



**RACIAL +
SOCIAL JUSTICE
FOUNDATION**
BARNES & THORNBURG LLP

NEWS RELEASES

Barnes & Thornburg Racial And Social Justice Foundation Announces 2023 Grant Recipients, Hits \$1 Million Mark

December 14, 2023 | [Nashville](#) | [Philadelphia](#) | [South Florida](#) | [Southeast Michigan](#)

The Barnes & Thornburg Racial and Social Justice Foundation will award grants of \$50,000 each to six organizations based in communities where the firm has offices. Four of the 2023 grants are being announced today to organizations in Nashville; Philadelphia; South Florida; and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The foundation raised \$312,000 from lawyers and employees of Barnes & Thornburg during 2023 and, since its inception in 2020, has raised \$1.1 million. The foundation is not currently supported by outside donors.

The foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, was established in 2020 with financial support coming entirely through personal donations from the lawyers and employees in each of the firm's offices. The Barnes & Thornburg Racial and Social Justice Foundation is committed to promoting, advocating, and effecting racial and social justice in local communities and nationally.

The \$50,000 grants will be presented to the following organizations, with an additional two to be announced in the coming weeks:

- **Choosing Justice Initiative, Nashville** – The Choosing Justice Initiative (CJI) provides representation to individuals in Nashville facing criminal charges who are unable to afford it and helps them pursue justice when encountering the criminal legal system. CJI is a public interest and nonprofit law firm that strives to end wealth-based disparities in the criminal legal system including cash bail, centuries-old structural racism, unfettered prosecutorial

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discretion, and judge-picked defense lawyers.

- **Why Not Prosper, Philadelphia** – Why Not Prosper provides support and resources to empower women from the prison system to become responsible, economically self-sufficient, and contributing members of the community. They offer programs that help women find and retain employment, secure safe and affordable housing, reunite with their children, and abstain from alcohol and illegal drugs.
- **5000 Role Models, South Florida** – The 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project is a mentorship program in Miami that aims to intervene in the lives of at-risk boys and provide them with progressive and successful men in their communities to emulate, promote positive alternatives to self-destructive behaviors, and prepare youth for the challenges and struggles they may face in the future.
- **Youth Arts Alliance, Ann Arbor** – Youth Arts Alliance (YAA) provides healing-centered arts workshops to youth across Michigan. YAA seeks to continually shift its approach to investing in its community, by responding to the visions and aspirations of the young people their cohort of teaching artists serves.

“I’m proud of my colleagues for donating more than \$1 million for communities where we have offices in the fight against racial and social inequality and inequity,” said Connie Lahn, the Racial and Social Justice Foundation president and managing partner of Barnes & Thornburg’s Minneapolis office. “Whether it is through legal services, mentorship, or arts programming, the organizations we’re partnering with are providing life-changing support to historically disenfranchised members of our community.”

In addition to Lahn, members of the foundation board are Allen R. Baum, vice president and partner-in-charge of the Raleigh office; Michael A. Carrillo, secretary and managing partner of the Chicago office; and Roscoe C. Howard Jr., managing partner of the Washington, D.C., office. Ex officio members are Steven M. Merkel, chief operating officer and the foundation’s treasurer; Andrew J. Detherage, firm managing partner; Dawn R. Rosemond, firm diversity partner; and Robert T. Grand, partner and former firm managing partner.

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

“Barnes & Thornburg has long been committed to maintaining an active, positive presence in our local communities, and since launching the Racial and Social Justice Foundation in 2020 we’ve been able to support 18 organizations,” said Detherage. “I’m grateful to be part of a team that is deeply invested in advocating for equal opportunities to justice and making tangible impact on so many important organizations over the last three years.”

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

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