



CitySquare

ABILENE

1634 N. 1st St.
Abilene, TX 79601

**A SIGNIFICANT NEED.
A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY.**

Developing a Drop-In Center for
Abilene's At-Risk Teens

Abilene is often described as a “great place to raise a family.” Many who call Abilene their hometown have fond memories of a loving family and community surrounding them as they grew up.

However, another version of reality exists for some of Abilene's youth. A variety of scenarios in our community too often lead a teen to experience homelessness, hunger, a front row seat for the effects of drug addiction, the risk of trafficking, and other traumas and challenges. These environments understandably lead to limited opportunities for growth and for some, their loss of hope.

We have a **significant need** – the AISD identified 258 unaccompanied teens during the 2020-2021 school year. During the summer of 2021, CPS had 160 youth aged 14-17 needing placement, yet with no capacity to do so.

We have a **significant opportunity** in Abilene to work together to create something new that will bridge a gap for at-risk teens. CitySquare Abilene will coordinate this community effort. CitySquare Abilene will be led by staff and a board of Abilenians who are committed to collaborative work with partners in our city to bring safety and hope to teens in need. May we come together to create a safe place for teens that supports them and provides reasons to hope as they grow up in Abilene.

“Healthier students more equipped for education and life can only mean a better tomorrow for Abilene. A Drop-in Center will fill a void in the system and multiply efforts to provide a better future for all students in Abilene.”

- Mayor Anthony Williams

Drop-in Center – A Safe Place for Teens to Belong and Grow

Direct service providers in Abilene agree - a safe, physical location for at-risk teens to belong and receive the help they need (outside of school) does not yet exist in our community. The space and programming of the Drop-in Center will include:

Safety and Basic Needs

- Safety – a secure space, staffed with screened and trained adults
- Food – distributed in a commercial kitchen through shared meals and food to-go
- Hygiene – shower facilities and hygiene products, laundry facilities
- Safe resting space – couches and cots offered on a temporary basis
- Lockers – for students to safely store belongings

Opportunities for a Positive Path Forward

- Staffing partnerships and flex spaces for direct service providers to engage with teen clients for counseling, basic health care and other social services
- Maintaining a strong partnership with the AISD and offering space for doing homework with necessary technology and tutors
- Opportunities for community service and connection to potential employers

Inspiration, Hope and Healthy community

- Dedicated space for art and other forms of creativity and expression
- Intern relationships with local university students
- Partnerships with mentoring programs and faith communities

Coordination of Local Services

Although many social services exist in Abilene, a need for more cohesion among the providers along with a physical, coordinated-entry point accessible to teens. A strategically located facility will serve to complement the mission of existing service providers and create a stronger network for the sake of Abilene's at-risk youth.

The integrated approach, beginning at the governance level and extending through the programming, targets beneficial outcomes such as:

- Clarity for a teenager – a teen in crisis only needs to remember one location rather than being forced to navigate and travel to different service providers,
- Case conferencing – the shared space will facilitate stronger working relationships between service providers and reduce the times a teen must repeat a trauma story,
- Efficiency – partnering will guard against duplication,
- Shared data and assessment of methods – collaboration will facilitate assessments of whether Abilene teens are truly benefitting from the collective efforts and identify adjustments needed.

Will You offer your "Building Block" to this Abilene effort?

- As Abilene comes together, we need 50 BUILDING BLOCKS
- A BUILDING BLOCK is \$25,000
- Individuals, Business and friend groups are invited to offer their BUILDING BLOCK/S
- We will showcase the community effort in a graphic of Abilenians, building this center together
- Gifts of ANY size are valuable and help bring this dream to reality!
- You may make financial contributions online at <https://give.citysquare.org/Abilene> or discuss other methods with us.

If you would like to offer input, learn more or discuss ways for you or your group to participate, please contact

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A View Inside

- Commons area for lounging, TVs, art and music
- Commercial kitchen with dining area
- Showers and laundry facilities
- Sleeping area with cots
- Homework and computer lab
- Exam/sick room
- Counseling areas

