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Application Catalog



Let's Do Some Good Today!



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

Central Kentucky Community Action Council

Project Name:	Meal Delivery Truck Conversion for Seniors and Emergency Response
Project Summary:	Central Kentucky Community Action Council (CKCAC) requests Big Spark funding to convert a donated box truck into a dedicated hot/cold meal delivery vehicle. CKCAC partners with Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD) to operate the Senior Centers in our shared eight counties of Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson and Washington. CKCAC has a catering kitchen in Elizabethtown that is used to make approximately 250 hot, nutritious lunches for our Seniors every day. This vehicle will be used to deliver these vehicles from Elizabethtown across the region in an efficient manner. However, there is an additional use case for this vehicle that we want to propose. CKCAC proposes to use this vehicle to deliver hot meals from Elizabethtown to disaster-affected areas in times of need. We have seen numerous times where private businesses and private donors fill the gap for meal and commodities for first responders and impacted residents during disaster response. However, CKCAC hopes to help proactively participate in this process by leveraging our catering kitchen for meals and this vehicle for delivery. CKCAC has engaged with Delivery Concepts, Inc. (https://deliveryconcepts.com/) as a local industry leader in food delivery options. They will be able to do a custom conversion of this box truck into a purpose-built hot meal delivery vehicle. The donated truck is an F-350 chassis and dually. It will be well-suited to deliver meals and commodities to disaster-affected areas with unpredictable road conditions.
Total Project Cost:	\$39,260.00
Secured Funding:	\$0.00
Anticipated Outcome:	Successful conversion of the vehicle is the primary anticipated outcome. Utilization of daily meal delivery vehicle for Senior Congregate Meal program if the second anticipated outcome. Successful deployment of vehicle to disaster-affected areas in our region would be the third anticipation outcome.

Mission Statement: To empower individuals and families in poverty to achieve self-sufficiency and economic mobility through community partnerships and providing essential services in education, employment, aging and family support, nutrition, health, housing, and transportation.

Primary Service Area: Hardin County



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

Guthrie Opportunity Center

Project Name:	GOQuest Community Access Initiative
Project Summary:	The Guthrie Opportunity Center (GO Center) requests \$24,000 from the Big Spark Grant to purchase and operate a used wheelchair-accessible vehicle for GOQuest, its individualized, community-based day program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Nelson County. The \$39,260 first-year project includes the \$25,000 vehicle purchase, \$4,000 in cash operating costs, and \$10,260 in in-kind staff time. The GO Center has committed \$15,260 toward the project, leaving the requested \$24,000 to fully fund the first year. GOQuest connects participants with community partnerships, job-shadowing opportunities, employment experiences, and activities tailored to their individual goals. Currently, the GO Center has no accessible vehicle, requiring staff to use personal vehicles and families to provide transportation for participants who use wheelchairs. This creates an inconsistent and inequitable barrier to participation. The requested vehicle will accommodate 2–4 wheelchairs per trip, enable larger groups to participate together, reduce reliance on staff personal vehicles, and expand access to community opportunities for all participants. Up to 20 participants rely on transportation each day, representing nearly 4,800 participant-days annually. The GO Center will measure success by tracking accessible transportation participant-days, with a first-year goal of 4,800, and report results to CKCF at year-end.
Total Project Cost:	\$39,260.00
Secured Funding:	\$15,260.00
Anticipated Outcome:	Success will be measured by the GO Center's ability to provide reliable, equitable accessible transportation to every GOQuest participant who needs it, regardless of mobility device use, and closing the current gap in which wheelchair users depend on an inconsistent, family-vehicle workaround. We will track whether participants who use wheelchairs are able to access the same range and frequency of community placements as participants without mobility needs, and whether missed or cancelled placements due to transportation issues decline.

Mission Statement:

The Guthrie Opportunity Center is a nonprofit organization serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those with barriers to employment in the Nelson County, Kentucky community. Through job training, community employment, day services, advocacy, arts and social recreation, our goal is to assist these citizens with finding new friends, realizing future career paths, seeking independence and community integration, and unleashing creative passions.

Primary Service Area:

Nelson County



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

Hope Academy for Kids

Project Name: The Hope Playground

Project Summary: The Hope Playground Project will transform our outdoor space into a vibrant playground where children can learn, explore, and grow through active play. At Hope Academy for Kids, we serve children who benefit from a safe, supportive environment that encourages physical activity, creativity, teamwork, and confidence. The playground will become an extension of our educational and enrichment programs, giving children opportunities to develop important social, emotional, and physical skills every day. This project is a "Big Spark" because it creates a lasting place where hope is experienced, not just taught. Many of the children we serve face challenges that limit access to safe, high-quality places to play. A new playground will provide an environment where they can build friendships, develop resilience, and simply enjoy being children. The Hope Playground Project will also strengthen connections with families by providing a welcoming space for events and celebrations. More than new equipment, this project is an investment in healthier children, stronger relationships, and a brighter future—creating a place where hope grows with every climb, laugh, and new adventure.

Total Project Cost: \$109,998.00

Secured Funding: \$3,400.00

Anticipated Outcome: Successful conversion of the vehicle is the primary anticipated outcome. Utilization of daily meal delivery vehicle for Senior Congregate Meal program if the second anticipated outcome. Successful deployment of vehicle to disaster-affected areas in our region would be the third anticipated outcome.

Mission Statement: To empower individuals and families in poverty to achieve self-sufficiency and economic mobility through community partnerships and providing essential services in education, employment, aging and family support, nutrition, health, housing, and transportation.

Primary Service Area: Hardin County

Hope Academy for Kids



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

Nazareth Literary & Benevolent Institution Inc. dba Sisters of Charity of Nazareth

Project Name:

A Place for Prayer, Reflection, and Belonging for All

Project Summary:

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth seek support to create an outdoor meditation space on the historic Motherhouse grounds, providing a welcoming setting for reflection, restoration, connection, and emotional renewal. The space will offer opportunities for mindful walking, quiet contemplation, prayer, and respite for a diverse population, including retreatants, community members, women in recovery, caregivers, seniors, individuals with disabilities, grief groups, and healthcare workers. Designed with universal accessibility in mind, the space will feature an ADA-accessible walking surface, welcoming entrances, strategically placed seating, intuitive signage, natural landscaping, and sensory elements. These features will create a peaceful environment where people of all abilities can participate comfortably and with dignity. Open to people of all faith traditions and those without religious affiliation, the space will provide an opportunity to step away from daily demands and reconnect through stillness, gentle movement, or shared experiences. The space will also support community programming, including guided reflection walks, mindfulness gatherings, recovery experiences, grief support, interfaith services, caregiver respite, and intergenerational activities. Building on more than 200 years of hospitality and service, this project continues the Sisters' legacy by creating a place of refuge, healing, belonging, and renewal that responds to today's spiritual, emotional, and social needs.

Total Project Cost:

\$127,500.00

Secured Funding:

\$70,000.00

Anticipated Outcome:

The success of this program will be evaluated through a combination of quantitative data and qualitative feedback to measure progress toward goals related to accessibility, well-being, and community engagement. Increased utilization will be tracked through visitor counts, program participation, and engagement from priority populations, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers. Improvements in emotional well-being will be assessed through participant surveys, testimonials, and repeat engagement, offering insight into how the space supports stress reduction and restoration.

Community connection will be evaluated through program attendance, participant feedback, and the development of partnerships with local organizations. Program effectiveness will also be measured by the frequency and diversity of offerings, overall participation rates, and engagement across different groups. Accessibility will be assessed through user feedback, particularly from individuals with disabilities, as well as observation of ease of navigation and independent use. Long-term success will be reflected in consistent use of the space, growth in programming, and sustained community and donor support. These measures will help ensure the space becomes a valued, enduring resource that contributes to well-being, fosters connection, and reflects the Sisters' commitment to inclusive hospitality. Ultimately, success will be defined by the extent to which the space is actively used, widely accessible, and meaningfully enhances the lives of those who experience it.

Mission Statement:	We Sisters of Charity of Nazareth are an international Congregation impelled by the love of Christ in the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac and the pioneer spirit of Catherine Spalding. Embracing intercultural relationships, we and our Associates commit ourselves to care for all creation and to work for peace and justice in solidarity with oppressed and marginalized peoples.
Primary Service Area:	Nelson County



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

The Hardin County Playhouse

Project Name: Raising the Curtain on Our New Home

Project Summary: For more than 50 years, Hardin County Playhouse (HCP) has brought residents together through live theater, providing generations of children and adults opportunities to perform, volunteer, create, and experience the arts. After losing its longtime performance space, HCP continued productions through partnerships with local venues, but the lack of a permanent home limited programming, growth, and long-term capacity. HCP has now secured a new permanent facility, creating opportunities to expand performances, youth theater, educational workshops, and community events. To transform the facility into a functioning black box theater, HCP seeks funding to purchase and install professional modular audience risers. The risers will provide safe, accessible, and comfortable elevated seating while ensuring clear sightlines and allowing the space to adapt to various productions and events. This “Big Spark” project will turn an empty room into a true community theater and establish essential infrastructure for HCP’s future. The new facility will expand opportunities for youth to develop communication, collaboration, leadership, and problem-solving skills; provide volunteers opportunities to share their talents; and strengthen partnerships with schools, artists, and community organizations. The risers will be a permanent asset serving thousands of residents for decades, supporting productions, youth programs, school performances, fundraisers, and community gatherings while helping community theater flourish in Hardin County.

Total Project Cost: \$36,425.00

Secured Funding: \$0.00

Anticipated Outcome: We will measure the success of this project through both immediate outcomes and long-term community impact. The first measure of success will be the purchase and installation of the audience risers, allowing us to safely open our permanent theater and launch our planned performance season. Once the theater is operational, we will evaluate success by tracking the number of productions presented, youth theater participants, audience attendance, volunteer engagement, and community events hosted in the new space. We also expect to see increased partnerships with local schools, civic organizations, and other community groups that can now utilize a permanent performing arts venue. Success will ultimately be measured by

our ability to provide a consistent home for community theater in Hardin County.

Mission Statement: At Hardin County Playhouse, we're more than just a theater – we're a vibrant community hub dedicated to bringing the magic of live performances to audiences of all ages. With a rich history of captivating productions and a commitment to fostering local talent, we invite you to experience the joy and excitement of theater with us.

Primary Service Area: Hardin County



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

Vine Grove Historical Society

Project Name: Vine Grove Connect: Board the Caboose Build the Vision

Project Summary: The Vine Grove Historical Society, in partnership with the City of Vine Grove, is transforming an underused area beside the railroad tracks in Historic Downtown Vine Grove into the “Signal” Pocket Park, a vibrant destination combining public art, local history, recreation, and education. The project’s “Big Spark” is its potential to turn a forgotten space into a place that inspires connection, creativity, and community pride. The park will feature large-scale public art celebrating Vine Grove’s first 100 years, a railroad-themed play area, walking paths, interpretive exhibits, and a restored vintage caboose serving as a small museum highlighting the community’s railroad heritage. The Signal Pocket Park will function as an outdoor classroom, community event venue, and gathering space where residents and visitors can engage with the stories that shaped Vine Grove. It will encourage outdoor activity, strengthen intergenerational connections, support educational programming, and create a distinctive sense of place. As a new destination in Historic Downtown, the park is also expected to increase foot traffic for nearby small businesses, attract heritage tourism, and contribute to commercial district revitalization in alignment with the Vine Grove Historic District Strategic Plan. The Historical Society has launched an \$85,000 capital campaign. Support from the Central Kentucky Community Foundation’s Granted program would provide critical momentum to transform an overlooked area into a lasting community asset that celebrates Vine Grove’s past while creating opportunities for its future.

Total Project Cost: \$85,000.00

Secured Funding: \$20,000.00

Anticipated Outcome: The success of the Restore the Caboose and Signal Pocket Park Project will be measured through both project completion milestones and its long-term impact on the Vine Grove community.

Project success will first be evaluated by achieving the planned restoration of the historic caboose, including structural improvements, preservation of its historic character, installation of interpretive exhibits, and the creation of the mural and the Signal Pocket Park with its planned amenities. Completing these improvements on schedule and

within budget will represent an important milestone. Beyond construction, the Vine Grove Historical Society will evaluate how the project serves the community. Success will be measured by increased public use of the site, attendance at community events and educational programs, volunteer participation, school and youth group visits, and community feedback. We will also monitor the number of partnerships developed with local organizations, businesses, and civic groups that utilize the space for educational, cultural, or community activities. The Society expects the project to contribute to increased visitation to Historic Downtown, greater awareness of Vine Grove's railroad heritage, and stronger community pride. Visitor counts, event participation, volunteer engagement, and surveys from residents and visitors will help measure these outcomes over time. Ultimately, success will not be defined solely by the restoration of a historic caboose, but by the creation of a vibrant, welcoming community destination that preserves local history, encourages outdoor recreation and lifelong learning, strengthens community connections, and supports the continued revitalization of Historic Downtown Vine Grove for generations to come.

Mission Statement:	The Vine Grove Historical Society is a non-profit organization whose mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and promote the history of Vine Grove, Kentucky.
Primary Service Area:	Hardin County



2026 Big Spark Application Summary

Warm Blessings

Project Name: Warm Blessings Expansion Project

Project Summary: Warm Blessings is one of three nonprofits selected by the City of Elizabethtown to renovate and occupy a 30,000-square-foot former nursing home the City purchased for \$1.5 million in Fall 2025, establishing a shared hub dedicated to serving neighbors in need. The City will lease approximately 6,800 square feet to Warm Blessings for a nominal fee and retain responsibility for parking lot repaving and maintenance, snow removal, lawn care, and roof maintenance — an extraordinary public investment. This is a Big Spark because it is bigger than any single organization or any single grant. Three nonprofits — Warm Blessings (expanded food service, day shelter, and a white-flag emergency shelter), Heartland House (shelter and transitional housing), and Mission Hope for Kids (academic support for children) — are each investing approximately \$1 million to build out their sections of one shared facility. Together, this creates a genuine community hub where a neighbor in crisis can access food, shelter, case management, and children's services in a single visit, removing barriers that too often keep people from getting help at all. A previous owner gutted most of the building. Each section requires a full interior build-out, including Warm Blessings' space. This will more than double our current operating space and enable transformational program expansion, including:

- A dining room with capacity for approximately 140 guests at a time, with the ability to expand service hours to serve twice that many guests per night if needed.
- The ability to convert that dining room into a 42-bed white-flag shelter during extreme weather — Warm Blessings will be the only year-round white-flag shelter between Louisville and Bowling Green.
- Private consultation offices where service providers can meet confidentially with guests.
- Expanded day shelter space, including computer stations for job and housing searches.
- Laundry service expanded from one residential washer/dryer set to three commercial machine sets.
- Expanded shower facilities.
- A larger, better-equipped kitchen to make meal creation, storage, and service more efficient — including a full commercial cooking, refrigeration, and dishwashing package already quoted at \$318,165.60 by Dine Company of

Louisville, KY.

- Green space for guests and for Warm Blessings' kitchen staff to use as a kitchen garden.

Warm Blessings currently serves about 677 unique individuals to date in 2026 and, in a typical month, provides nearly 5,000 meals. Demand has outgrown our current 2,720-square-foot facility at 609 E. Dixie Avenue. The "to-go" meal service — originally adopted as a pandemic accommodation — has remained the primary model simply because there is no room for guests to dine in. This expansion directly addresses that physical limitation, transforming Warm Blessings from a meal provider operating at capacity into a full-service community hub built for the scale of need Hardin County actually has.

Total Project Cost: \$1,500,000.00

Secured Funding: \$126,000.00

Anticipated Outcome: Success will be measured not only by the completion of the Community Resource Center, but by the measurable increase in services provided and lives impacted once it opens. Warm Blessings tracks detailed program data, allowing us to compare outcomes before and after expansion. Key performance indicators include:

Increased number of meals prepared and served annually. Growth in senior meal and mobile meal delivery — already at 2,730 senior meals and 1,602 mobile meals delivered through July 2026, volumes we expect to grow substantially with expanded kitchen and storage capacity. Increased utilization of showers, laundry, and day shelter services. Number of individuals receiving Blessing Bags — two-day supplies of emergency food and hygiene products — with 320 distributed through July 2026. Number of community partners utilizing the facility for collaboration and referrals. Growth in volunteer engagement. We currently have approximately 167 volunteers and growing, and are actively expanding recruitment through civic groups, religious congregations, and corporate partners across Hardin County. Capacity to activate up to 42 White Flag emergency shelter beds during severe winter weather. Beyond these quantitative measures, Warm Blessings will evaluate success through qualitative outcomes reflecting our mission: improved guest experiences, increased access to supportive services through community partnerships, greater volunteer engagement, and enhanced dignity for neighbors experiencing hardship. Long-term success will be reflected in a stronger, more connected Hardin County — more seniors receiving nutritious meals, more families with access to food and essential services, more individuals connected to resources that promote stability, and no one facing extreme winter weather left without a safe place to seek refuge. Ultimately, success will not be measured simply by the number of services we provide, but by the number of lives strengthened because our community chose to invest in hope, dignity, and opportunity.

Mission Statement:

Warm Blessings alleviates food insecurity in our community by providing meals and temporary refuge to neighbors in crisis. Since 2005, we have served our neighbors from Hardin County and the surrounding area without barriers — housed families living on the financial edge, isolated homebound seniors, and neighbors experiencing homelessness alike — through hot meals, senior and community meal delivery, a day shelter, showers, and laundry services.

Primary Service Area:

Hardin County