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Otto Bremer Trust expanding

Geographic expansion reflects growth and changes in philanthropic strategies

SAINT PAUL, Sept. 17 — The Otto Bremer Trust (OBT) today announced that it will be expanding into all of Wisconsin and Montana beginning in the middle of next year. OBT currently operates in Minnesota, North Dakota, and western Wisconsin.

The change reflects the growth of OBT beyond traditional grant making to making innovative investments and providing creative financial tools for the region. These include a broad range of program-related investments, mission-related investing, and strategic capital allocation, all of which flow from OBT’s heritage in financial services and philanthropy.

The Otto Bremer Trust, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, was established in 1944 by businessman and civic leader Otto Bremer to fulfill his vision of being a resource to help people and communities in the region. Since its founding, OBT has made grants and program-related investments of more than $700 million, including over $50 million in 2018 alone.

“Two years ago, we created the expression Good Lives Here to reflect our passion for the part of the country that was so important to our founder,” said Charlotte Johnson, Co-CEO and Trustee. “Now ‘Here’ will include all four states cited in the original trust. It is so meaningful to now be able to reach a multitude of additional organizations and beneficiaries.”

OBT is making the announcement now as nonprofits and other organizations plan their budgets for 2020 and the years ahead. While no new grant requests will be accepted from the expanded geographies this year, interested organizations should periodically check OBT’s website at ottobremer.org for information and to sign up for updates.

“We have been mindful that any change to our investment scope could have an impact on the planning and budgeting process for nonprofit organizations in the region, and we felt it was important to highlight the change now,” said Daniel Reardon, Co-CEO and Trustee. “We are currently working on the detailed expansion plans and will share more information in the coming months.”

In addition to OBT’s core commitment to responsive grant making, impact investing has received more attention over the past several years. OBT has been continuously innovating products and services to provide the region with additional resources. Recent examples include medium-term loans, investments in patient-capital funds, revolving lines of credit, real estate acquisition funds, and health services investments.

“During his life, Otto Bremer had great fondness and a strong business commitment to the four-state region. We are delighted that we will soon be able to support all of Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin,” said Brian Lipschultz, Co-CEO and Trustee. “OBT represents the 21st-century financial service model—using our financial and non-financial resources to do well and do good.”
About the Otto Bremer Trust

The Otto Bremer Trust is a bank holding company and a private charitable trust based in St. Paul, Minn., that works at the intersection of finance and philanthropy. OBT is the 92 percent owner of Bremer Bank, a regional financial services company, and also manages a diversified investment portfolio. Since its founding, OBT has invested more than $700 million in people, places, and opportunities in the Upper Midwest. Visit ottobremer.org.

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