



Vice President of Finance & Operations  
Heartland Forward

Heartland Forward seeks an innovative leader to serve as Vice President of Finance & Operations, based in Bentonville, Arkansas.

About the Organization:

Heartland Forward is a first of its kind think-and-do-tank focused on the heartland – the 20 states in the middle of the country that make up the third largest economy in the world. Heartland Forward’s goal – accelerate economic growth and help change the narrative in the middle of the country and generate \$500M in economic impact by 2030.

The Heartland Forward team is focused on impact and scale. Heartland Forward is building the capacity, talent and network to operate not just as a thought leader, but as a builder connecting policymakers, entrepreneurs, philanthropists and civic leaders around a shared agenda: unlocking the full potential of the middle of the country. This is about translating insight into implementation, driving regional competitiveness, advancing education, workforce and healthy communities. This requires solutions that are practical, replicable and nationally relevant. At its core, Heartland Forward is a convener of uncommon alignment, bridging sectors, geographies, and ideologies to drive progress where it matters most. By deepening its research excellence directly into applied solutions, the organization is shaping a new model for impact: one that is agile, entrepreneurial and grounded in results.

Heartland Forward is not just advocating for the heartland, it is actively collaborating with leaders, communities and investors to drive economic success. The ambition is clear: to ensure the heartland’s economic future is balanced, resilient and a leader for the entire country.

For more information about Heartland Forward, visit their website at:

<https://heartlandforward.org>

About the Position:

The ideal candidate will bring a blend of financial expertise, operational leadership and organizational building experience. They will be equally comfortable managing complexity and driving simplicity, setting strategy executing detail and leading teams while working collaboratively across functions. Above all, the Vice President of Finance & Operations will be motivated by the opportunity to support the organization's strategic goal to deliver lasting economic impact and to advance a bold vision for the future of the heartland.

Working in close partnership with the President, the Vice President of Finance & Operations will help translate strategic ambition into operational reality. They will provide both direction and support to the President and senior leadership team, ensuring Heartland Forward's financial strategy, organizational design and operational execution are aligned, disciplined and scalable. This leader will be a trusted advisor to the President while also driving clarity, accountability and rigor across the Heartland Forward team.

A core mandate of the role is to build and lead a high-performing finance and operations function that serves the current and growing organization. This includes developing a cohesive team, strengthening internal systems, and fostering a culture of excellence, transparency and continuous improvement. The Vice President of Finance & Operations will play a key role in attracting, developing and retaining top-tier talent within their own team and across the organization; helping to ensure Heartland Forward is equipped with the people and capabilities required for long-term success. At the same time, the Vice President of Finance & Operations will serve as a steward of the organization's financial health and integrity. They will ensure Heartland Forward operates with the highest standards of fiscal responsibility, governance and operational discipline, while also enabling the flexibility and innovation required of a growing, entrepreneurial organization. This balance between rigor and agility will be essential as the organization continues to expand its footprint and influence.

The broad goals and responsibilities facing the Vice President of Finance & Operations, include:

- Lead all aspects of financial strategy, planning and management, including budgeting, forecasting, reporting and long-term financial modeling.
- Ensure the organization's financial resources are aligned with strategic priorities, enabling thoughtful growth and sustained impact.
- Oversee financial controls, compliance and risk management, maintaining the highest standards of fiscal integrity and transparency.
- Partner with the President and Board to provide clear, actionable financial insights that inform decision-making.
- Oversee core operational functions, which may include HR, IT, legal, AI and administrative operations, ensuring they are integrated and high performing.

- Build, lead and mentor a high-performing finance and operations team with internal and external leaders, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement.
- Operate as a trusted partner to the President, working in parallel to translate vision into execution and enterprise-wide results.

The ideal professional qualifications and personal attributes the new Vice President of Finance & Operations include:

#### Professional Qualifications

- Significant senior leadership experience in finance and operations, ideally within a high-growth nonprofit, philanthropic, for profit or mission-driven organization.
- Demonstrated expertise in fiscal management, including budgeting, forecasting, financial modeling and compliance.
- Proven record of building and scaling teams, systems and organizational infrastructure.
- Experience partnering closely with a President and senior leadership team, with the ability to influence and execute at the highest levels.
- Strong understanding of organizational design, talent strategy and operational best practices.
- Experience working with or presenting to a Board of Directors or equivalent governing body.
- Experience helping an organization evolve to a higher level of performance and impact.

#### Personal Attributes

- Brings energy, creativity and a solutions-oriented mindset to building and improving systems and teams.
- Able to think big while also driving disciplined follow-through and results.
- Thrives in a dynamic, entrepreneurial workplace and helps others navigate change with clarity and confidence.
- Attracts strong people, invests in their growth, and fosters a culture of excellence and accountability.
- Operates with sound judgment, discretion, and the ability to serve as a confidant and advisor to the President.

### **Compensation**

Compensation for the Vice President of Finance & Operations includes a comprehensive compensation and benefits package.

### **How to Apply**

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter describing how their skills and background fit this position along with a resume to Daniel Sherman, President, Explore Company at [resumes@explorecompany.com](mailto:resumes@explorecompany.com). Refer to HF/VPFO in the subject line. No phone inquiries please.

*Heartland Forward is an Equal Opportunity Employer and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates for this search. All correspondence will remain confidential.*