



NEWS RELEASE

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Application Deadline Approaches for Community Economic Assistance

EAST LANSING, April 27, 2015—U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development State Director for Michigan James J. Turner today announced the agency is continuing to accept applications for the Stronger Economies Together (SET) technical assistance program. Applications are due by midnight on May 7, 2015.

“The SET Program teaches regional groups how to work together to identify their own communities’ strengths and weaknesses as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the communities surrounding them” said Turner.

The program is designed to encourage and train regional partners how to plan and implement regional economic strategies. SET includes six months of training and planning workshops to design a high quality regional plan and an additional six months of technical assistance throughout the implementation of the plan.

“More and more communities are starting to understand that the key to economic success is in allowing communities to specialize in what they are good at while building a regional plan to meet all citizen needs” said Turner.

Regional based development plans keep farmers or manufacturing plants located in the communities where they are successful then build the capacity to meet other economic needs in the areas adjoining them.

USDA Rural Development, the Regional Rural Development Centers and Land Grant College extension offices all across the country are partnering with other agencies and private foundations to provide this technical assistance program.

Applications can be requested via email from USDA Rural Development’s Community & Economic Development Coordinator Valarie Handy at valarie.handy@mi.usda.gov or MSU Extension’s State Specialist David Ivan at ivand@msu.edu.

USDA Rural Development State Director for Michigan James J. Turner was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009. USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, has a portfolio of programs designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Under the Obama Administration, USDA Rural Development has invested more than \$6.5 billion in Michigan projects.

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