

THE HEARTLAND FORWARD GIVING GUIDE 2024



**HEARTLAND
FORWARD**

AN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RENEWAL

Heartland Forward is a think and do tank dedicated to being a resource for states and local communities in the middle of the country.

We do this by studying broad economic trends and building data-driven and community-tested partnerships, programs and policies to address the needs of the heartland – all while helping to change the narrative about the middle of the country and kick-starting economic growth.

OUR PILLARS



INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of a community's economy.

Our research and programs focus on developing opportunities to spur entrepreneurship and stimulate business creation right here in the heartland.



HUMAN CAPITAL AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

People along with their education and training are the most important asset of a state and region's economy.

Our work focuses on the education, training and funding of programs that promote job growth and stimulate local economies.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Accessibility, affordability and adoptability in health care must lead to simplifying and improving the health care system to achieve better individual health outcomes.

In this area of focus, we seek to advance the health care workforce, public policy, new technologies and quality of life.



REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

A successful and vibrant heartland is one that attracts and maintains a variety of businesses, entrepreneurs and human capital all while maintaining a healthy workforce and quality of life for the people who live and work in the region.

We are committed to ensuring the 20 states that make-up the heartland remain the 3rd largest GDP in the world.

GIVING GUIDE

Here are several ways you can fuel our mission:

GIVING CIRCLE

Giving Circle donors receive special benefits throughout the year plus an invitation to the Heartland Summit.

Commitment of \$25,000 for three years.

OTHER GIVING OPTIONS



Donors receive **tailored benefits** based on level of gift.

COMMUNITY GROWTH PROGRAM + TOOLKIT

The Builders + Backers Idea Accelerator powered by Heartland Forward is a 90-day program, a proven onramp to entrepreneurship, helping participants (we call them Builders) put their business ideas into action and scale.

Our goal is to inspire more people to see themselves as Builders, creating value for communities and increasing access to capital and resources.

We are going statewide with an initial focus in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee and Alabama!

Meet our builders



Learn more



Stepping Stones is the next phase of the Idea Accelerator to help entrepreneurs who have gone through the program scale their businesses.

Members of the Stepping Stones program participate in a year-long program and receive \$25,000 in funding to continue to grow their business.

The goal of this new program is to help high-capacity Builders with promising ventures get on a path toward \$1M in revenue and having 2-3 full-time employees.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

HEALTH INDEX

Understanding the determinants of physical health is crucial for improving healthcare outcomes and shaping effective health policies. In this study, we will create a comprehensive measure of physical health, the Health Index, by combining multiple variables associated with physical health. This research has several significant implications enhancing our understanding of the factors influencing physical health.



RESEARCH

Heartland Forward's research is data-driven and fact-based and has actionable outcomes – either programmatic or policy-related actions that the reader or policy maker can take to affect their current situation or environment.



Most Dynamic Metros

Our annual Most Dynamic Metros report ranks metropolitans nationwide to determine those communities that are leading in categories including employment, income, economic production and the ability to start and scale young firms. This index captures both historic and forward-looking indicators enabling cities to evaluate policies impacting local economic performance. The research also features an interactive map, which allows users to analyze the data that makes up the metros' rankings.



Most Dynamic Micropolitans

Our annual Most Dynamic Micros report ranks the economic dynamism of micropolitan areas across the United States by studying changes in key economic conditions, with special attention to the change in employment. Top micropolitans generally share characteristics such as outdoor recreation, natural amenities and resilient industries. The research also features an interactive map, which allows users to analyze the data that makes up the micros' rankings.



Black Business Opportunity Strategy

Entrepreneurship is a powerful economic development strategy for communities and regions. But to the extent to which entrepreneurs are able to succeed, relies largely on providing individuals with the right tools and environment to pursue their businesses. This is especially true for historically disadvantaged communities where barriers are higher and access to resources are harder to come by. Heartland Forward, along with a coalition of partners based in Memphis, examined the unique data and characteristics of Memphis to provide the following key insights regarding black business ownership.

commercial appeal

News Sports Memphis Tigers Business Advertise Obituaries eNewspaper Legals

Memphis will continue to grow thanks to Black entrepreneurs, but they need support

Heartland Forward has offered a blueprint for supporting Black entrepreneurs in Memphis. Now, it's the time for leaders to act.

Andre Fowlkes and Jonas Crews Guest Columnists

Published 7:03 a.m. CT Nov. 7, 2023 | Updated 7:03 a.m. CT Nov. 7, 2023

In the heart of the South, Memphis, a city rich in soul and musical heritage, boasts one of the largest Black populations — outnumbering cities like St. Louis, Boston and San Francisco. And while a recent report by Heartland Forward showcases the city's pride in its 55,000 Black-owned businesses, it also highlights a clear disconnect between its demographics and its entrepreneurial landscape.

HEARTLAND SUMMIT 2025



Our flagship event, the Heartland Summit, brings together approximately 350 of the top thinkers and doers across sectors, geographies and generations - right in downtown Bentonville, Arkansas to “Meet in the Middle” by sharing their collective insights on advancing the heartland. Attendees range from policymakers, investors, entrepreneurs, business, philanthropy and thought leaders.



GIVING GUIDE

Give online or reach out to the Heartland Forward Development Team at giving@heartlandforward.org or by phone at **479-957-6301**.

Donate 

WE THANK OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

Thank you for the generous support from our sponsors! You keep the “**heart**” in the **heartland**, and for that, we are grateful.

- Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield
- Arvest
- Barbara and James Freeman
- BDT & MSD Partners
- Bonita Bonita
- Jean Tracy Buckley
- Christian Brothers University
- City of Birmingham
- City of Montgomery
- Cox
- Dillard's
- Ford Foundation
- Ford Motor Company Fund
- Reed Greenwood
- Tammy and Clete Brewer
- Indiana University
- Iowa City Area Development Group
- J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.
- Jobs for the Future
- George Kaiser Family Foundation
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
- McKenna & Associates
- Mercy Health
- Michigan Central
- Morgan Stanley
- Nabholz
- Northern Trust
- Ozark Beer Company
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Claudia San Pedro
- Dennis Shaw
- Harriet and Warren Stephens
- Shawnee Tribes
- Simmons Foods
- State & Federal Communications, Inc
- State of Arkansas
- State of Michigan-Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Superior Automotive Group
- The Haslam III Foundation
- The Just Trust
- Tracy Family Foundation
- Trailblazers
- Heartland Whole Health Institute
- Tyson Foods
- University of Arkansas College of Engineering
- Visit Bentonville
- Walmart
- Walton Family Foundation
- Whetstone Wine Cellars
- Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
- Women of Oz



**HEARTLAND
FORWARD**

AN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RENEWAL

HEARTLANDFORWARD.ORG

