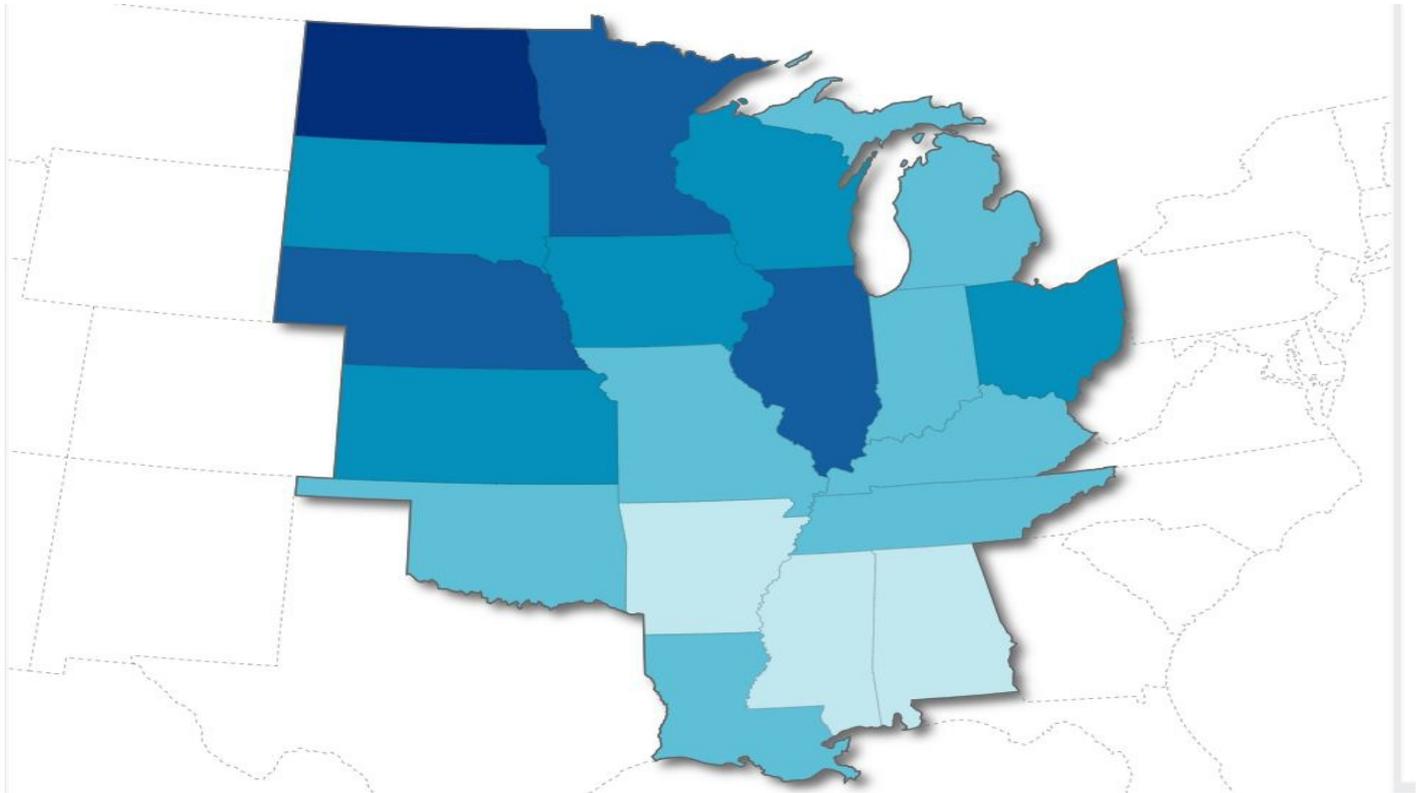




# Are Missouri's Neighbors Passing It By?

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As a general rule, it isn't wise to spend too much time worrying about keeping up with the neighbors. But we might make an exception to that rule for Missouri, especially in light of a new report that shows how weak our economy is relative to other states in the region.

The [State of the Heartland Factbook 2018](#), a joint effort by the Walton Family Foundation and the Brookings Institution, uses 26 different socioeconomic measures to detail the performance of the 19 states that compose America's Heartland. This data is compiled into the [full report](#), and is accompanied by an interesting [interactive database](#).

This new information makes it easy to compare Missouri to the other states in our region. However, the comparison is hardly flattering. The two best examples of Missouri's stagnation are the change over time in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is the total value of everything produced by the people and companies of the state, and standard of living. Measuring the change in GDP from 2010 to 2016, Missouri only grew faster than two nearby states (Mississippi and Louisiana), averaging a 0.8 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR). Most of the other states had a CAGR of over 1.0 percent.

Standard of living (which the authors measure as GDP per capita) showed practically identical results, with Missouri once again coming in third from the bottom (again ahead of only Mississippi and Louisiana). While Missouri showed a positive CAGR of 0.5 percent in standard of

living, the majority of the states where data was reported averaged at least a 1.0 percent CAGR from 2010 to 2016.

The story was the same with regard to wage growth. Missouri held its popular position of third from the bottom, a CAGR of 0.4 percent from 2010 to 2016.

Clearly, there is work to be done in Missouri if we want to climb to a position where we are competitive with the states surrounding us. Policy initiatives that spur economic growth will be key in helping turn the Show-Me state into a better place to work and live.

## About the Author



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[2] <http://factbook.theheartlandsummit.org/>

[3] [http://factbook.theheartlandsummit.org/assets/pdf/Heartland\\_Factbook\\_2018\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://factbook.theheartlandsummit.org/assets/pdf/Heartland_Factbook_2018_Full_Report.pdf)

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Advancing liberty with responsibility by promoting market solutions for Missouri public policy.

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