

## **The time is now for courageous action**

Blandin Foundation has been standing alongside and investing in rural Minnesota leaders and communities for 78 years. Over time, we have come to know this to be true: communities cannot be strong, healthy and vibrant unless they are working for, and safe for, all peoples.

*Is your community?*

Minnesota residents are facing changes and pressures today that test long-held assumptions and challenge us to forge new relationships. Racism, hate and bigotry *are* alive in rural Minnesota, and must be met with hope, leadership and the firm belief that communities are stronger when they work for every resident.

*Are you aware?*

When Blandin Foundation surveyed rural Minnesotans this spring about who in their community faces discrimination, bias or harassment, most often named were those with a drug or mental health issue, transgender people and recent immigrants among many others. They also overwhelmingly (by 82 percent) believe that people in their community are able to stand up to hate when they see it occur.

Minnesota's rural residents *are* a hopeful bunch. Blandin Foundation's Rural Pulse survey (at [www.ruralpulse.org](http://www.ruralpulse.org)), as well as our daily experiences, suggest that rural Minnesotans are optimistic about the future and believe they can make a difference in their communities.

*Can you? Do you?*

The time is now. To recognize racism and discrimination, to name and stop it when we see it. To stand with those working to make our communities more welcoming. To make sure that opportunity truly is available to all, that no one is living unseen in the shadows. To recognize that our destinies are intertwined with those of neighbors. To not let another hateful remark or act pass without addressing it. To be courageous and curious.

Rural people, rural places are beautiful, resilient and resourceful. Let's not give our sense of community away, not on our watch.

*We stand with you.*

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