



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

www.usda.gov/strikeforce

ALABAMA

Alabama Fast Facts - 2015

State's Child Poverty Rate:	27.6%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	11.2%
StrikeForce State Since:	2013
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	23
Total Outreach Events:	20
Number of Community Partners:	67
Total USDA Projects:	3,282
Total USDA Investments:	\$408 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

Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Farmers Market Authority
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Resource Conservation and Development Councils
Small Farmers Agricultural Cooperative
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
Hunger Solutions Institute
Tuskegee University
United South and Eastern Tribes

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 970 counties in 25 states and Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future.

StrikeForce At Work

As Executive Director of the Wiregrass Resource Conservation and Development Council, James Currington's job is to help the local agriculture community. He noticed that many hoop houses in the area were approved for construction but had not been installed. After visiting producers, Currington discovered an issue with the kits. Many farmers felt they were too complicated to install, too large for their needs, or simply not a good fit.

Through a small outreach grant with Alabama's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Currington tested a new hoop house model. "It's my belief that a new model was needed to fit the needs of limited resource and beginning farmers, in addition to models that were already available," Alabama NRCS' State Conservationist, Dr. William Puckett said.

Currington worked with Dr. Victor Khan at Tuskegee University to develop, design and manufacture a new wooden hoop house kit and determine the best installation method. After successfully working with eligible producers, the kits have been installed on 10 farms in Alabama StrikeForce communities, and many more are in the pipeline. Currington believes this model will be more widely used and bring additional opportunities to small-scale producers. "It's one of the most rewarding things I've ever done in my life," he said.

NRCS will now fund wooden hoop house kits statewide through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Small, beginning, limited resource and socially disadvantaged producers will receive priority for the program.



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