



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
441 S. Salina Street • 5th Floor • Suite 357 • Syracuse, NY 13202-2425
Phone: (315) 477-6426 • Fax: (315) 477-6448 • TDD: (315) 477-6447 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ny>

Contact: Beverly Von Pless (315) 477-6426
Beverly.vonpless@ny.usda.gov

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE for a new “STRONGER ECONOMIES TOGETHER” Program
(Provides Training and Technical Assistance for Rural Regional Economic Development)
Application Deadline May 13, 2011

Syracuse, April 13, 2011 – USDA, Rural Development, in conjunction with The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, Community and Regional Development Institute (CARDI), Cornell Cooperative Extension, and other state and local partners, invite applications for the “Stronger Economies Together” (SET) program. The SET program is an opportunity for emerging (those coming together for the first time through the SET application process) or recently formed (those that are less than a year old) multi-county teams to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and resources for collaborating as a region to pursue economic development goals. Participants will learn about and receive technical assistance designed to help them utilize the latest research, demographic and economic data, tools, and regional resources to identify, pursue, and ultimately achieve economic opportunities and enhance the region’s overall quality of life.

The NY SET program eligibility requirements are: 1) Applicants must be Multi-county regions (two or more counties) in New York (or in conjunction with counties in neighboring states) where the average rural population is 51% or more of the region’s total population based on Census data or other sufficient data or documentation OR 2) Applicants must be Multi-county regions (two or more counties) in New York (or in conjunction with counties in neighboring states) where 75% of the region’s land area is located in rural areas of that region based on Census data or other sufficient data or documentation.

Applications are available upon request by contacting Beverly Von Pless or Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman as per the contact information below. A complete application must be sent electronically to beverly.vonpless@ny.usda.gov by May 13, 2011 (11:59 pm Central). An acknowledgement of receipt of application will be sent within 2 business days. The selected regions are expected to be announced June 30, 2011.

To help interested communities learn more about the program, an informational webinar, including time for questions and answers, will be available on April 21, 2011 from 11:00am to 12:00pm. To register for the webinar, please contact Beverly Von Pless as per the contact information below. Further instructions will be provided the day before the webinar via the email address you provide in the registration form.

Successful applicants will receive the following: 1) Approximately 35 hours of intensive training designed to help your regional team develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance

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regional economic development activities; 2) Data and tools specifically designed to help the regional team examine the critical drivers of their region and identify emerging growth sectors and regional competitive advantages; 3) Technical assistance and educational support from the Northeast Regional Rural Development Center, Community and Regional Development Center Institute, Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators and Rural Development staff and other state partners; and 4) Opportunities to engage with and learn from the experiences of other SET program participants around the country.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Beverly Von Pless, USDA Rural Development, (315) 477-6426, beverly.vonpless@ny.usda.gov

Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, Extension Associate-Community and Regional Development Institute (CARDI), Associate Director-Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCD), (607) 225-0417, hmm1@cornell.edu

USDA, Rural Development serves as the lead Federal Agency for rural development by offering financial and technical assistance to individuals, businesses and communities. USDA, Rural Development programs include loan guarantees to rural businesses to save and/or create jobs, loan guarantees/grants for renewable energy projects, loans/grants to community facility projects, water and sewer utility projects and for the purchase, construction and repair of residential homes. For more information on programs offered by USDA, Rural Development, contact the New York State Office at (315) 477-6400 or visit its website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/ny