

2025 Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Funds FAQ

The organization must have at least five years of successful operations. Does this mean that the organization must have had its 501(c)(3) status for five years?

Yes.

Are government-owned hospitals or joint powers healthcare systems eligible?

No. However, affiliated 501(c)(3) hospital and healthcare foundations may be eligible.

Local chapters of a larger organization, which are all unique legal entities (like Habitat for Humanity, United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters) may not each have expenses of more than \$2 million last year. Can these organizations apply as a coalition?

No. The single legal entity applying must have had previous fiscal year's actual expenses of more than \$2 million.

How can grant funds be used?

Grant funds can be used to support operations, programming, and/or capital projects. No more than 10% of grant funds may be used for administrative expenses, the bulk of grant funds must be used for direct services. Grant funds may not be used for work to influence public policy, sponsorships or annual events, or fiscal sponsorships.

What is included in and excluded from the Literacy focus area?

OBT considers literacy through the lens of reading, writing, speaking, and other language skills needed to navigate civic, social, and economic systems. These include early childhood literacy, tutoring programs, adult basic education, English as a second language, etc. Services such as health literacy or digital literacy do not align with our current lens for the literacy focus area.

Our organization is the backbone of a local coalition in which we have some financial relationship. Could that coalition apply?

No.

If my organization works in multiple regions within Minnesota, are we eligible to receive multiple grants through the OBT Community Responsive Fund?

Yes, however pooling multiple regions together to receive a larger grant is not allowed. Any single organization is eligible to receive up to \$75,000 in combined regional grants.

OBT requires that any individual grant can't exceed 10% of the organization's previous fiscal year's public philanthropic financial support. How is "public philanthropic financial support" defined?

Found on section VIII, line 1f of the Form 990, public philanthropic financial support includes dollars raised through private fundraising (individuals, businesses, foundations, etc.), giving campaigns, fundraising events, United Way awards, and so forth. It excludes government grants and contracts, earned income, investment gains, and so forth. In-kind contributions are also excluded.

What if my otherwise eligible organization did not have any public philanthropic financial support in our previous fiscal year?

Your organization should not apply. Only those with previous public philanthropic financial support (Form 990, Section VIII, line 1f) may apply as this amount is what a grant award would be based on.

What if my otherwise eligible organization received less than \$100,000 in public philanthropic financial support in our previous fiscal year?

Your organization should not apply because the minimum grant we can award is \$10,000.

"No more than 10 percent of grant funds may be used for administrative expenses." What does OBT consider to be administrative expenses? Are these additional expenses beyond traditional indirect expenses?

Administrative expenses include management and general expenses and fundraising expenses, as is consistent with the Form 990 (Part IX, Statement of Functional Expenses.) No, administrative expenses through the OBT Community Responsive Fund are not additional expenses beyond traditional indirect expenses.

Do funded programs need to spend OBT Community Responsive grant funds within 12 months?

Yes, grant funds must be spent within 12 months. The start date occurs when the grant is made from the Northland Foundation to the grantee after recommendations are approved by the OBT Board of Trustees in late summer 2025.