



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**



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

**StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity**

# NORTH CAROLINA

## North Carolina Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate:	24.9%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	17.2%
StrikeForce State Since:	2013
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	46
Total Outreach Events in '14:	43
Number of Community Partners:	20
Total USDA Projects:	2,989
Total USDA Investments:	\$465.4 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

- Black Family Land Trust
- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
- North Carolina A&T State University
- North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- North East Coalition of Farmers and Rural Families
- RAFI
- Roanoke Electric Cooperative
- The Conservation Fund
- Twin Rivers Farmers Coop

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

Vance County in the eastern part of the state is a food desert where more than one in four residents live in poverty. When the USDA StrikeForce team came to town to showcase the assistance offered by USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA Rural Development (RD), USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), local groups saw a chance to bring more healthy, affordable foods to area's low-income residents.

The StrikeForce team worked with growers like Henry Crews, who applied for a farm number with FSA and subsequently received an FSA microloan to improve agricultural operations on his farm. Crews then worked with NRCS to develop an organic transition plan. He has also applied for grant funds through Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant program to purchase the equipment needed to cool and wash produce. With all the pieces in place, Crews will make affordable organic fruits and vegetables available to the community's low-income residents by accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) benefits offered though FNS.

With USDA assistance, Crews and other local growers like him are helping improve the affordability and availability of fresh produce for low-income residents in Vance County.

