

Stronger Economies Together: Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

An exciting new initiative is being launched by USDA Rural Development in partnership with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs). The purpose of *Stronger Economies Together* (SET) is to encourage communities and counties in rural America to work collaboratively on a multi-county regional basis in strengthening their regional economies.

Here are some of the important elements of the *Stronger Economies Together* initiative:

- Pilot efforts will be located in 22 multi-county regions in eight target states: Arizona, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia;
- State Partner Teams will bring the talents and resources of key state and federal agencies, land-grant university Extension programs, and other organizations together to provide training and technical assistance to each of the 22 regions;
- Twenty hours of Stronger Economies Together training will guide each region through a process of developing a practical regional economic development strategy. Much of this training will be participatory;
- Economic analysis tailored for each of the 22 regions will delineate the region's comparative economic advantages and its current and emerging economic clusters;
- Technical assistance will be provided to the 22 regions over several months following the training;
- Experiences and insights will be shared among the 22 regions and the eight State Partner Teams.

If you want to learn more about this exciting new initiative, contact the following:

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Committed to the future of rural communities.



Stronger Economies Together

Outline of the Training Program

Module One: A Snapshot of the SET Program (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: 2-2.5 hours)

- Exploring a Changing World: Some Major Trends
- Determining the Implications of These Trends
- Comparing Local and Regional Economic Development
- Looking at Regional Development
- Pinpointing What Should Your Region Do?

Module Three: Building a Strong Regional Team (Time: 2.5 – 3 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: Your Regional Vision & Goals (Time: 2-2.5 hours)

- Defining Your Vision
- Determining the Features of a Vision Statement
- Developing a Vision Statement
- Focusing on Regional Goals

Module Five: Exploring Regional Assets and Barriers (Time: 2 – 2.5 hours)

- Examining asset-based regional development
- Discovering assets that exist locally
- Pinpointing barriers to achieving regional goals
- Reviewing and adjusting regional goals as needed

Module Six: Examining Current Demographic Features of Your Region (Time: 1.5 hours)

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

Module Seven: Exploring the Region's Economic Foundation and Development Opportunities (Time: 2.5 – 3 hours)

- Investigating the economic base of the region: Current economic drivers
- Understanding regional comparative advantages
- Determining your regional economic development advantages: Some key tools
- Exploring Value-Added Strategies

Module Eight: Planning for Success (Time: 2.5 – 3 hours)

- Refining the Goal
- Identifying the ABC's of Success
- Selecting Strategies
- Planning for Action

Module Nine: Measuring for Success (Time: 2.5 – 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