



# Theory of Change

## HOME REGION PROGRAM: NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

### Enhancing Economic Opportunity

#### CULTIVATING A CAREER-READY WORKFORCE

Northwest Arkansas has outpaced state and national averages for employment growth, yet median household income lags behind peer regions. At the same time, critical industries, such as healthcare, IT and construction face growing workforce shortages. There are gaps between the region's projected talent needs and the preparation offered through current K-12, postsecondary and adult learning institutions.

Without better alignment between education and industry, too many residents risk being left out of the region's economic progress. A coordinated and responsive workforce system is key to helping students and young adults prepare for high-quality jobs and supporting long-term regional growth.

### What we plan to do



**Expand reskilling and upskilling opportunities**



**Strengthen education and job training to grow a skilled, job-ready regional workforce**



**Facilitate coordination between education and industry**

### How we plan to do it



Invest in programs that teach new skills to unemployed or underemployed residents in industries driving future economic growth.



Fund programs that enable career awareness, exploration and immersion for students in kindergarten through college.



Support organizations that effectively coordinate employers, educators and other stakeholders to identify and fill workforce needs.

### Why we do it

Early exposure helps students navigate career pathways and build relevant skills.



High-quality jobs provide residents with a pathway to greater economic mobility.



Cross-sector collaboration ensures programs are responsive to evolving business needs and rapid technological advancements.

