Senior Policy Analyst - Health & Wellness
Position Description

The Senior Policy Analyst - Health & Wellness will help develop and advance Heartland Forward's state health policy agenda, serving as a substantive policy resource to the Senior Director of Policy and Strategy and the Director of the Maternal & Child Health Center for Policy & Practice. The role works across the Heartland Health Caucus and the Maternal & Child Health Center for Policy & Practice and may lead work on maternal and child health, health workforce, rural health, behavioral and mental health, health care access and other emerging priorities.

This role requires someone who can move beyond what policy says to how it can be implemented: who has authority to act, what barriers exist and what strategies are realistic for states and communities.

Responsibilities

Policy Analysis and Strategy

- Conduct advanced analysis of state and federal health policy, including legislation, regulations, executive actions, budgets and Medicaid policies.
- Identify promising state policies and implementation models and assess their potential for replication across different political and geographic environments.
- Translate evidence into actionable recommendations, assessing executive, legislative, regulatory and public-private policy pathways.
- Monitor policy developments across heartland states and recommend new opportunities for Heartland Forward to engage.

Research and Written Products

- Lead or co-lead policy briefs, reports, issue memos, state policy roadmaps, implementation guides and grant applications.
- Develop executive briefings, talking points and presentations for senior Heartland Forward leaders.
- Review and edit materials from colleagues and partners for accuracy, clarity and strategic relevance.

State Engagement and Partnerships

- Build relationships with governors' offices, state agency leaders, legislative staff and policy experts, serving as a trusted, nonpartisan resource.
- Provide research, technical assistance and strategic support to state leaders developing or implementing health policy.
- Design and facilitate convenings, roundtables and multi-state learning opportunities, and ensure outcomes translate into next steps.
- Represent Heartland Forward externally and cultivate national and regional partnerships that expand its reach.

Project Leadership and Team Contributions

- Lead policy projects from concept through execution, including work plans, milestones, deliverables and coordination with partners, consultants and grantees.

- Support grant development, funder reporting and tracking of outcomes against organizational strategy and funder commitments.
- Mentor Policy Analysts and junior team members and help establish standards for policy tracking, research quality and knowledge management.
- Collaborate across Heartland Forward's Health & Wellness, Talent Pipeline and Regional Competitiveness portfolios.

Required qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in public policy, public health, political science, economics, law, public administration or a related field.
- 5-7 years of relevant experience in government, public policy, health policy, research, consulting, nonprofit or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience analyzing complex policy issues and translating analysis into practical recommendations.
- Excellent research, writing and verbal communication skills.
- Strong understanding of state policymaking and the roles of executive agencies and legislatures.
- Experience independently managing substantive projects and ability to travel.

Preferred qualifications

- Experience in a governor's office, state or federal agency, legislature or national policy organization.
- Health policy expertise, particularly maternal and child health, Medicaid, rural health, health workforce or behavioral health.
- Experience providing technical assistance to state policymakers or leading multi-state initiatives.

Characteristics that support success

- Unquestionable ethics and integrity.
- Self-starter who independently owns significant bodies of work.
- Sound judgment in a fast-moving environment with competing priorities.
- Converts research into practical strategies that state leaders can use.
- Communicates effectively with senior policymakers and maintains discretion with confidential information.
- Team-player, solution-oriented and able to analyze and think critically.

Location

This position is based in-office in Bentonville, Arkansas, and requires travel for state engagements, meetings, and convenings.

Salary and Benefits

Salary range: $90,000–$115,000 annually, depending on qualifications and experience.

Benefits Information: We offer a comprehensive and generous benefits package which includes medical, dental, and vision insurance, a 401 (k) retirement plan and paid time off.

About Heartland Forward

Heartland Forward is a non-profit, policy think-and-do tank that turns ideas into action for states and local communities. Our mission is to accelerate economic growth, change the narrative about the middle of the country and generate $500 million of economic impact to the heartland by 2030. We do this through applied research, community-driven programs, policy and convenings— focusing on regional competitiveness, talent pipeline and health and wellness.

Heartland Forward is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to building and maintaining a culturally diverse workplace. We encourage women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, status of protected veteran, or status as a qualified individual with a disability.