

Process Used to Revitalize Rural Communities

THE AREA SECTOR ANALYSIS PROCESS

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Introduction

The residents of many rural communities are faced with troubling economic concerns. On average, in rural communities compared to urban communities, incomes are lower, unemployment greater and poverty more extensive. To help address these economic problems, the Area Sector Analysis Process (ASAP) was developed by a team of researchers and Extension professionals from throughout the western region. The goal of ASAP is to help communities achieve sustainable economic development. The ASAP model does this by considering the goals and desires of community residents and the infrastructure, workforce, and other assets available within the community. The ASAP model also considers the needs and potential benefits of various businesses and industries. The model then matches businesses and industries that are both desirable to community residents and where the community is compatible with industry needs.

ASAP aids communities with both short-term and long-term planning. For the short-term, the ASAP model provides a list of industries that are both desirable and compatible. The community can seek to immediately develop these industries. ASAP also aids long-term planning by showing which assets are lacking that if developed could make the community compatible with other desired industries.

The implementation of ASAP involves the ASAP regional team working with a local coordinator and a steering committee comprised of local community members. The ASAP process involves six modules lasting about two hours each. Much of the time consists of working through ASAP output to determine which industries to pursue and how in developing an economic development plan. Since its inception, ASAP has been successfully implemented in Arizona, California, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, and Utah. At the present time, the model is being used in a number of other communities.

ASAP in Utah

Recently, ASAP was implemented in Wayne County, Utah (see *Rural Connections* 9:2). Based on the success of the Wayne County ASAP program, a number of other Utah counties have started or will soon start the process. Specifically, ASAP is underway in Grand County (Moab). ASAP will soon begin in Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, and Sevier Counties. Together with Wayne County, these counties comprise the Six County Association of Governments. In addition to a separate analysis for each county, the Six County project will include a regional analysis



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where data from all six counties are considered simultaneously. Additionally, ASAP is set to begin in Lewiston, Utah, a small rural community in Cache County. The Lewiston process provides the ASAP team with a first-time opportunity to conduct the process in a community within the larger county where the needs and opportunities of that community are very different from the larger county in which the community is located.

The expansion of ASAP in Utah has been made possible by involvement of a number of partners. In particular, funding for the process has been provided by the Utah Governor's Office for Economic Development (GOED), Southern Utah University, and Snow College.

ASAP in New Mexico

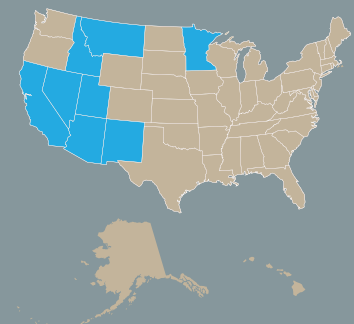
For several years, the Regional Rural Development Centers, USDA Rural Development, and Cooperative Extension have partnered on SET ([Stronger Economies Together](#)). The SET program consists of multi-county regions working together to develop a high quality economic development plan. Thus far, SET has been conducted in 58 different regions in 26 states. Dr. Michael Patrick of New Mexico State University has utilized the SET program in five regions in New Mexico. After going through the SET process, Cibola County implemented ASAP as a complement. ASAP will provide a list of desirable and compatible industries that can become targets on the SET strategic economic development plan.

ASAP in Idaho

Dr. Paul Lewin of the University of Idaho issued a call for applicants to participate in ASAP in Idaho. The application of Valley County, Idaho, has been accepted. A steering committee has been assembled and they are ready to begin the ASAP program. For more details about ASAP, contact Don Albrecht at don.albrecht@usu.edu.

STATES WITH ASAP COMMUNITIES:

- Arizona
- California
- Idaho
- Minnesota
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- Utah



■ STATES WITH ASAP COMMUNITIES



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