



# Elks Veterans Service Commission Manual

**BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**The Elks National Veterans Service Commission  
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614-1889**

## THE ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

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**This manual, and all of its contents (including additional information and resources) can be found online at [elks.org/vets](http://elks.org/vets). All interested volunteers are encouraged to sign up for the ENVSC's monthly e-newsletter at [www.elks.org/vets/newsletter.cfm](http://www.elks.org/vets/newsletter.cfm).**

The purpose of this manual is to provide Elks volunteers with the tools and information they need for success.

## **THE ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION**

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission was established in 1946, immediately following the war, with the primary purpose of caring for veterans. Since that time, the Elks have wholeheartedly taken that mission to heart. In VA clinics, veteran's homes, USOs, homeless shelters and more, thousands of Elks volunteers give generously of their time, energy and resources to serve veterans and military members each year.

This manual will help you and your Lodge members join that group of dedicated Elks.

The National Veterans Service Commission maintains its mission of directly serving our nation's veterans, with a special focus on serving veterans and military members in need. It also holds a policy of non-involvement regarding legislation and matters relating to veteran's benefits.

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

As provided in Section 4.290 of the Grand Lodge Statutes, the National Veterans Service Commission is comprised of five members. Each member is a Past Grand Exalted Ruler and is appointed for a term of five years. They elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer. Commission members give liberally of their time and experience without remuneration.

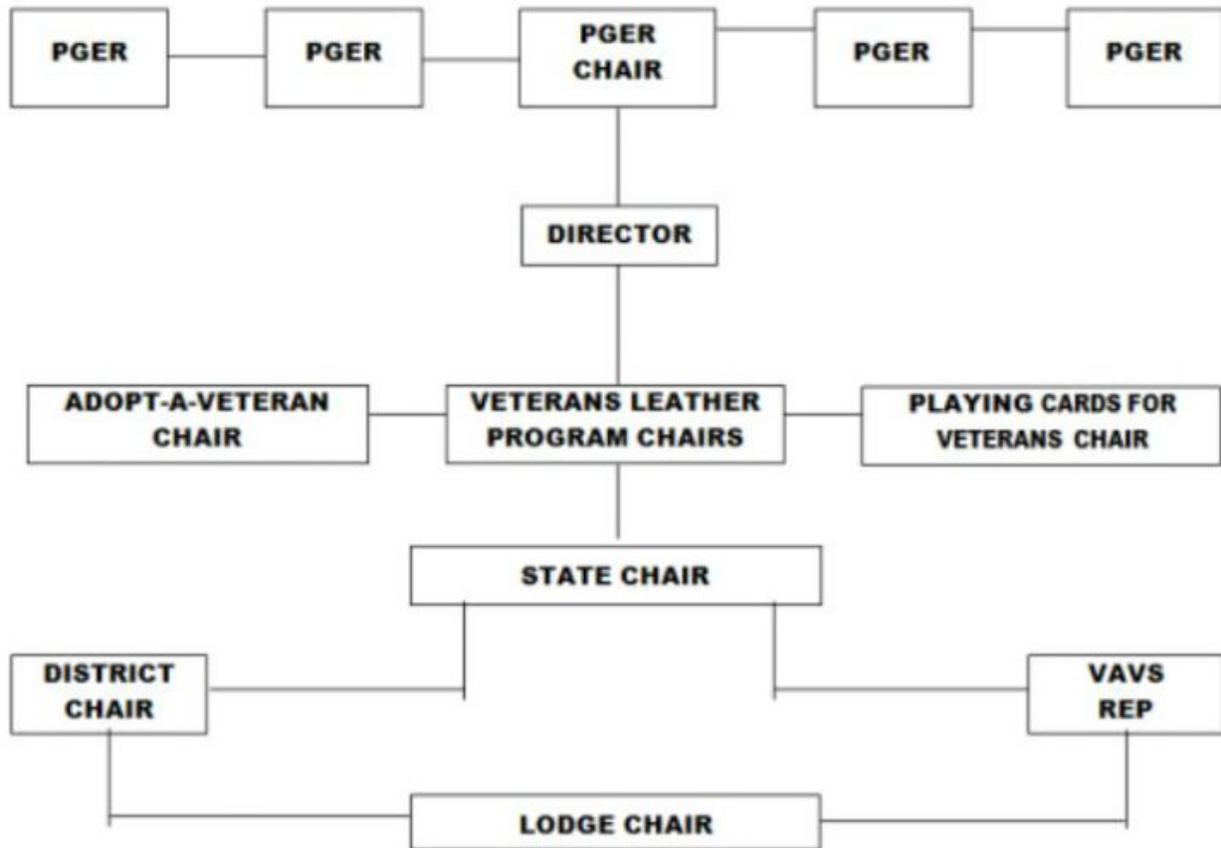
Section 4.290 states:

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission shall be composed of five members whose term of office shall be 5 years, and until their respective successors have been appointed and confirmed. The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- To promulgate and supervise the Order's program for the benefit of members of the Armed Forces of the United States and the veterans of such services.
- To annually elect its Officers.
- To adopt rules for the conduct of its business.
- To employ personnel.
- To require bonds from its Officers and employees.
- To pay expenses of the Commission out of the funds under its control, provided that no Commission member shall receive any compensation for his or her services.
- To keep an accurate account of its receipts and expenditures and make an annual report in writing to the Grand Lodge of its activities and expenditures.

- To receive funds appropriated by the Grand Lodge for the conduct of the program. All funds in excess of the year's operating budget shall revert to the Order and be subject to appropriation annually in accordance with the approved budgeted requirements.
- To submit its budget to the Board of Grand Trustees for review and approval.

**Organizational Table  
THE ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION**



Members of the Veterans Service Commission are appointed by the Grand Exalted Ruler.

The Director is engaged by the Veterans Service Commission.

The State Chair is appointed by the State President.

The VAVS Representative is appointed by the State Chair with the approval of the State President and the Past Grand Exalted Ruler of Jurisdiction.

The District Chair is appointed by the District Vice-President.

The Lodge Chair is appointed by the Exalted Ruler.

**This chart lists only official positions. It is not intended to limit anyone's involvement. All Elks are welcome and encouraged to get involved in serving veterans.**

# Programs

## ADOPT-A-VETERAN

Many older veterans in hospitals, VA homes, nursing homes and care centers have limited or no family nearby. Without social engagement and positive interaction, veterans' health can suffer and they can feel like they lack support. Elks can help by participating in the Adopt-a-Vet program and providing friendship and assistance.

The program is targeted toward veterans in VA hospitals, assisted care homes, community living centers, and retirement homes, or toward any veteran with little or no family nearby.

### Where do I find Veterans to adopt?

Locally	State-Wide
1. VAVS Reps and Hospital Chairs can obtain lists from the hospital. Veterans can be adopted by an entire Lodge, a few members or just one person.	1. Local volunteers secure names of veterans and forward the list to the State Veterans Chair.
2. Nursing homes and Community Living Centers may have an Activities Director or Social Services Representative who can give you names of veterans, especially those who have no family or few visitors.	2. The State Chair divides the list among Lodges near the facilities and forwards to the appropriate District Chair.
3. Churches or other groups may give you the name of a veteran who is homebound or lonely.	3. The District Chair divides the names among local Lodges according to interest in participating.

In light of the Elks' recent commitment to help end veteran homelessness, don't forget about homeless veterans, and those who've recently transitioned into housing.

### How do I get my Lodge to support an adopted veteran?

1. Publish names, birthdays (do not print year of birth), and addresses of adoptees.
2. Assign names to volunteers and committee members.
3. Approach members at Lodge meetings and functions and ask them to support the program.
4. Ask schools, churches, or other service groups to Adopt-A-Veteran.
5. High school student groups and individual students may also be interested.

### Now that I have adopted a Veteran, what do I do?

1. Send them a card on their birthday.
2. Send cards on holidays, or send a letter, note, or postcard at any time.
4. Give them gifts on holidays or birthdays.
5. Take them to dinner at the Lodge.
6. Visit them and just talk.

### **How much will this cost?**

The cost of the program is usually the responsibility of the individuals who do the adopting. This would include cards, postage or small holiday gifts. Larger gifts can be offset with 50/50's or special parties.

### **Where can I get additional help or information?**

1. The Elks Veterans Hospital Chair.
2. The District Veterans Chair.
3. The State Chair.

## **FREEDOM GRANTS**

In 2017-18, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission will award \$2,000 Freedom Grants to 200 Lodges to hold projects that serve veterans and active-duty military members.

Freedom Grants are competitive and will be awarded to Lodges whose projects are judged to best serve the needs of veterans and/or active-duty military members.

Meaningful Elk involvement is strongly encouraged and increases chance of approval. Freedom Grants must focus on one of these five areas of increased need:

- Employment
- Homelessness and Housing
- Military Families
- Health
- Educational Support

Freedom Grant applications become available online July 1 and are due July 31, at 12 p.m. (noon) Central Time. Recipients will be announced in September. Freedom Grants are available for use between September 1, and July 31. Final Report Forms are due by August 31 of the following year.

Applications are online only. The Lodge Secretary or ENF Grants Coordinator is able to process, complete and submit the online application at [elks.org/enf/grants](http://elks.org/enf/grants). Please note that grants may not be used for fundraisers, scholarships, general community events, appreciation dinners, solely to benefit Lodge members and their families. Full guidelines and more resources available online at [elks.org/cip/grants/FreedomGrants.cfm](http://elks.org/cip/grants/FreedomGrants.cfm).

Upon approval of a Lodge's online application, the ENF will mail the Lodge an approval letter, a grant check and a Final Report form to the Lodge address. A Lodge can use its \$2,000 Freedom Grant in conjunction with a Beacon Grant and/or a Gratitude Grant. Applications must be submitted separately.

After the grant has been used, mail in the Final Report Form, along with all grant-related receipts. Please email photos. Lodges that do not complete this required form will not be eligible to apply for Lodge grants the following year.

## **VETERANS LEATHER PROGRAM**

This manual includes the names, addresses and phone numbers of Chairs in charge of special activities. Specific program-related questions may be directed toward them. All other questions or suggestions should be directed toward the Commission office in Chicago.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission is the major source of hides and tanned leather used for recreational and occupational therapy throughout the Veterans Affairs health-care system.

Time between visits from friends and families can make hospitalization drudgery for our veterans. Leather provides a form of relief by keeping minds active and providing exercise for injured and unused muscles. Veterans often enter wallets, clothing, belts, moccasins and leather paintings in arts and craft shows sponsored by the Elks.

A program is in place whereby tanned leather is cut and sewn into specially designed fingerless gloves to be furnished to veterans confined to wheelchairs, thereby protecting their hands during movement.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Elks Leather Program was initiated in 1948 when the Elks of California launched a hide gathering program in their state during hunting season. The raw hides were collected at central points and shipped to a Los Angeles tannery for processing. Finished leather was made available to Veterans Medical facilities throughout the State.

To make this popular program available to all VA Medical Centers (VAMCs), the Elks National Veterans Service Commission arranged funding to pay for tanning and shipping of the hides nationwide. Today, many states donate salted hides to support the program. All states are encouraged to participate.

### **PROCEDURES:**

Listed in detail are the proper procedures for processing and preparing salted hides for shipment to the tanneries. Methods to be used to obtain tanned leather and wheelchair gloves for patients are also explained.

The program would not exist without the donation of animal hides (which are abundant and often disposed of in many states). Donated hides come from a variety of locations and individuals such as hunters, farmers, ranchers, slaughter houses, locker plants, taxidermists and highway departments to name just a few. The hides usually can be obtained for our Veteran Leather Program simply by asking.

Hides arrive at individual Lodges in various conditions including salted, unsalted, frozen, dry, dirty and in a variety of containers such as boxes or plastic bags. If hides have already begun to spoil, they cannot be used. Good hides need to be immediately thawed, spread, cleaned and salted. Processing hides that have been allowed to dry out is not cost-effective. They must be re-constituted in salt water, and then salted again before shipping. This is a labor-intensive time consuming process that should be avoided.

Proper preparation of hides prior to shipment to the designated tannery is extremely important. Rotted hides arriving at the tannery are discarded; making freight charges wasteful expenses.

The equipment and material required to prepare hides for storage and shipment are relatively inexpensive and if not already available, may be obtained from local businesses as donations. Otherwise, they may be purchased for a nominal amount. You will need:

- A container of fine table salt or livestock salt (rock salt will not work)
- a sharp knife for removing excess fat, flesh, tails and tags
- A clean surface (the ground, a table, barrels, plywood, etc.)
- "Kitty litter" or sawdust under the loaded pallets, to absorb juices and odor
- Surgical rubber gloves or old gloves for clean up
- Packing materials (plastic or cardboard barrels for small amounts, pallets for large amounts)

Upon receiving hides:

- 1) Carefully examine the hide to determine if it is still good. Spoiled hides can be identified by a peculiar odor, discoloration and if the hair begins to pull away from the hide easily. This means the hide is worthless and should be discarded.
- 2) Remove and discard excess fat, flesh and the tail. Be very careful when processing hides. Avoid cutting even the smallest holes with a knife. All holes, bullets, arrows or just careless trimming will increase several times when the hides are processed at the tannery. Most tannery equipment stretches the hides and thereby increases the hole sizes. A quality piece

- of leather will have very few holes, blemishes or scratches and can be used by the veterans for almost any type of project.
- 3) Salt should be applied over all of the fleshy surface. A small animal will require four to five pounds of salt. A larger animal, such as a cow or an elk, might require as much as twelve pounds of salt. **Remember, you cannot use too much salt!**
  - 4) Rub the salt thoroughly into all fleshy areas of the hide. Areas not salted will allow bacteria to develop and spread throughout the hide. The juices of the hide will mix with the salt and create a brine that will prevent bacteria growth.
  - 5) When salting is completed, the edges of the hide should be folded in four to six inches to keep the moisture inside. This will keep the hides soft and pliable until they reach the tannery.

#### Packing hides:

- 6) In colder climates, the hides, with the edges folded, can just be placed on the pallet, hair side down, one on top of the other.
- 7) In warmer climates, hides tend to spoil more rapidly. It is strongly recommended hides be again folded side to side and then placed on the pallet. This will help keep them in good condition until they reach the tannery.
- 8) Square up the pallet to facilitate the loading of the hides onto the commercial trucks with fork-lifts. Do not overload the pallets.
- 9) Shrink wrap the hides. Most commercial truck lines require this.
- 10) Store in a secure area, such as a CONEX container, discarded semi-truck trailer, shed, barn or just a fenced area, if inside storage is not available.
- 11) Transport hides to a designated State collection point, and notify the Veterans Leather Program Chair or Vice-Chair. They will arrange for the most efficient transportation to the tannery. Their contact information is listed on the front of this manual. No hides should be individually sent to the tanneries. They should never be mailed "C.O.D" or by parcel post.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission will pay the expenses for the transporting of salted hides from pre-designated State collection points to the tanneries. It will also cover the expense of tanning these hides.

## LEATHER AND GLOVE PROCUREMENT

Any VAVS Rep. or Deputy Rep. can order gloves or tanned leather for veterans at VA and other facilities. Orders must be submitted using the order form at the back of this manual. (Order forms are also available online at the Elks Volunteer Resource Center at [elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm](http://elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm).)

Please note that the Elk submitting the form must fill in their own name and address, as the leather and gloves can only be shipped to that location. The form

must also be signed by the Chief of Occupational or Recreational Therapy at VA Medical Centers or the person who will supervise the program at State Veteran's Homes.

Requests that are exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Director in Chicago.

It is the responsibility of the Elks receiving the leather and gloves to see that they are only used for their intended purpose. It is recommended that the gloves be presented to veterans in wheelchairs by Elk members to receive maximum effect for the veterans and our organization.

## **PLAYING CARDS FOR VETERANS**

Another way to reach out to hospitalized veterans in your community is by providing them with playing cards. Local casinos donate decks of playing cards to Elks to be distributed to VA homes and hospitals. If you'd like to provide playing cards to veterans at a facility near you, approach local casinos about donating cards.

If there isn't a casino or riverboat near your home, you can order cards to be delivered, using the form at the end of this manual. Cards are provided free of charge. The order form is also available at the Elks Volunteer Resource Center at [elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm](https://elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm).

## **WELCOME HOME PROGRAM**

Every night, an estimated 50,000 veterans are living on the streets. Each with a different story, they all shared a common pledge: to support and defend this country. Their service is done. Now, it's the Elks' turn to serve.

In partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission has pledged to help end veteran homelessness, and ensure that every veteran has the safe, stable home they deserve. To accomplish this goal, we need your help! [First, watch this video](#). Then, get started!

**Here are the 5 main components of the Welcome Home program.**

### **Welcome Home Kits**

Most veterans move into their homes with nothing. Elks can help veterans establish their homes by building Welcome Home Kits. Generally, this kit would include some small furniture, kitchenware, and cleaning supplies. Items can be new or used, donated or purchased. The ENVSC has funds available to help with this.

- Our Welcome Home Kit Reimbursement Form assists Lodges with costs up to \$200. Access it at the Elks Volunteer Resource Center at [elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm](http://elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm).
- Once your Lodge submits this form to our office, we'll match your Lodge with a veteran moving into a new home.

### **Adopt a Homeless Veteran**

Once a veteran is home, it can be difficult to change habits and transition from a life on the street. Veterans may need assistance with independent living and home care skills such as budgeting, opening bank accounts, cooking, cleaning, job seeking and assistance dealing with landlords. Having an Elk as an advocate and friend can help these veterans to thrive in their new home. Adopt a newly housed veteran.

### **Awareness Campaign**

Spread awareness! Be a local advocate. Encourage business owners to hire a homeless veteran. Help find affordable housing for veterans making the transition.

- [Talk to landlords](#) in your community about renting to veterans.
- Share this video.

### **Increased Focus on 8 cities**

The VA has asked the Elks to focus their efforts in and around the following 8 cities, which they've identified as the areas of highest need. The following two additional programs will be available to Lodges in and surrounding these areas: Chicago; New York; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles/Loma Linda; San Francisco; San Diego; Seattle; and Miami-Dade.

### **Elks Emergency Assistance Program**

Spread the word about the Elks Veterans Emergency Assistance Program. Veterans registered with and receiving services from the Department of Veterans Affairs can apply for one-time monetary assistance to prevent homelessness or secure a home. Forms must be signed by the veteran and by a VA employee.

- *Currently, this form is only available to providers within the 8 pilot cities designated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.*

### **Welcome Home Lodge Grants**

In addition to Freedom Grants, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission is funding additional grants in the areas around the 8 target cities identified above.

These grants of up to \$2,500 will be available specifically to assist veterans who are homeless, or at risk of being so. Applications become available online July 1, and are due by May 31. Here are the requirements:

- Elk involvement is required.
- Grant applications must focus on direct service to veterans in need.

- A complete application and budget must be submitted and approved before funds are mailed.
- After project is complete, Lodges must complete a Final Report Form, including documentation of all funds spent.
- More information, including application questions, can be found online at [elks.org/vets/welcomehome.cfm](http://elks.org/vets/welcomehome.cfm).

**Together, we can end veteran homelessness.**

For further information, contact the Elks National Veterans Service Commission office at [Vets@elks.org](mailto:Vets@elks.org), or at 773-755-4736. Or, visit [va.gov/homeless/](http://va.gov/homeless/).

## **ENVSC Volunteers**

### **STATE CHAIR**

State Chairs bring all of the other volunteers together, and are an important part of keeping the Chicago office informed. How's how to get started.

- State Chairs are advocates for their own states. Each community, state and region has different needs, and it's important to know what the biggest needs of veterans in your state are. So, learn about your state. Do your research. Visit the VA website, read about local nonprofit organizations, speak with people who are already doing the work and learn from them. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Work together and build a coalition of people with the shared goal of serving veterans in your state.
- Don't go it alone. Establish a good working relationship with the State President, and with the Past Grand Exalted Ruler(s) who are your state sponsors. Appoint and work closely with a State Veterans Vice-Chair. Keep District Deputy Grand Exalted Rulers and State Vice-Presidents informed.
- Visit the ENVSC website and become familiar with all of the ENVSC programs. Learn about local volunteers. Compile a list of the VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives in your state. Learn about the facilities they serve in, and the key people at those facilities (such as the Chief of Voluntary Service, Veterans Home Directors, Veterans Service Officers).
- Communicate with the District Deputies, and make sure they communicate with the Lodge Chairs in their area. Provide training opportunities at State and District meetings so that volunteers are

informed and prepared. Recruit more volunteers in your state. Get people excited about helping!

Next, be aware of the official duties of your position.

1. Develop annual budget and insure its compliance, once approved. Submit expense vouchers to your State Association in a timely manner with supporting receipts.
2. Support, train and direct District Chairs. If possible, visit each District annually to provide assistance, help with problem solving, and honor outstanding volunteers.
3. Prepare Annual Performance Evaluations on District National Veterans Service Committee Chairmen and the State Vice-Chair of National Veterans Service.
4. Be present at and prepare information and training for annual conventions, mid-term conferences and other state events.
5. Screen, approve/disapprove and forward to Past Grand Exalted Ruler(s) of jurisdiction for approval, requests for certification of VAVS Representatives. In order to be certified as a VAVS Representative, the nominee must have the approval of the State Sponsor(s).
6. Screen and approve requests for certification of VAVS Representatives. Nominees must be approved by State Sponsor(s). Forward all approved requests to Past Grand Exalter Ruler(s) of jurisdiction.
7. Screen and approve requests for certification of Deputy VAVS Representatives. Forward all approved requests to Past Grand Exalted Ruler(s) of jurisdiction.
8. Encourage all VAVS Reps in your state to have least one and as many as three Deputy Representatives.
9. Working with the State President, select two outstanding Elks (or Elks spouses) each year for special recognition by National Veterans Service Commission. (This award can only be given once to an individual. More information on page 13).
10. Stay up-to-date about what's going on at State VAMCs, State Veterans Homes and other VA facilities in your state. Visit if possible. Keep informed about how the Elks' involvement is helping.

## DISTRICT CHAIR

One of the most important responsibilities of serving as District Chair is to foster communication between the Lodges and the State Chair. Here's how to get started.

- Compile a District Directory with the names, addresses, emails and phone numbers of every Exalted Ruler, Lodge Secretary and Lodge Veterans Chair in your district. Get to know your State Chair and VAVS Representatives.
- Each community and district has different needs, and it's important to know what the biggest needs of veterans in your district are. Do your research. Learn about local VA facilities, read about local nonprofit organizations, speak with people who are already doing the work and learn from them. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Work together and build a coalition of people with the shared goal of serving veterans in your District.
- Gather a list of activities that currently exist and that people would like to exist in your District. Consider the areas of greatest need, and focus on those.
- Stay in touch with each Lodge in your district. Visit if possible. Speak with the Lodge Veterans Chair, the Exalted Ruler and anyone who is passionate about serving veterans. With the ER, consider what the Lodge's capabilities are, regarding finances, volunteer participation, timing, etc. Be conscious of matching Lodges with projects they can run successfully.
- Occasional district meetings, district phone emails or email chains with all the Lodge Chairs can be very helpful. Encourage people to share what their local needs are, what projects are most helpful, which are easiest and which maybe aren't worth the time. Learn from the volunteers on the ground who are already running projects that serve veterans and military members in need.
- Some State Associations provide for reimbursement when travel is excessive. Please keep in mind that funds provided by the ENVSC are to be applied only to programs that are directly serving veterans and military members in need. If you need assistance with expenses, speak with your State Chair.

## LODGE CHAIR

The Lodge Veterans Chair is appointed by the Exalted Ruler. Section 13.130 of the Grand Lodge Statutes outlines the duties of the Lodge National Veterans Service Committee Chair. It states:

- The National Veterans Service Committee shall implement the program of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission within the Lodge as may be requested by the Commission in the furtherance of service to veterans, assist when called upon by the Armed Forces of the United States, respond to any call for aid and cooperation as might be requested by our National Government in any emergency and to be available for cooperation in the event of disaster in any local area of the United States.

Lodge Veterans Chairs are the most important part of the ENVSC program, and the ones responsible for direct service to veterans in Elks communities. Lodge Veterans Chairs have four main responsibilities.

First, find out what the needs of local veterans are. Are there a large number of young veterans returning to your community? Is there a VA facility nearby that could use volunteers? Is there a veterans' shelter in the area that could use the Elks' support? Are there homeless veterans nearby who need help?

Second, don't go it alone. Recruit Lodge members to get involved. More volunteers means more awareness, more community connections, more service hours to get things done, and more capacity to make a difference in the lives of local veterans.

Third, be sure to keep Lodge members informed of what's going on at the Lodge. Write articles for the newsletter, send out emails, hang up flyers at the Lodge and spread the word whenever possible. At meetings, report the activities and plans of your committee on the floor.

Finally, be sure to visit the ENVSC webpage and Facebook page often to stay up to date on the latest programs, stories and news. Don't forget about using Freedom Grants, Beacon Grants and Gratitude Grants to help fund your activities for veterans and military members in need.

## VETERANS REMEMBRANCE MONTH

Lodge Chairs: keep in mind that November is Veterans Remembrance Month. Lodges are strongly encouraged to hold an event to benefit veterans and military members in need this month.

Choose the project, set aside the date and recruit volunteers well in advance of the month. This could be a fundraiser for injured veterans, a food drive for military families in need, a night out for veterans in VA homes, an outing for

wounded warriors, a special meal for veterans at a local shelter, or something else.

Be sure to keep your District Chair, VAVS Representatives and nearby Lodges informed.

## **VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS) REPRESENTATIVES**

Since its inception in 1930, the Department of Veterans Affairs has encouraged and sought volunteer assistance in its various facilities through the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service program. This includes an Advisory Committee comprised of National Representatives of participating organizations. The Elks are represented on this prestigious committee by the Director of the National Veterans Service Commission.

The VAVS is made up of 60 National Organizations and meets at least annually to conduct business, elect officers and hold workshops for the instruction of its members.

Every organization whose members participate in the VAVS program may certify one Representative and up to three Deputy Representatives to the medical facility's VAVS Advisory Committee. Deputy Representatives are to work closely with the Representative to fulfill our obligation of caring for veteran patients at the VA Medical Center. When members cross a state line to serve as volunteers, one VAVS Associate Representative and one Associate Deputy Representative may be certified from that neighboring state.

The certification of Representatives to the Director of the VA Medical Center is done by the Director of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission. VAVS Representatives and Associate Representatives must be recommended for appointment by the Grand Lodge Sponsor of their state. After acceptance from the VA Medical Center, Outpatient Clinic, or Nursing Home in which they have been assigned, they then begin their volunteer responsibilities at that center. Deputy Representatives must be endorsed by a State Association official or the Representative.

A VAVS Representative must demonstrate a sincere interest in the welfare of hospitalized veterans and have the ability to work with others. He or she must be able to promote and coordinate the program among the local Lodges.

He or she must be able to attend the quarterly meetings of the Medical Center VAVS Advisory Committee. A Deputy Representative should be on hand if the Representative is unable to attend. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory. The VHA Handbook (1620.1, page 7) states, "Organizations will be removed from the VAVS Committee when none of the certified members are in attendance at three consecutive meetings of the VAVS Advisory Committee."

The National Veterans Service Commission provides financial assistance to Elk Committees in the form of a monthly allocation. Some VAVS Representatives receive a check directly while in other instances; the funds go to a State Association official who in turn distributes allocations to VAVS Representatives within the state.

Each VAVS Representative must file a monthly report with the National Veterans Service Commission. Representatives are required to send reports to State Chairs within 15 days of the reported month and Chairs are expected to forward reports to our office within 30 days of the reported month. Representatives who are more than one month delinquent in submitting reports will not receive another check until all reports are complete.

Funds provided by the Veterans Service Commission are intended to be used to directly serve the veterans at the facility. These funds are generally supplemented through additional fund raising at the State, District and Lodge level to provide veterans with the assistance they need and deserve.

Lodges should understand that the person in charge of all Elk programs at VA Medical Centers is the Representative certified by the National Veterans Service Commission. This person is responsible for organizing all activities, recruiting others to help, and delegating duties to other as needed.

It is highly recommended that VAVS Representatives have at least one and as many as three Deputy Representatives. This will help by increasing the activities available to veterans, offering veterans more personal attention, and preventing volunteer burnout.

A good VAVS Representative:

- has a flexible schedule that allows them to spend time at the medical center, attend all required VAVS meetings, carry out regular activities, and plan special events.
- Is able to make contact with Lodges in the service area to recruit volunteers, explain the VAVS program and report on relevant VA news.
- Is a leader, with a passion for serving veterans and the ability to work with a diverse group of people.

**For list of suggested activities, please visit the Elks Veterans Volunteer Center at [www.elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm](http://www.elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm).**

## **VETERAN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

The Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award honors those who have demonstrated outstanding service to veterans and military members in need. This award program permits State Associations to honor two Elks who have given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans. Each state is encouraged to honor one male and one female, but may submit any two names for consideration.

The State National Veterans Service Commission Chair should coordinate this program if a State desires to participate. The Chair should work closely with the State President and a Committee established for judging nominations.

All Elks members and their spouses are eligible for the award, as long as they are engaged in direct service to veterans and military members in need. There will be two awards per State Association.

Nominations for Veteran Volunteer of the Year must be submitted to the State NVSC Chair, or the designated judging committee chair, by January 31st of each year. The Judging Committee, with the assistance of the State NVSC Chair, will select the winners and submit their names and other pertinent information to the National Veterans Service Commission office by February 28th of each year, so that inscribed certificates and watches can be sent for presentation at the State Convention. Nominations should be in narrative form, and should not exceed 300 words. Nominations should include as many details as possible as to why the person is being nominated.



## Elks National Veterans Service Commission

Playing Cards for Veterans Program  
c/o Tom Jamison, Chair  
12102 Chandlerville Road  
Beardstown, IL, 62618-7679  
Phone: (773)755-4736

### **Playing Cards for Veterans Order Form**

For many veterans in hospitals, VA homes, nursing homes and care centers, time can move slowly between visits from family and friends. Veterans are often looking for ways to stay engaged and upbeat. Playing cards can offer an engaging and social activity to fill spare time.

Playing cards are intended to be used for charitable purposes, and to be used by veterans and military members in need. They may not be used for Lodge events, for personal use or for sale.

Please complete this entire form and mail it to the address listed above. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Lodge Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Title at Lodge: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(i.e. Exalted Ruler, Vets Chair, VAVS Rep, General Volunteer, etc.)*

Your Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the facility or facilities where the cards will be sent.:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list the full address where the cards should be shipped.

Addressee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, you certify that the information provided above is correct, and that the cards received through this program will be used for the purposes stated.

ER Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ER Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Vets Chair Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Vets Chair Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If your Lodge does not have a Vets chair, please have the Lodge Secretary sign this form.)*



**Elks National Veterans Service Commission**  
Veterans Leather Program  
384 County Road 852, Elizabeth, AR 72531-9603  
Phone: (870) 488-5786  
E- Mail: kdmc@mtnhome.com  
Dennis McAleese, Chairman

**VETERANS LEATHER PROGRAM  
LEATHER ORDER FORM**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative at VAMCs or State Homes)

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing Address - NO P.O. BOXES)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VAMC OR STATE VETERANS HOME**

**NAME OF FACILITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO. OF BEDS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing Address - NO P.O. BOXES)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

**CONTACT PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and Title)

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LEATHER ORDER**

	<b>NUMBER OF PIECES</b>	<b>COMMENTS (Type of Animal)</b>
Skin	_____	_____
Hide	_____	_____

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Occupational Therapy/Recreational Therapy  
Or Manager of State Home or Other Facility

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**  
**Order #:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Elks National Veterans Service Commission**

Veterans Leather Program  
384 County Road 852, Elizabeth, AR 72531-9603  
Phone: (870) 488-5786  
E- Mail: kdmc@mtnhome.com  
Dennis McAleese, Chairman

**VETERANS LEATHER PROGRAM  
LEATHER GLOVE ORDER FORM**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative at VAMCs or State Homes)

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing Address - NO P.O. BOXES)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VAMC OR STATE VETERANS HOME**

**NAME OF FACILITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO. OF BEDS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing Address - NO P.O. BOXES)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

**CONTACT PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and Title)

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEELCHAIR GLOVE ORDER**

(Limit -- 24 per order)

**NUMBER OF GLOVES REQUESTED**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Small
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medium
- \_\_\_\_\_ Large
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extra Large

<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>
<b>Order Number:</b> _____
<b>Date:</b> _____

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Occupational Therapy/Recreational Therapy  
Or Manager of State Home or Other Facility

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_