



Rural Life Initiative: Bridging the Gaps

The National Grange is pleased to announce a new round of Rural Life Initiative grants.

The **Rural Life Initiative: Bridging the Gaps Grant** offers funding to support local Granges' event-based projects that bring the community together and help engage new Grange members. Your project can be something new or built on an existing event, as long as it's clear how the funding will support the event and member recruitment, and the event must take place within the grant guidelines.

Grants are open to Community or Pomona Granges. The total funding available is **limited to 40 \$1,000 grants**. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, but must be received by February 28, 2026.

Key Requirements for Your Project:

- Final report must be submitted by **September 30, 2026**.
- Must be event-based and involve your local community
 - You have the flexibility to choose topics based on local needs, but the projects cannot involve building improvements or equipment purchases unless they are essential to carrying out the project.
- Must include at least one partner organization beyond your Grange
- Events must address a disparity seen within your community. *See example projects below.*
 - The goal of the **Rural Life Initiative: Bridging the Gaps grant cycle** is to get Granges active, encourage flexibility, and help place Granges at the forefront of **educating the community** and **addressing and mitigating a local disparity** within your community.
- You must submit a current membership list with the application proposal.
- Must include a plan for recruiting new members

How to Apply:

Step 1: Watch the “**Ideas to Impact**” webinar on the [National Grange YouTube Channel](#).

Step 2: Get inspired (not required, but a great way to find ideas)

Check out these videos for ideas on events or projects your Grange can plan:

- [Sharing Grange Outside Ourselves](#) - This webinar will help you better understand how to promote your Grange, connect with local media, build community partnerships, and create outreach strategies that fit your community's needs.
- [Shortcuts to Success](#) – This webinar focuses on planning end-of-year events and was initially focused on holiday events. However, it still offers great ideas you can use anytime,



including creating event calendars, building partnerships, engaging local businesses, and finding simple ways to strengthen your Grange's outreach and fundraising efforts.

- [New Ideas, New Approaches with Beth Westbrook](#) - This webinar focuses on fundraising basics and creative approaches for Granges of any size. It includes practical tips on setting goals, thinking bigger, building relationships, approaching businesses, and using storytelling to engage donors and community partners.

Step 3: Complete the online application form.

This will include:

- Answers from this proposal form
- Uploading your current membership list

Step 4: Submit your application

We will email the address on your application to confirm the successful submission and receipt within two (2) business days. If you do not receive an email, please reach out to rurallifeinitiative@grange.org to confirm your application was received.

Step 5: If your submission is selected, you will receive notice, which will include steps to submit your bank information and receive funds.

Step 6: Receive your funds

Approved payments will be made within two weeks of approval, but no later than **March 31, 2026**, via bank transfer.

Step 7: Execute your project

Complete your project between approval and August 31, 2026. Be sure to take photos to include in your final report.

Step 8: Submit your final report by September 30, 2026

Send your completed report to rurallifeinitiative@grange.org. You'll find the reporting form attached to the acceptance email.



Sample Event Ideas

1. Strong Communities Health Fair

Partner: Local hospital/health network, Senior Center, or Area Agency on Aging

Disparity Addressed: Lack of access to preventative care and wellness education for senior citizens

Event Idea:

Host a one-day health fair at the Grange Hall or community center with free screenings (blood pressure, glucose, fall-risk assessment) and workshops on topics such as nutrition, exercise, and medication management. Invite local health professionals to provide educational talks, and offer resource tables with information on transportation, Medicare benefits, and local services for seniors.

Educational Component: Mini lectures on “Healthy Aging at Home” and “Preventing Falls and Injuries.” Tie in the National Grange’s “Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors” or “What to Do with a Cancer Diagnosis” programs.

Sample Allowable Expenses: Advertising (print, radio, TV, social media), printing materials for the day, renting a location (if you don’t have a Grange Hall), donations to presenters, payments to health systems (if required), light refreshments.

2. Farm-to-Family Food Security Day

Partner: FFA, 4-H, Scouts of America, local food bank, or church food pantry

Disparity Addressed: Food insecurity and lack of nutrition education

Event Idea:

Granges collect surplus produce or donations from local farmers and gardeners, then distribute fresh food boxes to families in need. Student groups help with packaging and delivery, while a nutritionist offers a cooking demonstration using affordable, seasonal ingredients.

Educational Component: Take-home recipe cards, information about local food pantries, or making healthy, budget-friendly choices.

Sample Allowable Expenses: Printed materials for the day (recipe cards, notes, educational materials), additional supplies, boxes/baskets to distribute, payment for the presenter & their materials.



3. “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” Benefit Night

Partner: Local church, 4-H, Extension, or Lions Club

Disparity Addressed: Financial and emotional strain on families after farming accidents or health crises

Event Idea:

A spaghetti dinner, silent auction, or basket raffle held at the Grange Hall to raise funds for a local family impacted by a farm accident or medical emergency. Community partners help with food donations, auction items, and ticket sales. The event also includes a short presentation on farm safety practices or rural health resources.

Educational Component: Farm safety demonstration by Extension Service or local ag safety officer. Resources for ag workers provided by Extension or OSHA.

Sample Allowable Expenses: Advertising (print, radio, TV, social media), food to serve/sell, presenter fees, purchasing or printing tickets, renting a location.

4. Mind Matters Rural Mental Health Forum

Partner: Local counseling center, church, Rural Minds, or your local NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) affiliate

Disparity Addressed: Lack of access to mental health resources and stigma in rural areas

Event Idea:

A community forum hosted by the Grange, featuring speakers such as local counselors, clergy, or peer support advocates. The program includes breakout groups on stress management, youth mental health, and caregiver support. Resource tables provide information on local hotlines and telehealth options.

Educational Component: Workshop on recognizing signs of stress and burnout - tailored for farmers, parents, and community leaders. In-person or virtual workshop with Rural Minds.

Sample Allowable Expenses: Advertising (print, radio, TV, social media), printing materials for the day, renting a location (if you don’t have a Grange Hall), donations to presenters, refreshments.

5. “Healthy Homes, Happy Families!” Day

Partner: Local veterinary clinic, Scouts, or Humane Society

Disparity Addressed: Barriers to affordable family wellness and pet care in rural communities

Event Idea:

Offer a family wellness day at the Grange Hall with low-cost pet vaccinations, health check-ups, and child/family health booths. Scouts help with organizing activities for children while parents attend sessions. The day also features workshops on family nutrition, budgeting, and pet care.

Educational Component: Short sessions like “Caring for Pets on a Budget” and “Building Healthy Family Routines.”

Sample Allowable Expenses: Advertising (print, radio, TV, social media), printing materials for the day, renting a location (if you don’t have a Grange Hall), donations to presenters and partner groups, payment to veterinarian(s) or health partners (if required), light refreshments.



PROPOSAL

This document is to get your ideas on paper. The complete application must be submitted via the online form at <https://www.nationalgrange.org/rural-life-initiative-program/>

Grange Name & Number & State:

Town/Community Served:

Is this the first time you've received an RLI grant: Yes _____ No _____

Some preference may be given to Granges that would be first-time recipients.

About Your Grange:

- Briefly describe your Grange: location, history, and focus areas.
- Briefly describe the community you serve (demographics, population, urban/rural, etc.)
- Website of your Grange:
- Social media handles of your Grange (list all that you have):
- Grange meeting schedule (please list your regular meeting dates, times, and locations):

Proposal Summary:

Describe the project or activity you are proposing. What do you plan to do? Where and when will it take place? Who will be involved?

You must include what local disparity or issue you plan to address, and how the funds provided through this grant will help you mitigate the disparity and educate the public.

Proposed Expenses:

General idea of how these funds will support your program: (i.e. advertising, community outreach, direct donations, purchasing supplies that are essential to making the event happen, renting equipment or locations, etc.)



Partners:

List the local organizations, businesses, community groups, or other partners who will be involved. Explain how each partner will contribute to the project.

Note: *Each project must include at least one partner beyond your Grange.*

Member Engagement & Recruitment:

Describe how your project will help attract or involve new members. How will the community learn about your Grange? Will your project encourage participation from new volunteers, partners, or the general public?

Note: *You can receive an additional **\$50 for each new, verified Community Grange (i.e. non-Junior) member** who joins during the project period (March–September 2026). New members must be listed and confirmed in your reporting form, and copies of membership applications – as provided by RLI - must also be included. These funds will be released following verification with state membership reports after the 1st quarter of 2027.*

Project Contacts:

List at least two names and contact information for the people who will serve as the primary points of contact for your Rural Life Initiative project.

Primary POC for this project:

- Name:
- Phone:
- Email:

President of your Grange:

- Name:
- Phone:
- Email:

Attachments to this proposal (to be completed separately):

- Current membership list (use this template)