

# Frequently Asked Questions for Otto Bremer Trust's Community Responsive Fund 2024 Pilot Program

## Background

### **Who is Otto Bremer Trust?**

The Otto Bremer Trust (OBT) is a private charitable trust based in St. Paul, MN, created in 1944 by business and community leader Otto Bremer. It is committed to supporting a better quality of life for residents of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Since its founding, OBT has invested more than \$1 billion in people, places, and opportunities in its region. Learn more at: [Ottobremer.org](https://ottobremer.org).

### **Why is Otto Bremer Trust conducting a pilot program with philanthropic intermediary partners in 2024?**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a growing need for supporting residents and services in local communities throughout the four-state region that OBT serves, which includes Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana.

These needs have not only increased, but OBT recognizes the philanthropic landscape has become much more complex, requiring additional insight and guidance from people who know communities and their needs the best. In response, OBT is conducting a one-year trial program to test a grantmaking partnership approach and learn together throughout the pilot program.

OBT believes intermediary partners rooted in communities are more knowledgeable and better able to identify and invest in approaches that are relevant, timely, and effective.

### **Who are the intermediary partners in the pilot program and what is their role?**

The OBT has identified six intermediary partners across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Montana and North Dakota.

- Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region (WI)
- Greater Milwaukee Foundation (WI)
- The Greater Twin Cities United Way (MN)
- Initiative Foundation (MN)
- Montana Community Foundation (MT)
- North Dakota Community Foundation (ND)

OBT has provided funds to each of the intermediary partner organizations and the partners will administer and distribute those grant dollars from a Community Responsive Fund in their respective geographic service areas to support nonprofit organizations responding to immediate high priority challenges. The intermediary partners will identify nonprofit organizations that align with OBT's funding scope as articulated by its Trust Instrument. The partners will have latitude in administering the responsive grant program and are encouraged to utilize their existing grant-making practices to solicit, screen, and select grantees.

### **What is Otto Bremer Trust's role in the grants decision-making process?**

OBT staff will provide ongoing guidance throughout the pilot project, including overseeing, approving, advising intermediary partners on potential grant recipients, and gathering results and learnings. The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region will advise OBT on the unique needs and strengths of communities in the Community Foundation's service region, allowing the Trust to focus its efforts and make an even greater impact in its regions in Wisconsin.

**Why was the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region selected?**

OBT chose the Community Foundation due to our knowledge and familiarity with the intersection of regional challenges and opportunities, community dynamics, and experience working with organizations and programs in the Fox Valley region of Northeast Wisconsin that address immediate needs and community building opportunities, as well as our understanding and knowledge of identifying the best opportunities for positive impact.

**Will this opportunity continue after the 2024 pilot program year?**

OBT is implementing the pilot initiative alongside its regular grantmaking activities with no determined plans beyond 2024.

**Grant Application Process**

**How much funding is available for grant making through the Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund?**

The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region will distribute \$3 million in grants to eligible nonprofit organizations serving residents in the Community Foundation’s service region of Calumet, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca and the Neenah/Menasha area of Winnebago counties.

**How can my organization be considered for funding?**

Organizations can apply for funding through a special grant cycle beginning March 11, 2024. Applications submitted through other Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region grant cycles may also be referred to the Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund for funding consideration at the discretion of Community Foundation staff.

**What are the focus areas of the grants?**

Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund grants will focus on supporting organizations that align with OBT’s mission to fund community asset building, basic needs, health and well-being, and restorative and responsive services, as well as organizations focused on bringing stability to individuals and families facing disruptive forces in life.

**What is the application process for the special grant cycle?**

Beginning March 11, 2024, eligible nonprofit organizations serving residents in the Community Foundation’s service region of Calumet, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca and the Neenah/Menasha area of Winnebago counties in northeast Wisconsin can apply for grants aligning with the fund’s focus areas, up to \$75,000 for a one-year grant. The application will close April 30, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

More information, including the grant application can be found on the [Community Foundation’s website](#).

**When will grants be decided and distributed?**

All grant decisions will be communicated to recipients by the end of June, with grant distributions to recipients completed by the end of July.

**If I'm eligible to apply to the Community Responsive Fund, can I also apply for other funding through the Otto Bremer Trust?**

A grant through the Community Responsive Fund will not preclude you from applying with the Otto Bremer Trust. The Otto Bremer Trust continues to make grants through its own processes, please check their website for eligibility.

**Am I able to apply if I have an existing grant from OBT?**

A current grant with the Otto Bremer Trust will not preclude you from applying for the Community Responsive Fund. Organizations who have an existing grant from OBT can also apply to the Community Responsive Fund.

**Where can I go for more information and questions?**

Go to the [Community Foundation's website](#) or contact Jenny Krikava, Community Engagement Manager, [jkrikava@cfoxvalley.org](mailto:jkrikava@cfoxvalley.org) or 920-702-7632.