Arizona Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate: 24.3%
State's Overall Poverty Rate: 18.9%
StrikeForce State Since: 2012
Number of StrikeForce Counties: 15
Total Outreach Events: 160
Number of Community Partners: 52
Total USDA Projects: 3,325
Total USDA Investments: $481.5 million

Contacts
Contact us to be a partner, or to learn more about StrikeForce opportunities:
Jeff.Hays@az.usda.gov
(928) 759-9301 ext. 103

Congressional Inquiries:
(202) 720-7095

Media Inquiries:
(202) 720-4623

Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners
Arizona Cattle Growers Association
Arizona Deptment of Agriculture
Arizona League of Cities & Towns
Arizona Public Service
Campesinos Sin Frontera
Cochise College
Native American Tribes
Navajo Nation Dept. of Agriculture
Navajo Nation Dept. of Natural Resources
Salt River Project
Southwest Indian Agricultural Association
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity
ARIZONA

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

Arizona’s StrikeForce efforts concentrate on improving access to healthy, affordable foods in a state with chronic rural poverty, high unemployment, and low food security. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that communities in need get access to critical services and support. As part of StrikeForce, USDA is partnering with local and regional food activists and organizations to increase awareness of the benefits of and assistance for local and regional food systems. This year, USDA has coordinated and participated in 160 outreach events across the state.

One USDA forum focusing on increasing healthy food access drew a wide spectrum of participants, including farmers markets, farmers, food banks, food assistance organizations, schools, communities and master gardeners. USDA Rural Development, USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA Food and Nutrition Service were joined by state agencies and Cooperative Extension. Forum participants discussed various strategies for increasing healthy food access across the state.

As a result, Rural Development is considering several community projects supporting farm diversification, facility repairs, distribution equipment, and commodity storage to strengthen the local food system and increase healthy food access for Arizonians in need.
StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity in Arizona
www.usda.gov/strikeforce

3,325 Projects Invested = $481.5 Million Invested

32 Jobs Created or Saved
2,643,838 Summer Meals for Kids
259 Farmers Assisted

4,719 Home Investments
129 Conservation Efforts

United States Department of Agriculture

STRIKEFORCE MAP SERIES FINAL: Arizona Persistent Poverty StrikeForce Counties with Native American Reservation overlay

Legend
- State
- Tribal Reservations and Pueblos
- Counties

Map Produced - January 10, 2013
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer