

RFP: Frank M. and Eleanor R. Miese Fund

Bridge Builders Community Foundations

Request for Letters of Intent

Frank M. and Eleanor R. Miese Fund

Purpose of the Funding Opportunity

Bridge Builders Community Foundations invites Letters of Intent for grants from the **Frank M. and Eleanor R. Miese Fund**, an endowed fund devoted to the benefit of underprivileged, orphaned, dependent, neglected, delinquent, and disadvantaged children. The fund's geographic priority begins in Cooperstown Borough, then extends to Utica Borough, Jackson Township, and Canal Township in Venango County, Pennsylvania, and then to communities within a five-mile radius.

Through this funding opportunity, BBCF seeks to support programs, services, and charitable efforts that strengthen children, families, and caregiving environments; prevent harm; address unmet needs; support education; and improve the well-being of children and youth within the fund's defined service area.

Grant Award

Average grant award size: \$10,000 to \$25,000

Requests outside of that range will be considered.

Funding Priorities

Letters of Intent may focus on one or more of the following priorities identified in the Miese Fund guidelines:

- **Strengthening Family Life**
 - Services designed to strengthen family life and help maintain children safely and appropriately in their homes.
- **Supplemental Parental Care**
 - Services that supplement parental care and help address gaps or inadequacies in such care.
- **Substitute Parental Care**
 - Services designed to substitute for parental care when needed.
- **Specialized Services for Children or Families**
 - Targeted services for individual children or families facing specific challenges, barriers, risks, or unmet needs.
- **Preventive Services**
 - Programs that help prevent harm, instability, neglect, delinquency, crisis, or deeper system involvement among children and families.
- **Education for Children**

- Educational programs, supports, enrichment opportunities, tutoring, mentoring, school-readiness services, or other educational assistance for children.
- **Direct Aid for Specific Child or Family Needs**
 - The fund guidelines also allow support when a child has a specific need not otherwise listed, provided the assistance may fulfill that specific need. The applicant should be an organization that would then distribute the aid to the child or family, rather than an individual applying directly.

Geographic Priorities

The Miese Fund is geographically focused and should benefit children and families in the following order of priority:

1. **Cooperstown Borough**
2. **Utica Borough, Jackson Township, and Canal Township in Venango County**
3. **Communities within a five-mile radius of the defined service area**

Applicants should clearly identify the communities served, where services will be delivered, and how the proposed project fits within the fund's geographic priorities.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants may include nonprofit organizations, public institutions, municipalities, authorities, educational institutions, child and family serving organizations, charitable initiatives, or organizations operating through an eligible fiscal sponsor.

Churches and faith-based organizations may be eligible when the proposed project serves a charitable community purpose and does not require participation in religious instruction, worship, or proselytization as a condition of receiving services.

Organizations proposing to provide direct aid to children or families should be prepared, if invited to submit a full proposal, to describe how eligibility, need, confidentiality, documentation, and distribution of assistance will be handled.

Preferred Applicant Characteristics

BBCF is especially interested in ideas that demonstrate:

- Strong alignment with the Miese Fund's child and family- ocused mission
- Clear benefit to children and families in the fund's geographic service area
- Experience serving underprivileged, dependent, neglected, delinquent, disadvantaged, or otherwise vulnerable children
- Practical, compassionate, and well-managed service delivery

- Strong referral relationships with schools, social service agencies, child welfare systems, courts, churches, health providers, or community organizations
- Organizational capacity and financial stewardship
- Ability to identify, document, and respond to specific child or family needs
- A plan for tracking outcomes while respecting privacy and confidentiality
- Evidence of partnership, matching funds, or other community support, where applicable

Eligible Uses of Funds

Grant funds may support expenses such as:

- Family support services
- Child and youth programming
- Preventive services
- Educational supports
- Counseling, mentoring, case management, or navigation services
- Emergency or direct assistance for specific child or family needs
- Transportation, supplies, clothing, equipment, or other supports that reduce barriers for children and families
- Program materials and staffing directly tied to the proposed project
- Outreach, referral coordination, and service coordination
- Evaluation and reporting

Ineligible Uses

Grant funds generally may not be used for:

- Activities outside the fund's charitable purposes or geographic priorities
- Political campaign activity or lobbying
- Religious instruction, worship, or proselytization
- General operating support unrelated to the proposed project
- Debt reduction or prior expenses

- Activities that do not primarily benefit children, youth, or families consistent with the fund's guidelines
- Funding endowments

Two-Step Application Process

This funding opportunity will use a two-step application process.

Step 1: Letter of Intent

Interested applicants should first submit a brief Letter of Intent. The LOI is intended to help BBCF understand the basic idea, its fit with the Miese Fund, the needs of children and families to be addressed, the population and geography served, and the applicant's capacity to carry out the work.

Step 2: Full Proposal by Invitation Only

BBCF staff will review submitted LOIs and invite selected applicants to submit a full proposal. Submission of an LOI does not guarantee an invitation to apply or a grant award. Full proposals will request additional detail about project design, budget, partnerships, outcomes, implementation timeline, evaluation approach, and safeguards for serving children and families.

What to Include in the Letter of Intent

Please submit a Letter of Intent of no more than one page that addresses the following:

- Who is applying, including the organization's name, contact person, location, and service area?
- What is the proposed project, program, service, direct aid effort, or initiative?
- How does the idea benefit underprivileged, orphaned, dependent, neglected, delinquent, disadvantaged, or otherwise vulnerable children?
- What child, family, educational, preventive, or caregiving need would the project address?
- Who would benefit, and where would the work take place?
- How does the project align with the Miese Fund's geographic priorities?
- What is the estimated amount of funding requested, if known?
- Why is the applicant well positioned to carry out the work?
- What would success look like?

Full Proposal by Invitation Only

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal should expect to provide additional information, which may include:

- Detailed project description and work plan
- Project budget and funding plan
- Description of referral sources, partners, or collaborating organizations
- Evidence of organizational capacity
- Process for identifying and serving children or families
- Confidentiality, safeguarding, and documentation procedures
- Expected outcomes and evaluation approach
- Sustainability or continuation plan
- Additional documentation requested by BBCF

Review and Selection Process

BBCF will review LOIs for alignment with the Miese Fund guidelines, benefit to children and families in the defined service area, community need, feasibility, organizational capacity, safeguards for vulnerable populations, and potential impact. Selected applicants may be invited to submit a full proposal. BBCF may also request follow-up conversations, interviews, site visits, or consultation with the Miese Fund Committee as part of the review process.

Final grant decisions will be made according to BBCF's grantmaking policies and procedures.

Grant Reporting and Partnership Expectations

Grant recipients may be asked to provide periodic updates, a final report, financial documentation, outcome information, de-identified stories of impact, and other information that helps BBCF understand the benefit to children and families. Site visits or check-in conversations may be requested during the grant period.

Timeline

- RFP Released: September 7, 2026
- LOI Opens: September 14, 2026
- LOI Deadline: September 25, 2026
- Invitations for Full Proposals Issued: October 12, 2026
- Full Proposal Deadline: October 30, 2026
- Applicant Interviews / Site Visits, if applicable: Throughout September, October, and November

- Grant Decisions Announced: December 18, 2026
- Grant Disbursed: Throughout late December and early January
- Final Reports Due: September 30, 2027

Submission Instructions

Letters of Intent should be submitted through the grant portal, which can be accessed on the Grants page of the BBCF website. Questions may be directed to Tessa King, Grant & Scholarship, at tessa@bbcf.org or 814-677-8687.