

Dane County Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund 2026

Application period will be open May 1, 2026

United Way of Wisconsin and its network of local United Ways across the state of Wisconsin have been selected by Otto Bremer Trust (OBT) as a philanthropic intermediary to administer and distribute funds through the Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund. The United Way of Wisconsin network will administer \$4,000,000 in funds for grants up to \$75,000 to support local organizations that directly respond to immediate challenges and opportunities in the community.

In Dane County, local nonprofits, organizations and groups may apply for funding from the OBT Community Responsive Fund through United Way of Dane County. The amount available to Dane County organizations is approximately \$550,000. Qualified applicants focus on food, shelter, low-income healthcare clinics, disability services, and school-based mental health which are [OBT Trust's 2026 Focus Areas](#).

“The Otto Bremer Trust is proud to work with United Way of Wisconsin to administer and distribute grant funds in Wisconsin,” said **Frank Miley, Co-CEO and Trustee, OBT**. “The Trust’s mission has always been to fund organizations and programs that effectively address challenges and opportunities in their local communities. What better way to have a deeper understanding of where those challenges are than to work with an organization like United Way of Wisconsin, which is fully integrated into the communities and regions we serve. We look forward to working together to increase our impact.”

About Otto Bremer Trust:

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.

Eligibility and Funding Criteria

Eligibility

United Way of Dane County will use the following to determine an organization’s eligibility for an OBT Community Responsive Fund grant:

- The work must align with the OBT Community Responsive Fund focus areas for 2026 (see below).
- Beneficiaries of the grants must reside in Dane County, Wisconsin.
- The organization must have a 501(c)(3) determination from the IRS. (Government entities, including public schools, are not eligible. Non-public schools are eligible.)
- The organization must have at least five years of successful operations during which they have continuously held 501(c)(3) status.

- The organization must complete annual audited financial statements prepared by an independent CPA.
- The organization's last fiscal year's actual expenses must have been \$2 million or more. (Excluding in-kind expenses.)
- The organization may not have an open OBT strategic grant.
- If an organization has received OBT Community Responsive Fund grants for three consecutive years, it must wait one year after the third consecutive grant is closed before being considered for another grant.

Funding Restrictions

- Grants may be up to \$75,000 to support operations, programming, and/or capital projects.
- The amount awarded may not exceed 10 percent 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 (e.g., donated or rescued food, volunteer hours, etc.) are also excluded.*
- No more than 10 percent of grant funds may be used for administrative expenses— the bulk of grant funds must be used for direct services.
 - *Administrative expenses include management and general expenses and fundraising expenses, which are consistent with Form 990 (Part IX, Statement of Functional Expenses).*
- OBT Community Responsive Fund grant funds may not be used for the following:
 - Work to influence public policy
 - Sponsorships or annual events
 - Fiscal sponsorships

2026 Focus Areas for 2026 OBT Community Responsive Fund grants

1. **Food.** Organizations and programs that directly operate meal sites and food pantries to meet basic daily needs. (Large, region- and state-wide food bank activities are not included.)
2. **Shelter.** Organizations and programs that provide short-term and emergency shelter beds for people who are housing insecure or facing homelessness.
3. **Low-income healthcare clinics.** Organizations and programs that primarily provide affordable medical, dental, and mental health services to people with limited financial resources or who are uninsured/underinsured.
4. **Disability services.** Organizations and programs that support people with physical/cognitive disabilities.
5. **School-based mental health.** Organizations and programs that have established school-based mental health services.

Timeline

The application opens 8:00 am Friday, May 1, and closes 4:30 pm Thursday, May 28, 2026.

United Way of Wisconsin will send checks for the full grant amount awarded in Fall/mid to end of October 2026. Grant funds must be spent within 12 months of receipt.

How To Apply

The application will be available, when open, in United Way of Dane County's online grants software, e-CImpact. Please review full eligibility criteria and funding restrictions before creating an account. To access e-CImpact, you will need a computer with an internet connection and current version of a web browser such as Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome. Mac users: some features are not available in Safari; please use another web browser.

[Click here](#) to access United Way's e-CImpact portal. For technical assistance at any point in accessing or completing this application, please contact Deb Hanrahan deb.hanrahan@uwdc.org or (608) 246-4350

Agencies with an existing account

Agencies with an e-CImpact account should use their existing credentials to log in:

1. From the home screen, select "Request Grant Application" (located under the "Apply/Report" section of the left-hand sidebar).
2. Select the check box for "2026 Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund," then click "Continue."
3. Click "Complete Registration." You will receive a confirmation email.
4. Click "Continue." You may now begin the application.

Agencies without an existing account

Agencies without an existing e-CImpact account need to create an account.

1. Click the button, "Click here to create a new e-CImpact account."
2. Click "Next."
3. Enter your agency's EIN, then click "Next."
4. Complete your agency's profile and create your login credentials. All fields marked with an asterisk (*) must be completed. When finished, click "Next."
5. From the home screen, select "Request Grant Application" (located under the "Apply/Report" section of the left-hand sidebar).
6. Select the check box for "2026 Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund," then click "Continue."
7. Click "Complete Registration." You will receive a confirmation email.
8. Click "Continue." You may now begin the application.

For questions about this upcoming funding process please contact impact@uwdc.org