HOST NAME: Southern Tier West Regional Planning & Development Board

HOST BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Southern Tier West (STW) is the chartered regional planning and development entity serving Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua Counties in the southwestern portion of New York State. Our service area also includes three territories of the Seneca Nation of Indians. The region encompasses over 3,200 square miles of mostly rural landscape populated with approximately 230,000 people residing in small towns and villages. The mission of the agency is to coordinate and enhance planning and development activities within the region to promote social, physical, and economic development. STW seeks to improve the quality of life for the region’s people and assure that the people of the region have access to adequate occupational, educational, and recreational opportunities, a safe environment, access to health care services and housing, sound public safety and transportation routes. Southern Tier West’s staff work in program areas that include economic development, food system development, GIS asset management, transportation planning, rural health care planning, local government assistance, broadband buildout, watershed management, and grant assistance. The region is located in the northern end of the federally designated area known as Appalachia, and Southern Tier West acts as the Local Development District on behalf of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

INTERNSHIP POSITION TITLE: Food System Analyst Intern

INTERNSHIP POSITION / PROJECT CONTEXT: Southern Tier West’s food system development project work was initiated in 2011 when ARC prioritized rebuilding local and resilient food systems using an asset-based approach to development. The goals of the local program are to 1) increase the profitability of consumer-direct farm growers and value-added food processors and, 2) increase consumer access to fresh, local farm and food products. Southern Tier West works with diverse stakeholders including farmers, value-added food processors, slaughterhouses, community and public health organizations, institutional and wholesale buyers, farmers markets, Amish communities, agriculture service agencies and Extension associations, income assistance agencies, state and national food system/food security affiliations, planners, and consultants. Southern Tier West has received funding from ARC, NYS Dept. of Ag and Markets, and USDA to advance food system development work, including performing a food hub feasibility study, development of a regional brand and promotion program, a regional meat processing assessment, and increasing the use of SNAP at farmers markets.

Near-term project work includes a 2016 update to the regional food guide, implementation of the USDA Farmers Market SNAP Support Grant program, implementation of recommendations contained in the meat processing study, technical assistance to the region’s farmers markets, and planning a regional “meat summit” to take place summer 2016.

INTERNSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION: The Food System Analyst Intern will work closely with Southern Tier West’s Regional Development Coordinator/Food System Projects Manager and with the Local Food Projects Specialist on the following activities:

Mobile Farmers Market Feasibility Study: Southern Tier West hosts the STW Regional Farmers Market Network, a peer resource network for the region’s 20+ farmers markets,
managers, and vendors. While consumer demand for local food continues to be strong and is a key economic driver in a farmer’s profitability, consumer purchasing trends within the region are beginning to shift slightly away from farmers markets to other sales outlets. There are many areas of the region that are not served by a farmers market that may also be situated in areas of high percentage of SNAP households. Several established farmers markets are considering changing their model from a once weekly location in a community to “mobile market” model that would make short stops at multiple locations in one day(s). In order to inform and assist our constituents appropriately, the Food System Analyst Intern would work with staff to conduct research, perform analysis, and produce a summary report related to the startup of a mobile farmers market, especially as the model relates to serving areas with high percentage of SNAP households.

**Farmers Market Business Assessment** The Food System Analyst Intern will work with program staff to conduct a comprehensive business assessment of the eight currently operating farmers markets that are not certified to accept SNAP payments. Information learned and summarized will inform staff’s work to assist several of these markets to become SNAP certified for the 2017 season. This activity supports STW’s implementation of the USDA Farmers Market SNAP Support Grant.

**General Food System Development Support** The Food System Analyst Intern may also choose to assist or shadow STW staff in their food system development work to gain greater exposure to the region’s food system assets. Opportunities include assisting with startup organizational activities for two newly proposed farmers markets, assisting with planning and implementation of the region’s first “meat summit” tentatively slated for August 2016, shadow attendance at meetings, updates to the 2016 version of the local food guide, social media message and content development, and technical assistance consultations at farms and farmers markets.

Southern Tier West’s entire staff will be available to assist in any part of these projects, including GIS mapping. This internship opportunity will provide the successful applicant with well-rounded exposure to all the program areas in which Southern Tier West works.

Southern Tier West will provide the Intern with a laptop, private office, desk phone, supplies, and access to the company vehicle when available and needed for field work.

**BASIC QUALIFICATIONS AND PREFERRED EXPERIENCE:**
- Effective and professional writing; traditional and digital communication skills
- Ability to conduct field research, manage data, and perform multi-level analyses to draw evidence-based conclusions
- Demonstrates initiative and leadership qualities
- Proven ability to self-direct work schedule and productively work independently
- Comfortable working in professional office as well as “in the field”
- Ability to utilize Microsoft suite of applications and programs
- Driver’s license valid in New York State
- Basic understanding of food systems and value chains, concepts of food justice and food security, and community and rural development principles

**INTERNSHIP SCHEDULE:** The Food System Analyst Intern will devote 80% (32 hours) of a standard 40-hour week to project work for Southern Tier West. It is understood that the remaining 20% of the Intern’s time will be spent working on a community engagement project with the CLS NYS Internship Program and that STW is flexible in how the Intern chooses to arrange the release time. Please note:
the nature of working with farmers markets may mean that the Intern will have to work 4-5 Saturdays (partial or full) during the course of the 10-week placement.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR INTERN: Southern Tier West expects that completion of the Mobile Farmers Market Feasibility Study, the completion of the Farmers Market Business Assessment, and general food system project work will provide the Intern with opportunities for creative thinking and original contributions, experience multi-tasking, and working within fast-paced project windows to meet deadlines, and the professional skills required in most community and rural development careers. Depending on the level of research, the elements of analysis, and the quality and detail contained in final reports, the intern will produce outputs that can be added to their resume portfolio. This internship is designed to immerse the intern directly into many functions of local and regional food systems, provide opportunities to apply concepts learned in an academic setting, and provide the intern with first-hand experience of rural community and economic dynamics.

LOCATION OF ASSIGNMENT: Southern Tier West’s administrative office is located in Salamanca, NY (Cattaraugus) in the Center for Regional Excellence, 4039 Route 219, Suite #200. The intern’s project service area includes all of Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua Counties and territories of the Seneca Nation of Indians. Due to the large geographic scale of the service area and the expectation that the intern will conduct field work, the intern will have flexibility in working from a remote location(s) several days per week and working in Southern Tier West’s office the remaining days per week.