



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Registration opens for *Thriving by Design – Rural & Urban Together*, a statewide gathering June 27-29 in Granite Falls, toward creation of a *One Minnesota Equity Blueprint*

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General registration and delegate applications opened this week for a statewide convening, *Thriving by Design - Rural & Urban Together*, in Granite Falls, MN on June 27-29, 2018. The event, co-hosted by **Growth & Justice** and **OneMN.org**, will kick off a three-step community engagement process, leading toward creation of a comprehensive statewide policy agenda -- the *One Minnesota Equity Blueprint* by year's end. The ultimate goals of the convening and blueprint are: stimulating more equitable economic and business growth statewide, protecting and enhancing our environment, and reducing our damaging disparities across regions, racial groups and economic strata. Space is limited at the June gathering and prompt registration is encouraged at <http://www.growthandjustice.org/thriving-by-design>.

“This process will produce a unique rural-urban, statewide socioeconomic contract, fully integrating equity as the growth model,” said Jane Leonard, President of Growth & Justice. “It honors, recognizes, and uses the strength of our diversity and our interdependence. It’s all about Minnesota people, places, and resources working together for the betterment of all.”

The convening and blueprint initiative represents the second phase of the MN Rural Equity Project, an ambitious effort launched by Growth & Justice in early 2017 to shine a light on persistent socioeconomic and public investment gaps throughout rural and Greater Minnesota, and to create a durable, long-term “One Minnesota” policy framework for decision-makers. The blueprint will be presented to the new Minnesota governor and a new Legislature in January 2019.

Thriving by Design also builds on a years-long effort by OneMN.org to lay the groundwork for a shared sustainable prosperity for all. “Our goal is to provide public policy recommendations that support and propel racial, social and economic equity throughout state, county, local governments, agencies and corporations,” said Brett Buckner, Managing Director of OneMN.org.

Underscoring the often overlooked importance of Greater Minnesota and rural regions in the statewide struggle for equity, conference organizers chose the historic and scenic Granite Falls area in western Minnesota for this history-making convening, said Sarah Leistico, Public Policy & Outreach Manager for Growth & Justice. “We’ll meet along the banks of the Minnesota River, get an in-depth overview of Minnesota’s current community and economic conditions, and together begin creation of the *One Minnesota Equity Blueprint*, toward achieving rural-urban and racial economic equity and inclusive growth over the course of the next few years.”

At the Granite Falls event, every participant will have the opportunity to first learn about specific issues as well as overall trends in Minnesota, and how they all interrelate, with implications for Minnesota’s community and economic vitality. Issue areas and public investment needs include broadband, child care, clean water, renewable energy, workforce housing, local education partnerships & career pathways, transit/transportation, and more, framed within the [Community Capitals Framework](#) for comprehensive community & economic development and the [Shared Sustainable Prosperity](#) model for equitable, inclusive economic growth.

Building on existing strategy roadmaps such as [DevelopMN](#), participants will create the outlines of a unifying ***One Minnesota Equity Blueprint***, featuring public policies and a new socio-economic contract to heal the harmful divisions at play in Minnesota and across the country: the rural-metro divide, racial disparities, unfair outcomes for other marginalized groups, and overall economic inequality.

Registration, delegate application forms, and more information on the June gathering, speakers, and the overall *Thriving By Design* process is available at: <http://www.growthandjustice.org/thriving-by-design>. Full conference registration is \$195. One day registration (for June 28) is \$100. Hotel rooms are available at and nearby the convening venue, which is the Prairies Edge Casino Resort, owned and operated by the Upper Sioux Community. There is also an RV Park on-site.

In addition to seeking general participants for the Granite Falls event, *Thriving by Design* organizers are looking for people ages 15 to 80+ years old who are also willing to serve as *Equity Blueprint* delegates in Granite Falls and beyond, and who can help represent the more diverse Minnesota of the future. Following the June event, *Equity Blueprint* delegates will help the *Thriving by Design* team gather further input from their own communities back home between July & December 2018 -- to ensure that the draft *One Minnesota Equity Blueprint* represents Minnesotans' shared thinking and actions. A limited number of scholarships are available for delegates to help cover registration fees and lodging during the Granite Falls event. (However, one need not be a delegate to attend the Granite Falls gathering. General registration is open to everyone.)

If you would like to add your name and/or your organization's name to the *Thriving by Design – Rural & Urban Together – One Minnesota Equity Blueprint* partner list and/or be a financial sponsor alongside the Blandin Foundation and Growth & Justice donors, please contact Jane Leonard at jane@growthandjustice.org. Please click here to access a [Save-the-Date Flyer](#).

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ABOUT GROWTH & JUSTICE: Growth & Justice is a research and advocacy organization that develops innovative public policy proposals based on independent research and civic engagement. We believe when Minnesota makes *smart investments* in *practical solutions* it leads to *broader prosperity* for all. For more than a decade we have been setting Minnesota's progressive agenda by uniting people around one simple philosophy: a robust state economy with widespread economic opportunity leads to a higher quality of life and greater economic justice. www.growthandjustice.org

ABOUT ONEMN.ORG: OneMN.org is a research-based, advocacy, and communications nonpartisan multi ethnic coalition working to create One Minnesota, with a mission to civically engage and empower Minnesotans to establish shared sustainable prosperity and a shared vision towards racial equity, social and economic inclusion. OneMN.org has been in existence for over a decade and has played a vital role on many issues from voter empowerment and redistricting to business and workforce development. www.onemn.org

NOTE: Here are links to quotes from national leaders and organizations that have informed and inspired our collaborative initiative.

“Equity is the superior growth model. Equity is both the antidote to inequality and the means to a future where everyone can participate and prosper. Through an equity lens the strategies needed for all to succeed are clear: jobs that pay decent wages, good education that prepares young people for the future and provides skills for adults who need them, and the removal of racial barriers to economic inclusion and civic participation.”

- [Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink, All-in Nation – An America That Works For All](#)

“It’s time for the narrative to shift from urban vs. rural to a shared economic future. Bridging the economic divide between urban and rural areas will require states, regions and localities to understand and bolster the relationship between urban and rural areas in economically meaningful and strategic ways.”

- National League of Cities,
Bridging the Urban Rural Divide

<http://www.nlc.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/nlc-bridging-the-urban-rural-divide.pdf>