2022
YEAR IN REVIEW
HEARTLAND FORWARD
AN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RENEWAL
We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit “think and do tank” focused on improving the economic performance in the center of the United States by advocating for fact-based solutions to foster job creation, knowledge-based and inclusive growth, and improved health outcomes. Heartland Forward is based in Bentonville, Arkansas, but our work focuses on the entire heartland region which is comprised of 20 states.

Our four areas of focus are:

- **Innovation and entrepreneurship**
- **Human capital and workforce development**
- **Health and wellness**
- **Regional competitiveness**
RESEARCH

Over the course of 2022, Heartland Forward released cutting-edge research. The scope of research ranged from how to improve health outcomes in rural communities, to developing strong talent pipelines, ranking the most dynamic metros and micros in the U.S. and more. Most importantly, each report is heartland-centric and emphasizes solutions for policymakers to advance our communities.

2022 RESEARCH
2022 BLOGS

SURPRISE AND DELIGHT: NATIONAL RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Heartland Forward’s Research to Renewal: Advancing University Tech Transfer report was featured during the primetime Florida vs Georgia football game in October, 2022.
With so many people wanting to say such negative things about our colleges and universities so often, getting the public to think, even for a moment, about the indispensable roles that these institutions play is important. That makes this particular list a real value.


COVID-19 Vaccinations: U.S. Patient and Economic Estimated Impact

Public Health Impact

- >1 Million
  - Deaths prevented
  - As of December 2021, more than 1 million deaths have been prevented by COVID-19 vaccination among vaccinated people. (1)
  - (Commonwealth Fund, December 2021)

- >10 Million
  - Hospitalizations prevented
  - More than 10 million hospitalizations have been prevented by COVID-19 vaccination among vaccinated people. (2)
  - For vaccinated people, severe COVID-19-associated outcomes or death were rare. (3)
  - (Commonwealth Fund, December 2021)
  - (Healthcare and Human Services, CDC)

Economic Impact

- $438B
  - Savings for the economy in 2021
  - COVID-19 vaccinations contributed to creating an estimated economic savings of $438 billion in terms of 2021 U.S. real Gross Domestic Product gain, lessening the economic impact of the pandemic. (4)
  - (The Health Care Report, December 2021)

- 2.3%
  - Of 2021 U.S. real GDP
  - Assuming the 2021 U.S. real GDP to be $19.416.17 billion, the impact of COVID-19 vaccinations represented up to 2.3% of 2021 U.S. real GDP.
  - (The Health Care Report, December 2021)

COMIRNATY: ~6 Out of 10 Doses Administered in U.S. (4)

(4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2022. *U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Administration by Vaccine Type* accessed February 6, 2022. 61% of doses, or ~6 out of 10 doses, calculated as the number of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine doses administered, divided by the total number of doses administered of any COVID-19 vaccine. COMIRNATY (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) is also known as the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine.
COMMUNITY GROWTH PROGRAM

Powered by Heartland Forward, the Community Growth Program is aimed at turning entrepreneurs’ (we call them Builders!) ideas into reality.

Builders undergo a 90-day program that includes a 45-day Bootcamp to teach participants how to put ideas into action, followed by 45 days of actively executing their ideas through experiments with access of up to $5,000 to use.

324 BUILDERS ACROSS 16 COMMUNITIES

- **Oxford, MS**
  - Oxford-Lafayette Chamber Foundation
  - The City of Oxford
  - Lafayette County
  - The University of Mississippi

- **Iowa City, IA**
  - Iowa City Area Development Group

- **Tulsa, OK**
  - George Kaiser Family Foundation

- **Oklahoma City, OK**
  - Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
  - Inasmuch Foundation

- **Joplin, MO**
  - MOKAN Partnership
  - Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Arvest Bank-Joplin

- **Pine Bluff, AR**
  - Go Forward Pine Bluff
  - Walton Family Foundation

- **Northwest Arkansas**
  - Walton Family Foundation

- **Grand Rapids, SD**
  - Elevate Rapid City

- **Helena-West Helena, AR**
  - Walton Family Foundation

- **Clarksdale, MS**
  - Walton Family Foundation

- **Duluth, MN**
  - Office of Mayor Emily Larson
  - Northland Foundation
  - Duluth Chamber of Commerce

- **Fort Worth, TX**
  - University of North Texas, Health Science Center at Fort Worth
  - John Peter Smith Hospital

- **Durant, OK**
  - Durant Industrial Authority

- **Eastern Shawnee Tribe, OK**
  - Eastern Shawnee Tribe

- **Fargo, ND**
  - Grand Farm

- **Rapid City, SD**
  - Elevate Rapid City

- **Northeast, TN**
  - Niswonger Foundation
SPOTLIGHT ON OUR ALUMNI

Our Builders go on to win more competitions, accelerators and grants:

Lisa Nelson of Joplin, Missouri, won the Joplin Regional Innovation & Technology Summit Pitch Competition for Landmark Builds, which combines history with STEM skills to help youth and community connect with local landmarks.

Britt Parrish of Tulsa, Oklahoma, won the Eventbrite #RECONVENEAccelerator program to bring her wildly popular Plant.Sip.Vibe events nationwide, as well as the Black Founders TikTok cohort.

Dady Mansaray of Iowa City, Iowa, was accepted into the National Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit Business Pitch Competition for FitMeReach, which enables students to build communities through sports and fitness.

BUILDERs IN THE NEWS:

In Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Kanesha Barnes-Adams’ Bearapy helps heal the hearts and minds of children through books and bears. Kaneshas inspiring story of how she channeled the loss of her sister into a way to address the mental health of young people is covered by Fox16.

Britt Parrish was featured in Better Homes and Gardens magazine. The “plant queen” of Tulsa is on a mission to make plant ownership accessible to all.

Tulsa’s Sam Kurtz has developed the Tulsa Policy Institute to centralize information on government services. His work was covered by News on 6/KOTV.

UP NEXT

Winter 2023 cohort launched in: Northwest Arkansas, The Delta (Helen/West Helena Arkansas + Clarksdale, Mississippi), Iowa City, The Eastern Shawnee Tribe in Oklahoma, Tulsa, West Tennessee, Montgomery, AL and a special workforce development cohort across the state of Alabama.
**Connecting the Heartland** is a multi-pronged, multi-state initiative dedicated to boosting affordable, high-speed internet access and adoption throughout America’s heartland. We believe that when people have high-speed internet access, doors open to them — to everything from healthcare, employment, education and so much more.

This year, we made great strides in our work to bridge the digital divide in Arkansas, Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee:

• Launched the **Accelerate program**, with the **Benton Institute for Broadband and Society**, to **28 communities** across three states with 30 hours of expert counsel to teach community leaders how to develop broadband plans and access federal funding.

• Partnership with the **League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)** to reach over **380,350 people in Latino communities** with information about the Affordable Connectivity Program. Through local council-led events — at churches, grocery stores, festivals and more — we supported over **9,900 people in enrolling in ACP** to access affordable internet service and devices.
Local organizations strive to close Arkansas digital divide

Heartland Forward launches new coalition to bridge ‘digital divide’ throughout Arkansas

• Formed the **Arkansas Connectivity Coalition** with **15 partners and government leadership** to expand digital equity and broadband workforce opportunities.

• Co-founded **Opportunity Broadband** with **Pew Charitable Trusts** to help shape the policy strategy for organizations working on expanding connectivity.

• Kicked off the second year with a cohort of **14 American Connection Corps (ACC) fellows** with a Hill Day in Washington D.C. Launched a **digital equity mini-grant program** for the fellows to pilot highly tailored, innovative digital skills training models.

**MEET THE ACC FELLOWS VIDEO**

**MEETING SENATOR BOOZMAN**
(with our Arkansas ACC fellows) in Washington D.C.
WE MADE HEADLINES THIS YEAR!

1,327 to be exact

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVORITES:

**THE OXFORD EAGLE**
Ten Oxford Entrepreneurs begin National Accelerator Program
Published 4 mins ago Tuesday, January 15, 2022

**UF News**
Illinois communities getting broadband infrastructure assistance
Published Jan. 18, 2022 at 8:15 PM GMT+1

**CHICAGO SUN-TIMES**
Now is the time to close the Latino digital divide
By Sindy M. Benavides and Angie Cooper | Jun 23, 2022, 5:42am GMT-5

**Cities Today**
How the next wave of tech hubs can be more inclusive
29 March 2022
by Sarah Whay

**FORTUNE**
Low-cost tech hubs are emerging as America’s most dynamic cities
05:03 AM GMT+5

**FAST COMPANY**
These 39 companies are doing corporate social responsibility right
05-03-22 | WORLD CHANGING IDEAS
See the full list of honorees of Fast Company’s 2022 World Changing Ideas Awards in the corporate social responsibility category.

**MIKE DEWINE**
Governor DeWine Announces BroadbandOhio Community Accelerator Cohort
• Wendy Guerrero, president of the Bentonville Film Festival and BFFoundation
• Matt Wadiak, Founder and CEO of Cooks Venture.
• Phil Graves, CEO of Wild Idea Buffalo
• Professor Richard Florida

Heartland states must focus more effort on supporting entrepreneurs start and scale up their companies to promote economic growth and job creation across the heartland.
This year’s Heartland Summit featured a diverse mix of some of the brightest minds across sectors, geographies and generations. 350 businesses, policymakers, entrepreneurs, investors, philanthropy and thought leaders united by a shared sense of purpose.

Stay tuned for the 2023 Heartland Summit!
As a nonpartisan 501c3 charitable “think” and “do” tank, we depend on the generosity of our supporters to carry out our important work.

Here are several ways you can fuel our mission:

• **Join our Giving Circle:** an annual $25,000 gift for three years will help our organization grow and evolve

• **Support a Builder:** $7,000 will support a Builder in our Idea Accelerator

• **Sponsor a Program Launch:** $10,000, $25,000 or $50,000, will support human capital and workforce development and our health and wellness programs

• **Co-sponsor a Report:** $25,000 or more to help support an annual or biennial report like *Most Dynamic Metros* and *Most Dynamic Micros*

• **Support Connecting the Heartland** to high speed internet

• **Host a Heartland Reception:** $5,000 or more to join as a brand ambassador

• **Sponsor our flagship event:** *Heartland Summit*

• **Sponsor Meet Us in the Middle Podcast:** $2,500 for each interview

• **Sponsor Heartland Happenings:** our monthly newsletter for $2,500 per month

Of course, we welcome gifts of any size to help further our mission.

Give online or reach out to Paige Jernigan, director of development.

jemigan@heartlandforward.org

917-847-4212
Thank you for the generous support from our donors in 2022! You keep the “heart” in the heartland, and for that, we are grateful.

WE THANK OUR GENEROUS DONORS

- Aaron and Rebecca Burkes
- Accenture
- Amanda Crumley
- Arkansas Community Fdn (Arkansas Impact Philanthropy)
- Arkansas Community Foundation
- Arkansas Electric Cooperatives
- Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation
- Arvest
- BDT Capital Partners LLC
- Bethany Culpepper
- Betsy Gage
- Bike Rack Beer
- Carley Chastain
- Caryl Stern
- Chelsea Miller
- Claiborne and Elaine Deming
- Clete and Tammy Brewer
- COX Communications
- Craig Gardenswartz
- David Snow
- Delta Dirt Distilleries
- Diamond State Networks
- Durant Industrial Authority
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe
- Eileen Hyde
- Elevate Rapid City
- Emerging Prairie
- Ford Motor Co Fund
- Forward Arkansas
- George Kaiser Family Foundation
- GoForward Pine Bluff
- Grand Farm
- Hank Henderson
- Inasmuch Foundation
- Iowa City Area Development Group (ICAD)
- J. Alan Lewis and Nancy Martin
- Jill Wagar
- John Frederick Brekelbaum
- Jonathan Bailly
- Joplin Area Chamber Foundation
- Jordan Carlisle
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- Tyson Foods
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- Walmart Global Policy
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