



## Behind the Scenes of Caldwell County

### Amber Quinley, Grants Administrator

Caldwell County doesn't just run on its own. There are many folks who work behind the scenes to help keep it going. This year, we're going to be regularly highlighting the individuals who help us keep things moving in the right direction. This month, let's get to know Grants Administrator Amber Quinley.

As head of the Caldwell County Grants Administration Department, Ms. Quinley helps county departments and offices find and obtain supplemental financial resources – above and beyond local tax dollars – to support the goals and initiatives of Caldwell County government and its strategic partners. Her department works with state, federal and private entities to find and apply for grant money that benefits citizens in all areas of Caldwell County.



Ms. Quinley, who grew up nearby in Smithville, is just the second official grants administrator for Caldwell County, joining the staff in November 2023 following the retirement of Dennis Engelke. We got a chance to catch up with her and ask her some questions about grants, her goals for the department and county and what's new and exciting in the world of grant funding.

### **Q: Why are grants important to how a county government operates?**

A: Grants have proven to be a game changer for local governments, as they can provide financial support and valuable resources for a wide range of initiatives that otherwise may not be possible.

### **Q: What are some ways grants allow a county to enhance what it's able to do for its residents?**

A: Often grants can provide funding for community development, transportation, environmental efforts, public safety, education, health, and housing. Other times, it is helpful to the county for large capital projects, but in both cases any funding that is secured through grants is money saved.

**Q: What made you decide you wanted to work with grants?**

A: To be honest, I didn't find grants...grants found me. About six years ago I began my journey with County Government when I was hired by the Bastrop County Auditor's Office as their Assistant Auditor/Grant Coordinator. The County Auditor hired me knowing I didn't have a background in grants, but still felt I was the right one for the job, and I am so happy she did. During my time with Bastrop County, I learned so much about county government, all the financials that are involved and of course I was thrown into the world of grants which was super uncomfortable at first. However, once I got my feet wet it became like second nature. I loved seeing new grant funding come to the county, getting to work closely with county personnel to ensure proper management, financials, procedures, and requirements were met. It was extremely rewarding to see a project through from start to finish.

**Q: What are some funding opportunities that excite you?**

A: We are currently working with the Texas General Land Office on grant funding for an Evacuation Shelter. This project is essential for the safety of our growing community during emergency events. Furthermore, any funding opportunities that allow me to work side by side with other county personnel/entities to bring their department/county needs to life are both exciting and rewarding.

