

Heartland Forward



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HEARTLAND FORWARD IS AWARDED \$1,499,931 TO BUILD CAREER PATHWAYS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO NURSING IN THE APPALACHIAN, DELTA, AND NORTHERN BORDER REGIONS

The Workforce Opportunities For Rural Communities Grant is overseen by the Department of Labor (DOL).

Poplar Bluff, MO: [Heartland Forward](#) is partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, Missouri Hospital Association, five major employers, and three educational institutions to build a clear programmatic pathway for secondary students into nursing programs and career apprenticeships, specifically targeting underserved veterans as well as low-income, first-generation, and rural students. To support this work, they have been awarded a \$1,499,931 Workforce Opportunities in Rural Communities Grant, fully funded by the DOL. The Community Funding Accelerator (CFA) supported Heartland Forward in their grant application.

Heartland Forward's project aims to expose 1,050 students to a potential career in nursing, guiding 179 through the program application process, and providing ongoing support such as childcare and transportation as students complete the program. The long-term goal of this project is to see 10% of the students committed and thriving in nursing careers. Heartland Forward will be working in partnership with CFA to implement this work.

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

CFA helps underserved communities access competitive federal grants, elevate education in the workforce, and improve economic mobility. CFA demystifies the competitive federal grants landscape, delivers world-class technical assistance, and drives implementation to scale innovative education and workforce solutions in communities across the U.S. Currently in its pilot phase, CFA has helped 9 coalitions apply for up to \$10 million in federal funding, with the potential to support 1.9 million K-12 students. By the end of its first year, CFA estimates it will have supported 25 grantees to apply for up to \$178 million in federal funding.

"We have heard time and again from legislators, community leaders and patients that the nursing shortage is a major concern with regard to health care," said Maria Rodriguez-Alcala, Program Director for Health and Wellness at Heartland Forward. "We thank the U.S. Department of Labor and CFA for supporting our vision of developing a comprehensive pathway to nursing careers, particularly in rural communities where this is ever-more essential. We can't wait to work with our community partners in getting started!"