Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation’s (SMIF) Early Literacy Grant Program is designed to support early literacy efforts that enhance school readiness for children birth to age five by providing children with books. Organizations working with these children are encouraged to apply for books to be given to families to keep and read to their children. The Early Literacy Grant Program receives books through partnerships with Mankato-based publishing companies, ABDO and Capstone.

**Grant Guidelines**
- Applications must be submitted by an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, a unit or agency of government, or a public institution.
- Proposal must benefit SMIF’s 20-county region.
- Only one application per organization (including school districts) will be considered.
- Books must be distributed within one year of the grant award date.

**Exclusions**
Ineligible activities include:
- Books used as library and/or school books.
- Books for resale.
- Books not given directly to children to take home to keep, to read and be read to.
- Books as a pass-through from one organization to another.
- Projects that do not include a significant parent education component focused on literacy.

**Priority Considerations**
Priority in funding will be given to projects that:
- Strengthen parental awareness of early literacy needs including communication and language development.
- Target populations that may not be receiving books through any other avenues in the community.
• Collaborate with other organizations to provide literacy tools to enhance and increase school readiness skills.
• Offer new and creative ways to reach families in the community you serve.
• Focus on diverse populations: race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or physical disability.

**Application Process**
• SMIF awards grants on a competitive basis.
• A final report is due July 1, 2021. Failure to submit a completed final report may jeopardize future grant awards from SMIF.
• SMIF will provide a public announcement highlighting awards.
• Grant recipients are required to attend a book pick up on Thursday, June 18, 2020 in Owatonna.

**Required Documents**
• Completed application
• IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter (if nonprofit organization)

For grant award consideration, submit a completed application by April 6, 2020 via email to jenniferh@smifoundation.org or postal mail to:

Grants Coordinator  
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
PO Box 695  
Owatonna, MN 55060

All applicants will be contacted via email or telephone to confirm receipt of their application. Applicants will be notified of award decisions by April 29, 2020.

**Questions**
• For questions about what SMIF might fund contact Heidi Coulter, Early Childhood Project Manager, at 507.214.7016 or email at heidic@smifoundation.org.
• For questions about the application process or required documentation contact Jennifer Heien, Grants Coordinator, at 507.214.7040 or jenniferh@smifoundation.org.
SMIF is a member of the Minnesota Council of Foundations and adheres to the Council of Foundation’s Statement of Principles and Practices. SMIF’s annual report is available on-line at www.smifoundation.org.