



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

a grantmaking publication of the Community Foundation of Abilene



FALL 2026 COMMUNITY GRANT CYCLE

Cover photo courtesy of Abilene Philharmonic Association.



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The generosity and compassion of Abilenians is truly remarkable!

In this issue of Community Connections, you'll find grant requests from local nonprofits, carefully reviewed by the grant committee. We invite you to consider a donation to support the organizations that serve our community and speak to your heart.

Thank you for believing in the power of collective giving.

Sue Schackmuth,
Grants Committee Chair



Contact the Foundation:

✉ cfa@cfabilene.org
☎ 325-676-3883

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NONPROFIT GRANT APPLICANTS

Grant Requests & Summaries

CURRENT NEED

\$22,292

Enhancing emergency care with portable ultrasound technology

Abilene Fire Department (AFD)

The AFD serves as the primary emergency medical response agency for Abilene and surrounding areas, addressing more than fifteen thousand medical calls each year. They're seeking funding to purchase a portable ultrasound system to integrate into frontline EMS operations. This compact, field-ready technology would give responders real-time insight into critical conditions, strengthening on-scene decision-making, communication with receiving hospitals, and improving the quality of emergency care and outcomes in time-sensitive medical incidents.

CURRENT NEED

\$9,000

Youth education program support

Abilene Philharmonic Association

The Abilene Philharmonic's music education program serves children from birth through high school, offering a continuous pathway of instruction for every stage of a young musician's development. Grant funding will support instructor stipends, music and materials, and continued tuition assistance, allowing the program to sustain its growth while remaining accessible to families regardless of economic circumstance.

CURRENT NEED

\$9,975

Operational support

Abilene Preservation League (APL)

The Abilene Preservation League has preserved historic structures and promoted local history since 1977. Funding will support core operating needs, including staffing, utilities, programs, and professional development. This support will strengthen organizational stability as APL advances major redevelopment projects, including Abilene Courts and the WTU Power Plant, while continuing its educational programming and community outreach.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

*High school bigs program support:
Stafford Elementary expansion*

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)

The BBBS High School Bigs program empowers high school students in Abilene to mentor local elementary students. Funds will expand this initiative into a high-impact, two-year match model at Stafford Elementary, providing the long-term stability necessary for sustaining academic and socio-emotional benefits. Each match will utilize an evidence-based mentoring curriculum and is professionally supported by BBBS' dedicated staff.

CURRENT NEED

\$30,000

Program support

Boys & Girls Club of the Big Country

Boys & Girls Club provides after-school, summer, and teen night programming for youth across the Big Country. Its after-school programs serve more than 700 students annually. To keep care affordable, the organization raises funds through grants, donations, and community support to offset programming costs. Families pay \$50 per month, while the actual cost is \$225 per child each month. Grant funding would help cover program expenses for Taylor County locations.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

ArtWalk program support

Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA)

CCA's quarterly ArtWalk festival in Downtown Abilene promotes cultural tourism, supports local artists, and strengthens community connections through themed events featuring music, vendors, hands-on activities, and Downtown business partnerships. Grant funds help sustain this showcase of local creativity, contributing to downtown's cultural and economic vitality.

CURRENT NEED

\$5,000

2026-27 season support

Children's Performing Arts Series (CPAS)

The CPAS mission is to bring live, professional children's theater shows to Abilene and make them accessible to everyone. CPAS shows will introduce a range of art, dance, and music to over 4,000 children and family members in the upcoming season. About 200 free tickets per show will be distributed to low-income, medically fragile, or otherwise disadvantaged children and families. Grant funds offset rising production costs, allowing them to distribute the free tickets and keep regular ticket prices affordable at \$12 each.

CURRENT NEED

\$6,800

*Support for social enterprise program
and Abide community group*

Christian Job Corps of Abilene (CJC)

CJC is committed to equipping underserved women and men with the skills, confidence, and support needed to discover their God-given purpose through workforce development, faith-based encouragement, mentoring, and life skills. The Social Enterprise program teaches practical entrepreneurial skills that can create supplemental income and increase financial stability. Abide will provide a welcoming community for participants navigating major life transitions - offering encouragement, meaningful relationships, and renewed hope and purpose.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,064

*Child care center improvements at
Beltway South location*

Day Nursery of Abilene

Day Nursery of Abilene is expanding affordable, high-quality early childhood education through its new Beltway Center. Grant funding will support Frog Street curriculum for infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms, as well as a toddler play structure and permanent playground shade. Together with planned health, safety, technology, and security upgrades, these improvements will bring the center in line with Day Nursery standards, enhance classroom and outdoor learning, and allow DNA to better serve more of Abilene's working families.

CURRENT NEED

\$15,000

Operational support

Friends for Life

Friends for Life serves seniors and adults with disabilities through six programs, including money management, life skills training, guardianship, and volunteer-based check-ins and support services. These services help clients maintain independence, stability, and quality of life. Funding will support operations through the Abilene office, allowing Friends for Life to serve more than 550 local clients over the next year.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

*Acquisition of products for the
Non-Profit Resource Center (NPRC)*

Global Samaritan Resources, Inc.

Housed at Global Samaritan, the Non-Profit Resource Center (NPRC) helps member churches and nonprofits access bulk donated goods to support their missions. Open two to four times per month, the center helps smaller organizations save donor dollars on essential supplies and redirect resources toward serving the community. Grant funding will help acquire and transport products to keep the NPRC stocked and accessible to local partners.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

Land acquisition for home construction

Habitat for Humanity Abilene (HFHA)

Habitat for Humanity Abilene (HFHA) creates affordable homeownership opportunities for low-to-moderate income families through affordable mortgages, financial education, and homeownership support. Grant funding will help purchase three lots as they prepare to construct new homes at an increasing rate. By expanding access to stable homeownership, HFHA strengthens families, improves neighborhoods, and creates lasting economic opportunity across generations.

CURRENT NEED

\$6,000

Production support for "The Little Mermaid Jr."

Historic Paramount Theatre, Inc.

The Paramount produces one of the longest-running junior musical programs in Abilene, showcasing excellence with their annual youth production since 2005. They offer a performance opportunity free of charge to students ages 8-18 from the Abilene area. Participants are part of a high-quality production supported by caring theatre professionals in the local arts community. Funds will be used to pay licensing rights and offset advertising costs for the 2027 production.

CURRENT NEED

\$9,500

Support for educator families in crisis

Hope Weavers

Hope Weavers supports educators, school employees, and their families through medical crises and life-altering loss. Through individualized care plans, they address practical, emotional, and relational needs across four pillars: mind, body, spirit, and community. Funding will help connect families to needed resources and fill critical gaps when other support is unavailable.

CURRENT NEED

\$50,000

Fort Imagination rebuild

Junior League of Abilene

Fort Imagination, located in Grover Nelson Park, has inspired generations of children to play, learn, and explore. After being destroyed by fire, the Junior League of Abilene is leading the effort to rebuild this treasured community space as a modern, safe, and inclusive playground for children of all abilities. Grant funding will support design, construction, and community enhancements, ensuring Fort Imagination remains a vibrant destination for Big Country families for years to come.

CURRENT NEED

\$6,000

Kairos Outside weekend retreat

Kairos Outside, Abilene

Kairos Outside provides a welcoming, nonjudgmental retreat where women can support one another while navigating the incarceration of a friend or family member. Offered twice a year, the two-and-a-half-day, volunteer-led weekend includes presentations designed to address the pain of separation from an incarcerated loved one and the stigma often experienced within the community. Funding will support Taylor County participants attending the spring 2027 retreat.

CURRENT NEED

\$11,524

The Badger weight room modernization and student safety initiative

Merkel ISD – Athletics

This project will upgrade Merkel ISD's training facility with commercial-grade equipment to support over 550 middle and high school students through daily P.E. and conditioning curricula. Their goals with the new equipment include establishing proper movement habits, reducing training injuries, and fostering safe and equitable athletic development for all student demographics as well as lifetime wellness habits. Funding will purchase lifting bars, resistance bands, and storage racks to expand capacity and prevent overcrowding.

CURRENT NEED

\$25,000

Mental health support for children at Audrey Grace House

New Horizons Ranch and Center

New Horizons offers mental health treatment and residential care for children, foster care and adoption services, and youth and family counseling to over 1,200 children and families each year. Audrey Grace House provides a home and trauma-informed care for children ages five to 17, who have experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Funding will support care, therapy, and recreational activities for the children residing there.

CURRENT NEED

\$38,298

Facility privacy fence project

Noah Project

Noah Project serves as the Abilene region's only organization providing emergency protective shelter to survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual assault. As residential development expands nearby, funding will help build a secure perimeter fence around its confidential campus. The project will strengthen security, protect survivor confidentiality, and preserve a safe environment for men, women, children, and unaccompanied youth seeking safety and healing.



CURRENT NEED

\$15,000

Behavioral health for children experiencing foster care

Pathways Youth & Family Services

Pathways’ Mosaic Behavioral Health program provides trauma-informed mental health services for children in foster care and their caregivers across Abilene and Taylor County. Through therapy, psychiatric care, skills training, rehabilitative services, and case management, Mosaic helps children heal from trauma, build resilience, and achieve stability. In a region with limited pediatric behavioral health access, grant funding will support timely, evidence-based care that promotes emotional well-being, placement stability, and long-term success.

CURRENT NEED

\$18,000

Support for patient transport

Serenity Foundation of Texas

Established in 1984, Serenity House provides detox, residential, and outpatient treatment for individuals recovering from substance use disorders. Funding is requested toward the purchase of two 15-passenger vans to replace aging vehicles used to transport residential clients to 12-Step meetings and sober recreational activities. Reliable transportation supports client safety, recovery routines, community connection, and long-term healing.

CURRENT NEED

\$25,000

Operational support

Special Olympics Texas – Big Country

Since 1969, Special Olympics Texas has provided direct services to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Grant funding will help support services for over 165 Abilene and Taylor County athletes. Their programs emphasize healthy living and promote community social engagement through inclusive participation. Programs provide opportunities for participants to develop physical fitness and build confidence to break down barriers and thrive within their relationships and the community.

CURRENT NEED

\$20,000

Arbor preservation project

Swenson House Historical Society

Serving as one of the historical property’s most recognizable architectural features, the arbor structure at Swenson House provides the setting for educational tours, community programs, weddings, nonprofit events, and public gatherings throughout the year. After nearly three decades of exposure to the West Texas climate, the structure has experienced significant deterioration, including rotted structural members, splitting beams, and failing joints. Grant funds will support the restoration and preservation of the iconic arbor at 1726 Swenson Street.

CURRENT NEED

\$10,000

Veterinary care

Taylor Jones Humane Society (TJHS)

Founded in 1972, TJHS protects and cares for unwanted animals in Abilene and the surrounding area. Many of the dogs and cats arriving at their door need a high level of care. They operate a non-kill facility and strive to rehabilitate unwanted animals for adoption. They provide proper housing and nutrition, as well as all medical treatment ranging from vaccines to more critical needs. Grant funds will support veterinary care costs to rehabilitate the pets for adoption.

CURRENT NEED

\$18,000

Samaritan Fund support

Texas Family Institute (TFI)

The Texas Family Institute is a counseling and therapy provider assisting families and individuals with the goal of helping them cope with problems and challenges in a healthy way. The Samaritan Fund provides an avenue for clients who are uninsured or otherwise unable to afford this life-changing counseling or therapy. Clients are encouraged to pay what they can toward a session, with the Samaritan Fund picking up the remainder of reimbursement to the therapist, up to \$50 per hourly session.

CURRENT NEED

\$7,500

Program support for Taylor County Ramp Project

Texas Ramp Project

Texas Ramp Project is a nonprofit that builds free wheelchair ramps for low-income older adults and people with disabilities. The project aims to improve safety, independence, and quality of life for clients in Taylor County. Volunteers build ramps following ADA guidelines, and all services are provided free of charge. Grant funds will be used to purchase lumber, materials, and tools, with a portion also allocated toward administrative costs.

CURRENT NEED

\$10,000

Educational outreach support

The Grace Museum

The Grace Museum partners with local schools and homeschooling families to provide hands-on, TEKS-aligned art and science experiences for pre-K through fifth-grade students. Through classroom outreach, tours, homeschool programs, and Youth Art Month activities, children engage with materials that spark curiosity and deepen learning. Funding will support History Traveling Trunks and new STEM in a Suitcase Trunks, giving teachers interactive resources that bring lessons to life in the classroom and help fill curriculum gaps.

CURRENT NEED

\$24,000

Community financial assistance funding

We Love Abilene

We Love Abilene, an outreach of The Well Abilene, provides emergency rent and utility assistance to individuals and families facing temporary financial hardship. By helping households stay safely housed and maintain essential services, the program prevents short-term crises from becoming long-term instability. Applicants complete an intake process, and assistance is paid directly to landlords or utility providers. Funding will help neighbors receive timely support while connecting them to additional resources for long-term stability.

CURRENT NEED

\$7,500

Building a stronger Abilene through community journalism

West Texas Tribune

The West Texas Tribune is seeking funding to expand its capacity as a community newsroom and provide more consistent, in-depth coverage of Abilene and the surrounding area. Investment in editorial systems, distribution, community reporting, and contributor development will help ensure residents have access to trusted local news that reflects their everyday experiences. Grant funds will support part-time journalists and help offset printing costs.

CURRENT NEED

\$5,000

Arts after school program support

Young Audiences of Abilene (YAA)

Young Audiences brings quality interactive arts learning experiences to 4th and 5th grade students in Abilene ISD elementary schools. Most of these schools have high percentages of economically disadvantaged students and YAA provides inclusive, interactive, and entertaining arts education that may not otherwise be available to these students. Grant funding will support hiring of local teaching artists including musicians, dancers, singers, and actors to provide eight weeks of interactive workshops concluding with a student showcase.

CURRENT NEED

\$35,000

Drop-in center and youth program support

Youth Voice, Inc.

Youth Voice provides a safe, extended-hours drop-in center for teens facing housing and food insecurity, poverty, and other barriers. Open Tuesday through Thursday evenings, Youth Voice meets basic needs through food, hygiene supplies, laundry, and showers while providing one-on-one counseling, substance abuse prevention, and anti-trafficking initiatives. Teens also gain tools for long-term success through tutoring, educational counseling, life-skills groups, financial-literacy classes, and job-readiness support.

Ready to give? Here's how!

To make a gift to any of the proposals in this grant catalog, please list your selections in the worksheet below. You can submit your responses by:

-  **MAIL** Complete the form below and return this page to: PO Box 1001, Abilene, TX 79604.
-  **ONLINE** Visit bit.ly/CFA26Fall to share your selections.
-  **EMAIL** List your nonprofit selections and award amounts in an email to: mcollier@cfabilene.org.
-  **PHONE** We're here to help. Call: 325-676-3883.
 - Nonprofit applicant question? Contact Kassidy Nygaard, *grants director*.
 - Donor fundholder or fund question? Contact Misti Collier, *donor relations director*.

Contributions can be made via check; include “Fall 2026 Community Grants” in the memo. Please make checks payable to: Community Foundation of Abilene.

Are you a CFA fundholder? Complete the last section on this worksheet to recommend grants from a donor-advised fund.

Deadline: Monday, Oct. 19

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

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Please enter your first and last name:

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Section below for fundholders only

FUND INFORMATION

List fund name if you are a fund holder recommending grants from your fund.

Fund Name

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Circle “Yes” if you wish to remain anonymous.

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EPICenter Opening Celebration

Join us in celebrating the completion of our building expansion project!



Wednesday, Oct. 7 | 8:30 a.m.

850 N 1st St, Abilene

Over the past year, the Foundation has been working on an expansion project to renew the 15,000 sq. ft. Cloud Printing building. We are excited to share that this project is now complete!

Please join us in celebrating the opening of ***EPICenter***, a place for education, philanthropy, and impact.

8:30 a.m.	Refreshments
9 a.m.	Remarks & ribbon cutting
8:30-10 a.m.	Open house

The dedication of our donors, nonprofits, and community partners, has made *EPICenter* possible. ***Thank you!***