



2025 Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund at Montana Community Foundation

Grant Guidelines

As a trusted partner to the Otto Bremer Trust, Montana Community Foundation will grant out \$1.5 Million to Montana organizations through the **Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund**.

2025 Community Responsive Fund Funding Priorities:

- **Literacy.** Organizations and programs advancing literacy.
 - Literacy is seen through the lens of reading, writing, speaking, and other language skills needed to navigate civic, social, and economic systems. These can include early childhood literacy, tutoring programs, adult basic education, English as a second language, and so forth. Services such as health literacy or digital literacy do not align with our current lens for the literacy focus area.
- **Adoption and foster care services.** Organizations and programs that support adoption and foster care.
- **Children's health.** Organizations and programs that provide health-related access and services for children.
 - This area focuses on providing direct health services and increasing access to services for children.
- **Children's disability services.** Organizations and programs focused on supporting children with physical/cognitive disabilities.
- **Mental health.** Organizations and programs that support access to and delivery of mental health services, with preference given to work that addresses the needs of children aged 5-15.
- **Capital projects for hospitals and clinics.** Activities supporting the maintenance of hospitals, construction of facilities, and purchase of medical equipment.

Program Eligibility

- The work must align with one or more OBT Community Responsive Fund focus areas for 2025.
- Organizations must be in Montana.
- The organization must have a 501(c)(3) determination from the IRS.
 - Government entities, including public schools, are not eligible.
 - Government-owned hospitals or joint powers healthcare systems are not eligible.
- The organization must have at least five years of successful operations.
- The organization's last fiscal year's actual expenses must have been \$2 million or more.
- The organization may not have an open Otto Bremer Trust strategic grant. Note: This is a grant directly through Otto Bremer Trust and does not include a 2024 Community Responsive Fund through Montana Community Foundation.



Funding Criteria

- Grants awards will be up to \$75,000 to support operations, programming, and/or capital projects. Partial funding may be awarded.
- The amount awarded may not exceed 10% of the organization's previous fiscal year's public philanthropic financial support.
 - 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.
- For requests for operating support, no more than 10% can be used for administrative/indirect costs.
 - Administrative expenses include Management and General Expenses and Fundraising Expenses, as is consistent with the Form 990.

Ineligible projects:

- Work to influence public policy
- Sponsorships or annual events
- Fiscal sponsorships
- Regranting

Ranking Criteria:

Montana Community Foundation is committed to maximizing community impact. We strive to ensure that MCF's resources create meaningful, measurable outcomes in the communities served. This work includes targeting and prioritizing underserved communities and issues, and focusing on projects that address systemic issues, ensuring long-term benefits and sustainable solutions.

To meet these goals, the applicants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Underserved Communities:** Priority will be given to organizations serving rural or tribal communities and populations, as well as [low-capacity communities](#). While organizations do not need to be based in these areas, they must demonstrate a meaningful relationship with and commitment to supporting underserved populations.
- **Alignment with Funding Priorities:** Applications must clearly illustrate how the program/organization directly aligns with the funding priority.
- **Impact and Reach:** Applicants should demonstrate the potential impact of the program/organizations' work on the target population or community. The review committee will consider factors such as the number of people served, the depth of the impact, and the potential for long-term sustainability.
- **Evidence of Need:** Applicants should clearly demonstrate the need for the proposed program within the community. This could include data on relevant demographics, community input, or evidence of existing gaps in services.
- **Feasibility and Sustainability:** Applicants should outline the feasibility of implementing the program and its prospects for long-term sustainability. For organizations seeking operational support, applicants should demonstrate long-term strategies for ensuring the sustainability of the organization.



Applications showing realistic plans for funding, staffing, and continuous support are likely to receive higher scores.

- **Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Programs/organizations should engage the community it serves and collaborate with other stakeholders. Projects that involve community members in the planning and decision-making process may be more effective and sustainable.
- **Measurable Outcomes and Evaluation:** Applicants should clearly, and specifically outline the goals and objectives, as well as the feasibility of measuring its outcomes. Projects with well-defined metrics for success and plans for evaluation will be scored higher.

Application Process:

- Applications will be open **April 1, 2025 – May 15, 2025**.
- Applications must be submitted online through [Montana Community Foundations Grant Portal](#).
- Application instructions can be found on [MCF's Funding Guide](#).
- All applications will be reviewed by external Grantmaking Advisory Committees composed of experts in the field.
- Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in August and funding will be available in early September.

Reporting

- A project report will be due within one year of receiving funds.

For questions about the fund or application please contact Elisa Fiaschetti, MCF Impact Program Director, at elisa@mtcf.org or 406-441-4953.