

CORI Heartland Rural Innovators Initiative Letter of Commitment Template

The purpose of this letter is to demonstrate your community's commitment to fully engaging in this 18-month initiative. Experience has shown that successful communities bring together a core team of 5-7 decision-making leaders often representing education and workforce development, local government, economic development or chambers, and the private or entrepreneurial sector. Decision-making leaders are individuals with the authority to dedicate staff capacity from their organizations or entities to:

- a) Participate in the assessment and strategy engagements with CORI
- b) Implement activities identified in the strategy phase (e.g. hosting events, launching storytelling campaigns, applying for grants, and hiring entrepreneurship support staff for future programs).

We are not prescribing exactly who should be on your team, but encourage you to consider: whose voice is essential to have at the table, who holds decision-making authority, who understands how to turn ideas into action locally, and who is already building or positioned to build your innovation ecosystem.

At least one letter of commitment from a partner who will participate on the core team is required. It may be signed by a single organization or jointly by multiple partners.

The letter of commitment should reflect your community's unique strengths, challenges, and priorities. Your partner(s) should, where possible, note the staff and resources (such as meeting space) the organization will commit to this effort.

EXAMPLE TEMPLATE - Please adapt to your community and partners:

[DATE]

TO: Center on Rural Innovation (CORI)

Dear CORI Team,

[INSERT INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION] commits to actively participating in the Heartland Rural Innovators Initiative, an 18-month engagement with CORI. Our [LEADERSHIP TEAM, NAME POSITION/PERSON] will dedicate the necessary time and resources needed for active involvement to ensure the success of this initiative in [INSERT COMMUNITY/REGION NAME]

[BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHY THE COMMUNITY IS PURSUING THE OPPORTUNITY AT THIS TIME].

Examples include what challenges or opportunities make this work timely or how it connects to your community's broader economic vision or priorities.

[BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE ROLE THE ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL PLAYS IN THE COMMUNITY AND HOW THEY SEE THEMSELVES CONTRIBUTING TO BUILDING THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM]

Examples include:

- *The local community college plays a central role in workforce development by aligning training programs with employer needs, and would like to build out a makerspace.*
- *The city government sets policies and creates an environment that supports business growth and innovation, and wants to build out an innovation corridor on main street.*
- *An economic development organization that already provides support for entrepreneurs and wants to expand that to tech entrepreneurs.*

We look forward to this opportunity to work with [INSERT LEAD APPLICANT] and CORI on building our tech and innovation ecosystem.

Sincerely,

[Signature(s) of organization and/or multiple partners]