

## REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



ADVANCING THE  
ECONOMIC HEALTH  
OF RURAL AMERICA



## REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

### Building New Economic Opportunities

The Regional Rural Development Centers are a trusted source of economic and community development data, decision tools, education, and guidance in our nation's rural communities.

The Regional Rural Development Centers form a one-stop-shop to connect to the nationwide network of land-grant college and university researchers, educators, and practitioners to provide sound information and hands-on, community-level training. The training helps rural communities make science-based decisions about their community and economic development investments.

### Who We Are

The Regional Rural Development Centers link research with outreach in the areas of rural economic development. Each Center serves a region of the U.S. and uses its regional network of land-grant universities to conduct research and develop Extension education and outreach programs for the benefit of communities.

The four Regional Rural Development Centers are:

#### **Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development**

Hosted by The Pennsylvania State University

#### **North Central Regional Center for Rural Development**

Hosted by Michigan State University

#### **Southern Rural Development Center**

Hosted by Mississippi State University

#### **Western Rural Development Center**

Hosted by Utah State University

## REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

### Providing Cutting-Edge Research on Public Policy Issues

The Regional Rural Development Centers organized and coordinate the National Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Center (NARDeP) to provide information about the increasingly contentious and complex agriculture and rural development U.S. policy issues.

NARDeP's current signature areas are:

- Energy and the Environment
- Food Systems Development
- Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

In addition, NARDeP supports research that cuts across policy issues related to the farm and agriculture sectors; the environment; rural families; households and economies; and consumers, food, and nutrition.

Initially funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, NARDeP engages land-grant universities and national organizations, agencies, and experts to develop and deliver timely, policy-relevant information on the signature areas listed above.

The NARDeP website hosts a number of timely policy briefs, data briefs, working papers, and webinars on topics related to its signature areas.

Access the website at: [nardep.info](http://nardep.info).





## REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

### Strengthening Regional Economic Development

Rural communities increasingly struggle to compete economically in a highly competitive skills-based global market. Research shows that single community and county focused economic development is less successful and sustainable. Today's rural communities must think, plan, and act regionally to gain a foothold in the marketplace.

**To help rural communities in designing and implementing a viable regional economic development blueprint, the Regional Rural Development Centers have:**

- Guided multi-county regions in discovering and building on their unique regional assets and comparative advantages.
- Helped rural regions build their strategies on broad-based partnerships that are grounded in regional cooperation rather than regional competition.
- Established and nurtured strong working partnerships with USDA Rural Development and Cooperative Extension that have resulted in the successful launching of SET (Stronger Economies Together) in 32 states and over 80 multi-county regions, which in turn have leveraged \$588 million in funding to support their work.
- Generated cross-regional data profiles that explore competitive advantage, impact of economic crises such as plant shutdowns, and regional economic leakages through intricate data resources and tools.
- Edited the ground-breaking peer-reviewed book, Targeting Regional Economic Development (Goetz, Deller & Harris) which informed the development of SET.
- Fostered cross-state sharing of impactful community development programming to strengthen regional capacity

**Details about SET can be found on the project website:**  
[srdc.msstate.edu/set](http://srdc.msstate.edu/set)



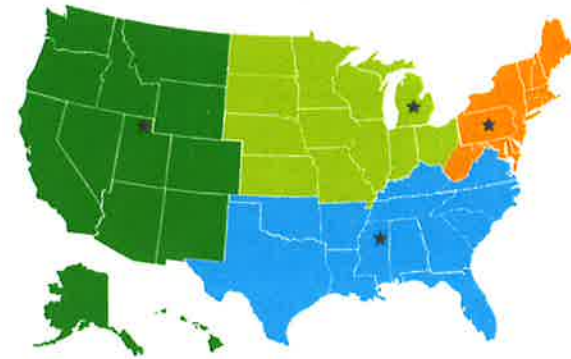
## REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

### Improving Sustainability

**The Regional Rural Development Centers are involved in a variety of programs to improve sustainability.**

- The Western Rural Development Center conducts sustainability training for Extension Professionals on topics related to food, water, land, energy and climate/air. A 2016 training was held in Portland, Oregon. Beginning in 2018, this program will go national.
- The Southern Rural Development Center is facilitating an AFRI Seed Grant designed to build collaboration around local & regional food systems in the South through research and Extension partnerships. Over 300 professionals from within the land-grant university system have been identified, and goals are set to move the collaboration forward.
- The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development has conducted path-breaking research which shows that Cooperative Extension programs have contributed to saving at least 137,000 farms nationally over the last 25 years. The research demonstrates the critical importance of Extension in sustaining food production capacity in the nation.

# REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



## **Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development**

Stephan Goetz, Director  
sgoetz@psu.edu  
nercrd.psu.edu



## **North Central Regional Center for Rural Development**

Mark Skidmore, Director  
mskidmor@msu.edu  
nccrd.org



## **Southern Rural Development Center**

Steve Turner, Director  
steve.turner@msstate.edu  
srdc.msstate.edu



## **Western Rural Development Center**

Don Albrecht, Director  
don.albrecht@usu.edu  
wrdc.usu.edu



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture



The Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) are regionally focused centers competitively funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each Center links the research and extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to address a wide range of rural development issues. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or their host institutions. The RRDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or veteran status.