

About the Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program:

In many counties – especially counties with smaller populations – finding ways to create, attract, and retain jobs is a challenging process. Pursuing economic development as a single rural county in isolation from other nearby counties is oftentimes unproductive. In today's global marketplace, economic development progress is more likely to be realized when rural and metro counties work together as a multi-county region to assess, design, and implement plans that build on their assets and comparative economic strengths. That's what the *Stronger Economies Together* (SET) program is all about.

Purpose:

The purpose of SET is to strengthen the capacity of communities/counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region, one that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of that region.



What will SET do for my region?

The SET program helps communities to identify their regional assets and goals and to follow through in implementing their action plans. At the close of the program, regional relationships will be strengthened, regions will be able to function interdependently on shared initiatives, and assets will be more effectively employed. Working at the regional level, rather than the county or city level, provides a stronger asset base and greater opportunities for economic synergies.

What's involved:

- Training
 - 6 core modules
 - Region-specific data and training
 - Identification of regional assets and issues
- Technical Assistance
 - After the SET training
 - Up to 40 hours of assistance from Extension and USDA RD

SET Benefits:

- Tools that uncover local assets and resources to advance your region's economic strategies and actions.
- In-depth data that are tailored to the region, information that helps delineate the critical drivers of your economy
- Valuable training on the core building blocks for community and economic development.
- Coaching and a limited amount of technical assistance.
- Opportunity to share information and gather ideas/insights from other SET regions across the nation.



Stronger Economies Together

Why should I participate in SET?

Individuals and organizations participating in SET will have a role in determining the future of their region. They will also strengthen regional relationships and gain skills that will enable them to better serve their communities as leaders and as economic developers.

When and where will training occur?

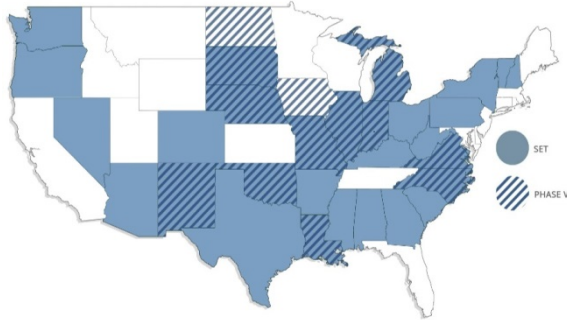
SET workshops will begin in Fall/Winter 2015-16 and will be held in communities within the region. Workshops will cover six modules and will be scheduled to fit the needs of the region.

What is the cost?

There is no cost either for individual team members or for the counties and partnering organizations to participate in SET. However, regions should be prepared to provide logistical support (e.g., facilities and group meals/snacks as needed) for facilitated workshops and to provide their own travel.

SET Success Stories:

- The Texas South Plains region hosted an education and workforce forum with major employers and educators to help address critical workforce needs—before even finalizing their regional plan.
- The Texas LRGV region partnered to survey youth in local schools about their interest in becoming entrepreneurs within region after high school or college graduation. Programs to connect youth to local businesses and resources can be developed based on survey results.
- One New York region created a regional foods system.
- Many regions have found that the SET process supports their EDA-CEDS planning efforts.



SET has been implemented in more than 50 regions in 28 states.

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