



Rural Democracy Program Manager

[Heartland Fund](#), part of the [Rural Democracy Initiative](#) (RDI), is seeking a Rural Democracy Program Manager. This position requires a strategic thinker who is committed to building a thriving democracy and rural communities. They will develop and manage a portfolio of grantees and inform our grantmaking and capacity building.

We are looking for a collaborative team player with experience building powerful civic and/or political infrastructure that advances community solutions, ideally for rural people and places. This is an exciting and dynamic position with opportunities for advancement and leadership. The successful candidate will be service-oriented, an excellent writer, able to manage competing priorities and deadlines, and balance many strategic considerations.

This is a remote full-time position with a salary range of \$80,000 to \$90,000 and includes a generous benefits package.

APPLY ONLINE

Applications will be reviewed & considered on a rolling basis. Early applications are strongly encouraged. A limited number of screening calls & interview spots will be filled starting in late February. The desired start date is April 2025.

About the Organization

The [Heartland Fund](#), part of the [Rural Democracy Initiative](#), is a funding collaborative that connects rural leaders with funders to build powerful, permanent civic infrastructure in small towns, small cities, and rural areas. Heartland's network of grantee partners showcases the dynamic and diverse communities that make up rural America. Building on a long rural tradition of fighting for justice, we surface new voices, ideas, and energy by developing partnerships with groups working in rural communities of color, engaging with young people, and leading bold anti-racist organizing in majority-white communities.

Our coalition of rural innovators and aligned funders is working in more than 25 states across diverse regions. We support rural people working to transform rural America – and therefore the entire country – for decades to come.

Why Rural Democracy

Small town, small city, and rural voters maintain disproportionate power to shape national policy and politics. Historically, a strong coalition of rural farmers and urban laborers advanced progress in this country, but in recent decades the leadership and funding infrastructure for progress has largely withdrawn from non-metro areas. At the same time, anti-democratic interests have invested heavily in rural voters. They've built organizing, policy, and communications machines to spread disinformation and ignite fears among rural electorates, promoting their own agendas to deepen divides.

The Heartland / RDI approach

The Heartland Fund is a 501(c)(3) grantmaking and power building organization that, alongside the 501(c)(4) Rural Victory Fund, comprises the Rural Democracy Initiative. RDI invests in civic engagement infrastructure in small towns and rural areas. Building power in these communities is essential to establishing an enduring pro-democracy, multiracial majority, and implementing the policies required for rural and small city communities to have vibrant, thriving futures.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

The Program Manager will support and help drive Rural Democracy grantmaking and capacity building strategy. They will manage a specific portfolio of grantees. In this portfolio, they will be responsible for cultivating trusting relationships, providing flexible resources, and assessing overall capacity needs. They will recommend timely investments that result in greater power and meaningful policy change for rural communities.

The Program Manager will be supervised by the Rural Democracy Program Officer and work alongside the team to manage grantmaking, build the capacity of our grantee network, communicate learning and success stories, and coordinate with key funding partners. The person holding this position will also work with the team on RDI's affiliated project, Rural Victory Fund (RVF), to advance 501(c)(4) investments.

The Rural Democracy team takes pride in building an organizational culture rooted in learning, collaboration, racial justice, and a deep commitment to our mission. All staff are expected to provide leadership and vision to advance our mission, vision, and core strategies.

Grantmaking & Program Management

- Develop and implement grantmaking strategies for priority states.
- Conduct research and facilitate outreach in specific geographies, communities, and issue areas to fill gaps in our strategy.
- Lead outreach to existing grantees and partners, including check-ins, collecting reports, and participating in site visits.
- Gather, review, and organize grant proposals, reports, and accompanying materials.
- Prioritize and recommend grant awards. Support grant docket preparation.
- Assess impacts and opportunities in partnership with field and funding partners.



Grantee Capacity Building & Resources

- Help assess and identify capacity building needs, offerings, models, and potential partners.
- Support the Program Officer to manage and implement specific capacity building programs. These may include organizing, safety and security, data, fundraising, disinformation defense, management, operations, and/or compliance.
- Manage select capacity building partners, trainers, and consultants to meet grantee needs.
- Provide individual support to grantee organizations - this can range from introducing grantees to funders, or connecting them with other grantees and helpful resources.

Program Support & Management

- Support the Program Officer to meet requests from funders, stakeholders, partners, and aligned organizations.
- Participate in grantee data collection processes including our annual summer survey, bi-annual civic engagement survey, capacity building surveys, and political landscape summary.
- Monitor and update grantmaking data systems in partnership with Grants and Operations Manager.
- Advance program priorities through Program Team Meetings, retreats, grantee surveys, and work and project plans.
- Facilitate grantee access to resources, tools, and capacity building opportunities.
- Provide scheduling support for outreach with grantees and partners as needed.

Communications

- Help the team showcase grantee success stories and lessons learned through external communications: webinars, presentations at conferences, newsletters, websites, articles, annual reports, etc.
- Translate impact stories, photos, quotes, and anecdotes from grantees into compelling content that supports fundraising efforts, including grant proposals and reports for our funders and donors.

Examples of Growth and Development Opportunities:

- Help convene grantees in small and large groups to share, learn, and plan together.
- Partner with aligned funders to make grant recommendations, share state strategy updates, and learn about the field.
- Represent Heartland Fund and Rural Victory Fund in some external settings, including calls, conferences, and convenings of peer funders and rural practitioners.



Qualifications

We realize that great candidates may not have everything on this list. If you believe you would be a great fit for this role, we encourage you to apply.

Heartland Fund is seeking a strategic and ambitious team member who is excited to work in an entrepreneurial, fast paced, and creative environment. The person should exhibit a high degree of professionalism, initiative, and independence while also being collaborative and team focused. Specifically, the successful candidate will demonstrate:

Essential Skills & Characteristics

- 5+ years of related professional experience in a nonprofit, campaign, intermediary, and/or foundation setting, working on projects with varied deadlines and deliverables.
- Understanding of social change, civic engagement, or political strategy.
- Demonstrated commitment to racial justice and fluency with equity and anti-racist practices.
- Strong writing and verbal communication skills, with an ability to clearly communicate an organization's mission and impact.
- Excellent relationship management skills with diverse constituencies, and a service orientation in grantee relationships.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively, managing multiple priorities and deadlines effectively with exceptional attention to detail.
- Entrepreneurial and resourceful, a proactive and creative problem-solver.
- Connection to and passion for rural people and places.

Preferred Skills & Knowledge

- Experience in the philanthropic sector and with grantmaking.
- Familiarity with a broad range of digital platforms and tools including Monday.com, Google Suite, Airtable, and Slack.
- An understanding of rural and small town America derived from either lived, professional, and/or volunteer experience.
- 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofit program management experience.

Compensation & Job Design

This is a full-time, exempt position. The organization is virtual, and the position will work remotely from their home within the United States. **Expected compensation will be based on skills and relevant experience, with a starting salary range of \$80,000 to \$90,000.**

The comprehensive benefits package includes 100% employer-paid health, dental, and vision insurance for employees (and their families). Employees are able to enroll in a 401k retirement plan and are eligible for a 3% automatic contribution and up to a 3% employer match on 401k contributions. Employees are also eligible for pre-tax transportation benefits. Employees will



receive 120 hours of vacation time, 80 hours of health leave, up to 2 days of casual leave, and 20 hours of volunteer leave annually. Employees will also receive 13 paid holidays throughout the calendar year. Employees are eligible for 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave after 90 days of employment. All employees of Windward are required to complete timesheets.

Heartland Fund is a project of Windward Fund, a 501(c)(3) public charity that incubates new and innovative public-interest projects and grantmaking programs. Windward Fund is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional people and to creating a work environment that is dynamic, rewarding and enables each of us to realize our potential. Windward Fund's work environment is safe and open to all employees and partners, respecting the full spectrum of race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, and all other classifications protected by law in the locality and/or state in which you are working.

The individual holding this position will also work part-time for an affiliated project, Rural Victory Fund, in Sixteen Thirty Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization, under a resource-sharing agreement between Windward Fund and Sixteen Thirty Fund. The responsibilities under that position will be overseen by Sixteen Thirty Fund.

Windward participates in [E-Verify](#) and will provide the federal government with employees' Form I-9 information to confirm authorization to work in the United States. Job candidates and employees authorized to work [may not be discriminated against](#) on the basis of national origin or citizenship status.

How to Apply

Applications will be reviewed and considered on a rolling basis. A limited number of screening calls and interview spots will be filled starting in late February. **Early applications are strongly encouraged.** Desired start date by April 2025. Apply by submitting a cover letter and résumé to: <https://cloversearchworks.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0pzow>.

In your cover letter we are interested in learning why you are interested in this specific role at this time in your career, more about your connection to rural people and places, and the unique skills and talents you bring to this position. **Anticipating a lot of applications, candidates who demonstrate persuasive communications skills will stand out in the process.**



The Heartland Fund is partnering with [Clover Search Works](#) on this search. Questions regarding this opportunity are welcomed and can be directed to sumi@cloversearchworks.com.

