



Description

Abilene is a well-recognized hub of arts and culture. Its rich history of storybook illustration, the Abilene Cultural District (one of the first five cultural districts in Texas), and the emerging renaissance of the SoDA District provides a strong platform for an ongoing arts & culture environment.

The innovation and creativity of people in Abilene reflect the strength and richness of its cultural heritage. Abilene's diversity of individuals and cultures enriches the lives and livelihoods of residents. Longstanding organizations such as the Grace Museum, the Center for Contemporary Arts, the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature, the Paramount Theatre, and others provide a backbone of activity and creativity in the area. Abilene residents are bound together by a shared heritage and a desire to expand arts & cultural offerings as a way to inclusively bring diverse people together.

Arts & culture influence all phases of life in Abilene – adding color and enhancing the quality of life. Looking ahead, enhanced opportunities will help to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for future arts leaders – as well as providing additional, inclusive opportunities for all Abilene residents to enjoy and contribute to life in Abilene!

Vision Statement Options

- To be a nationally recognized destination for the arts and culture that capitalizes on this recognition to improve the overall quality of life.
- To be the city where people actively engage in the arts and cultural offerings regardless of disabilities, socio-economic class, or cultural background.

Strategies

- Increase community and neighborhood exposure to arts programs – increase all residents’ ability to enjoy and/or participate in the arts or cultural activities
- Provide focused initiatives (e.g., transportation, awareness building, education, and others) to help people challenged to take advantage of cultural events due to disability, lack of exposure, or other issue
- Expand Abilene’s reputation as a cultural and art “destination”
- Create an ongoing, city-wide array of arts and cultural activities that can engage residents regardless of age. Enhance arts and cultural appreciation as early as age five



Key Indicators

- Cultural events - number, attendance, support
- Number of arts programs in schools
- Number of low-income children participating in arts and education and programs
- Tax dollars and other funding for arts education in school

Supporting Indicators

- Diversity of attendees (measures TBD)
- Dollar value of private funding for the arts
- Number of attendees from out of town
- Number of channels (or “exposures”) that communicate events and ways to access them
- Number of events related to heritage (Abilene’s heritage or culturally diverse heritages)
- Number of public school and university events
- Number of new attendees at cultural / arts events
- Survey of student satisfaction of arts / cultural performances

Potential Partners

- Abilene Community Health Center
- Abilene Community Theater Groups
- Abilene Cultural Affairs Council
- Abilene Independent School District (and Individual Schools)
- Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra
- Abilene University Partners - Institutions and Students
- Abilene Visitors and Convention Center
- Arts and Culture Non-profits
- Churches
- City of Abilene
- Connecting Caring Communities
- Friendship House
- Grace Museum and Other Abilene Museums
- Hendrick Medical Center
- International Rescue Committee
- Legal, Financial, Retail, and Other Larger Service Providers Who Could Sponsor Events of Awareness / Access Building Activities
- Local Print, Television, and Other Media
- Non-profit Foundations
- Paramount Theatre
- Volunteer Service Organizations





Cause Area #6: Arts and Culture

- Build on our mural developments to more strategically reflect culture
- Central information and create a mechanism to inform community members
- Continue early and frequent exposure to arts/culture of young children
- Create culture showcases of the immigrant population
- Develop multiple-church Christian gospel groups to perform throughout the city
- Expand and upgrade exhibits about Abilene culture and heritage.
- Expand diversity in music, performing arts, and visual arts by offering an ongoing series of diversity-focused events (not just a special “month”)
- Increase the number of live events by local artists
- Offer art classes in neighborhood Rec Centers and parks
- Offer art therapy in schools and for the elderly
- Produce placemats at restaurants advertising local events and venues for visitors
- Provide free tickets for cultural and arts events to higher-need communities
- Provide University programs for more diverse culture in their exhibits, art, theater
- Reach out to military families to ensure their participation
- Support and develop an “Artisan” or Fairtrade market

