

WITNESS



DEFENDING OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE

GENDER
JUSTICE

FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER & ANNUAL REPORT

Where We Stand, We Stand Together

*A year of resilience, joy, and resistance
in the face of gender authoritarianism*

Reflections From Our New Chief of Staff

I first sat in a talking circle at the age of fifteen, and it ignited a lifelong calling. The practices I learned of nonviolent communication, deep listening, and conflict transformation set me on a path of peacebuilding with a commitment to evolving systems with curiosity, connection, and courage. That path has led me around the world. I have learned from and supported courageous and steadfast leaders fighting for women's freedom in Afghanistan, advocating for LGBTQ+ rights in Nigeria, advancing women's safety in India, and beyond. As far-right leaders and authoritarian practices have taken hold here in the United States, I turn to these partners for guidance, strategy, and inspiration.

Together, we have learned that weaponizing gender is a core tool in the authoritarian playbook. This is by design: Control over our bodies and identities is control over our most intimate sense of self. We have all experienced, in our respective countries, how attacks on gender serve as a gateway to restrictions on other rights and of broader civil society. From our streets to our screens, from legislation to legal protections, we see and feel the harm in daily life. These seemingly disparate yet truly coordinated attacks aim to overwhelm, exhaust, divide, and silence us. Yet we refuse.

It is an honor to join Gender Justice as Chief of Staff at this critical moment. This year, we expanded our team, broadened our coalitions, and strengthened our intersectional movement. I am honored to help lead our team with the values and practices that keep us ready and nimble to adapt and respond to immediate crises, while staying grounded and sustained for the long haul.

In our work in Minnesota and North Dakota, I bring leadership rooted in love, and the practice of humanizing each other and refusing 'othering' that I learned so powerfully from peace and democracy leaders around the world. Authoritarianism depends on dividing us. By radically choosing one another with intention and compassion, we build a community that authoritarianism cannot break. The pages that follow show what that choice looks like in action.

Together, we are embracing our shared humanity to create a future where every one of us is free, safe, and truly belongs.

sylvia murray

sylvia murray | Gender Justice Chief of Staff



“

I BRING LEADERSHIP
ROOTED IN LOVE.

"Leadership is Service — Not Domination"



Knowing your history provides a particular clarity that comes when being descended from people whose identities were once declared illegal, whose families were separated, whose ways of being were erased. You learn to recognize when someone decides they have the power to define who you are, and whose rights are protected.

I am from North Dakota and a citizen of the Three Affiliated Tribes. I grew up in a multicultural home, my mother from a German from Russia farming family; my father Northern Cheyenne, Dakota, and Arikara. I was raised with the understanding that we are never truly alone as we carry our ancestors, our responsibilities, and the generations still waiting for us into life. Growing up, I was not taught leadership as domination, but as service. That power carries an obligation to the community around you, to those who came before, to those yet to come, and to the land that sustains us all. This is a very different starting point from authoritarianism.

Gender authoritarianism is ultimately about control. Control of bodies, identities, families, relationships, language, and the stories we are allowed to tell about ourselves. For me, there is a profound Indigenous resonance in that. Colonization brought systems of classification designed to tell us who we were. Governments decided who was Indian enough. Institutions decided which children belong with their families. Boarding schools decided what language a child could speak, what they could wear, and what parts of themselves to surrender in order to survive. Underneath it all lies one assumption: Someone else gets to define you.

So when I hear political movements insist there is only one legitimate way to understand gender, as states write that insistence into law and strip trans people of protections, care, and recognition, I recognize more than a disagreement over terminology. I recognize a system trying to turn complexity into conformity. When we refuse to let the government dictate which identities are legitimate, we are protecting something much larger than policy: We are protecting the idea that government exists to serve people.

My understanding of gender is informed by a worldview where relationships come before rigid categorization, and by Indigenous teachings that were never a single story or meant to fit inside colonized categories. What we are witnessing today is not one fight, but many: bans on gender-affirming care, abortion restrictions, laws policing which bathroom, sport, or classroom a child belongs in. What connects them is a government claiming that those decisions were never ours to make. If we accept that premise, there is no guarantee that the boundaries of who is considered acceptable will remain where they are.

That's why Gender Justice's work in North Dakota and Minnesota matters. Years spent working in North Dakota have shown me that our communities are far more complicated than our political labels. I have sat with people whose politics differ and still found shared commitments to family, community, fairness, and taking care of one another. Those relationships matter. In fact, I think they may be one of our greatest sources of power.

I won't pretend that what is happening isn't frightening or that we won't lose some battles. Justice has never moved in a straight line, but I come from a people who survived policies meant to erase us. From women who carried their families through enormous loss. From a tradition that understands caring for the next generation is not separate from justice; It's why we do the work.

There will come a time when we will look back and ask what we did when our government began attacking the rights of trans people and using fear as a political tool. I want our answer to be clear: We stood with our relatives, we protected our communities, and we refused to let fear define who belongs. That is what gender justice means to me: building a society mature enough to understand that difference doesn't threaten community. Difference is community.

Prairie Rose Seminole

Prairie Rose Seminole | Gender Justice Board Chair



DIFFERENCE DOESN'T
THREATEN COMMUNITY.
DIFFERENCE IS
COMMUNITY.

Two Cases. Two State Supreme Courts. One Fight for Our Rights.



In June, we were at the North Dakota Supreme Court, working to overturn the state's sweeping ban on gender-affirming care for trans youth. In September, we were at the Minnesota Supreme Court, opposing the use of personal religious beliefs to strip away civil rights protections.

The cases involve different states, statutes, and communities. But they are part of the same fight. In both, trans people have been blatantly singled out for discrimination, part of a national wave of anti-trans dehumanization that cannot go unchallenged. And in both, extremists are working to strip fundamental rights — first from our trans neighbors, and then from every Minnesotan and North Dakotan.

1 *T.D. v. Wrigley: Defending Trans Youth and Every North Dakotan's Right to Bodily Autonomy*

Medical decisions belong to doctors, families, and patients — not politicians. But that isn't the reality in North Dakota. The state's drastic ban on gender-affirming care for trans youth prevents doctors from doing their job, blocks young people from accessing critical health care, and forces families to choose between their child's wellbeing and staying in their home state.



We fought this cruel law all the way to the North Dakota Supreme Court because we refuse to stand by while politicians target trans youth, criminalize doctors, and vilify families for loving their kids. And we were devastated when the North Dakota Supreme Court issued a decision in September upholding the ban — leaving in place a law that normalizes political interference in private health care decisions.

When political whim is allowed to override medical consensus, the question isn't just who this law harms today, but who will be targeted tomorrow. While this case is over, we are committed to continuing this fight through grassroots, policy, and legal advocacy because every North Dakotan must be included in the state's constitutional promise of self-determination for all.

**Our opponents have a name
— and an agenda that
weaponizes fearmongering
around our trans neighbors
to weaken everyone's rights**



Increasingly, anti-autonomy extremists have been gathering under one banner: **white Christian nationalism**.

White Christian nationalism isn't Christianity. Instead, it's a political ideology that borrows the language of faith to justify a hierarchy, one that ranks whose rights count and whose don't. It targets the rights of women, people of color, people of other faiths, and LGBTQ+ people.

2 *Reyzt Grace v. Academy of Holy Angels and the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis:* A Manufactured Crisis with Chilling Consequences

Minnesota has some of the strongest protections against discrimination in the country. In 1993, Minnesota became the first state in the nation to explicitly protect trans people under its civil rights law. Minnesota also has some of the strongest protections for religious freedom. These protections have coexisted for decades. But increasingly, in Minnesota and across the country, groups and individuals are invoking religious beliefs as a license to discriminate — asking courts to treat one set of rights as a reason to override the other.

That’s what happened to our client, Reyzt Grace, a cherished librarian who was effectively fired from her secular role at a Catholic school when she came out as trans. No one should lose their livelihood because of who they are. And employers shouldn’t be able to impose their religious beliefs on secular employees.

This case matters because everyone should be able to live and work with dignity. It also matters because of what comes next. If what happened to Reyzt is allowed to stand, thousands of Minnesotans employed by religiously affiliated schools, hospitals, universities, and social service organizations could be left vulnerable to discrimination because of who they are, who they love, their faith, or deeply personal decisions about their lives and families. That is not religious freedom. That’s religious supremacy, and it makes all of our civil rights less secure.

BEYOND SOLIDARITY — THIS IS OUR COLLECTIVE FIGHT

There’s a reason voices from across Minnesota have spoken up alongside Reyzt, religious communities included. And there’s a reason 300+ organizations and individuals, from advocates to small business owners, signed our open letter pledging support for North Dakotan trans youth and their right to gender-affirming care.

It’s because these cases make something clear: Our neighbors’ fight is our fight too. We understand that fundamental rights, basic dignity, and thriving communities belong to all of us or none of us. When we fight for our collective freedom, we fight stronger. And that’s how we win.

Like all authoritarian movements, white Christian nationalism relies on fearmongering, disinformation, and scapegoating — and trans community members are frequent targets. Gender Justice Senior Advisor Erin Maye Quade has an idea why: “In part, I think it’s because **trans people demonstrate to the world what actual freedom looks like: freedom of thought, freedom of expression, deep self-awareness. And that’s everything that white Christian nationalists hate.**”



What would you do if discrimination cost you the best job you ever had?

Our client Reyzt Grace is sharing her story and fighting back — not just for herself but for all Minnesotans.

Hear Reyzt’s story in her own words:



Learn more about the white Christian nationalist agenda — and how we resist — from legal, policy, and religious voices.





Gender Justice Shows Up

Gender Justice hosts and participates in dozens of community events every year, from virtual trainings, to Pride celebrations across Minnesota and North Dakota — connecting people with resources, advocacy tools, and ways to plug into our work.

Uplifting Trans Equity, One Conversation at a Time

Our signature Trans Equity Trainings continue to expand, equipping people with tools and skills to have constructive conversations that build support for trans equity within their communities. This year, we held trainings tailored to Minnesota and North Dakota audiences, launched a new training focused on combating anti-trans culture war narratives, and reached 1,000+ people who have successfully completed a Trans Equity Training.

“It’s a scary time to be a trans person in this country right now, with over 700 anti-trans bills proposed in the last year and an entire campaign of rhetoric targeting our very humanity. As an openly trans person, I honestly expected the worst when I started co-facilitating Gender Justice Trans Equity Trainings.

Instead, I was met with an absolute wave of support. **Regardless of what the people coming to our trainings had been told to believe about the trans community, I saw them show up time and time again out of love:** love for their children, grandchildren, friends, neighbors, and, most impactfully to me, love for people like me, who they had never even met, but that they knew they shared humanity with.

When we show up as a collective, and use that love to drive us to fight for ourselves and our communities, we are powerful enough to overcome any hate we could face — and we can use that power to make purposeful and impactful change.”

- Arthur (he/him, they/them), Trans Equity Training Facilitator





Our Gender Justice contingent marches at the No Kings March in St. Paul.

Executive Director Megan Peterson leads a session at the North Dakota People's Session.



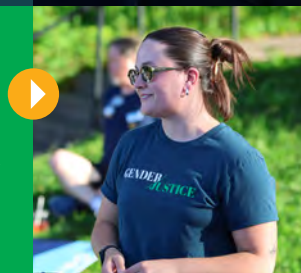
Gender Justice tabling at the Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment Annual Conference.



Members of the Minnesotans for Equal Rights Coalition at the State Capitol for a mini ERA Lobby Day.



Development Manager Sara Hildreth talks with attendees at community music fundraiser, Jam for Gender Justice.



Gender Justice staff with friends from North Dakota Human Rights Coalition at the annual Equality Federation Conference in Baltimore.



"Mapping Our Futures" at the Equality Federation Conference

This July, Gender Justice joined dozens of other state-based LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations at the annual Equality Federation Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, titled "Constellations of Care: Mapping Our Futures."

Executive Director Megan Peterson was featured in the conference plenary, ***We Deserve Strategy, Not Just Survival***, which spoke to the conference's theme of looking beyond survival towards a bold, long-term vision of equality. **Executive Coordinator & Board Liaison Paola López-Cortés** gave a powerful talk about Minnesota's experience of ICE occupation, our community-centered resistance, and how gender-based violence is an inherent component, not a by-product, of oppressive authoritarian systems.



PRIDE

Gender Justice was busy and on-the-road this Pride season:



24

regional Pride events attended

15,000

flyers, brochures, stickers, buttons, and resources distributed

5,000+

connections with community members

Performed the official coin toss at an Aurora FC Pride Match



"Whether a Pride event has 15 attendees, or 15,000, each conversation is an opportunity for us to celebrate queer joy, resistance, and community solidarity. It's so fun to hear about the impact Gender Justice has made in people's lives, whether they know us from a Facebook post or have been following our work at the state supreme court. **From Minneapolis to Minot, we're showing the community that we are here to stay, because it's never the wrong time or place, to fight for people's rights."**

- Charlie Williamson (they/them), Gender Justice North Dakota Program Manager

GENDER JUSTICE *Brunch*

Sunday, November 15, 2026 | McNamara Alumni Center, Minneapolis



FROM TRADWIVES TO TYRANNY

*The Weaponization of Gender
to Dismantle Democracy and
Global Lessons on Fighting Back*

From viral tradwife content and cis men trying to enter the WNBA draft, to testosterone testing in the military and talk of repealing the 19th amendment, **the far-right has successfully weaponized gender to warp our culture in unexpected ways.** These attacks are not isolated, random, or to be underestimated. The authoritarian movement in the United States is gaining power at an alarming rate, and their agenda has found one of its strongest footholds in gender politics.

At this year's Gender Justice Brunch, we'll discuss the far-right's sophisticated gender fundamentalist agenda and their end goal of stripping away power and rights — and uplift how we can harness an inclusive gender liberation strategy to defend our democracy. We'll hear from our speakers on global success stories of defeating authoritarianism, and reflect on our own experience during Operation Metro Surge.



- Purchase Tickets
- Become a Sponsor
- Earn CLE Credit
- Check Out the Speakers

genderjustice.us/brunch

Can't make the brunch this year? Mark your calendars for Give to the Max Day on November 19, or contact:

Anne Page, Director of Development
anne.page@genderjustice.us

for a conversation about your giving today.

2027 Legislative Preview

In January, state legislative sessions will kick off in both Minnesota and North Dakota. Here's what we're anticipating:

PROTECTING PROGRESS AND LEADING BOLD COALITIONS IN MINNESOTA

In 2027, we will continue to build on Minnesota's strong existing laws protecting reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ rights, gender equity, and bodily autonomy — and we will defend against attacks on our hard-won victories.

We're also proud to lead two bold, intersectional coalitions advocating at the Legislature: Minnesotans for Equal Rights and UnRestrict Minnesota.

Passing the Minnesota ERA will be one of our top priorities this legislative session

as we aim to launch a 2028 ballot campaign to give Minnesota voters the chance to cement equal rights for all into our state constitution. We'll get there with the statewide, intersectional Minnesotans for Equal Rights Coalition, now 30+ organizations strong and growing.

Meanwhile, through the UnRestrict Minnesota Coalition, we've helped secure some of the strongest reproductive rights protections in the country. Now, we're responding to ongoing federal threats to abortion access, and our 2027 legislative agenda will especially focus on protecting Minnesotans from the harms of pregnancy criminalization.

From defending against targeted attacks on our trans neighbors, to expanding health care access and civil rights protections, **this session will be a critical moment to protect the progress we've made as we continue building a more just Minnesota.**



RESISTING AND RE-INVENTING IN NORTH DAKOTA

In North Dakota, legislative sessions happen every other year — and while the work doesn't stop in the interim, it doubles when legislators and advocates from across North Dakota bi-annually gather in Bismarck. **With over 40 legislative seats up for election this year, we're expecting to see old friends, familiar opponents, and new voices at the table in January.**

In the 2027 session, we'll partner with local coalitions to advance North Dakotans' real priorities: managing data center growth, increasing childcare and housing assistance, and protecting data privacy. We will also fiercely defend against political attacks on bodily autonomy and protect the rights and dignity of our trans neighbors.

Looking ahead to the legislative session, **we are excited to push for laws that reject political fearmongering and lift up the people's priorities.** Central to this effort is a fight decades in the making: amending the North Dakota Human Rights Act. Fueled by growing grassroots momentum, we are ready to finally secure permanent protections for sexual orientation and gender identity.



Neighbor by Neighbor: The Legacy of Minnesotans United

In 2012, Minnesotans United for All Families built the largest grassroots campaign the state had ever seen. Tens of thousands of Minnesotans joined together to defeat a constitutional amendment that would have permanently denied same-sex couples the freedom to marry.

The campaign changed who saw themselves as part of the fight for LGBTQ+ equality, and what they believed was possible. People put signs in their yards, wore T-shirts, made calls, knocked on doors, and talked to their neighbors about why it mattered. Our opponents believed they could use discrimination against LGBTQ+ people for political gain. Minnesotans said no — for their neighbors, for their friends and family, and for a state where everyone is treated with dignity.

Together, we built a legacy bigger than one election. The relationship, organizing infrastructure, and public support built through the Minnesotans United campaign created the momentum to win marriage equality at the legislature the following year.

That is the lesson we carry forward: **Lasting change comes from bringing people in, giving them real ways to lead, and helping them see that their actions matter.** When people come together and refuse to accept discrimination as inevitable, we can change what is possible — and build a just future for Minnesota.



Enshrining Equality: The Push for the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment

**MINNESOTANS
FOR EQUAL RIGHTS**

Minnesota has been a North Star for hope and progress. When Roe fell, Minnesota protected patients and the providers who care for them. When states across the country turned on transgender people, Minnesota became a refuge, passing a law to protect trans people and their families. And when federal agents swept through our streets last winter, Minnesotans rapidly built mutual aid networks and defended their neighbors' rights as their own.

We know how to stand up against threats to our freedoms, and we know that for progress to sustain, it needs fierce protection. **In a time of escalating national threats, we must enshrine equality, fairness, and freedom into the foundation of our state laws.**

Minnesotans for Equal Rights is a cross-sector coalition fighting to cement a comprehensive Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) directly into the Minnesota State Constitution. This is our opportunity to make Minnesota a state where equality isn't a hope — it's a promise. **Passing the Minnesota ERA would offer everyone the strongest possible protections against discrimination, no matter who's in power in state government.** Passing one of the nation's most inclusive ERA's is a long-term fight, and alongside our partners, **we are determined to secure this victory for Minnesota in 2028.**

Here's how you can get involved:

- ✓ **Join the Minnesotans for Equal Rights Coalition:** Be a part of a coalition of cross-sector organizations cultivating the next generation of civil rights leaders and fighting to pass the ERA.
- ✓ **Donate to the Minnesotans for Equal Rights Campaign:** Help fund the effort to pass the ERA.
- ✓ **Get Involved:** Sign up to volunteer with Minnesotans for Equal Rights.
- ✓ **Spread the Word:** Talk to your friends, family, and community about why passing the ERA matters.

Minnesota has a rare chance to write unconditional equality into our constitution and show every American whose freedoms are under attack what's possible. To learn more, contact Lauren Himiak, Minnesotans for Equal Rights Campaign and Coalition Manager, at lauren.himiak@genderjustice.us.



Minnesota Nice, Minnesota Strong

Our collective power is our strongest defense

Wintana Melekin | Gender Justice Action Board Member, Founder of Groundwork Institute

As a Black movement organizer from a mixed status immigrant family, Operation Metro Surge didn't just affect my organizing, it directly affected my personal life. When federal agents terrorized my community, I saw it as my duty as an organizer and community member to leverage my political capital to protect them. Most Minnesotans didn't have those kinds of political networks, so it became up to organizers and neighbors to band together and protect one another. We did our best to meet the moment by offering multiple, weekly trainings at Groundwork Institute (GWI) to inform residents of their rights, cyber security tools, and rapid response actions.



More than six months after the official "end" of Operation Metro Surge, the work continues. We have yet to see justice for Renée Good or Alex Pretti, or the thousands of neighbors kidnapped by our federal government. At GWI, we have transformed from simply being a training resource to becoming a central hub for movement organizers seeking support, knowledge, and community.

Unfortunately, Metro Surge was not the first, nor the last, attempt the federal government will make to instill fear in our communities. **Our opposition is weaponizing despair and distrust to weaken our democracy.** When citizens are afraid of being targeted or don't trust our political system, they become less likely to vote. Our participation is what legitimizes democracy, and as organizers, it's our job to disrupt the flow of misinformation and fear with political education and community solidarity.

In order to do just that, GWI is working with partners to build the Election Protection Network (EPN) — a coalition of organizers building the structures needed to protect our democracy and empower voters at the polls. We are using our skills and networks to disseminate accurate voter information and prepare for whatever situations may arise on election day.

Part of my ongoing commitment to Gender Justice Action — the 501(c)(4) sibling organization of Gender Justice — is my conviction that by banding together, we demonstrate community strength and people power. **The liberation of Black and brown people will not be successful unless it is done alongside the liberation of women, trans, and queer people.** From Metro Surge, to increasing gender authoritarianism, our opposition thrives when we are divided and weakens when we are united.

That's why intersectional organizing is critical. The next generation of leaders are inheriting a tenuous political landscape and they will need all the help they can get. By humbly passing along learned knowledge and encouraging experimentation and creativity, we can build a bench of organizers with the tools to lead with empathy, power, and courage. When Americans think about Minnesota, I want them to know that being nice is not a weakness: It's a strength.

Gender Justice Action is a leading advocate for gender equity in Minnesota.

Your support helps us build political power and push a transformational legislative agenda — including enacting the Minnesota ERA to enshrine our rights in the Minnesota Constitution.

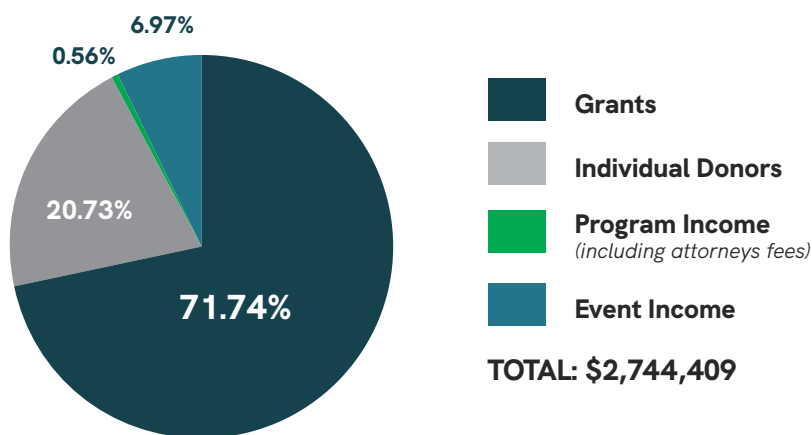


Funding Our Future

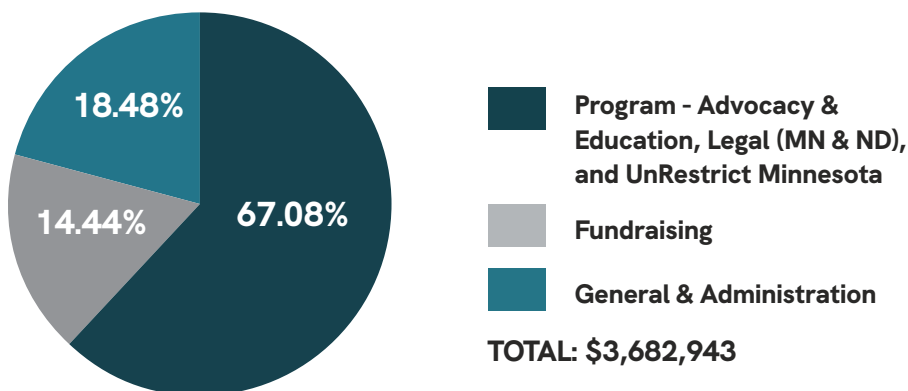
Ongoing support from our Gender Justice community allows us to be creative and bold as we implement our strategies, take on high-stakes issues, and show what's possible in a world of gender liberation and freedom. Your generosity, at every level, funds it all – building support for the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment, narrative change and organizing work for trans liberation and reproductive freedom, and the countless efforts that sustain this work. **Because of you, we play a critical role in the dynamic and powerful movement for democracy and gender freedom in Minnesota and North Dakota.** Thank you for all you do.

FY25 Gender Justice Revenue - 501(c)3

Revenue includes gifts that were pledged in the fiscal year for work in future years.



FY25 Gender Justice Expenses - 501(c)3



Starting in 2027, Gender Justice will move its annual financial reporting to the spring edition of the newsletter and report on both 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 audited revenue and expenses simultaneously.

Thank You To Our Donors

Armstrong Foundation
Ciresi Conlin LLP
Code42 Foundation
Collaborative For Gender and Reproductive Equity
Contreras Edin Law, PA
Cook Family Foundation
Crook Family Foundation
Decoro Law
Dorsey & Whitney LLP
Dykema Gossett
Equal Justice Works
F. R. Bigelow Foundation
Fein Foundation
Fiebigler Law
Flourish Wealth Management
Four Stones Consulting
Fredrikson and Byron, P.A.
Holthues Trust
Homebody MN
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation
If/When/How
Larkin Hoffman
Lewis Brisbois
Lockridge Grindal Nauen PLLP
Maslon LLP
Minneapolis Foundation
Minnesota Lavender Bar Association
Minnesota State Bar Foundation
MSP Nest Real Estate Team at Compass
Nichols Kaster PLLP
O'Connell Consulting
Perry Undem
PFund Foundation
Pohlad Family Foundation
Proteus Fund
Queer Legislators Caucus
Quorum
Reidell-Estey & Associates
Robbins-Berger Charitable Foundation
Robins Kaplan LLP
ROYA llc - Relational Financial Planning
Saul Ewing LLP
Smith Foundation
Stephen C. Fiebigler Law Office, Chartered
Still Ain't Satisfied Foundation
TakeAction Minnesota
The Nash Foundation
TSR Injury Law
Vote Run Lead Action
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
Women's Foundation of Minnesota
Women's March MN

And to all of the organizations, businesses, and individuals who give to Gender Justice!



FUEL THE FIGHT:
Donate online at genderjustice.com/donate



ROYA MOLTAJI

FUELING THE MOMENT:

The Power of a Giving Plan

Gender Justice Development Director Anne Page sat down with Roya Moltaji — founder of the relational financial planning firm, ROYA LLC, and a Gender Justice donor — to talk about the importance of philanthropy and how to utilize intentional giving to make the biggest impact on the issues that drive you.

How did you get into this line of work, and what's important to you about it?

My dad is an immigrant from Iran, and my mom's from northern Minnesota. Like many stereotypical immigrant stories, it was apparent from a young age that being a doctor was one of the most prestigious careers a person could have. I was squeamish around blood, so that wasn't for me — but my dad's hobby was investing. He'd watch the tickers scrolling across the TV and taught me about compound interest when I was small. I thought it was incredible.

I watched my parents' values around money and frugality, which was a fear-based mentality. As I was growing up, I just wanted to make a lot of money, which is how I headed into college — I want to do something that's going to make me rich. Then I went on a service trip to Selma, AL, where I witnessed racism and poverty in a way I hadn't experienced before. I came back and thought — oh, I might need to switch to social justice. How could I square what I used to think meant success with this thing that I just experienced? I really grappled with it because I was deeply interested in money, how it works, and how people interact with it. So, I stayed on the finance track, and decided that if I built a lucrative career, I would give money away and help others do the same. That's what I'm doing now.

Why is Gender Justice an organization that you chose to support personally?

I first got to know Gender Justice through a friend. I choose to support Gender Justice because gender equality has always been a top issue for me. Gender Justice takes concrete action to dismantle systems that prop up barriers to gender equity.

Why is intentionality important in philanthropy?

Intentionality lets you put real thought and strategy behind what you are doing. Otherwise, giving can feel haphazard. When you do the math and see how your giving aligns with what you care about most, it creates clarity and confidence. You know your resources are making the impact you intend.

Do you think that someone needs to be giving at a certain level to make a meaningful impact?

It's really common to wonder whether your gift is meaningful. People giving at the \$10 level and the \$1,000,000 level all have the thought: Am I giving enough?

If you talk to an executive director, they will tell you how important donors at every level are. A high volume of smaller donors brings more people into the fold and creates real stability. I recently talked to an executive director who noted that a \$250,000 donor is great, but if they drop off, it's tough to replace them quickly. Giving at all levels makes a meaningful impact.

If someone is just starting their personal philanthropy journey, what should they consider?

Just like your savings and spending, philanthropy is its own bucket. Start by identifying the organizations you definitely want to support, then determine dollar amount, timing, and sources, and automate your gifts! Just like retirement contributions, if your giving is automated, you don't have to think about it.

I also recommend setting aside a separate amount for things that come up throughout the year. This past winter in Minnesota, there was an unforeseen and urgent need for community support during the ICE occupation. In moments like that, you want to be able to jump to action. With discretionary funds, you can ask: Do I have money to say yes to something I really care about?

It's also helpful to think about how you like to give. I love going to events, so my family tends to give gifts when we are in person. Maybe you prefer to give online, from the comfort of your home. Maybe you make an event out of year-end giving or get together with your family over the fourth of July to make a tradition of community giving.

Finally, track your giving. It feels good when you lay out a plan and accomplish it, and it gives you something to celebrate with friends and family.

What limitations do you see people bumping up against when they think about giving?

Often it's simply taking the time to plan. Sitting down and organizing something in advance isn't always fun. It can feel like one more thing on the to-do list. But if you make it easy — even enjoyable — it becomes much more approachable. Get together with friends and work on it together, or go to your favorite coffee shop and treat yourself while you map things out.

Roya, how can folks get in touch with you if they want to learn more?

You can reach me via:

Email: rmoltaji@financialguide.com

Text: **651-412-7693**

Or schedule online at royamoltaji.com



Roya Moltaji is a registered representative of and offers securities and investment advisory services through MML Investors Services, LLC. Member SIPC. Supervisory Office: 100 South 5th Street, Suite 2300, Minneapolis, MN 55402; Phone: 612-333-1413. CRN202902-10639939



ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY THROUGH THE LAW

663 University Avenue W, Suite 200
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651.789.2090
Email: info@genderjustice.us

www.genderjustice.us
[@genderjustice](https://twitter.com/genderjustice)

Nonprofit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit # 7382

Staff

MEGAN PETERSON, Executive Director, she/hers
sylvia murray, Chief of Staff, she/hers and they/theirs
ALISSA LIGHT, Senior Advisor, Minnesotans for Equal Rights (MN4ER) Campaign, she/hers
ERIN MAYE QUADE, Senior Advisor, she/hers
JESS BRAVERMAN, Legal Director, all pronouns
LAUREN HIMIAK, Interim Communications Director & MN4ER Campaign and Coalition Manager, she/hers
MONICA MEYER, Political Director, she/hers and they/theirs
ANNE PAGE, Development Director, she/hers
SARA JANE BALDWIN, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers
GRETA WIESSNER, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers
CAROLINE CASEY, Legal Fellow, she/hers
ALANNA GOLDSTEIN, Saeks Public Interest Fellow, she/hers and they/theirs
MCKINNA HODGE, Legal Assistant / Paralegal, she/hers
PAOLA LÓPEZ-CORTÉS, Executive Coordinator & Board Liaison, she/hers
KELLY MCCANN, Senior Operations Manager, she/hers
SIENA IWASAKI MILBAUER, Senior Communications Manager, she/hers
KARA COWELL, Advocacy & Organizing Manager, she/hers
SARA HILDRETH, Development Manager, she/hers
CHARLIE WILLIAMSON, North Dakota Program Manager, they/theirs

Board of Directors

GENDER JUSTICE

PRAIRIE ROSE SEMINOLE, Chair, she/hers and they/theirs
DEE SENARATNA, Vice Chair, she/hers
MICHAEL ANDERSON, Treasurer, he/his
THOMAS FIEBIGER, Secretary, he/his
CB BAGA, they/theirs
AMANDA BARTSCHENFELD, she/hers
CIERRA BUCKNER, she/hers
ELINA CASTILLO JIMÉNEZ, she/hers
AL GERHARDSTEIN, he/his
JESSICA HEISER, she/hers
ALISON KELLY, she/hers
NICOLE MOEN, she/hers
CHRIS MOSIER, he/his
RILEY PALMER, she/hers
DIVYA RAMAN, she/hers
JONI THOME, she/hers
ANN TOBIN, she/hers

GENDER JUSTICE ACTION

HETAL DALAL, Chair, she/hers
CHELSEA SHELDON, Vice Chair, she/hers
ELIZABETH GLIDDEN, Treasurer, she/hers
CLARA RIES, Secretary, she/hers
MADDIE HARVALA, she/hers
MARS KAMENSKI, they/theirs and he/his
ERICA MAUTER, she/hers
WINTANA MELEKIN, she/hers