

OTTO BREMER FOUNDATION

Mission and Meaning

The mission of the Otto Bremer Foundation is to assist people in achieving full economic, civic and social participation in and for the betterment of their communities.

Our mission is based on the intent of our founder, Otto Bremer. His vision and longstanding commitment to communities during and after the Great Depression are carried forward today through our work in the places that are [homes and neighbors](#) to Bremer banks. We strive to help build healthy, vibrant communities—*communities where basic needs are met, mutual regard is prized and opportunities for economic, civic and social participation are within everyone's reach.*

- We start by saying **“basic needs are met,”** because we understand that for any individual, meeting basic needs—like the need for food, warm and stable housing, and access to medical care—has to come first. Once people are able to attend to their basic needs, they are in a better position to access community resources that can help them achieve long-term economic stability. While the Foundation cannot address all of a community’s unmet basic needs, we are committed to partnering with organizations whose work contributes significantly to meeting those needs in Bremer communities.
- When we say **“mutual regard is prized,”** we mean that members of the community work together with respect and compassion to solve problems and build on opportunities. Bremer communities are increasingly home to people from all parts of the world and from all paths of life. In our vision, multiple voices are part of the conversation to ensure that solutions reflect the goals of the whole community.
- When we say **“opportunities for economic, civic and social participation are within everyone’s reach,”** we mean that active, vibrant community life is available to all, not just to some.
 - By **“economic participation,”** we mean that the community is a place of deep opportunity, where all people have the chance to build an economic foundation for themselves and their families. In our vision, economic opportunity means real possibilities for advancement, not just ways to scrape by.
 - By **“civic participation,”** we mean that the community is a place where people are informed about and engaged in the issues that affect their community, a place where people work together to forge community visions, solve community problems and build on community opportunities. In our vision, participation in community building is broadly shared.
 - By **“social participation,”** we mean that the community is a place where individuals can connect and contribute to social networks that are key to their well-being. In our vision, people have what they need for social engagement and support at all phases of life.

In the spirit of Otto Bremer’s intentions, we are open to a variety of requests while giving highest priority to opportunities with the potential to move a community forward in meaningful, powerful and broad-based ways. We respect the remarkable resiliency and strength of Bremer communities and understand that each community has its own vision, its own ways of solving problems and building on opportunities. We are interested in supporting the communities’ efforts to move toward their visions when those efforts are consistent with the Foundation’s mission.