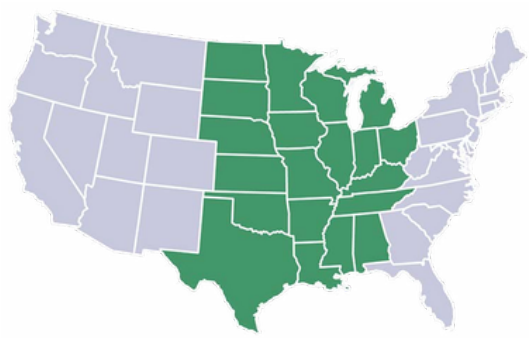
About Heartland Forward

Heartland Forward is a nonpartisan, nonprofit think-and-do tank dedicated to accelerating economic growth and expanding opportunity across the heartland.



Our goal is to generate $500 million in economic impact by 2030 by translating research into action—through policy, programs and partnerships that deliver measurable results.

The heartland spans 20 states and represents the third-largest economy in the world, creating a strong foundation for growth and innovation. Through applied research and collaborative partnerships, we help turn ideas into meaningful solutions to expand economic opportunity, strengthen talent and improve health—ensuring the region competes and leads in the 21st-century economy.

Our Approach

We focus on three interconnected areas critical to long-term economic growth

Regional Competitiveness

We equip states and communities with data, policy solutions and tools to compete in a rapidly evolving economy

- Harnessing the Power of AI through the nonpartisan Heartland AI Caucus
- Creating a dedicated hub for research and strategic program development to enhance investor confidence and support new and thriving businesses in the heartland through the Center for Investment Readiness
- Delivering real-time economic insights through the Pulse of the Heartland

Talent Pipeline

We strengthen pathways to education and employment

- Placing dedicated college and career advisors in rural high schools through rootEd Arkansas and rootEd Oklahoma
- Preparing workers for high-demand skilled workforce careers in partnership with industry leaders

Health & Wellness

We address health as a critical economic driver, focusing on scalable, policy-driven solutions

- Convening multi-state leaders through the Heartland Health Caucus
- Improving maternal health outcomes through our Maternal & Child Health Center for Policy & Practice

Learn more: heartlandforward.org