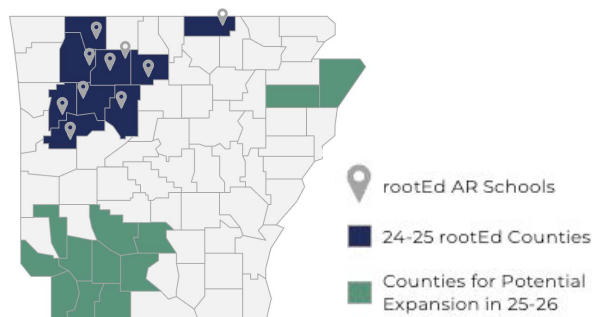


## Overview

Heartland Forward, in collaboration with rootEd Alliance and with support from the Arkansas Department of Education, is leading efforts to strengthen Arkansas's talent pipeline. This initiative focuses on growing the state's economy by providing rural high school students with dedicated college and career advisors. The rootEd program ensures that students graduate equipped for the careers of the future, with the tools they need not only for work, but for life—empowering them to achieve long-term economic independence and success. It is a powerful step toward creating a more skilled, vibrant and opportunity-rich heartland.

## rootEd in Arkansas



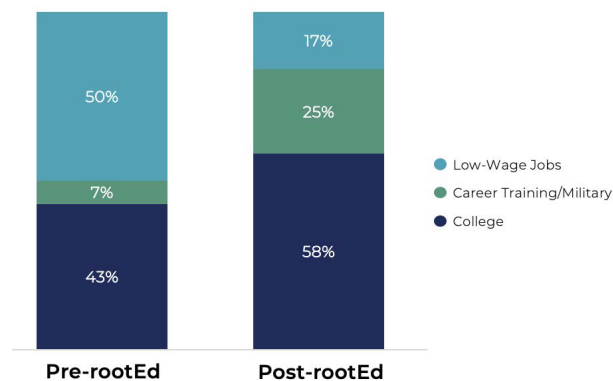
The rootEd model places trained college and career advisors in rural schools across Arkansas. rootEd advisors work alongside school counselors to help students define and plan their futures, whether students choose to:

- Earn a college degree
- Pursue career credentials
- Explore apprenticeships
- Join the military

## Key Benefits and Success Stories

After just one year, rootEd Arkansas has had a tremendous impact on the 480+ rural students served. The 1:1 advising model ensures rootEd students are graduating with concrete plans and clear paths to high-growth, high-wage careers, in alignment with Arkansas's statewide educational policy priorities.

- **99% of rootEd Arkansas seniors created a plan** for after high school with their rootEd advisor
- **66% more students are pursuing education or training opportunities** rather than low-wage jobs
- Students **accessed 75% more financial aid** than the national average
- **FAFSA completion rate is 36% higher** than the state average
- Non-college-bound rootEd students are landing high-wage, high-growth jobs—with median **earnings over \$11,000 higher** than similar students before the rootEd program



### rootEd Students

*"I had absolutely no interest in doing anything after high school or leaving home. Thanks to my advisor, I applied for multiple colleges and plan to attend Arkansas Tech in the Fall."*

*"I was planning to go to a trade school or not even go to school at all because of my past grades and lack of knowledge about the steps needed. My advisor gave me the confidence I needed to keep pursuing my dream."*

### rootEd Advisor

*"rootEd has helped students confidently take ownership of their lives. For many of our students, the decisions they're making now have the potential to change their family's story. It's exciting to be a part of that!"*

### School Admin

*"The rootEd partnership has really helped our students have hope and defined goals for a better future than they may have ever realized otherwise. Thank you!"*