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Otto Bremer Trust announces new grantmaking approach

SAINT PAUL, April 29, 2024 — The Otto Bremer Trust (OBT) announced today a new grantmaking process as part of its continued efforts to be more effective and efficient in delivering on its mission of investing in people, places, and opportunities in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Since the Otto Bremer Trust was founded 80 years ago, the philanthropic landscape has experienced tremendous change, including in recent years following the COVID-19 pandemic. With a surging need for supporting residents and services in the local communities it serves, OBT has been assessing and improving its processes to lessen the burden on grantees and be more impactful in its work.

“While we are changing how we invest, our objectives and mission will not change and will continue to align with Otto Bremer’s vision he started 80 years ago,” said Charlotte S. Johnson, co-CEO and trustee, OBT.

The Otto Bremer Trust will shift to its new grantmaking model using a two-prong approach following the June 6 grant application deadline. The two-prong approach includes:

- Strategic grants initiated and provided directly by OBT that meet the trustees’ criteria and objectives and have demonstrated impact that will be sustained and enhanced through further investments from OBT.
- Community Responsive Fund grants through intermediary partners that will be selected through a closed process and announced in the fall of 2024.

“With these changes, we believe that we can be even more effective and make a greater impact in the communities we serve, and thus fulfill our mission in even bigger and more impactful ways,” said Daniel C. Reardon, co-CEO and trustee, OBT.

In late 2023, OBT initiated a pilot project to work with intermediary partners, engaging them to identify and recommend grants to organizations addressing community needs. The intermediaries regrant from the Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund in areas aligned with OBT’s objectives and approved by the trustees.

“The Community Responsive Fund grants leverage the expertise and local insights of intermediaries to extend the reach of OBT’s objectives and to identify organizations,

projects, and services that will have the greatest impact and are most needed in their local communities and regions,” said Francis M. Miley, co-CEO and trustee, OBT. “We had an extraordinary response to the Community Responsive Fund during the pilot project and are looking forward to continuing to expand and explore grantmaking through this approach.”

More information will be released in the near future. Visit ottobremer.org for more information.

About the Otto Bremer Trust

The Otto Bremer Trust is a private charitable trust based in St. Paul, Minn. Created in 1944 by business and community leader Otto Bremer, it is committed to supporting an enhanced quality of life for residents of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Since its founding, OBT has invested more than \$1 billion in its region’s people, places, and opportunities.

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