically to serve veterans in their communities.
- From the first year, these grants flew off the shelves. We've slowly and steadily grown this program every year since it started. This April, we awarded the most Freedom Grants ever: 350 grants worth \$2,500 each!
- Over the past decade, we've awarded 2,277 Freedom Grants to Lodges to serve veterans and military members in need, totaling \$4,892,500.

Elks in Action

“In 2014 I was approached by the head of the Recreational Therapy Services Department at the Fort Worth VA outpatient clinic to start a music program at the clinic. I loved the idea and jumped right in with both feet. I started out with a donation jar at the lodge and then applied for a Grant to purchase the guitars to get them started. With 10 guitars the program came to life. We rounded up some volunteer instructors and started out with the first 12-week beginners guitar class.

We have had over 500 Veterans participate in the program. One of our original members has since moved to the Dayton Ohio area and started the program up there as well. We have now expanded the program to include other instruments and crafts. Over the years the band has played at our State Convention, numerous Veterans Day Parades and a host of other venues promoting the program.”

- Stacy Lahue, Texas State Veterans Chair





Elks Voluntary Service

- The VA Voluntary Service Program began in 1946, and Elks joined in 1955.
- The program originally only included service in VA Medical Centers, but today Elks have volunteers in all types of facilities that serve veterans: state veterans homes, outpatient clinics, veterans shelters and even in veterans treatment courts.
- Program is always growing! We've added about 4 facilities a year, for the past 20 years.
- 331 Representatives and 295 Deputy Representatives serve in 354 facilities.

Elks in Action

“Over the last few years, I have seen more Elk members wanting to get involved in serving our veterans. During the last standdown at the New Orleans VA Hospital before the Covid-19 pandemic, we had over 38 Elk volunteers from New Orleans Lodge #30 to escort the veterans through the hospital to their doctor’s and other scheduled appointments.

After their appointments they kept the veterans company during their lunch before moving on to their next assigned veteran.

Often our female veterans are looked over. In 2020 the Representative and Deputy Representative planned and executed a drive thru baby shower at the New Orleans VA Hospital. Items like diapers, wipes, lotions, and blankets were given out to new and expecting veteran mothers.”

– Don Baye, Louisiana State Veterans Chair





Veterans Leather Program

- Started in 1948!
- Elks donated a total of 16,277 hides last year.
 1. Missouri donated the most, with 5,117 hides.
 2. Arkansas came in second with 4,218 hides.
 3. Iowa came in third with 3,966 hides.
- Leather is used for 3 main purposes.
 - wheelchair gloves
 - some finished leather goes directly to VA Recreation therapists
 - Craft kits!



Elks' Support of Help Heal Veterans

- 923,280 sq ft of leather donated to Help Heal Veterans since 2001
- Donated leather helped to create 622,216 kits for recovering veterans
- Elks support of Help Heal Veterans is estimated to be worth more than \$15 million



Help Heal Veterans

