

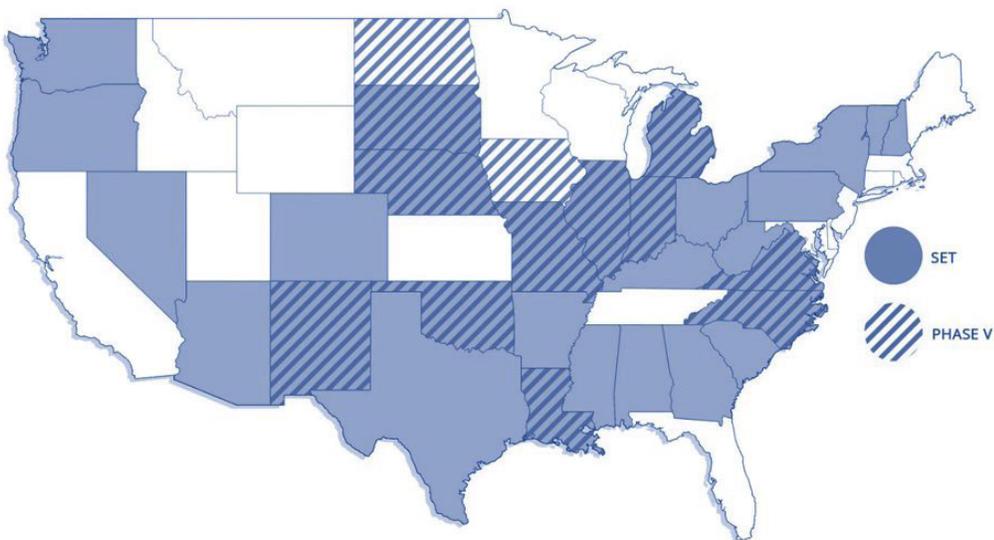


Stronger Economies Together

PURPOSE OF SET

Stronger Economies Together (SET) enables communities and counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of that region.

Creating, attracting, and retaining jobs as a single rural county in isolation from other nearby counties is becoming increasingly ineffective. In today's global marketplace, economic development progress is more likely to be realized when rural and metro counties work together as a region to assess their resources and then design and implement plans that build on their assets and comparative economic strengths.



Launched in 2010 by USDA Rural Development and the nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers and their land-grant university partners, this exciting initiative is now in place in more than 50 regions in 28 states.

BENEFITS OF SET

- Step-by-step coaching to guide the design and implementation of a practical and viable regional economic development plan
- In-depth data tailored to the region, describing its current and emerging clusters, comparative economic advantages, and detailed demographic and socio-economic information
- Tools to uncover local assets and resources that can advance the region's economic strategies, Technical assistance from Extension educators, USDA RD state staff, the Regional Rural Development Centers, and the Purdue Center for Regional Development to guide the initial stages of implementation of regional goals and strategies

PLANNING PROCESS, 6 TO 7 MONTHS

Launching SET through Civic Engagement

(Time: 4 hours)

- Explore in-depth demographic and workforce features of the region
- Identify high priority themes to guide the regional efforts
- *Products:* List of priority areas to address; substantial region-wide engagement in the planning and implementing process

Examining Economic Data for the Region

(Time: 4 hours)

- Define the evidence base for working together as a region
- Identify economic clusters to explore further
- Exploring in-depth regional economic data
- Examine in-depth cluster analysis
- Identify appropriate strategies to build on regional strengths
- *Products:* Draft evidence description for how regional assets and challenges will guide the direction of the regional plan

IMPLEMENTATION: 6 TO 7 MONTHS

- Develop a model for action and accountability
- Design leadership structure appropriate for regional plan implementation
- Identify technical assistance needs for success
- Secure resources needed for success

Exploring the Region's Assets and Challenges

(Time: 4 hours)

- Examine the region's key assets and challenges related to the high priority themes of the civic engagement forum
- Articulate the regional values to guide the work
- *Products:* Review of available assets for action; potential new connections among assets to strengthen relevant work

Developing Goals, Actions, and Measures Based on Consideration of Region's Unique Advantages

(Time: 5 hours)

- Investigate the region's economic advantage
- Explore regional data to identify regional industrial clusters
- Identify appropriate goals, strategies and action to strengthen the region's advantages
- *Products:* Select industry clusters for further exploration if relevant to the region; draft initial goals, strategies and work plan.

Tailored Modules *(Time: varies by module)*

- Tourism
- Food Systems
- Entrepreneurship
- Land Use Planning
- Networking
- Targeted Attraction Strategies

CONTACTS

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