

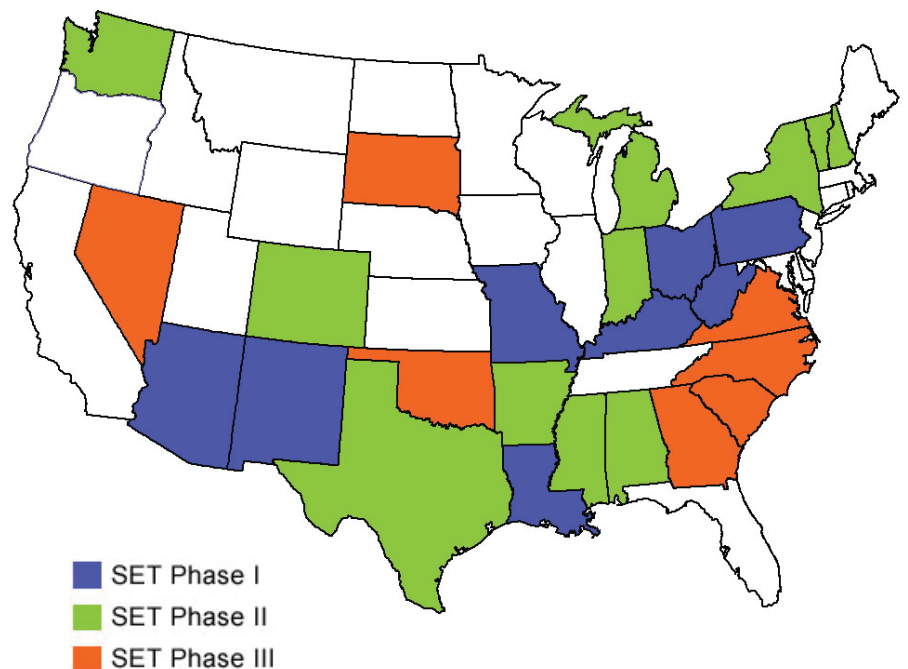


# Stronger Economies Together

## WHAT IS SET?

Stronger Economies Together (SET) enables communities and counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of that region.

Creating, attracting and retaining jobs as a single rural county, in isolation from other nearby counties, is becoming increasingly ineffective. In today's global marketplace, economic development progress is more likely to be realized when rural and metro counties work together as a region to assess their resources and then design and implement plans that build on their assets and comparative economic strengths.



Launched in 2010 by USDA Rural Development and the nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers and their land-grant university partners, this exciting initiative is now in place in nearly 40 regions in 19 states (Phases I and II). Regional teams in seven additional states are joining Phase III in 2012.

## SET BENEFITS

- More than 35 hours of valuable, step-by-step training to guide production of a practical and viable regional economic development plan
- In-depth data tailored to the region, describing its current and emerging clusters, comparative economic advantages, and detailed demographic and socio-economic information
- Tools to uncover local assets and resources that can advance the region's economic strategies
- Up to 40 hours of technical assistance from Extension educators, USDA RD state staff and the Regional Rural Development Centers to guide the implementation of regional goals and strategies
- Opportunity to apply for a special assistance grant to support more advanced regional data analyses or to connect with those with specialized expertise needed to reach your regional goals
- Chance to share information and gather ideas from other SET regions nationwide

## TRAINING PROGRAM OUTLINE

### **The SET Initiative: An Introduction** *(Time: 1 hour)*

- What is SET?
- What it offers to a regional team
- Who's who? State partners and trainers
- Preview of the training program

### **Profiling Your Region** *(Time: 3 hours)*

- Reviewing key elements of SET
- Defining and examining economic development activities
- Examining approaches to defining a region
- Exploring regional demographic features

### **Building a Strong Regional Team** *(Time: 4 hours)*

- Determining elements of a sound team
- Developing a call to action
- Inviting broad participation
- Creating a succession plan
- Exploring habits of highly effective regional teams

### **Developing Your Vision and Goals** *(Time: 4 hours)*

- Defining your vision
- Determining the features of a vision statement
- Developing a vision statement
- Determining the elements of a good regional goals

### **Focusing on Regional Competitive Advantage**

*(Time: 6 hours)*

- Investigating elements that contribute to regional economic advantage
- Exploring data that may help identify regional clusters
- Selecting clusters for further exploration

### **Exploring Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy** *(Time: 4 hours)*

- Identifying economic leaks in the region
- Exploring basic avenues for strengthening clusters
- Providing specific strategies within each avenue
- Selecting potential directions for the region to explore

### **Discovering Regional Assets & Barriers** *(Time: 5 hours)*

- Examining asset-based regional development
- Discovering assets that exist locally
- Pinpointing potential barriers

### **Planning for Success** *(Time: 4 hours)*

- Defining the regional goals
- Identifying the ABCs of success
- Selecting strategies
- Planning for action

### **Measuring for Success** *(Time: 4 hours)*

- Exploring the value of measuring
- Deciding what to measure
- Using measures to promote success
- Tracking appropriate measures
- Creating a regional plan for measuring success

### **Supplementary Modules**

- Community Business Matching Model
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial Capital
- Networking
- Sustainable Communities

[srdc.msstate.edu/set](http://srdc.msstate.edu/set)

## CONTACTS

Suzette M. Agans  
USDA Rural Development  
Community and Economic Development  
Phone: 202.401.1922  
[suzette.agans@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:suzette.agans@wdc.usda.gov)

Bo Beaulieu  
Southern Rural Development Center  
Mississippi State University  
662.325.3207  
[ljb@srdc.msstate.edu](mailto:ljb@srdc.msstate.edu)



Committed to the future of rural communities.

