



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

a grantmaking publication of the Community Foundation of Abilene



SPRING 2024 COMMUNITY GRANT CYCLE



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- Michelle Parrish, *Grants Director*
- Barbara Richert, *Office Administrator*
- Jennifer Weber, *Scholarships Director*

The *Community Connections* features a list of nonprofit grant requests that have been reviewed by our grant committee. The needs are vast, and we ask that you consider partnering with us to help as many of our neighbors as possible.



Chris Montoya,
Grants Committee Chair



Contact the Foundation:

- ✉ cfa@cfabilene.org
- 📞 325-676-3883
- 📍 850 N 1st St, Abilene, TX 79601
- 📧 PO Box 1001, Abilene, TX 79604

NONPROFIT GRANT APPLICANTS

Grant Requests & Summaries

CURRENT NEED

\$5,000

89.5 KACU | Abilene Public Radio

KACU is embarking on an oral history project to collect stories of people in Taylor County. This new program will give voice to tales and inspirational members of our community from a trusted news source. Themes will range from Women of the West to Agriculture, focusing on narratives that will educate listeners and help them thrive. West Texas is in an ever-growing news desert, and KACU provides high-caliber programming while training the next generation of journalists and sharing stories from our community.

CURRENT NEED

\$17,500

Abilene Back the Badge Foundation (formerly Abilene Police Foundation)

The Abilene Back the Badge Foundation is committed to serving those who protect and serve Abilene and Taylor County by providing financial assistance to the Abilene Police Department, Fire Department, and Sheriff's Department personnel and their families who have suffered catastrophic life events and need financial assistance. Assistance is also available to cover their unexpected and unbudgeted expenses that arise and negatively impact their ability to serve our community.

CURRENT NEED

\$8,000

Abilene Disc Golf Association

The Abilene Disc Golf Association's (ADGA) mission is to foster community well-being through promoting and growing the sport of disc golf in Abilene and the surrounding areas. ADGA has an agreement with the City of Abilene to maintain and improve city park disc golf courses and aspires to contribute by providing well-designed, approachable, and enjoyable disc golf courses in Abilene parks. Grant funds will be used to revitalize the disc golf course at Will Hair Park with new baskets, tee pads and signs, and course maps.

CURRENT NEED

\$7,600

Abilene Fire Department (AFD)

AFD relies on physically strong and healthy firefighters. Recently, there has been a growing focus on the health of firefighters, with cancer prevention and cardiovascular health as two primary areas of focus. Each year, Abilene firefighters perform a mandatory functional firefighter test to assess health in these areas. The test is accomplished through aerobic equipment that provides a VO2 measurement. Funds will replace the current equipment with an updated machine with more accurate technology.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

Abilene Home Away from Home

Abilene Home Away from Home provides new Dyess airmen an avenue to form community friendships and gather support beyond the work environment. The program offers Abilene community members a rewarding opportunity to host young Airmen in a family environment through monthly activities in turn alleviating service member's anxiety of being far from home. Their events also encourage community involvement and support local businesses. Grant funds will assist in funding operational, event, and marketing costs to grow the program.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

Abilene Hope Haven

Collaborating with homeless coalition, West Texas Homeless Network, Abilene Hope Haven shelters our most vulnerable homeless neighbors. Qualifying residents of the 14-room, 25-bed facility enter the shelter through the local homelessness crisis response system called "coordinated entry." Abilene Hope Haven offers our community's only free extended-stay shelter. This program is contingent on having staff and a fully operational shelter and is vital to community efforts to address homelessness.

CURRENT NEED

\$6,000

Abilene Independent School District

This continuous project utilizes a conjoined effort between Student and Family Support Services and the McKinney-Vento programs to identify low-income students and families in need of immediate pest control services or home appliance assistance. Most notably, the substantial cost of bed bug removal is one that many families cannot afford, and there are no other community resources to provide this assistance. Funds are utilized to pay pest removal or appliance companies directly.

CURRENT NEED

\$5,000

Abilene Performing Arts Company

The Abilene Performing Arts Company (APAC) is a youth-centered musical theatre, theatre, dance, and music organization. Their performances throughout the year include studio showcases, summer camps, dance intensives, workshops, annual spring productions at the Abilene Convention Center, and annual musical theatre productions at the Historic Paramount Theatre. Grant funds will support cast costumes and camp staff at their summer production camp. The camp is three weeks long and serves 50-65 campers ages 8-18.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

Abilene Preservation League

The 2024 Abilene Railroad Festival is planned for September 5-7 to honor the city's foundation as a rail community and the railroad history that built the area. The festival will provide subject-specific presentations and family-friendly interactive activities to engage railroad enthusiasts and historians alike. Partnerships are being coordinated with the many organizations, museums, and railroad-related buildings along the cultural district corridor of N 1st Street, and grant funds will support event costs.

CURRENT NEED

\$15,000

Abilene Youth Sports Authority (AYSA)

AYSA's goal is to increase participation in and improve the culture of youth sports in the Abilene area. Their mission is to help kids, coaches, and parents have a better experience with youth sports than ever before and cultivate an atmosphere of friendly competition and good sportsmanship. Grant funds will support the second year of their Coaches Clinic to develop volunteer youth team coaches in promoting positive player growth. Leadership Camps contribute to the development of student-athletes, and grant funds support scholarships.



Photo courtesy of City Light Community Ministries.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

Abilene Zoological Society

As an Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) accredited institution, Abilene Zoo provides the highest standards of animal care and housing for each animal that calls the zoo home. Caribbean Cove was built a decade ago and needs an update to meet current animal welfare standards for the residents of the exhibit. The update will offer an opportunity to bring new species to Abilene and create new educational opportunities to surprise and delight the 250,000 students and guests that visit each year.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

BCFS Abilene Transition Center

BCFS Health and Human Services developed the transition center model. And since 2011, BCFS Our House Transition Center has provided a transitional living program for young men in Taylor County, serving ages 18-22, who have aged out of foster care or otherwise become homeless. This “one-stop” center and residential facility provides case management and efficient delivery of workforce life skills training and education services. Grant funds will be used to provide for residents’ basic needs as well as costs to operate and maintain the facility.

CURRENT NEED

\$25,000

Ben Richey Boys Ranch

The Mabee Home is a group living home for the Family Program on the Ben Richey Abilene campus and supports single mothers and their children as they work to improve the lives of their families. The home was built in the late 1980s and has been used for families since 2009, with no major renovations in 35 years. The flooring is original to the home and needs to be replaced with an easier-to-clean surface. Built-in furniture will also be removed and replaced with movable furniture to better accommodate each family’s needs.

CURRENT NEED

\$15,000

Cancer Services Network (CSN)

CSN’s mission is to provide post-diagnostic assistance to cancer patients, survivors, and their families through direct financial assistance, emotional and spiritual support, and educational programs. CSN offers patient navigation to income-qualified individuals through a social worker who helps them prioritize needs, access resources, and minimize stress. Grant funds will support insurance premiums and emergency funding assistance for low-income Taylor County cancer patients in the program.

CURRENT NEED

\$5,000

Children’s Performing Arts Series (CPAS)

CPAS brings live, professional children’s theater shows to Abilene and makes them accessible to everyone. The shows will introduce a range of art, dance, and music to nearly 4,000 children and family members in the upcoming 2024-25 season. Approximately 200 free tickets will be distributed to low-income, medically fragile, or otherwise disadvantaged children and families. Funds offset rising production costs, allowing distribution of free tickets and keep regular tickets affordable at \$10 each.

CURRENT NEED

\$6,400

Chorus Abilene

Chorus Abilene’s mission is to promote choral music through performance and participation by singers of all ages and to foster community through the arts. The organization has grown exponentially since it was established 34 years ago. Since its inception, the Executive Director has operated as the only paid staff. Grant funds are requested for salary support for a part-time office assistant to allow the director to focus on increased organizational development.

CURRENT NEED

\$9,000

City Light Community Ministries

City Light works to meet the immediate needs of our neighbors. One way they accomplish this is by providing meal services seven days a week. When financially possible, they offer meals to go in addition to dine-in meals. To-go meals enable recipients to feed themselves when the facility is closed and bring food to friends and family who are unable to come to City Light. Funding will allow them to increase takeaway meals they provide, making meals accessible to a larger number of those in need.

CURRENT NEED

\$12,500

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)

Big Country Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) is partnering with the Abilene Youth Sports Authority (AYSA) to provide an on-campus FCA Director of Youth Sports. This position will help provide opportunities for character growth and development for youth, their families, and volunteer coaches. The director will create programs on-site at the Dodge Jones facility, provide training for coaches and athletes, and run social programs through AYSA, including summer and leadership camps, family nights, and sports-specific training camps.



Photo courtesy of Global Samaritan Resources.

CURRENT NEED

\$50,000

Frontier Texas!

Providing a historical experience that entertains and educates guests about the rich cultural heritage of Central West Texas, Frontier Texas serves approximately 30,000 visitors annually, including 3,500-5,500 students on guided group tours. Funds are requested for renovation and expansion, including a new archival space, a temporary exhibit gallery, enclosing space for an education center, an administrative wing of offices, a new parking lot, and an updated entrance and lobby space to better serve the community's next generation.

CURRENT NEED

\$17,500

Global Samaritan Resources

Founded in 1999, Global Samaritan Resources, a Christian humanitarian aid nonprofit, specializes in logistical services for other nonprofits both around the globe and in Abilene. Global Samaritan has been updating a 5,000 sq. ft. warehouse space to open a new nonprofit distribution center dedicated to providing local organizations with free goods and supplies to distribute to those they serve. Funds will be used to offset the operational cost of procuring, transporting, and distributing these goods.

CURRENT NEED

\$10,500

Harmony Family Services

Harmony Family Services operates a thirteen-bed emergency shelter licensed by the state to provide foster and emergency shelter care for children ages 5-17 who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect or are experiencing temporary homelessness. This funding will help cover expenses to house local children and youth, providing a safe and structured environment where they can continue their education, learn healthy behaviors, and receive professional therapy.

CURRENT NEED

\$25,000

McMurry University

McMurry is implementing initiatives designed to matriculate first-generation, Pell grant-eligible pre-nursing students into the Patty Hanks Shelton School of Nursing. Initiatives support students as they overcome barriers such as insecurity regarding clinical abilities, curriculum complexity and rigor, and fragmented professional identity. Workshops and supplemental instruction will be utilized with the goal of graduating more nurses locally to continue to help address the state's nursing shortage.

CURRENT NEED

\$25,000

Ministry of Counseling & Enrichment (MOCE)

MOCE therapists help meet the growing needs of families in our area by providing affordable family life resources and licensed therapy services regardless of ability to pay. Funds will be used for the Samaritan Fund, which provides mental health services for low-income/uninsured adult clients and their families, and the Kids' Place Scholarship Fund, which provides mental health services for youth. Fees are set according to client income and ability to pay, with these funds offsetting costs of services.

CURRENT NEED

\$18,000

National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature (NCCIL)

The NCCIL organizes three distinctive and unique exhibitions a year featuring award-winning illustrators and their picture book art. Artwork is preserved, promoted, protected, and showcased with the highest care, allowing the artists to feel appreciated and respected while providing cultural and artistic learning opportunities for guests. Funding supports exhibits paired with programming, school tours, and activities that engage the community to read and be creative.

CURRENT NEED

\$25,000

Pathways Youth & Family Services

Pathways Mosaic Behavioral Health Services are provided for children ages 3-17 in foster care who are referred through the CPS system or through local school districts and agencies. Behavioral and mental health services increase the child's ability to self-regulate and demonstrate healthy thinking, emotional responses, and behaviors, paving the way for healing that leads to a productive, successful adulthood. Funds provide salary support for qualified health professionals administering services.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

Phoenix Clubhouse

The Clubhouse model creates a strengths-based working community of adults whose lives and careers have been interrupted by their mental health condition. Funding is requested to support mental health and wellness through the development of an employment and education program. Plans for the program include assessing staffing needs, creating an Employment Action Plan, identifying needed training, and promoting partnerships with potential employers to secure community-based employment for members.

CURRENT NEED

\$15,000

Pink Cap Warriors on the Move

This organization provides a "Hello Beautiful" chemo care bag to women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. The bag is filled with comfort supplies, inspirational items, and resources to navigate challenges during an uncertain cancer journey. They host monthly support group meetings, annual Breast Cancer Luncheon, and offer educational, financial, and training resources throughout the year. Grant funds will support operations and chemo care bags.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army serves community members who are currently unhoused and experiencing homelessness in Taylor County and surrounding areas by providing food and shelter. They are the only emergency overnight shelter in the Big Country. Individuals and families can come in for a meal and an overnight stay without meeting any admission requirements. Grant funding will support the shelter, which houses an average of 100 people per night, and their feeding program, which served more than 151,000 meals last year and is available seven days a week.

Photo courtesy of The Abilene Palm House.



CURRENT NEED

\$15,000

St. Mark's Baby Room

St. Mark's Baby Room is a volunteer Christian-based outreach program started in 2008 that provides necessities for children from newborn to age four whose families are unable to provide these items. Items include diapers, wipes, clothing, car seats, strollers, high chairs, swings, baby gates, and walkers. They accept donations of new and used items, and grant funds will enable the organization to purchase hygiene items, equipment, and supplies to fulfill unmet needs.

CURRENT NEED

\$7,200

Strength for Life

Strength for Life was established in 2018 and is the only free cancer rehabilitation gym in the Big Country. They serve cancer patients and survivors by offering free personal training with the goal of providing them with physical strength and endurance as tools to help fight their cancer. Trainers are certified and have been taught specific techniques to work with cancer patients. Grant funding will allow them to contract an additional trainer to increase the number of patients they can serve.

CURRENT NEED

\$28,000

The Abilene Palm House

The Palm House is a faith-based organization located in a historic home in Southeast Abilene. Their mission is to offer neighbors practical and spiritual tools necessary for a fulfilling life. The house was built in the early 1900s and requires ongoing maintenance and upkeep, as well as occasional remodels to adapt to changing needs of the community they serve. Funding is needed to level the home, renew leaking roofing, and create a more usable outdoor space used year-round by their ministry programs.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

The Mentoring Alliance

The Mentoring Alliance partners with public schools to provide safe, quality, out-of-school programming. They provide after-school programs, summer camps, and one-to-one mentorship. Founded in Tyler, Texas, nearly 30 years ago, they have recently expanded to Abilene and entered into an agreement with Abilene ISD to launch summer camps in 2024 at the Dyess and Purcell elementary campuses. Grant funds will support camp programming and scholarships for low-income campers in first through fifth grades.

CURRENT NEED

\$17,705

United Rescue Alliance

United Rescue Alliance (URA) is an Abilene-based disaster and crisis response organization equipping and training leaders in emergency management. They strive to empower communities in the areas of disaster preparedness and response, mobilizing specially trained teams to respond in crisis situations. They are seeking grant funding to provide Community Emergency Readiness Training (CERT) to 75 local residents at no cost, preparing them to take action in a natural disaster or crisis.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

West Texas Homeless Network (WTHN)

WTHN is a coalition of local organizations working to prevent and end homelessness in Abilene. The Prevention and Diversion Program is a proven strategy for keeping people from falling into homelessness by connecting them with wrap-around social services and financial assistance to help them stay and/or return to permanent housing. WTHN community partners can utilize these funds to solve situations and prevent putting additional strain on the homeless crisis system.

CURRENT NEED

\$10,000

West Texas Veteran Support Services

This program provides free home repair to low-income neighbors in Taylor County. Necessary repairs are made to homes to ensure resident safety and quality of life. The organization's founder volunteers to provide many services himself. Funds are used to purchase materials and hire contractors. Services provided include ADA accessibility modifications and repairs or upgrades to wiring, plumbing, HVAC, roofing, and windows, as well as kitchen and bathroom updates, and appliance replacement.

CURRENT NEED

\$10,000

YMCA of Abilene

This program will provide water safety and swimming instruction in partnership with the YMCA for those in the community who cannot swim and have barriers to accessing swim instruction. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 years and the second cause for ages 5-14. In underserved populations, the fear of water and swimming is often passed down through generations. Free lessons will be rolled out in phases to targeted populations, beginning with children in foster care and then low-income families, including all ages.

CURRENT NEED

\$19,500

Youth Voice

Youth Voice is a drop-in center serving middle through high school-aged students and adolescents at risk of or experiencing food and/or housing insecurity. The center provides activities and dinner Tuesday through Thursday nights. They are seeking to formalize and grow their weekend meal program, which offers nutritious frozen meals to fill meal gaps when the center is closed. Meal kits, consisting of at least three meals, are distributed to students prior to weekends and holiday breaks, or when emergency needs arise.



Photo courtesy of West Texas Homeless Network (WTHN).



A REMINDER ABOUT ABILENE GIVES

Fundholders, we wanted to share a reminder as the eighth annual Abilene Gives is coming soon!

Community Foundation of Abilene is honored to again host this 12-hour day of giving to raise money and awareness for nonprofit organizations serving our communities on **Tuesday, May 7 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

FUNDHOLDER IMPACT

Donor-advised fundholders play a significant role in the giving day's success. In 2023, our community and donors **raised more than \$2.1 MILLION, including \$515k from more than 30 donor-advised funds, for 170 nonprofits** serving Abilene and the surrounding region.

COMING SOON

The giving day continues to be successful because of fundholders like you. In April, our fundholders will receive a personalized letter with your donor-advised fund balance. This letter will also include additional details on how you can designate grants to nonprofits and other funds for Abilene Gives.

EARLY GIVING

Early Giving is from April 29 to May 7, giving donors the option of making their donations at abilenegives.org in advance of the giving day. Donations made during Abilene Gives are 100% eligible for a tax deduction.

HERE TO HELP

Questions about the giving day or your fund? Contact Stephanie DeLaGarza, *donor relations director*, at sdelagarza@cfabilene.org or 325-676-3883.

More information about the giving day can be found online at: abilenegives.org.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Ready to give? Here's how!

1. WRITE A CHECK

Please use the grant selections worksheet on the following page with one check made out to: "Community Foundation of Abilene." The Foundation distributes 100% of the funds as you direct.

2. ONLINE FROM THE DONOR PORTAL

Donors can make a gift online at bit.ly/CFASpringGrants24 to any of the organizations listed in this issue of *Community Connections*.






Need help accessing the online portal? Call us at 325-676-3883.

3. IN PERSON WITH OUR EXPERTS

Want to meet with the Foundation before making selections? We're here to help! Contact Stephanie DeLaGarza, *donor relations director*, at sdelagarza@cfabilene.org or 325-676-3883 to schedule a personal meeting.

READY TO GIVE? Here's how!

Thank you for considering recommending a grant from your donor-advised fund. Complete your selections by:

-  **MAIL** Complete the form below and return this page using the enclosed reply envelope.
-  **ONLINE** Visit bit.ly/CFASpringGrants24 to share your selections.
-  **EMAIL** Scan this form and return by email to: knygaard@cfabilene.org.
-  **PHONE** We're here to help. Call: 325-676-3883.
 - Nonprofit applicant question? Contact Cassidy Nygaard, *community grants manager*.
 - Donor fundholder or fund question? Contact Stephanie DeLaGarza, *donor relations director*.
-  **FAX** Please fax to: 325-676-4206.

Deadline: Monday, April 8

NONPROFIT	AMOUNT
<i>Please attach a list if you need more space.</i>	TOTAL

DONOR NAME

Please enter your first and last name:

<i>First</i>	<i>Last</i>
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DONOR ADDRESS

Please enter your mailing address:

<i>Address</i>		
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<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip</i>
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FUND INFORMATION

Please make grant from the following fund:

<i>Fund Name</i>

ANONYMITY

Circle "Yes" if you wish to remain anonymous.

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
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SIGNATURE

Please sign here:

<i>X</i>



OUR MISSION

*The Community Foundation of Abilene empowers people
to make a lasting charitable impact on our community.*

*We connect donors to causes they care about,
manage strategic investments to preserve our endowments,
make grants that align with donor intent,
respond to community needs and provide philanthropic leadership
to enhance Abilene's future, today.*

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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