



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**



## StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

# MISSISSIPPI

[www.usda.gov/strikeforce](http://www.usda.gov/strikeforce)

### Mississippi Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate:	32.5%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	20.7%
StrikeForce State Since:	2010
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	66
Total Outreach Events:	46
Number of Community Partners:	130
Total USDA Projects:	5,658
Total USDA Investments:	\$411 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

Alcorn State University and Cooperative  
Extension Program

Kellogg Foundation

Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Mississippi Road Map to Health Equity

Mississippi State University Extension  
Service

North Delta Produce Growers Association

Tougaloo College

Winston County Self Help Cooperative

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 more than a year, Percy and Emma Brown traveled 50 miles round trip three times a week from their home in Vicksburg, to their farm in Port Gibson to haul water for their cattle. It was a waste of time and money as they filled barrels with many gallons of water for the growing herd.

That all changed when the Browns, who were new to farming, heard about USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) financial assistance for livestock water and other conservation practices through the USDA StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity. The initiative provides an opportunity for landowners who have not traditionally worked with NRCS, including beginning farmers like the Browns, to determine how to best leverage available financial assistance. "We just really wanted to get started, and we didn't really know how," Percy said.

The Browns installed the farm's first two water troughs with NRCS financial assistance. The troughs improve farming efficiency while conserving water, as they are refilled only as needed. The Browns also installed cross fencing to implement a rotational system that will prevent overgrazing.

With their days of hauling water over, the Browns can now spend the extra time on other farm projects. "It gives us peace of mind knowing our cattle will always have drinking water," Emma said.



Updated March 2015

