



2017 SRDC Plan of Work & 5 Year Priorities

In October 2016 at the annual meeting of the SRDC Board of Directors and Technical Operations and Advisory Committee (TOAC), the SRDC was given guidance to help set the course for the next five years. Based on a survey distributed throughout the region in the early months of 2016, the following broad priorities were established to guide efforts:

5 Year Plan Priorities:

- Develop Pathways for Vibrant Communities
- Build Strategic Partnerships
- Mobilize Resources around Emerging Issues

With these three broad priorities as the framework, the FY2017 Plan of Work was established. The section below details the specific plans under each priority that will be given attention in the coming year.

2017 Plan of Work

Develop Pathways to Vibrant Communities

- **Continue to support initiatives that help communities/regions to identify strategies for moving forward (SET, LEAD, etc.).** Based on the successful launching of existing programs, SRDC will continue to provide leadership to expand these programs. Showcase initiatives include Stronger Economies Together (SET) and Leadership in Economic Development Alliance (LEAD), programs conducted in partnership with USDA Rural Development.
- **Showcase how data, benchmarks, metrics & technology can help community/regions assess progress.** Work will continue to refine the data and metrics that serves as the backbone of the SET initiative. Additionally, SRDC will continue to serve on the National Community Development Impact Team and help to coordinate regional impact measure documentation in the region.
- **Share programs, projects, activities that communities/regions are using to successfully reach their goals.** The SRDC will continue to work alongside the Community Development State Program Leaders in the South on the monthly webinar series. The series showcases a different southern-led community development project each month, rotating presenters throughout the southern region.

Build Strategic Partnerships

- **Objectives:**
 - Identify existing partners, assess gaps and assets
 - Create or enhance partnerships among LGU, Non-LGU, private foundations, and governmental agencies
 - Coordinate Research & Extension teams around top priorities
 - Explore multiple methods such as new technologies

- Encourage inclusiveness
 - Connect Extension to communities and non-traditional partners
 - Use relationships to leverage financial, human capital & technological resources
 - Reduce barriers to multi-sector partnerships
- **Action Plan:** In order to accomplish the objectives above (some of which have overlapping actions), the SRDC will:
 - Schedule quarterly meetings in Washington, DC engaging both federal and non-federal partners on issues key to the South
 - Regularly check with key stakeholders (State Program Leaders, Association of Southern Region Extension Directors, Association of Research Directors, Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, Association of Extension Administrators, TOAC, etc.) in the region on any emerging topics that may need immediate response (such as the work with ECOP on Civil Discourse on Race Relations)
 - Examine new technologies that can enhance participation in times when travel funds may limit participation
 - Monitor involvement from all of the region's LGUs on regional initiatives around community development to explore opportunities to engage those that are less connected
 - Build out a draft list of potential partners around 3-5 of the top priority areas identified in the 2016 survey of the region
 - The SRDC director will complete visits to each of the LGUs in the region, a process begun in 2016

Mobilize Resources around Emerging Needs/Issues/Opportunities

- **Inventory research available to inform practitioners about programs to foster collaboration (i.e. through existing SERAs, grant proposals).** SRDC will explore existing SERA's focused on community development initiatives and explore with NIFA opportunities to identify researchers in the South in order to strengthen collaboration.
- **Develop and share training materials (grab & go) to build Extension capacity in community engagement areas.** Working with the Southern Region CRD State Program Leaders, SRDC will develop a toolkit of materials that can be used for single or multiple sessions with communities.
- **Open channels of communication through civic forums, asset mapping, conflict resolution, etc.** SRDC will continue to infuse techniques and tools into its practices and resources to foster a more engaged community development process. Particular emphasis will be given to the area of civil dialogue around race relations in response to ECOP's charge to the Rapid Response Team which Rachel Welborn (SRDC Program Manager) chaired.
- **Utilize multi-technological platforms to engage partners.** SRDC will explore ways to work through technology to facilitate greater involvement.
- **Coordinate interaction with NIFA on reports of state activities in user-friendly & comparable format.** SRDC will coordinate opportunities to discuss the needs of the

Southern region with NIFA in order to facilitate linkages with potential research/Extension partners to address emerging needs.

Capacity-Building and Other Support Activities

The SRDC will continue to undertake a variety of activities to keep its stakeholders (especially our region's 29 land-grant universities) aware of key rural development opportunities and activities. Collectively, these efforts are designed to help strengthen the capacity of our region's land-grant schools to focus on high priority rural development research and Extension outreach efforts. Among these activities are to:

- *Provide assistance to the National Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Center (NARDeP) initiative along with the three other Regional Rural Development Centers*
- *Provide leadership to the southern CRD State Program Leaders in establishing regional CRD indicators*
- *Collaborate with the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) to provide capacity building opportunities across the land-grant system in community development*
- *Expand the research partnerships within the Southern Region by expanding the database of Southern research professionals exploring key rural development issues, examining current multi-state research teams around rural development issues and seeking new opportunities to expand capacity*
- *Maintain active communication with land-grant faculty and other clientele in the South. This will be done by the following channels:*
 - Provide timely information on a variety of rural development-relevant matters via the SRDC website
 - Publish *Around the South* newsletter on a monthly basis, a newsletter that provides information on a host of rural development issues relevant to the South and nation;
 - Participate on bi-monthly calls of Extension community development program leaders in the Southern region
 - Assist in coordinating the annual meeting of the community development program leaders carried out as part of the Southern Region Program Leadership Network (PLN) conference, as well as work with the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED) and Association of Extension Administrators (AEA) in managing all the logistics associated with the PLN meeting
 - Meet with the regional leadership of the 1862 and 1890 research and Extension leaders in the South to help inform and guide their rural development efforts in their states
 - Host quarterly calls of the SRDC Board of Directors and the Technical and Operational Advisory Committee (TOAC), and organize an annual face-to-face meeting of these two groups in the region to ensure that the Center continues to meet the research and Extension outreach needs of its primary audiences
 - Participate, as needed, in community/rural development efforts of land-grant institutions in the region

- Maintain strong working ties and interactions with the SRDC's sister Regional Rural Development Center staff, with NIFA and with other federal partners who can further advance the work of the SRDC in the Southern region