

MICHIGAN ELKS ASSOCIATION
Major Project Commission

LODGE CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL MANUAL

Michigan Elks Association
Major Project

Mission Statement

The Michigan Elks Association Major Project Commission exists to serve the special needs children and adults of Michigan and work in partnership with Michigan Elks and the community to raise funds, provide funding for therapy, camps and equipment and spread awareness of the ongoing challenges that children and adults with special needs and their families face every day.

The following is an overview of the Major Project. All lodge Chairpersons should become familiar with the rules and parameters of the Major Project. If you have a specific question that is not covered here, please contact your Major Project District Commissioner or the Executive Director for further help!

What is the Overall Aim of the Elks Major Project?

Our one major goal is to help special needs children to become as self-sufficient as possible, and reach their goals through individual therapy, attendance at a therapy camp where new skills are taught, medical equipment or technology that will help them to succeed! We will gladly refer any child to other agencies who can, and will, take care of his or her needs and we will receive referrals of those cases we can handle. When no one else will help, the Major Project stands ready to do all that can be done to care for the unfortunate. The expansion of the Commission to include adults through the Marching Forward! program is also now available.

Eligibility Rules for Assistance

The Elks will assist any special needs child who is a resident of Michigan, regardless of race, creed, or color, who is unable to obtain assistance from other agencies or organizations; whose family's income will not allow them to give the child the needed treatment, up to the age of 18. Relationship to a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is not required.

What is a Special Needs Child?

Elks define a special need as any health issue in a child that restricts his or her ability to function in a normal manner. The only cases presently excluded are severe heart or mental conditions and organ transplants. This program is not classified for educational purposes, such as tuition for special education schools, nor outings in camps designated for vacation purposes.

Age Limits

We welcome applications for children up-to their 18th birthday. Special needs adults may apply for Assistance through the Marching Forward! program.

What Kind of Help is Given?

We will provide financial assistance to contribute towards individual therapies, attendance (partial scholarships) at therapy camps, purchase of equipment recommended by doctor's or therapist's and technology items that will help to further their abilities. Each child's needs are unique, and we look for ways to help meet their needs!

How are Children Selected?

Major Project Chairmen in each lodge receives the requests from families in their lodge area of jurisdiction. They will submit an application (located at mielks.org / Programs / Major Project / Request for Assistance. Please see the following information on CASES within this manual and send YOUR Major Project District Commissioner along with all supporting documents and signatures. The District Commissioner will review and make recommendations. If necessary, a conference call will be scheduled with the Commissioners and Executive Director to discuss approval or rejection, and on what basis. The District Commissioner will submit the paperwork and recommendations to the Major Project office for administration. Information from doctors, health departments, social services and schools will be accepted and submitted by the Lodge Chairmen. In submitting cases the families are asked to share a portion of the expenses if they can possibly afford to do so. Also, the Major Project looks for opportunities to share expenses with any other agency.

Amount of Assistance Given

Assistance is given dependent upon many criteria: the financial ability of the family, number of dependents in the home, impact of potential assistance to the overall well-being of a child, extenuating circumstances where help from the Major Project will make a difference upon whether a child receives treatment, therapy, equipment or more. At no time will the Major Project become obligated for care beyond the limit of funds available. All contacts regarding any case being financed by the Major Project will be between the family and the Elks, with no other persons involved. The Major Project does not distribute funds to directly to a family who applies for assistance, funds are only paid directly to doctors, hospitals, vendors of medical equipment, camps for special needs, pharmacies, special therapy institutes, etc. Purchases are exempt from Michigan Sales Tax.

Dental Treatment Qualifications

Only dental work in cases associated with cleft palate and hare lip will be considered for funding by the Major Project.

Routine dental care/work/standard orthodontics are not considered by the Major Project Commission for funding. Individual situations of a child with special needs and dental work that will help or improve chewing, speech or another benefit, will be reviewed on overall merit.

Purchase of Equipment

Appliances and equipment may be supplied upon recommendations of a competent authority. This includes braces, wheelchairs, wheelchair ramps, orthopedic shoes (prescription required), hearing aids, communication devices and such other equipment that may be helpful in the child's progress. Intricate items of equipment which serve as a convenience, not required in the process of treatment will not be approved. The Elks Major Project does not purchase or donate equipment to any other agency or program.

Autism

As autism cases appear to be on the rise, and there are many unproven therapies, the Commission has worked with a specialist to develop guidelines for approved therapies and treatment. The Commission has adopted the National Professional Development Center of Autism Spectrum Disorder guidelines using "Evidence-Based Practices" as our guideline for approval of all therapies treating autism. Further information is available through the Major Project for links to many helpful sites.

Special Services

The Major Project may provide facilitating services when essential to treatment, such as special examinations, therapy and special prescriptions. The Major Project will also sponsor attendance at Speech Camps, Diabetic Camps and Special Therapy Camps. Camps for recreational purposes or vacations do not qualify.

The Major Project has agreements with all camps as to the amount of money that will be provided (set amount). The family is to be responsible for registration fee, unless arrangements can be made with the Camp Director. All CAMP requests *for Camps that are not listed as an Annual Budgeted Camp*, must be made using the Request For Assistance form, and working with their Local Elks Lodge Major Project Chairman. Families should verify directly with the Camp that their child qualifies to attend the camp and that there is room for attendance before contacting the Lodge. The Major Project office will process the application after notification from the camp that the child has been accepted. See "Request For Assistance – Step 1" for further information.

If a family wishes for their child to attend an Annual Budgeted Camp, they work DIRECTLY with the Camp, and ask about an Elks Scholarship. The Lodge Chairman should refer them to the camp and provide contact information.

Funding the Program

Elks' Lodges in Michigan supply the majority of necessary funds to manage this charitable program for special needs children. The Annual Contribution of \$1.00 (or more) per member, per year was established many years ago as a bylaw in the Michigan Elks Association in an effort to help fund the program annually. This Annual Contribution is invoiced to ALL Lodges in April of each year and also collects contact information for your lodge. Annual Contributions are required to be received by the Major Project office based upon the CLMS membership report as of March 31

(annually), and within 90 days of April 1 (annually). Refer to the MEA Bylaws, Section VII, Paragraph 8(a).

- Many Lodges include the Major Project in their regular budgets. Lodge dues are regulated to include the contribution from members and Lodges to finance participation in this Association program. Additionally, members also support the program with special individual donations. This is done through their Lodge or directly to the Major Project Commission.
- Lady Elks' organizations give generously to this benevolent project, through parties and special events to raise funds and awareness of Major Project.
- Donation Envelopes: Memorial donations and bequests can be made in remembrance of members who are deceased in lieu of flowers, as well as "Get Well" donations (with Major Project sending a gift acknowledgement card to the member) or in lieu of gifts for birthdays, anniversaries or special occasions. The Donation Envelopes are available to Lodge's at no cost, by requesting these from the Major Project office. We urge Lodge Chairman to utilize two letters of "introduction" we have created to use with your local funeral homes (for them to be able to provide to families wishing to have donations made to Major Project – in many instances a family is looking for organizations in lieu of flowers, and this is a great way to help provide another option), as well as a letter to your Intermediate School District (ISD). The ISD is a great referral point, in that they can provide your Lodge information to parents to seek assistance from Major Project. A letter of introduction and several tri-folds in both cases help your Lodge to become well known as a place that helps special needs children. These letters are available at [mielks.org / Programs / Major Project](http://mielks.org/Programs/MajorProject).
- The Major Project 365 Banks are an important part of the contribution funds we receive. Many Lodges mail them out to the membership periodically with their newsletters or through special mailings. There is a place for the donor's name and Lodges are encouraged to acknowledge the members donating 365 Banks in their newsletters. A competition can be held annually with various "races" for the number of banks turned in during a specific time – all of this to help raise not only funds, but awareness.
- Each September is "Coins 4 Kids" month! A friendly competition between ALL Lodges of the MEA to see which lodge can raise the most 365 banks turned in per-capita! A traveling trophy is presented to the winning lodge! Lodges must submit the funds collected IN SEPTEMBER with the "Coins 4 Kids" form no later than October 31st to be in the competition!
- Lodge fundraising is another critical component to helping to reach our annual budget needs. Creative and fun ideas that showcase Major Project have included spaghetti dinners, silent auctions, 50/50's on a Friday night at the Lodge, lodge special dinners, polar bear plunges, 5K's – special raffles, steak fry's, poker runs, golf outings – with proceeds contributed by the Lodge to Major Project. *Chairmen should NEVER deposit funds raised into their personal accounts, or accept checks made out to them for any fundraising activity.* All funds must be directed to Major Project. Checks being made out to the lodge are acceptable, but individuals may lose the right to claim their donation as a tax deduction. To avoid this, and be able to have a tax deducted donation utilizing Major Project's 501(c)(3) status, suggest that checks be written directly to Michigan Elks Association Major Project.
- Gold Crutch Club. The money is raised by selling our Gold Crutch lapel pins. We sell the pins for \$3.00 apiece or two for \$5.00. Lodges are able to sell the pins for more than the amount listed. Additionally, we have created a 60-year Anniversary pin, available for a minimum \$5.00 donation. Pins are available through the Major Project office, or your District Commissioner.

- Major Project “store” – we sell items such as Elks logo wear hats, shirts, jackets, crafts, jewelry and other items at our State and National conventions. Items can also be purchased by contacting the Major Project office throughout the year.
- Utilizing Corporate Donations – Many companies offer employees opportunities to volunteer and those hours can then be directed as a donation to the Major Project! We are currently participating with ExxonMobil, State Farm and GM Dollars for Doers! We encourage our members to work with their employer’s available opportunities with these donations and matching funds!
- Passive Giving programs – There are currently two Passive Giving programs we are utilizing to benefit Major Project; Kroger Community Rewards and Spartan Nash Direct your dollars. For more information, contact your District Commissioner or the Major Project office!

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Major Project (office)
 Diane Dusendang, Executive Director
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 Grand Rapids, MI 49514

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District Commissioners:

SE District / Dale Ridsen / Secretary / mmpse@mielks.org

Upper Peninsula District / Wendi Thomas / Vice-Chairman / mmpup@mielks.org

SW District / Sara DeVries / mmpsw@mielks.org

NE District / Russ Holove/ Treasurer / mmpne@mielks.org

Metro District / Jennifer Kurtz / mmpme@mielks.org

NW District / Lori Jackson / Chairman / mmpnw@mielks.org

The Major Project is incorporated in the State of Michigan as a non-profit corporation. All contributions to the Elks Major Project are deductible for Federal income and estate tax purposes in the manner and to the extent provided by law under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Check us out on FACEBOOK!

Michigan Major Project

Lodge Chairman Instructions for CASE and CAMP Applications:

Request For Assistance – Step 1!

- The “Request for Assistance” form is available for downloading at www.mielks.org – the forms are accessed by clicking on “Programs”, and then “Michigan Major Project”. These forms are available to be saved on a laptop, or printed.
 - All applications for assistance, including camp programs that are NOT a “Budgeted Camp” (see below), should be handled the same: The parents or legal guardian requesting assistance will complete and sign the Request For Assistance form while meeting with the Major Project Chairman of the lodge. Please note; the application must be signed by the parents OR legal guardian and proof (in the case of a legal guardian papers from the court stating so must accompany the application).
 - Each case should be handled individually with a personal interview, if possible, either at their home or at the Lodge. All information should be filled out by the family and the Elks Major Project Lodge Chairman. Please note - do not distribute the “Request For Assistance” (form) to any school, group, doctor, etc. Maintain the Form on your laptop, or in the Lodge office Only – do not email this form out!
- The Chairman will fill out the lower half of the back of the form **with recommendations and signatures and mail it to their District MP Commissioner**. The Commissioner will review the form for completion (including all supporting documents as required); this also keeps the District Commissioner aware of cases in his/her jurisdiction, and to be able to speak to the Commission regarding your case. The District Commissioner will then immediately forward to the Major Project office for processing. Please note, if you (Lodge Chairman) have additional information or photographs, *please* enclose it with the application.
 - Please note: we have created 2 NEW forms when requesting “equipment” such as an adaptive special needs bike or hardware/software. These two forms are also located on the www.mielks.org website/Programs/Michigan Major Project. Choose either a “bike” form or a “equipment/software” form. These MUST accompany your “Request for Assistance” form.
- **Be as specific as possible with the request for help! If there are known costs, please include this information on the application.**
- The Major Project budgets annually for our “camps” and “cases”. The “camps” are handled as follows:
 - **CAMPS OR CAMPS AS A CASE - YOU MUST KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!**
 - i. If the Major Project has approved a **CAMP** and provided them with an annual budget/amount per child (the approved CAMP names and budget amounts are available each April/May) – the parents must first apply to the camp and be accepted. If they request assistance at an APPROVED BUDGETED ANNUAL CAMP, the Camp Request for Assistance forms will be available THROUGH THE CAMP. The Lodge Chairman ONLY needs to refer the parents to the CAMP and ask for an Elk Award. You do not have to handle ANY paperwork!
 - ii. If a parent wishes to apply for any camp that is NOT listed on our APPROVED BUDGETED ANNUAL CAMP, this will be treated as a CASE, and you must work with them to fill out a REQUEST for ASSISTANCE form and submit through your District Commissioner.

PLEASE NOTE: Camps that are not on the APPROVED BUDGETED ANNUAL CAMP may require further investigation to ensure that the Camp is in compliance with our requirements of therapy for a special needs child. Any information that you can provide is very helpful!

CASES – General Housekeeping items!

- A copy of the parents or legal guardians Federal 1040 and a Michigan 1040 Tax Return must accompany the Request for Assistance form. In case the family does not file income tax returns, a copy of their authorization showing funds received from the Department of Social Services or Supplemental Social Security Income will be acceptable in lieu of the 1040's.
- You must include a signed HIPPA release form (signed by Parent or Legal Guardian).
- A copy of a letter from a doctor or therapist indicating the need for the particular request.
- You must include the "requested amount of funding" in your recommendation (bottom of the first page of the Request for Assistance form). Include a copy of any quotes, Amazon model number and price, equipment cost, etc. District Commissioners cannot fully review the families request without the funding being requested.
- District Commissioners have a cap on individual dollar amounts for all funding of \$2,500 per case. IF the Request for Assistance is higher than \$2,500, the Lodge should provide family needs that show how this item/therapy is of further consideration. Each case is reviewed on its own merits and centered around NEED and budget. If the request is deemed critical, the District Commissioner can/will take this to the entire Commission for further discussion and a vote on funding. At times, due to extreme costs (or simply an amount over our individual "cap", we can only provide a contingent approval. A "Contingent Approval" means that the family will need to raise the additional funds for the purchase. Our Authorization form will document our financial commitment, and the family has 1 year from the date of the approval to raise all the funds. WHEN those funds are raised (including our Contingent Approval), the Major Project should be notified that the funding is complete, and the Major Project will release the Authorized/Approved dollar amount to the appropriate Vendor.
- When the Lodge Chairman helps a family to complete a "Request for Assistance", we make no obligation on behalf of the Elks Major Project regarding whether or not a case can/will be approved. Only the Commissioners of Major Project have the authority to approve cases. The Major Project office will assign a case number if approved and the Lodge Chairman, Commissioner, Vendor and Family will be notified. If a case is rejected for any reason, the Lodge Chairman, Commissioner and Family will be notified in writing by the Executive Director.
- In all cases, the child has to be under the age of 18 and a resident of the state of Michigan. Relationship to a member of the Elks is not required.
- Lodge Chairmen should be especially careful to keep information regarding a child or family in strict confidence. Because of the HIPAA laws, Chairmen should advise parents that they must grant approval for the Major Project Executive Director to speak with the vendors/service providers to obtain patient information. Vendors/service providers will ask for this in writing. The HIPAA form is available at mielks.org / Programs / Michigan Major Project. This form is required to be completed and submitted with the Request for Assistance.

Authorization – Step 2!

Once a case has been approved, it is assigned a case number, and the Major Project office will mail an Authorization form to the Lodge Major Project Chairman, family, camp, doctor, hospital, etc. This tells exactly what we have authorized as far as treatment, therapy, camp, purchases, etc. Billings to Major Project, must be completed and returned to the Major Project office within 90 days from date of service. The timeline to complete therapy or services is one year from the date of approval from Major Project.

Major Project **does not distribute any funds to the family** that applies for assistance. Only doctors, hospitals, vendors of medical equipment, camps for special needs, pharmacies, special therapy institutes, etc. Purchases are exempt from Michigan sales tax.

The Major Project does NOT routinely pay travel expenses or lodging. Only special circumstances may change this guideline/outcome.

Be reminded again, that under no circumstances should the family be told by the Major Project Chairman that the case will be approved. Only the Commission has this authority.

EMERGENCY FUND GRANT

The Major Project Commission established the Emergency Fund Grant as a budget line item to offer help that is outside of the financial scope of a Case (Request for Assistance). Each year, the Commission establishes an annual budget amount, and all requests are considered until the funding is depleted. Once funding is depleted, Lodges must wait until the next fiscal year (April 1 through March 31) to apply.

If a Major Project Lodge Chairman (or member) knows of a situation where the purchase of equipment, special travel expenses for treatment or therapy (within normal Commission guidelines), where the funding exceeds \$2,500, the application is available on the website, Major Project, Forms, Emergency Fund Grants, for the Lodge to complete and submit.

The Major Project does not look at the financial situation of the family, but rather the immediate need that will benefit the child. The supporting documents required are newspaper articles, community fundraiser flyers, or first-hand knowledge through an appointment with the family.

The Major Project Emergency Fund Grant is an opportunity for the Lodge to get out into the community and receive the “community” credit for being of help. It is the foundation of “Elks Care ~ Elks Share”.

If a Request is approved by the Commissioners and funding is available, the EFG amount is determined by the Commission on a case-by-case basis (requests that exceed \$2,500; Requests of less than \$2,500 should utilize Case funds wherever possible). Funds will be allocated for a direct purchase on behalf of the Lodge requesting the EFG, and a letter outlining the Major Project Grant will be mailed to each

Lodge and the family by the Executive Director. Each Lodge is urged to contact local media to show the Elks involvement in the Grant.

The Major Project Commission does not fund "Go Fund Me" or other community fundraisers, but rather for the purchase of an item or direct payment for services (i.e. hospital bills, Doctor visits, specialized therapy or other relief needed).