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The Rust Belt Needs Capital to Turn Talent and Innovation Into Jobs.

Since Rust Belt voters tipped the results of the 2016 election, interest in effective strategies for supporting new business and job growth in this important region has intensified.

Such interest recognizes that the states of the upper Midwest share more than their swing state status. A unique economic and social development storyline unites the industrial heartland, extending across all or part of 12 states from Minnesota and Missouri in the West, through the Great Lakes and up the Ohio River Valley to Western New York, and to Pennsylvania and West Virginia in the East. The region has many economic challenges, but also boasts important economic strengths, perhaps none as important as the tremendous innovation and talent emerging from its companies and universities.

Yet a lack of risk capital in the Rust Belt has held back the region's capacity to translate its formidable innovation and talent assets into new businesses and jobs. That's beginning to change, but public policies could do much more to accelerate the development of a robust innovation infrastructure equal to the Midwest's potential.

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The Brookings Institute

by John C. Austin

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