



NEWS RELEASES

Barnes & Thornburg Racial And Social Justice Foundation Awards \$300,000 In Grants To Six Nonprofit Organizations

Firm gives \$50,000 to nonprofit organizations combatting racial and social injustice in regions across the country

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The Barnes & Thornburg Racial and Social Justice Foundation has awarded \$300,000 to six nonprofit organizations in the U.S. for 2021, thanks to the support of the firm's lawyers and teammates, to promote, advocate and effect racial and social justice in the firm's local communities. The amount awarded jumped \$100,000 from 2020, when the foundation was created and first awarded grants.

The foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, was established in 2020 with financial support coming entirely through personal donations from the lawyers and staff in each of the firm's offices; initial donations totaled \$200,000. The initial grants of \$50,000 each went to four nonprofits in Atlanta, Indianapolis, Los Angeles and Minneapolis.

The firm's Day of Giving in May helped push the donation totals higher for this year, allowing the foundation to award grants of \$50,000 to organizations in Chicago, Fort Wayne, Michigan, New York, Raleigh, and Washington, D.C., all places where Barnes & Thornburg has offices.

"We set out to take tangible actions in the fight for racial and social justice last year, and we are proud to have met that goal and continued to grow the foundation in 2021," said Connie Lahn, the Racial and Social Justice

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Foundation president and managing partner of Barnes & Thornburg's Minneapolis office. "The six organizations we've partnered with this year do amazing work in everything from justice reform and economic policy change to employment support and more. We're excited to see our team come together to support programs that have a measurable impact on our communities."

'No Gift Too Small'

The firm's fundraising efforts are driven by attorneys and teammates to generate broad participation under the mantra "no gift is too small." The foundation is considering opening donations in 2022 to anyone who would like to support the cause.

The \$50,000 grants were presented this month to the following organizations:

- **Sunshine Gospel Ministries Flourishing Community Initiative, Chicago** – The mission of Sunshine Gospel Ministries is to seek the renewal of the city through ministries of discipleship, mercy, and justice. It seeks to engage and empower youth, families and guests of our community to thrive and lead fruitful, healthy lives through faith, connectedness and opportunity. The Flourishing Community Initiative works to advance trauma-informed approaches to gun violence through individual support, community collaboration, and advocacy.
- **Center for Nonviolence, Fort Wayne** – The Center for Nonviolence provides education, support, and advocacy to end domestic and other forms of violence while modeling equality and power sharing.
- **Michigan League for Public Policy, Michigan** – The Michigan League for Public Policy promotes racial equity, economic security, health and well-being for all people in Michigan through policy change. It is the only state-level organization that comprehensively addresses poverty and analyzes state and federal policies' impact on low-income residents and residents of color. The firm has offices in Grand Rapids, Detroit Metro and Ann Arbor.
- **Parole Preparation Project, New York** – The Parole Preparation Project provides critical advocacy and direct support to currently and formerly incarcerated people serving life sentences, and seeks to transform the parole release process in New York State. The firm has an office in New York City.
- **North Carolina Center for Actual Innocence, Raleigh** – The North Carolina Center for Actual Innocence's primary mission is to identify, investigate and advance credible claims of innocence, obtaining justice for people imprisoned for crimes they did not commit, for the victims of those crimes, and for the actual perpetrators. Its secondary mission is to educate policymakers, the public, and legal and law enforcement communities about the factors that contribute to wrongful conviction, as well as emerging



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solutions which can increase the reliability of convictions. Promoting such systematic changes to our criminal justice system helps: prevent the true perpetrators from evading capture and victimizing others; save people from years of suffering due to wrongful imprisonment; increase public confidence in the system; decrease cost to taxpayers.

- **Thrive DC, Washington, D.C.** – Thrive DC’s mission is to end and prevent homelessness in Washington, D.C.

In addition to Lahn, who serves as president, Barnes & Thornburg’s Racial and Social Justice Foundation’s board members are Allen Baum, partner-in-charge of the Raleigh office; Michael Carrillo, managing partner of the Chicago office; and Roscoe Howard, managing partner of the Washington, D.C., office. Ex officio members are Steven Merkel, chief operating officer and the foundation’s treasurer; Robert Grand, firm managing partner; and Dawn Rosemond, firm diversity partner.

The foundation works hand in hand with Barnes & Thornburg’s Racial Justice Committee, which is tasked with continually looking at how the firm works to address racial justice, both externally and internally.

In addition to the foundation’s grants, Barnes & Thornburg attorneys plan to contribute time and professional experience in support of the above organizations.

“We are grateful to continue our efforts with the Racial and Social Justice Foundation by supporting six additional community organizations this year,” said Robert Grand, managing partner of Barnes & Thornburg. “We remain steadfast in our dedication to advocate for organizations that support and promote equality, advancement, and justice.”

To choose grantees, the foundation employed a rigorous scoring system to vet charitable organizations against specific criteria that align with its mission and goals.

With more than 700 attorneys and other legal professionals, Barnes & Thornburg is one of the largest law firms in the country. The firm serves clients worldwide from offices in Atlanta, Boston, California, Chicago, Delaware, Indiana, Michigan, Minneapolis, New York, Ohio, Raleigh, Salt Lake City, Texas and Washington, D.C. For more information, visit us online at www.btlaw.com or on Twitter @BTLawNews.