

GROWTH & JUSTICE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Pandemonium Year

The year behind us saw historic upheaval and reckoning sparked by a worldwide pandemic and racial justice reckoning amidst existential threats to our democracy and environment. Given the massive attention now on equitable growth & justice in our state, country, and the world, Growth & Justice's work remains more relevant than ever, especially as long-held and deep-seated health, racial, economic, and environmental inequities thoroughly revealed themselves in the 2020 crucible.

Like many organizations and businesses experienced, G & J revenues decreased (\$313,320 in 2020 as opposed to \$457,871 in 2019). This was not unexpected given a year in which donor attention and dollars diverted to political campaign contributions and COVID-19 relief. We survived and redoubled our efforts with a reduced staff and reduced salaries to join our BIPOC and rural partner organizations to provide immediate assistance and longer-term collaborative strategy-setting in response to the community health, economic, and racial justice crisis.

As we enter our 20th year of existence, G & J's original mission still rings true, "to develop and advocate for public policy that makes Minnesota's economy more prosperous and fairer for all Minnesotans." Thank you for your support through these many years! Please consider increasing your financial giving in 2021, so that Growth & Justice's mission not only rings true today but brings true growth and justice as we build together a renewed Minnesota going forward.

– Jane Leonard, President, Growth & Justice

Here's a round-up of what your support accomplished in 2020:

February 2020 - MN Equity Blueprint Launch

We had just released the two-years-in-the-making Minnesota Equity Blueprint in late February 2020 when the snowball of seismic and systemic change started rolling. Since then, we've been working with a multi-racial coalition of Blueprint co-creators to leverage and implement policy and practice ideas from the Blueprint as building blocks for a Minnesota where Equity is Our North Star and Everyone Belongs.

April 2020 - Minnesota Census Day, before and beyond

Growth & Justice has been a significant participant in the "We Count" campaign since before April 2019's kickoff with the Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership and others launching the statewide campaign to ask all Minnesotans to do their part to get out the count for the 2020 Census. So many critical state resources depend on as full and accurate a count as possible.

G & J President Jane Leonard has served on the Minnesotans for the American Community Survey and 2020 Census (MACS 2020) advisory board since 2019, advocating with congressional staff and Congresspersons for census funding and for equitable census policy. (We saw the great result in April 2021 – Minnesota was #1 in census response rate in the nation and we saved our vulnerable eighth congressional seat.)

June 2020 - Cofounded the ALANA COMMUNITY BRAIN TRUST with OneMN.org, for racial economic justice

In June 2020, after the murder of George Floyd, G & J's previous groundwork and bridgebuilding partnerships -- particularly with OneMN.org, our major partner in the Equity Blueprint -- helped us ally with over 30 African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American (ALANA)-led organizations in the Twin Cities and statewide, to start the ALANA Community Brain Trust (CBT).

This multi-disciplinary, multi-racial collaborative of community, economic development, and financial expertise helps coordinate wealth-building resources and action through regular meetings of ALANA CBT members with government, business, foundation, and non-profit leaders to reduce ALANA disparities and build capacity and capital for a social and economic renaissance. We received in early November a \$50,000 coordinating grant from the St. Paul & Minnesota Community Foundation to underwrite the initial CBT organizing work as a systems change coordinating coalition. The action continues into 2021. (<https://www.growthandjustice.org/partnering-projects/alana-community-brain-trust>)

October - November 2020 - The Minnesota Solution and Testifying at the House Select Committee on Racial Justice

The ALANA CBT made policy reform waves in the quest for racial economic justice. Members of the coalition testified in October and November before the House Select Committee on Racial Justice. Dr. Bruce Corrie, a co-steward of ALANA CBT, presented follow-up testimony. This included a presentation on The Minnesota Solution— a comprehensive policy proposal on the economic costs of racism and solutions for systemic change, based on Dr. Corrie's years of minority & ethnic community economic and entrepreneurship research, IMPLAN applied economic analysis, and the collaborative input from members of the ALANA CBT. Many elements of the Minnesota Solution made their way into the House Select Committee's final report in January. Testimony continues into 2021 at the Legislative Session. (<https://empoweringstrategies.org/the-minnesota-solution-to-close-the-287-billion-racial-economic-gaps>)

November-December 2020: A Better Community Impact Fellowships initiative for Minnesota youth

In October, as a fiscal agent and co-lead with OneMN.org and the ALANA Community Brain Trust, we were awarded a \$168,000 MN Department of Public Safety grant from federal CARES Act COVID-19 relief funds to implement "A Better Community Impact Fellowship" project in partnership with existing youth organizations. We had to self-finance the project before the end of 2020 – and then get reimbursed from the state grant in 2021! It was a race against time, but nearly 200 Minnesota BIPOC & low-income youth & youth leaders in the Twin Cities area and a cohort of

students from five Central Minnesota small towns participated. Over 30 cities and 60 schools were represented. Most of the grant funds were used to provide \$500 stipends to each participant to help them build skills and connections to create a more equitable local economy and complete community service projects – all in two months, all online! In December, 80 fellows met in two sets of two-hour Zoom sessions in direct conversation with key legislative leaders, including incoming House Ways & Means Chair Rena Moran, incoming House Education Policy Chair Ruth Richardson, and DPS Commissioner John Harrington, to share their policy ideas for improving current economic and social conditions. We were in awe of the wisdom and sense of purpose these young people conveyed as they shared their ideas and actions to help spur recovery. The project continues into 2021.

Greater Minnesota partnerships for Urban-Rural Equity

Related, particularly to the rural-urban connections in the Minnesota Equity Blueprint and the ALANA Community Brain Trust work, is the current partnership with Region Five Development Commission in Central Minnesota. G & J staff are members of their Welcoming Communities - Equitable Economic Ecosystems team project; we researched and wrote a practical guide/toolkit for community equity action work to happen as locally as possible -- the Rural Community Equity Action Guide (available as of January 2021 at <https://www.growthandjustice.org/partnering-projects/equity-action-guide>.) The Equity Action Guide is getting some national attention as a “test drive” of some of the MN Equity Blueprint’s best practices, showing how equitable economic development methods – built and used by local community members working on sustainable, equitable growth and encouraging inclusive, welcoming attitudes and behaviors – can be scaled up or replicated across Minnesota. (In May 2021, G & J received the R5DC/North Central Economic Development Association **Exceptional Service Partner Award** for that partnership and equity work!)

Ahead in 2021 – the Minnesota Equity Action Map!

In 2020 we began work on the Minnesota Equity Map, a tool to capture, spotlight, and share know-how on the ever-growing amount of equity and inclusion initiatives across the state. The map is in its beginning stages as a way to foster an exchange of ideas and resources that are both location- and category-based. Students at the University of Minnesota-Morris Center for Small Towns gather, write, and map equity action stories for us. You can see the beginnings here:

<https://www.growthandjustice.org/mnequitymap>. You can also help fill in more stories for the map by sending in examples of what you see happening in your own communities and networks. Just click on the “this form” link from the Equity Map URL noted above.

Changing hearts, minds, and negative narratives

What we’re seeing in communities statewide gives us hope, even amidst the heat of the white supremacy we’ve witnessed. Despite some of the negative narratives in the run-up to the 2020 elections, many Minnesotans are moving past fearmongering, anger, and the message that economic growth must have winners and losers. 2020 taught us that though Growth & Justice is a small organization, we share a mighty and relevant message for our times: *equity for all—social and economic—is the smart and sustainable growth strategy for Minnesota.*

It's been an intense year, and sometimes it feels as if we are running a mile a minute trying to keep up. We are down to two full-time staff and a few wonderful interns, but we manage. Your financial, moral, and practical support in a most difficult year helped Growth & Justice be resilient, relevant, and valued as a crucial partner and trusted source of public policy expertise in a world finally, actively seeking solutions that recognize and uplift the civic and economic talents of the global majority Minnesota is becoming.

Growth & Justice began in 2002 as a pragmatic force to help make Minnesota's economy more prosperous and fairer for all Minnesotans. In 2020 and beyond, we continue this effort towards shared prosperity, building on the Minnesota Equity Blueprint partnerships to ally with ALANA-led and rural-urban entities for racial and regional economic justice. Together, we can help create a Minnesota Where Equity is our North Star, and Everyone Belongs.



Please give generously to Growth & Justice (at <https://www.growthandjustice.org/support>) so that we can keep up the good works into 2021 and beyond. Your partnership keeps Minnesota's compass pointed towards progress for all Minnesotans.

For more information or to contact us, go to www.growthandjustice.org, or contact Jane Leonard, president of Growth & Justice, at jane@growthandjustice.org, 651-303-5263.

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