



**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 - 2015

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:	35
Number of Community Partners:	20
Total USDA Projects:	3,367
Total USDA Investments:	\$459.9 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 1,500 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

These efforts have invested more than \$23.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across more than twenty states. In 2016, StrikeForce expanded to include Florida, Missouri, Montana, and Ohio. 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 is common with immigrant farmers, language barriers can create a wall between themselves and those trying to work with them and help them succeed. For Catawba County Hmong husband and wife farmers, Chou Yang (husband) and Chou Yang (wife), their desire for natural resources conservation were stronger than language differences. The Yang family sought Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm Bill conservation program participation to help in their land stewardship efforts.

NRCS and the Yang family were determined to communicate, and partnered with Der Xiong, an Immigrant Agriculture Agent for Catawba County. With the translation assistance from Ms. Xiong, the Yangs were able to get technical and financial assistance for conservation planning and Seasonal High Tunnel Systems. Today, their cut flower farm operation in Claremont, North Carolina, is actively utilizing technical conservation management assistance and a Seasonal High Tunnel System. The System, along with improved natural resource management, will allow them to increase their farm profit by having flowers available for longer periods of time as well as sustain Catawba County's natural resources. The USDA Service Center in Catawba County is proud of their partnership with the Yangs and their proactive efforts to spread the conservation partnership message and opportunities throughout the Hmong community.

