



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

www.usda.gov/strikeforce

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate:	27.6%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	18.7%
StrikeForce State Since:	2010
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	48
Total Outreach Events:	164
Number of Community Partners:	41
Total USDA Projects:	3,744
Total USDA Investments:	\$424.4 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

Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
East Arkansas Enterprise Community
East Arkansas Planning and Development District
Forrest City School District
Rural Empowerment Development Organization
Seven Harvest, Inc.
Southern Bancorp
University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
Walmart Stores, Inc.
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

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

"I know USDA programs have been around for a while, but there are still some farmers who believe they won't qualify, or they believe the programs are only for big farmers. I believe StrikeForce has simplified the process," said Lee County farmer Roger Smith.

Roger first approached the USDA Farm Service Agency and requested a USDA farm number, which opened up opportunities for program assistance. Next, he met with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and requested a conservation plan for his farm. The plan outlines a list of conservation practices best suited for the land. Consequently, he implemented a rotational cropping system on his rice, sorghum, corn and soybean operation. These recommended measures will maintain the productivity of the soil and help Smith meet his long-term goal of keeping the farm sustainable and profitable for future generations.

In a short time, Smith has obtained a fixed-rate, low-interest farm loan from the Farm Service Agency to help with immediate financial needs. The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program further assisted by providing technical and financial assistance to install underground piping, drop pipes, land leveling, cover crops, nutrient management and waste transfer systems. These improvements will ensure the land remains healthy and productive over the years.

"I've got friends I tell all the time about what USDA will do for them; they just need to go to the offices and talk to them," Smith said. "There are so many USDA programs that can help farmers accomplish everything they want to do."



Updated March 2015

