Workshop: Evaluating the Economic Impacts of Local and Regional Food Systems: a Food LINC Project

March 29, 2017
10:10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
*Opening Session: 8:30 a.m.

Agricenter International
7777 Walnut Grove Road
Memphis, TN 38120

Are you an economic development official, local policy maker or community planner interested in examining the benefits offered by local and regional food systems?

If so, please join the Growing Food Connections and the USDA Economics of Local Food Systems Toolkit team for a one-day workshop: Evaluating the Economic Impacts of Local and Regional Food Systems: a Food LINC Project. Centered on a toolkit developed to help community leaders make informed decisions, the workshop will give you a new framework and methodologies to evaluate the economic impacts of investing in the local/regional food system.

Goals for Workshop:
• Help you measure the economic impacts of local food investments;
• How the results of the analysis can be used to advance local food systems;
• Share best practices, community case studies, and applied research;
• Support rigorous assessment of food system activities;
• Develop a roadmap to evaluate potential contributions and/or impacts.

Toolkit Project Team
• Dawn Thilmany (Coordinator), Colorado State University
• David Conner, University of Vermont
• Steve Deller, University of Wisconsin
• David Hughes, University of Tennessee
• Ken Meter & Megan Phillips Goldenberg, Crossroad Resource Center
• Alfonso Morales, University of Wisconsin
• Todd Schmit, Cornell University
• David Swenson, Iowa State University
• Allie Bauman, Rebecca Hill & Becca Jablonski, Colorado State University

There is no cost to attend and lunch will be provided. Contact Brenda Williams brenda.williams@communitiesu.org To register. The main workshop is limited to 32 participants so please register early to reserve your spot. The opening session is limited to 100 participants.
Communities Unlimited began in 2014, by bring together the services of Community Resource Group and alt.Consulting. It is an economic development corporation centered on fundamental infrastructure services and entrepreneurial growth strategies. Communities Unlimited serves seven southern states: Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Alabama.

Workshop Presenters:

**David W. Hughes** is Professor and Greever Chair of Agribusiness Development in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economic sat the University of Tennessee. Past and current areas of outreach and research include agribusiness-based economic development, rural entrepreneurship with an emphasis on agribusiness, and economic impact analysis, primarily for agribusiness-based activities. David holds a PhD from Washington State University.

**Margarita Velandia** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics at the University of Tennessee. Her research and extension activities have focused on decision-making processes in the general context of production economics and farm management especially with regards to precision farming, technology adoption, risk management, switchgrass as an energy crop, locally grown foods, and the adoption of alternative crops to replace tobacco production. Margarita holds a PhD from Texas Tech State University.

**Steven C. Deller** is Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin. His long-term research interest includes modeling community and small regional economies to better understand the changing dynamics of the economy, assess the impact of those changes, and identify local economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Steve holds a PhD from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Debra Tropp** is the Deputy Director for Local Food Research and Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Agricultural Market Service Division. She is responsible for providing direction and content of the Division’s research products and outreach materials related to analyzing local food systems, trends, and impacts. Deb holds a Masters in Economic and Political Development from Columbia University.
Workshop Agenda:

8:00-8:30 a.m.  Registration and Coffee

8:30-10:00 a.m.  Opening Session Welcome (Open to workshop participants & others)

   Opening Session:
   - Overview of the AMS Toolkit
   - Why did AMS decide to fund this now?
   - Project Overview
     - Communities Unlimited: Food LINC Project
   - Overview of the day’s agenda

10:00–10:15 a.m.  Break (Workshop Start)

10:15-10:45 a.m.  Structuring the assessment process (Module 1)

10:45-11:30 a.m.  Using secondary data sources, when to do primary data collection, and best practices with surveying (Modules 2&3)

11:30-12:00 p.m.  How to interpret data (Module 4)

12:00-1:00 p.m.  Lunch (free box lunch provided) and networking (chance to ask questions)

1:00-1:30 p.m.  Introduction to economic impact assessments and defining key terms (Module 5)

1:30–2:00 p.m.  What to look for in a ‘good’ study? (Modules 6&7)

2:00-2:10 p.m.  Break

2:10-3:00 p.m.  Discussion:
   - Applying what’s been learned to participant’s projects
   - Recap identifying what makes a good study

Questions?