



2020

The Minneapolis Foundation's
Year in Review



2020 was a year we'll never forget.

A year of political turmoil. A year of reckoning over racial injustice, sparked by the horrific killing of George Floyd in our own community. A year when wave after wave of a pandemic crashed over us, reaching every home and every family.

At the Minneapolis Foundation, these challenges stretched us as we leaned into our mission of driving collective action to realize strong, vibrant communities. Yet in the midst of sorrow and conflict, we are hopeful. We are inspired by the grit and ingenuity of our nonprofit partners as they respond to emerging needs, and by the passion and commitment of our donors, whose generosity in 2020 was nothing short of astonishing.



Our New Framework

We are also anchored by our new [strategic framework](#), which we launched in the fall of 2020 after a co-creation process that began well before the year's unprecedented events. Our framework states clearly that we have evolved in our approach to philanthropy:

- Our goals, and the actions we take to realize them, will not be dictated to the community by us; they will be set in partnership with community. We strive to listen more deeply, challenge our assumptions, and get closer to those most affected by pressing local issues.
- Our vision must evolve as community needs change. We strive to be flexible, creative, and responsive.
- Our impact will grow if we use all our tools. Grantmaking will continue to be a crucial way we invest in our community. But so will advocacy, policy development, research, organizing, communication, and more.

These values ground us firmly as we chart a course forward with you, our partners.





IN 2020...

We Launched and Innovated

At the core of our community-driven initiatives is the belief that those closest to issues are best positioned to address them. We use all our impact levers to promote civic participation, foster belonging and inclusion, advance upward mobility, and see and dismantle barriers to our vision of a society that is truly fair and equitable.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

We are driven to end the racial inequities that pervade the criminal justice system. Our multi-pronged investments include grantmaking through our Fund for Safe Communities, learning collectives where community members can get closer to the issues, research that surfaces necessary policy changes, and the recommendations of a State of Minnesota working group on police-involved deadly force encounters that we served on. [Explore >](#)

CONVERSATIONS WITH CHANDA

Our new podcast celebrated its first anniversary with both a national SABRE Award and accolades from the Minnesota PRSA. Featuring more than 40 guests (and counting!), Conversations with Chanda makes space for tough, revealing discussions about our community's greatest challenges. [Listen >](#)



REIMAGINE EDUCATION

This collaborative initiative transforms research into collective action to make our schools better for each and every child. In partnership with students, parents, school leaders, and researchers, we're building a roadmap to help transform our K-12 education system. In 2020, we...

- Commissioned a team of researchers at the University of Minnesota to issue a [report](#) on how we can approach the challenge of tackling education inequities during the pandemic.
- Provided [thought leadership](#) on distance learning in the age of COVID-19.
- Held [convenings](#) where community members shared ideas and discussed strategies for addressing pressing challenges in Minnesota's schools.
- Launched a [grant round](#) with new guidelines for the investments we make in education.





Photo credit:
Mark Vancleave and
the Star Tribune

We Listened and Responded

Listening and a thirst for community-driven solutions are key tenets our strategic framework, and we leaned into those values as we responded to the challenges of 2020.

A FIRE IN THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Early on Christmas Day 2019, more than 200 people were awakened by a fire alarm at the Francis Drake Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. The building, which served as temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness, was soon engulfed in flames, and parents and children quickly evacuated. That same day, at the request of the City of Minneapolis, we activated our Minnesota Helps Fund, giving people across our community a way to pool their resources to help address the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by the fire. The response was inspiring: Within weeks, the fund received more than \$580,000 in contributions. We worked tirelessly to support the government agencies and community organizations on the ground, ensuring that all contributions were invested to support the recovery and stabilization of survivors.

A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

When COVID-19 hit Minnesota, we knew its economic impact would reach every corner of our community, and we moved quickly to respond. Our first step was to listen: We surveyed local nonprofits to learn how their communities were affected and how we could plug in effectively. Within weeks, we deployed our [OneMPLS Fund](#). Since then, we have distributed over \$4 million in OneMPLS grants to more than 150 nonprofits that are addressing critical needs related to the pandemic. To support Minnesota's ongoing response, we are also serving on civic leadership tables such as Gov. Walz's Resilience and Recovery Work Group for COVID-19.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Giving More—and Getting It Out the Door Faster

Ed and Val Spencer, their three adult children, and their son-in-law have made grants to nonprofits as a family for years. When COVID-19 landed, they quickly ramped up their philanthropy to support the community.

[Here's how they did it >](#)



A HORRIFIC KILLING, AND A RECKONING OVER RACIAL INJUSTICE

George Floyd's killing threw into sharp, violent relief the injustices that have plagued our society for far too long. With the entire world, we witnessed the horror of yet another Black man losing his life under the knee of police. The pain and destruction of the following days hit our community with terrible force. At the Minneapolis Foundation, we used all our tools to support our community. We...

- Doubled down on our [Fund for Safe Communities](#). Within days, we committed an additional \$500,000 to support the people of Minneapolis in pursuing justice, equity, and healing. By year's end, we distributed more than \$1.1 million and joined forces with partners such as the Minnesota Lynx and Timberwolves.
- Teamed up with philanthropic partners, establishing the [Twin Cities Rebuild for the Future Fund](#) to support small businesses damaged in the civil unrest.
- Made impact investments from our [InvestMPLS](#) loan fund to support equitable redevelopment of Lake Street and other business corridors that sustained damage.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



“We felt compelled in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder to do something that would have a positive impact for change in our community.”

After researching a number of options, we felt that the Fund for Safe Communities was what we wanted to focus on. We liked that this fund is advised by younger individuals with a variety of backgrounds and experiences and that they would be providing grants to organizations focused on reducing violence and promoting justice and equity in our community.”

**- RICK AND KAREN WALD, MINNEAPOLIS
FOUNDATION DONOR ADVISORS**



We Invested

Our investments are as diverse as the community we serve. We strive to offer a grant process that's accessible and equitable, and each grant helps realize our vision for strong, vibrant communities.

ONEMPLS FUND

We launched this [collective impact fund](#) to enable people and businesses across our community to respond to emerging local needs—and given the challenges of 2020, we are very glad we did. Our [first](#) grant round focused on stable housing for families and youth, with \$500,000 awarded to five nonprofits in the fall of 2019. When COVID-19 landed, we quickly distributed nearly \$2 million to 150 organizations that serve communities disproportionately affected by its economic impact. After George Floyd's killing, we made \$500,000 in rapid response grants to five nonprofits supporting small businesses that were already struggling to stay afloat in the pandemic when they were impacted by the summer's civil unrest. We followed that up with our [most recent grant round](#) awarding another \$1.57 million awarded to 16 nonprofits that serve small businesses.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Building on a Legacy of Giving

Adam Braun and Kim Sauvageot have always been very consistent about their giving. A contribution to the OneMPLS Fund fit well with their family's overall strategy for responding to COVID-19.

[Here's what they did >](#)



ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS GRANTS

Any corporate executive would tell you that a well-run organization needs a good set of business tools to support functions like communication, leadership, and evaluation. Yet too often in the nonprofit sector, these basic operational needs are underfunded. That's why we ran a grant round dedicated to expanding the capacity of local nonprofits. In January, we [announced](#) nearly \$3 million in grants to 117 groups that are using their grants for a diverse array of projects, from hiring fundraising consultants to modernizing their websites.

"Receiving a grant from the Minneapolis Foundation gave us the room to build our capacity as an emerging organization. Their staff offered critical support, ensuring we were set up to succeed as a grantee so that we could continue cultivating space for Black artists in Minnesota."

- KENO EVOL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BLACK TABLE ARTS

CENSUS & VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTS

We believe that communities are stronger when everyone takes part in public decision-making about issues that affect their lives. In 2020, we deepened our longstanding commitment to civic engagement with investments that supported Minnesota in achieving nation-leading rates for participation in both the Census and at the polls on Election Day. We...

- Invested more than \$600,000 to support voter registration, messaging, and other nonpartisan get-out-the-vote activities that especially targeted voters who have historically voted at lower rates.
- Administered \$523,000 in grants to 231 Complete Count Committees statewide on behalf of the Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership and the Minnesota Council on Foundations.
- Made an additional \$250,000 in grants to 20 nonprofits that helped shaped the deep, authentic outreach that led Minnesota to have the highest Census self-response rate (75.1%) in the nation.



We Convened

Bringing people together to discuss and address our community's greatest needs is at the heart of our mission. Here are just a few examples of the convenings we held in 2020:

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL ON DISTANCE LEARNING

In July, as school leaders and families across Minnesota scrambled to prepare for a school year in the shadow of a pandemic, we teamed up with the Phillips Family Foundation and the School Transformation Collaborative to co-host a virtual town hall meeting on distance learning with a diverse panel of parents from Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs. [Watch the video >](#)

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF IMPACTFUL GIVING

In September, our [Fourth Generation](#) program kicked off their second decade of collective grantmaking. In the past ten years, 400+ members of this diverse group have chosen 11 timely topics to address, hosted nine fundraising events, gone on more than 100 site visits, and raised and donated more than \$493,000 to local nonprofits. [Flip through their 10th anniversary yearbook >](#)

HEALING FROM TRAUMA

Our [Catalyst Initiative](#) hosts a variety of convenings as it works to advance health and well-being. Here's a telling example of how Catalyst adapted to 2020's unique challenges: In October, the initiative partnered with Marnita's Table to co-host its 12th Healing from Trauma event as a virtual feast for people living and serving in the south Minneapolis neighborhoods surrounding 38th St. and Chicago Ave., where George Floyd was killed. More than 125 people participated, with food provided for each household. One woman who took part told us, "This is the first time in six months I have not felt alone."

We Incubated

We have a long history of nurturing new organizations in their infancy. In 2020, we cheered for two such initiatives as they reached early milestones.



CONNEXTMSP

Four years ago, we brought together a cross-section of Minnesota leaders from industry, education, philanthropy, and community organizations to help close the gap between college and career-readiness programs and local companies hungry to hire talented young people. The result? [ConnexMSP](#), an online platform connecting alumni of programs like College Possible and STEP-UP with professional employers. In 2020, we celebrated the transition of ConnexMSP to its next phase of growth at GreaterMSP.



LATINOLEAD

Starting with its launch in 2013, we housed and nurtured this consortium of Minnesota-based Latinos. In 2020, [LatinoLEAD](#) began charting a course as an independent 501(c)(3) organization.

We Partnered

We are part of a large ecosystem of civic leaders in the nonprofit, government, and corporate sectors who collaborate on a variety of community initiatives. In 2020, we were proud to sit in partnership at these tables:

- Governor Walz's Resilience and Recovery Work Group for COVID-19
- Heading Home Hennepin
- Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership
- Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund for Coronavirus
- Minnesota Commissioner of DEED – Workforce Innovation Working Group
- Minnesota Saint Paul Workforce Innovation Network
- Northside Funders Group
- State of Minnesota Working Group on Police-Involved Deadly Force Encounters
- The Partnership Funds
- Twin Cities Rebuild for the Future Fund

The Year in Numbers

\$141M

Charitable dollars coming in

\$108M

Grants going out

1,507

Charitable funds
administered

6,033

Organizations and
people supported

\$1B

Total assets under
management

74%

Percentage of giving
in Minnesota



Figures are from the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

As we move forward in 2021,

we will continue listening to our community partners as we strive for continuous improvement in all the work we do. We are strong in our resolve to meet today's challenges and excited by the opportunities we see to build a brighter future. The road ahead is long, but we look forward to walking it with you.

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Photo Credits

Special thanks to the nonprofits and donors who provided photos in this report. These include:

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