



Highland County Community Grants 2024

*Project Summaries

Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance

The Highland portion of the Upper James River Conservation Program is a first step toward a broader project aimed at fostering citizen engagement in the protection of water quality and environmental health in the Upper James River watershed. The James River begins in Highland County, with the Cowpasture, Bullpasture and Jackson Rivers flowing south to Bath County and beyond. ABRA will partner with Cowpasture River Preservation Association's active water monitoring project. Funds will focus on expanding ABRA's program in Highland County and assembling other available water quality and environmental data. The data would be presented in an online map, along with information on environmental regulations, permitting and new development. The project will produce a valuable tool, for citizens, officials and agencies to protect Highland's waters while planning and executing conservation efforts, new development and land management in Highland County.

Request: \$ 34,000

Awarded: \$ 12,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Blue Grass Resource Center

Funds will aid in the administration/operating costs of the revitalization of the Highland Inn. An Economic Impact Study created by Virginia Tech estimates the total economic impact of an operational Highland Inn at \$2.67 million in year one (inclusive of construction impacts), to \$2.58 million in year three, and just under \$3 million in year five, and sustaining 30-45 jobs. Highland Inn will provide critical lodging/fine dining for one of Highland's major economic development sectors, tourism.

Request: \$ 116,500

Awarded: \$50,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Bolar Volunteer Fire Department

Funds will provide an ice maker and ultraviolet water filtration for the fire department, which currently has a non-potable water source. Also included is funding to purchase three sets of full turn out gear for new members.

Request: \$ 14,965

Awarded: \$15,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Bolar Volunteer Rescue Squad

Funds will support the operations of the organization: fuel, maintenance, and medical supplies for Rescue 902, Response 9, and Unit 93, administration costs, medical malpractice Insurance, free CPR certification for county organizations, and Christmas stockings and supplies for visit with Santa event.

Request: \$ 11,379.20

Awarded: \$11,379

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Dare to Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship Center

Funds will cover facility and horse care expenses, allowing D2D to offer partially or fully sponsored lessons for Highland residents through other grant funding and donations. Facility rent and maintenance costs include barn rental (6 stalls, tack/feed room, office, hay storage), riding ring, pastures, trail access, farm equipment, utilities, and maintenance of roads and parking. Horse sponsorships ensure the best care for our herd, which is vital for serving individuals with special needs. D2D requires six carefully selected horses to support participants of all ages and abilities. The grant will underwrite feed, bedding, grooming supplies, tack, farrier, and vet expenses, allowing more resources to be allocated to program delivery and scholarships.

Request: \$ 19,980

Awarded: \$15,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Elegius Mini Equine Sanctuary

Funds will support general operating expenses for the organization, to include feed, bedding, vet care/medications, farrier services, and labor. There is an anticipated increase for the cost of hay due to the drought in Highland County which has limited hay production on the organization's farm and on surrounding farms which supplied hay to EMES. EMES is buying now for winter as hay supplies are already dwindling while costs are soaring.

Request: \$ 23,000

Awarded: \$ 11,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland Children's House

Funds will support payroll expenses at the Monterey location. This request for crucial support is for the organization's largest expense, payroll. Due to inconsistent revenue, our financial position is under strain, so we are requesting assistance for three specific payroll line items so that we can consistently pay our essential staff members and continue providing reliable care.

Request: \$ 139,000

Awarded: \$ 99,472

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland County Arts Council

Funds will support growth in offerings of performance and visual arts. HCAC, run by an all-volunteer, nine-member board, seeks general operations funding to keep part-time independent contractors working at a level to allow us to maintain our programs to the community, strategically expand visual arts with a sister non-profit called Third Space, and develop our local musical talent with a Community Orchestra.

Request: \$ 38,000

Awarded: \$ 20,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland County Fair Association, Inc.

Funds will support the organization's 2025 general operating budget. In 2023, we nearly doubled revenue, thanks to increased ticket prices and favorable weather. Despite this success, we faced a \$26,000 expense to install fire suppression systems in our food booths, mandated by the state fire marshal. Rising costs due to inflation and insurance also challenged our budget. While ticket prices remained unchanged for 2024, the organization needs support to keep the fair accessible and maintain its quality. Funding will help cover essential operating costs, allowing the organization to direct other resources toward critical capital projects, including a new restroom building and lighting upgrades. Support ensures that the fair continues to unite the Highland community, celebrate its agricultural heritage, and provide economic opportunities for local nonprofits and youth.

Request: \$ 98,000

Awarded: \$ 55,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland County Humane Society, Inc.

Funds will support for the society's two core programs: keeping pets and people together and saving homeless animals. For the pet retention mission, the following are necessary costs: fuel, food, supplies, and parasite treatments, spay/neuter surgeries, vaccinations, emergency care, medications, and other services. When age, illness, or poverty breaks up a household, HCHS is the last hope for animals. Those animals are welcomed into HCHS foster homes, where food and daily loving care are provided and medical needs are met. Complete care for illness or injury is provided. Because euthanasia shouldn't be the penalty for an animal becoming homeless, this funding request includes HCHS's foster care program.

Request: \$ 35,000

Awarded: \$ 35,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland County Volunteer Fire Department

Funds will support a new building for the tanker truck at the Blue Grass Firehouse. Space may also be used for one of the Highland County Volunteer Rescue Squad vehicles.

Request: \$ 70,000

Awarded: \$ 30,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland Historical Society

Funds will renovate an old shed on the property of the Highland County Museum for a new purpose as the Maple Museum. The project will include leveling the building; putting battens on the cracks; replacing one window & installing a stained-glass window from the original Maple Museum; repairing the roof; gravel or concrete floor and reconnecting and upgrading the electricity. The other part of HHS's request is funding to continue to employ two high school students who have been working for the organization for the past three years.

Request: \$ 17,000

Awarded: \$ 15,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

Highland Medical Center

Funds are requested to upgrade outdated equipment, add additional diagnostic equipment, and add equipment to the HMC physical therapy department to better serve the predominantly elderly population of patients. Patients could avoid emergency department visits for functional urinary issues if HMC had a bladder scanner to help diagnose these problems. The current urinalysis machine is > 15 yrs old and needs to be replaced to meet quality standards. The electronic muscular stimulation unit is currently broken, out of service and needs to be replaced. HMC physical therapy has basic equipment to assist in rehabilitation from surgery/injury; however, it lacks the equipment utilized for strength training that will help patients recover and prevent injury in the future. Many patients with severe arthritis and obesity are unable to reach their therapy goals due to the lack of anti-gravity therapy options. Aqua therapy and anti-gravity treadmills have been scientifically proven to increase healing in a shorter time.

Request: \$ 81,137

Awarded: \$ 80,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

McDowell Volunteer Fire Department

Funds will partially pay for the organization's Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus' for the firefighters. Last year the organization was not able to fully pay for these critical pieces of firefighting equipment but ordered less and borrowed money from Highland County to get them into service.

Request: \$ 105,000

Awarded: \$ 54,778

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

The Highland Center

Funds will assist The Highland Center to cover operating costs and initiate new endeavors. The organization maintains and operates a building of local, historical significance for the good of the community. It offers long-term space to several organizations and short-term meeting and event space. Its building meets the requirements to serve as an emergency shelter for the county. The organization operates a number of programs in support of economic development, youth employment and education, and local foods. The organization makes a priority of keeping its rental fees within reach of the community; however, in doing so this means that its income cannot match the expense of running its large, old facility.

Request: \$ 75,000

Awarded: \$ 50,000

Fund: Little Swiss Fund

TOTAL 2024 AWARDS: \$553,629