



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development  
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## **Applications Available for a new “Stronger Economies Together” Program (Provides Technical Assistance for Rural Regional Development)**

*Application Deadline May 3, 2010*

*Applications Available at USDA Rural Development’s website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa)*

Harrisburg, March 22, 2010 - USDA Rural Development, in conjunction with The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, the Governor’s Advisory Council on Rural Affairs, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and other state and local partners, has released details of a program called “Stronger Economies Together” (SET), a program designed to help regional teams develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities. The SET program is an opportunity for current or newly formed multi-county teams to receive the latest tools, training, and technical assistance to help their region move forward and take advantage of positive growth and quality of life opportunities. Two rural Pennsylvania multi-county area entities will be chosen.

The SET program eligibility requirements are: 1) Applicants must be Multi-county regions (two or more counties) in Pennsylvania (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 Pennsylvania (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 emailing Robin Lane at [Robin.Lane@pa.usda.gov](mailto:Robin.Lane@pa.usda.gov) or by visiting Rural Development’s web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa). A complete application must be sent electronically to [Robin.Lane@pa.usda.gov](mailto:Robin.Lane@pa.usda.gov) by May 3, 2010 (11:59 pm Eastern). An acknowledgment of receipt of application will be sent within 36 hours. The final decision will be announced by June 8, 2010. There is no application fee, but chosen applicants should be prepared to supply some minor logistical support.

The successful applicants will receive the following: 1) Valuable intensive strategic planning training for their regional team, including the newly developed “Stronger Economies Together” program, a program designed to help your regional team develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities; 2) Database tools specifically designed to help the regional teams 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, Rural Development staff, and Penn State University Extension staff; and 4) Other educational and information-sharing opportunities with other SET program participants around the country.

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If you have questions, please contact:

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USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal agency for rural development needs by offering financial and technical assistance to individuals, businesses and communities. USDA Rural Development programs include funding for day care centers, fire trucks and other community facility projects; the purchase, construction or repair of homes; loans and guarantees to rural businesses to save or create jobs and renewable energy; and loans and grants for water and sewer utility projects. For more information on programs offered by USDA Rural Development, contact the Pennsylvania State Office at (717) 237-2299 or visit its website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa).

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