



# FIVE & THRIVE

## Abilene's Commitment to the Dyess AFB Community

*Abilene, Texas, has a strong commitment to supporting the Dyess Air Force Base's Five and Thrive Program, which enhances the quality of life for military families in our community. This collaborative effort between the city and the base focuses on five crucial areas.*

**Childcare**



**Education**



**Healthcare**



**Housing**



**Spouse Employment**





## Our Five & Thrive Mission

### ★ **Community Integration**


Abilene goes beyond the five core areas by fostering a welcoming environment for military families. The city participates in programs like Jump Start, a newcomer's orientation that introduces families to Dyess AFB resources and includes a tour of downtown Abilene. This initiative helps military families feel at home in their new community.

### ★ **Ongoing Commitment**

Abilene's leadership continues to engage with Air Force officials, including visits from high-ranking personnel to discuss and improve military-community relations. This ongoing dialogue ensures that Abilene remains responsive to the evolving needs of Dyess AFB families.

### ★ **Dedication**

Through these concerted efforts, Abilene demonstrates its dedication to supporting the Dyess AFB Five and Thrive Program, creating a thriving environment for military families and strengthening the bond between the city and its Air Force community.







# Childcare

Recognizing the critical need for quality childcare, Abilene is partnering with Dyess AFB to expand childcare options. Additionally, the city is working to identify and support local childcare providers to meet the growing demand.

- ★ Affordable childcare for children from all economic levels
- ★ Comprehensive programs from infancy through pre-kindergarten
- ★ Emphasis on cultural diversity and readiness for kindergarten
- ★ After-school programs with transportation from local elementary schools
- ★ Summer programming with themed weeks and field trips
- ★ Participation in the USDA Child and Adult Food Program, providing nutritious meals and snacks

## **On-line Child Care Portal: [winnie.com](http://winnie.com)**

- ★ Search for local child care providers near Dyess AFB
- ★ Options for in-home care, babysitters, and nannies
- ★ Filter by distance, hourly pay, and other criteria





There are 43 public school districts in Region 14, and Dyess Air Force Base sits in the center. Due to the proximity to the base, the large majority of the Dyess AFB Families choose Abilene Independent School District (AISD) and Wylie Independent School District (WISD) as their preferred district. Any school district's state accountability rating and demographical information can be reviewed at <https://txschools.gov>

### **Abilene Independent School District (AISD)**

The AISD serves approximately 15,312 students annually, with 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, one Head Start Program, and two alternative campuses spread throughout the city - from the Mall of Abilene area to northern Abilene.

### **Wylie Independent School District (WISD)**

WISD covers 165 square miles in Southern Abilene and serves around 5,500 students. It includes one early childhood center, two elementary schools, one middle school (grades 5 & 6), two intermediate schools, two junior high schools (grades 7 & 8), and one high school.

### **Additional School Options**

Smaller districts such as Jim Ned Consolidated ISD, Hawley ISD, Trent ISD, Clyde ISD, Eula ISD, and Merkel ISD also provide quality education for military families. Texas Leadership Academy, Premier High School and Triumph High School also serve military-connected students in Abilene.

### **Private Schools**

Abilene offers a variety of private schools including Abilene Christian School, St. John's Episcopal, Cornerstone Christian School, Kenley School, PEAK Christian Academy, Abilene Classical Academy, Abilene Junior Academy, and A Habitat for Learning.

## **Purple Star Schools**

The Texas Education Agency's Purple Star designation highlights schools that provide exceptional support to military-connected students. In our area, the following schools hold this designation: Cooper High School, Clack Middle School, Bassetti Elementary School (EL), Dyess EL, Taylor EL, Thomas EL, Ward EL, Long Early Learning Center, Wylie High School, Wylie West Junior High, and Texas Leadership Academy.

## **Homeschooling in Abilene**

Homeschoolers are not regulated in the same ways that traditional or accredited private schools are regulated in Texas. Homeschools in Texas are private schools for the purpose of compulsory attendance and private schools are not regulated by the state.

Dyess has plenty of base and community programs to enhance your child's learning. There is a Dyess AFB Homeschoolers Group that meets several times each month for STEM activities at the base library, cooking class at the base Chapel, fellowship events around base and special field trips offered on base.

There are also several popular off-base co-ops and learning groups for homeschoolers, including Big Country Home Educators (BCHE), Classical Conversations of Abilene, X Dot Academy, Abilene Homeschoolers Association, Big Country Homeschool Forum, and Friday School Homeschool Co-Op.

## Exceptional Family Member Support

The School Liaison (SL) works in conjunction with the school counselors, teachers, principals, base personnel, and local and state politicians to ensure compliance with federal and state laws governing education to ensure quality education for families under the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). The SL also works closely with the Exceptional Family Member Program-Family Support (EFMP-FS), the Exceptional Family Member Program-Medical (EFMP-M), and the Exceptional Family Member Program-Assignments (EFMP-A) to provide comprehensive assistance including Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and information and referral regarding educational, medical, financial, and social service resources to families.

## Higher Education Partnerships

Four major universities are housed in Abilene offering associate, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. Other programs are also offered at a state technical college, a community college, a school of cosmetology, and a truck driving/commercial driver's license program. In addition, assistance may be available through the State Employment Agency's Workforce Investment Act, which assists qualified applicants in obtaining an associate degree from a local college or technical school. Acceptance for financial assistance for the My Career Advancement Account scholarship program varies by school. Call the Dyess Military and Family Readiness Center at DSN: 312-461-5999 or Comm: 325-696-5999 for more information.

Adult Education services for the military members are available through the Dyess AFB Education Office. Professional guidance counselors are available at the Education Office and at the colleges on an appointment basis. Testing facilities are available at the McMurry University Campus to include testing for CLEP, Dantes, GRE, and GMAT. Contact the Dyess Education Center at DSN: 312-461-5545 or Comm: 325-696-5545 for more information.

## School Liaison

The School Liaison Program Manager (SLPM) is the central point of contact for commanders, military families, and local school systems on school-related matters. The SLPM helps military families navigate the complexities of school transitions and fosters partnerships between parents, installation leadership, and local schools in meeting the challenging demands of the military lifestyle.

For assistance, reach out to Darci Hodges, the School Liaison Program Manager at Dyess Air Force Base, at 325-696-4591 or via email at [darci.hodges@us.af.mil](mailto:darci.hodges@us.af.mil). Her office is located at 217 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Bldg. 7401 on base. For more information, visit <https://dyessfss.com/school-liaison/>.



# Healthcare

Abilene is working with local medical facilities to ensure accessible, quality healthcare for military families, and Dyess AFB families have access to a robust network of healthcare services within the Abilene community. These services cover a wide range of medical needs, from primary care and specialized medical treatments to mental health support and emergency care.

## Hendrick Health System

- ★ Services: Comprehensive medical services including emergency care, specialty care, inpatient services, surgical services, and a wide range of medical specialties.

**Hendrick Health, based in Abilene, services over 400,000 Texas residents across more than 100 service areas.**

## Oceans Behavioral Hospital Abilene

- ★ Services: Inpatient and outpatient mental health services, including treatment for depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and substance abuse. Specialized programs for active duty military, veterans, and their families.
- ★ Special Features: Offers alternative therapies such as yoga for trauma, aromatherapy, and non-pharmacological pain management.

## Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

- ★ Services: Provides support and resources for families with special needs, including medical, educational, and social services.

## Affordacare Urgent Care Clinic

- ★ Services: Walk-in urgent care for non-emergency medical issues.

## Betty Hardwick Center

- ★ Services: Mental health services, including counseling and psychiatric care.

## Serenity House

- ★ Services: Substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services.

## Texas Family Institute

- ★ Services: Counseling and therapy services for individuals, couples, and families.

## Emergency Assistance

- ★ Medical Emergency or Fire: Call 911 from any Dyess Air Force Base phone.
- ★ 211 Texas Call for Help: 325-673-8211 or United Way of Abilene for non-emergency assistance.





# Safe & Affordable Housing

Abilene is addressing military housing needs through community partnerships. The city is working to identify suitable housing options and improve existing accommodations to meet the needs of service members and their families.

## Local Real Estate Resources

- ★ Abilene Association of Realtors provides a listing of upcoming open houses throughout the city, first time homeowner seminars, rent list, and a directory of local real estate agents.

## New Development

- ★ Significant developer investment has been committed to new apartment complexes in Abilene: one on the north side and two on the south side.
- ★ The 10-acre gated community Lofts at Allen Ridge opened in 2024 with 241 units available.
- ★ A 911 single-family subdivision on Abilene's north side is in development on land owned by Abilene Christian University.
- ★ Infrastructure for the new Water Crest Ranch community, providing 575 lots, is planned to begin in June 2024.

## Housing Statistics (May 2024)



**\$252,450**  
Median Home Price



**790**  
Active Listings



**900+**  
Rental Units

Source: Abilene Association of Realtors, 2024

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## Spouse Employment

Recognizing the importance of career opportunities for military spouses, Abilene is actively supporting spouse employment initiatives. The City of Abilene works closely with Dyess AFB to ensure that military spouses have access to a wide range of support systems. The collaboration between the city and the base creates a comprehensive network of resources to connect military spouses with local employment opportunities and support their career development, improving the quality of life for military families in the Abilene area.

### Job Fairs

- ★ The Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) hosts job fairs at the Dyess Community Center, connecting military spouses with local employment opportunities.

### West Texas Workforce Solutions Partnership

- ★ Abilene collaborates with this organization to provide employment resources and welcome classes for military spouses.

### Resume Building and Job Search Support

- ★ The A&FRC offers classes to help spouses build resumes and navigate USA Jobs, the federal government's official employment site.

### Career Exploration and Training

- ★ The Military & Family Support Center provides support for career exploration, education, training, and licensing specifically tailored for military spouses.

### Heart Link Spouse Orientation

- ★ This program is designed for newly married spouses and Dyess AFB newcomers, providing information about the local Abilene area and base resources.

### Jump Start Program

- ★ A newcomer's orientation held monthly to welcome families to Dyess AFB, introducing them to on-base resources and including a tour of downtown Abilene.



# Five & Thrive Abilene



## Military Families are at the Heart of Abilene!

Five and Thrive is a grassroots effort created to support and communicate viable quality-of-life programs and resources while highlighting various challenges military families face in the five focus areas. By highlighting preventative measures, promoting best practices, and fostering community partnerships in these five areas, this effort aims to provide Dyess Air Force families with the best communication, support, and opportunities to thrive.

- ★ Air Force families experience the same problems and stress surrounding childcare, education, housing, health care and finding fulfilling jobs as other american households.
- ★ Difficulty in one area can influence another, potentially creating a continuous cycle of struggle.
- ★ Constant moves, lack of family support, and other stressors related to military way of life such as deployments put additional pressure on families.

***The need for services to support and uplift our military families continues to be a priority for the city of Abilene. We cannot lose sight of the fact that families play a critical role in keeping the U.S. Air Force the best in the world.***



## About the Abilene Military Affairs Committee (MAC)

The MAC is a public-private partnership of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, Development Corporation of Abilene, individuals, and businesses established over 70 years ago. Through its 300 members, MAC advocates for expansion and preservation of missions at Dyess AFB and cares for the needs of military members and their families.

**For Additional  
Information Contact:**



## Gray Bridwell

Vice President, Military Affairs, Abilene Chamber of Commerce  
400 Pine, 5th Floor, Abilene, Texas 79601  
325-677-7241 ■ [gray@abilenechamber.com](mailto:gray@abilenechamber.com)