



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

LOUISIANA

www.usda.gov/strikeforce

Louisiana Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate:	27.3%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	20.6%
StrikeForce State Since:	2014
Number of StrikeForce Parishes:	44
Total Outreach Events:	82
Number of Community Partners:	30
Total USDA Projects:	4,075
Total USDA Investment:	\$761.6 million

Contacts

Contact us to be a partner, or to learn more about StrikeForce opportunities:

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Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners

Campti Field of Dreams
Coastal Consulting Co.
Delta Regional Authority
Louisiana Department of Ag & Forestry
Louisiana Economic Development
Louisiana State University AgCenter
Louisiana Tech University
Louisiana Association of Planning and
Development Districts
Morehouse Black Farmers
Rapides Community Ministry
Southern University AgCenter
Trailblazer RC&D Council

Currently, 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. More than one third of rural Americans, and one in four rural children live in poverty. Kids growing up in families earning twice the poverty threshold are nearly three times as likely as other children to have poor health, are more likely to finish two fewer years of school, and are more likely to earn half as much money in their adult lives.

Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is key to our Nation's future. In 2010, Secretary Vilsack established USDA's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, StrikeForce teams have collaborated with more than 500 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

These efforts have invested more than \$16.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across twenty states. In 2015, StrikeForce expanded to include Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. Now, USDA StrikeForce teams will operate in 880 counties in 21 states and Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future.

StrikeForce At Work

For years, Reverend Joe Green and the Rapides Community Ministry (RCM) have worked to help small-scale producers around Boyce get their products to a wider consumer base. This small town in Rapides Parish experiences many of the same problems plaguing rural America: persistent poverty, a poor economy and high crime rates.

Through StrikeForce, the USDA team worked with RCM to create numerous opportunities to benefit the area. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) worked with small-scale producers to provide microloans and other resources to enhance on-farm operations. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funded seasonal high tunnels allowing RCM and various local producers to enhance the availability of fresh produce year-round. The signature project was a \$175,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant from Rural Development (RD) in 2014 to fund the first phase of a state-of-the-art farmers market in Boyce. It will offer the added capacity of providing cooking demonstrations, job training, and rural life programs.

These leveraged funds from FSA, NRCS and RD will further benefit growers with additional sales opportunities at the new farmers market. The overall community—a food desert—will, in turn, gain improved access to fresh, healthy foods.



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