

Stronger Economies Together

Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

Stronger Economies Together (SET) is an exciting collaboration launched in 2010 by USDA Rural Development along with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) and their land-grant university partners. SET is designed to enable communities and counties in rural America to work together on a multi-county regional basis to develop an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region.

Some important highlights of SET:

- Phase I pilot efforts are in place in 23 multi-county regions located in nine states: Arizona, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.
- In Phase II, SET is expanding to 10 new states in 2011: Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire/Vermont, New York, Texas and Washington.
- State Partner Teams bring together the talents and resources of key state and federal agencies, land-grant university Extension programs, and other organizations to provide training and technical assistance to each of the regional teams.
- Thirty-five (35) hours of SET training will be delivered to each region, a process that guides the development of practical and viable regional economic development strategies. Much of this training involves actual hands-on work on the regional plan by team members.
- Each region receives tailored economic analyses describing the region's current and emerging clusters and its comparative economic advantages.
- To supplement the SET training, each region will receive some targeted technical assistance to help them launch their plans.
- Experiences and insights will be shared among the regions and the State Partner Teams.
- New states and regions are slated to be added in late 2011 as part of Phase III.

If you want to learn more about this exciting regional effort, contact the following:

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Committed to the future of rural communities.



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Training Program Outline

Module One: A Snapshot of SET

(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

Module Two: Regional Economic Development 101

(Time: 3 hours)

- Defining economic development
- Exploring major trends
- Examining your economic development activities
- Defining a region: Different approaches
- Determining key features of successful regions

Module Three: Building a Stronger 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

Module Four: Developing Your Vision and Goals

(Time: 3 hours)

- Defining your vision
- Determining the features of a vision statement
- Developing a vision statement
- Determining the elements of a good regional goal(s)

Module Five: Examining Current Demographic Features of Your Region

(Time: 3 hours)

- Local and regional demographic data: A look at past, present and future features of the region's population
- Features of the regional labor force
- What features/trends mean for your regional economic development goals

Module Six: Exploring Opportunities for a Stronger Regional Economy

(Time: 5 hours)

- Investigating the economic base of the region
- Understanding regional comparative advantages
- Examining tools to identify your regional economic development advantages
- Exploring value-added strategies

Module Seven: Exploring Regional Assets & Barriers

(Time: 4 hours)

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

Module Eight: Planning for Success

(Time: 4 hours)

- Defining the regional goal(s)
- Identifying the ABCs of success
- Selecting strategies
- Planning for action

Module Nine: Measuring for Success

(Time: 3 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

