



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

KENTUCKY

www.usda.gov/strikeforce

Kentucky Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate:	26.3%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	18.1%
StrikeForce State Since:	2014
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	73
Total Outreach Events:	89
Number of Community Partners:	100
Total USDA Projects:	7,431
Total USDA Investments:	\$501.8 million

Contacts

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

Timothy.McNeilly@ky.usda.gov
(606) 864-2172 ext. 4

Congressional Inquiries:
(202) 720-7095

Media Inquiries:
(202) 720-4623

Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation

Kentucky Division of Conservation/Local Conservation Districts

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

Farm Credit of Mid-America

DY Department of Education

Kentucky Department of Local Governments

Kentucky State University

Strengthening Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)

Grow Appalachia

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

The recent loss of more than 600 jobs from the closure a clothing manufacturing plant hit Kentucky's Russell County hard. Another local manufacturer, Superior Battery, has battled fierce competition, a disastrous plant fire and a severe economic recession over the past three decades while watching more than 90 percent of battery manufacturers go bust across the industry.

Superior Battery was started by Randy Hart – an Air Force veteran and tool-and-die enthusiast – along with his wife and four nephews. Superior manufactures a wide range of batteries from its plant in Russell Springs. Thanks in large part to Hart's commitment to his business, the community and his employees, the company has become a major industry player. Today, they export to more than two dozen countries around the world and garner more than 30 percent of their revenue from exports.

Like any business hoping to stay competitive, Superior was looking to grow, while also improving the economic climate in their community. In 2014, USDA Rural Development awarded Superior Battery a \$10 million Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan through Community Trust Bank, allowing the company to finance efficiency improvements that are saving money and increasing profits. The effort has helped Superior Battery save more than 160 jobs and create 25 much-needed new positions in the area.



