



# Heartland Rural Innovators Initiative: A Tech Economy-Building Cohort in Kansas & Western Missouri

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# Meet your CORI team



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Tech-Based Economic  
Development



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Head of  
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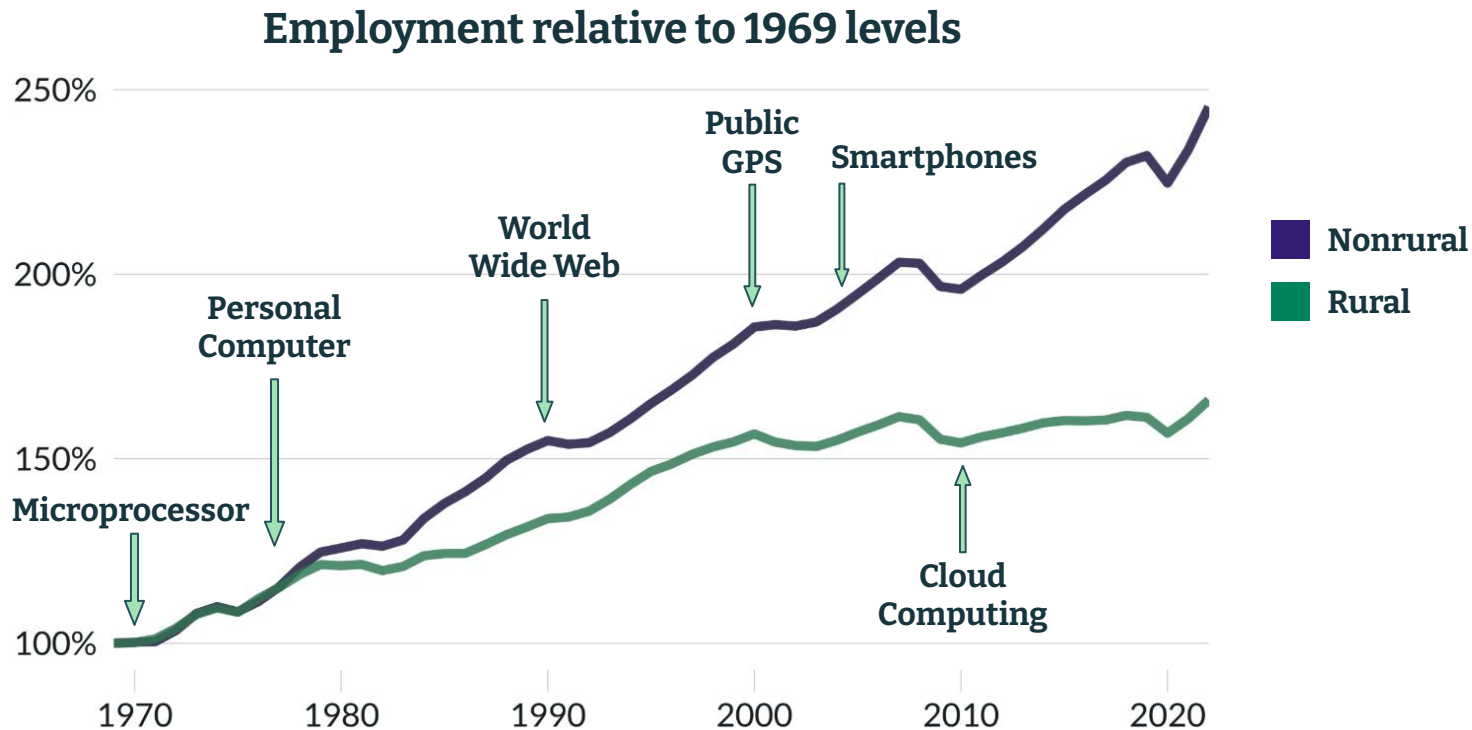
Head of  
Tech-Based Economic  
Development

# CORI and the Patterson Family Foundation are partnering to bring resources and support to rural innovators



**The Heartland Rural Innovators Initiative** is a 14-month program supporting rural communities in Kansas and western Missouri as they grow their tech and innovation economies.

# Rural America has been left behind during the rise of the knowledge economy



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

# Tech-Based Economic Development (TBED) strengthens rural economies



TBED is an economic development approach that helps communities to:

diversify their  
*local economy*

create  
*in-demand tech jobs*

support  
*homegrown innovation*

retain and  
attract *talent*

prepare for the  
*future of work*

# Selected communities will receive tailored support to take action

## Assessment

Benchmark assets, gaps, and opportunities

## Strategy

Roadmap with projects, partners, priorities, and timelines

## Positioning

Preparation for state, federal, and philanthropic funding

## Implementation Support

Guidance to translate recommendations into actions

## Connections

Access to a national network of rural innovation communities

# This process requires dedicated community leadership and collaboration

- **Assessment phase** (months 1–3): Regular meetings with CORI team, data gathering, and stakeholder engagement
- **Strategy phase** (months 3–6): Collaborative workshops, delivery of strategic recommendations, and alignment on priorities
- **Implementation support** (months 7–12): Office hours and targeted technical assistance to pilot programs and/or apply for funding
- **Cohort summit** (timing TBD): An in-person summit with peers to share learnings and successes

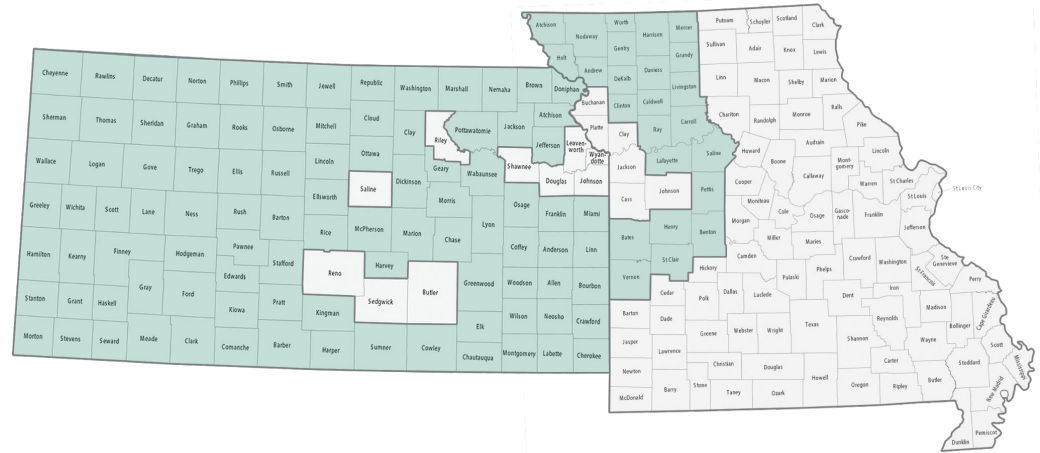


# Eligible communities must demonstrate readiness and commitment

1. Rural communities (<50,000 population), located in the Patterson Family Foundation catchment area

 In PFF catchment — eligible

 Outside PFF catchment — ineligible



2. **Demonstrated local buy-in/support:** local champions, cross-sector leadership, stakeholder engagement with **willingness to build** and rally around a **shared vision**, and **openness to new models** of economic development
3. **Readiness across key indicators** such as broadband access, workforce training assets, and leadership capacity
4. **Commitment** to working with CORI for **up to 14 months**



# Applications are now open!

- Applicants must submit a letter of support from at least one partner organization (template available online)
- Office hours with CORI staff (optional)
  - October 6, 11:30–12:30 CT
  - October 27, 11:30–12:30 CT
- **Deadline to apply: October 31st**
- Selections announced: November 18th



# Questions? Connect with us directly



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