

Synopsis of Projects for FY2015
2501 Selected Grantees
(organized by state)

Alabama

- Alabama A&M University (AAMU)—Enhancing and Sustaining Farming Opportunities for Veterans and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers in Alabama. AAMU assists Alabama’s veterans and socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers on a whole range of USDA loan and cost-share programs to enhance farm profitability. AAMU will partner with ACES, ASAN, Alabama Department of Veteran Affairs, and other organizations provide services to veterans and socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers to increase their participation in USDA programs and assist them so they may improve farm production, management, marketing, business planning, computer and leadership skills; increase revenues from value-added products; enhance networking among farmers/ranchers for peer-to-peer learning for cooperative marketing of agricultural products; and ultimately improve use and retention of farmlands and increase farm profitability.
Geographic Service Area: The project targets 38 counties including 23 strike-force communities with a significant number of SDVBFRs who face severe poverty and health problems generally associated with historically underserved areas. Nearly 60% of minority-owned farms in Alabama are within the 38-county area.
 - **Contact Info:** Duncan Chembezi, duncan.chembezi@aamu.edu, (256) 372-4970
- Alabama State Association of Cooperatives (ASAC)—As a community-based non-profit organization serving primarily African-American farmers in a 12 county area of the western Alabama Black Belt, which is home to over a third of all African-American farmers in the state, ASAC’s goals are to assist African-American farmers in: retaining, expanding and utilizing their landholdings in a sustainable manner; taking advantage of all programs, resources and services offered by USDA, especially credit, conservation, risk management and rural development; and organizing cooperatives as a means of working collectively for greater economic benefit. Farmers will gain equitable access and utilization to USDA programs especially those of FSA, NRCS, Rural Development, AMS, Extension and other agencies. Through this program, ASAC will make a positive difference in the lives and livelihoods of underserved farmers in the Alabama Black Belt.
Geographic Service Area: Mainly West Alabama area.
 - Contact Info: John Zippert, jzippert@aol.com, (205) 652-9676
- Tuskegee University—Tuskegee University Small Farmer Outreach, Training, and Technical Assistance Project serves the Black Belt and adjacent counties of South-central Alabama. Through partnering with and accessing programs by state and federal agencies, our project will develop and implement programs so that eligible SDFs may: apply for and acquire farm ownership and operating loans; access the full range of USDA programs including equipment, livestock, housing, youth loans, and grants including cost-share and specialty crops; develop

and enhance farm and business management and marketing skills; develop the financial documentation of the farm and other applicable rural enterprises to the point where the owner graduates to a commercial lender; and develop a long-range base for self-sustaining farm business analysis services through existing associations and institutions with special focus in addressing heir property and estate planning.

Geographic Service Area: Originally targeting the 12 Black Belt counties of South-Central Alabama, the Tuskegee University Small Farm Project has grown to encompass surrounding counties as well including with farmer groups in Autauga, Chilton, Dale, Geneva and Houston Counties.

- Contact Info: Cesar Fermin, dthall@mytu.tuskegee.edu, (334) 727-8164

- **The United Christian Community Association (TUCCA)**— TUCCA and its partners will bridge the gap in outreach, technical assistance, and practice implementation for 100 disadvantaged landowners within Alabama’s Black Belt and StrikeForce counties by determining the barriers that have historically prevented them from participation in USDA programs; providing on-the-ground assistance in proper farm production and forest management in order to sustain income and accumulate wealth; and providing individual technical assistance by marrying landowner skill and experience with technical assistance initiatives to ensure greater economic stimulus within Alabama’s StrikeForce region. Technical assistance will be provided through farm visits and practice implementation efforts such as farm planning development and on-the-ground forestland planning development. TUCCA will also expand the knowledge base of landowners in this area by sharing information through traditional media outlets and providing opportunities for public dialogue through radio broadcasts and website presence. Additionally, TUCCA will connect project participants to the food hub/aggregation facility in West Alabama through market cultivation, product purchases, and agriculture services.

Geographic Service Area: In an effort to reconnect to the past and work toward a more sustainable, economic future, this project serves landowners of the Central West Alabama Black Belt StrikeForce counties of Butler, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Wilcox.

- Contact Info: Andrew Williams, andrewwilliams66@yahoo.com, (334) 216-1344

Alaska

- **Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance (ATCA)**— ATCA will work closely with Alaska Native Villages and Alaska Tribal Conservation Districts to collect data and conduct a statewide analysis to evaluate and identify the traditionally unique subsistence and agricultural needs of Tribes. This initiative will help to increase both the relevance and applicability of USDA Programs in Tribal communities and their participation in those programs. In a collaborative effort to increase their participation in and provide education on USDA programs and to create specialized and innovative agricultural strategies, ATCA, along with federal, state, and community partners, will continue to work with local, state, and national USDA offices to develop useful and innovative agricultural strategies to foster a collaborative relationship

among Tribes, community partners, and USDA and at the same time support future agriculture for Alaska Tribal Conservation Districts statewide.

Geographic Service Area: 13 Alaska Tribal Conservation Districts totaling 75 million acres.

- Contact Info: Angela Peter, aktribalconservationalliance@gmail.com, (907) 317-3162

- **University of Alaska Fairbanks**—Our project targets Alaska’s 229 Federally Recognized Tribes, 225 regional and village corporations, and Alaska Natives in an effort to expand Alaska Native owned agriculture businesses; increase job opportunities in remote, rural locations; and increase food security thereby helping to revitalize local economies, provide higher availability of fresh and healthy food, and assist in agriculture skills acquisition. Alaska Native owned corporations, tribes, and individuals will gain the knowledge and skills needed to start a farm or ranch or improve the profitability and sustainability of an existing farm or ranch. Our innovative distance-delivered training sessions will bridge the gap between agriculture service providers, including Extension agents and USDA Agency professionals with remote, tribal communities, Native American farmers, and even Tribes Extension professionals in Utah and Arizona.

Geographic Service Area: Our project targets Alaska’s 229 Federally Recognized Tribes, 225 regional and village corporations, and 111,463 Alaska Natives.

- Contact Info: Andrew Gray, uaf-ogca-preaward@alaska.edu, (907) 474-1851

Arizona

- **Developing Innovation in Navajo Education, Inc.**— Native American Producer Success III Project (NAPS III). According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture the number of Native American farms and ranches in Arizona and New Mexico exceeds 16,000; the majority are small (less than 10 acres) and with limited-resources (gross sales of less than \$5,000 annually). Equitable participation of socially disadvantaged and veteran Native American farmers and ranchers in USDA programs has long been hampered by a number of factors including the lack of access to information and technical assistance to apply and qualify for government programs. The NAPS III Project will build on the successes of previous projects to increase the profitability and long-term sustainability of Navajo socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers. In addition to connecting Navajo producers with USDA programs and increasing producer access to education, training and technical assistance resources, our project will directly help Navajo producers complete BIA and NRCS resource conservation plans necessary for improving their farming and ranching operations.

Geographic Service Area: NAPS III project activities will target SDVFRs in six USDA Strike Force counties including Coconino, Navajo and Apache in Arizona and San Juan, McKinley and Cibola in New Mexico.

- Contact Info: Paul Spitzer, thirdplanet_30@msn.com, (928) 779-2623

Arkansas

- **University of Arkansas System**— Our project is designed to help socially disadvantaged producers and veteran producers in 20 StrikeForce counties and four additional counties in eastern and southwest Arkansas utilize extension production practices and USDA conservation practices

which will assist them in owning, operating, and maintaining farms and ranches. Many underserved producers in these counties are primarily livestock, row crop (soybeans, wheat, rice, and milo) and vegetable crop producers that experience low yield crop production and inefficient livestock operations often causing them the loss of their businesses. By providing the necessary training and technical assistance, our project will help farmers and ranchers in: developing and using business plans, enabling them to obtain USDA loans for owning, operating, and maintaining their farms and ranches; boosting overall profitability in their businesses through increases in crop production realizing maximum yields; developing pre-planting or pre-harvesting marketing plans which will assist with pricing factors; achieving greater operational efficiency in livestock production; and boosting overall profitability by developing effective marketing plans.

Geographic Service Area: The targeted areas for the project will be 19 counties in eastern Arkansas and 5 counties in southwestern Arkansas. Twenty of the counties are StrikeForce Counties.

- Contact Info: Laurence Alexander, chancellor@uapb.edu, (870) 575-8471

California

- National Hmong American Farmers, Inc. (NHAF)—Growing Equity: Fostering Success in the Hmong Farm Community in California’s Central Valley. Originally from Laos, these producers face enormous barriers in operating successful farms in part due to poverty and their cultural and linguistic isolation. NHAF will assist this community by identifying their contributions and technical assistance needs through an intensive needs assessment process, culminating in a professionally designed written report which will guide future NHAF programming. NHAF will inform them about USDA programs and services and assist them by holding training and conducting outreach initiatives at community events. NHAF will produce educational materials, host a weekly radio show, produce a newsletter, and update content on our website. NHAF will directly assist growers in accessing USDA programs, including redeeming SNAP benefits at farmers markets; develop joint strategies with other community based organizations in a skill-building initiative; and in creating capacity building action plan to enhance the ability of Hmong farmers to operate profitable farming operations.

Geographic Service Area: NHAF Growing Equity project will focus primarily on the socially disadvantaged and veteran Southeast Asian farmer and rancher population in California’s Central Valley. This population includes Hmong, Lao, Mien and Cambodian farmers with limited English language skills.

- Contact Info: Chukou Thao, cxthao@gmail.com, (559) 313-3339

Colorado

- Adams State University (ASU)—Engaging Disadvantaged San Luis Valley Farmers and Ranchers. ASU Community Partnerships will utilize existing systems and community links to assist disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in the San Luis Valley of south central Colorado, a USDA designated “Strikeforce” area. Our activities will directly: assist disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in completing USDA loan and grant applications related to farm ownership and improvements; organize and facilitate a mentoring program where disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are introduced to USDA programs and officials in order

to build relationships; conduct and host two workshops that present innovative Ag related conservation practices to disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; and provide confidential cash flow analysis and marketing support to individual disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through individual counseling. Farmers will become better able to function in the US agriculture system and their utilization of USDA programs will increase.

Geographic Service Area: The San Luis Valley which is our service area for this project is made up of six counties and is designated by USDA as a StrikeForce area.

- Contact Info: Mary Hoffman, mchoffma@adams.edu, (719) 587-7372

- **First Nations Development Institute**—Building the Capacity of Native Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. Our organization will serve beginning Native American farmers and ranchers in tribal communities in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado to assist them with managing agriculture and food systems operations in Native communities and increase their successful participation in USDA programs. Our organization will hold a First Nations’ Annual Food Sovereignty Summit that will focus on Native American community-based solutions to create food systems-based jobs and income opportunities, increase access to healthy and traditional Indigenous foods and nutrition education, and spark pride and revitalization in Native communities. We will also hold a First Nations’ LEAD Conference and workshops covering the five modules of First Nations’ *Business of Indian Agriculture* curriculum (which is designed to help farmers and ranchers succeed in managing their businesses). Offered at tribal colleges, the curriculum’s five modules cover 1) Business, 2) Accounting, 3) Financial Management, 4) Agribusiness Economics and Marketing, and 5) Land Use and Management.

Geographic Service Area: This project will serve beginning Native American farmers and ranchers in tribal communities in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado.

- Contact Info: Michael Roberts, mroberts@firstnations.org, (303) 774-7836

Delaware

- **Delaware State University (DSU)**— DSU will develop and begin the first class in the DSU Farm School Mentoring Program for socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers in Delaware to include African American, Hispanic, Asian, as well as all veterans interested in farming. The goal of the comprehensive mentoring program is to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged and veterans in owning and operating farms successfully as well as increasing their participation in agricultural programs offered by USDA. The outreach, educational opportunities and technical assistance needed to enhance their skills in areas of farm sustainability will include but are not limited to farm planning, marketing and financial management; production and marketing of alternative enterprises such as, ethnic crops, poultry, meat goats, and aquaculture. The DSU Farm School Mentoring Program will provide intensive education and technical assistance through a mentoring program to reach at least 50 socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers from the target area per class. After the first class is completed, this process will be repeated and expanded to more farmers as we continue this program.

Geographic Service Area: The project will be conducted throughout the entire State of Delaware with targeted counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex.

- Contact Info: Harry Williams, hwilliams@desu.edu, (302) 857-6001

- Wealth Watchers, Inc.—Wealth Watchers’ C.R.O.P initiative will increase awareness and receptivity of USDA programs among beginning and older farmers in Florida and Southeast and Southwest Georgia. C.R.O.P will work to increase the approval rate of loan applications of SDVFRs by providing workshops and one on one counseling to assist with business plans and financial management; increase their utilization of USDA Programs by conducting interest specific workshops in partnership with various USDA Department Personnel and C.R.O.P agribusiness specialist accompanying SDVFRs to meetings at USDA local and regional offices; increase the number of new farmers and ranchers that join the C.R.O.P Network and obtain farm numbers and develop farm plans with NRCS; increase the number of mentorships created within the C.R.O.P Network; and increase the number of children age 5-18 that are interested in considering agribusiness as a career which will be accomplished by expanding 4H Clubs and Community Gardening in Urban Schools.

Geographic Service Area: Florida and Southeast and Southwest Georgia

- Contact Info: Carrie Louise Davis, carriedavis@wealthwatchersfl.com, (904) 265-4736 ext. 4057

Florida

- Florida International University— Veteran and Small Farmer Outreach Program (VeSFO). This project serves a growing population of *veterans* and *socially disadvantaged farmers and nursery growers* (VSD-FNG) in South Florida by helping them establish or sustain existing farm operations by equipping them with necessary technical know-how, farm entrepreneurial skills, and most importantly, increase their access of government assistance programs so that they will launch and/or sustain viable farm operations. The project offers workshops on managerial and technical aspects of farming, apprenticeships at private and community farms, individualized consultation to farmers applying for USDA loans and conservation subsidies, and organized conference trips.

Geographic Service Area: South Florida, Miami Dade County region

- Contact Info: Roberto Gutierrez, gutierr@fiu.edu, (305) 348-2494

- North South Institute, Inc.—The Institute builds upon the Socially Disadvantaged Producers and Veterans (SDPV) Training and Outreach Program ® to recruit, train, place and support Veterans and Socially Disadvantaged Producers, Women, Black and Hispanic Tenant Farmers and Youth Farmers and Ranchers in Florida by using its outreach model to link farmers and ranchers to Regional & Up-South Markets for Specialty Produce and host a regional symposium that will cover topics such as: USDA Programs that put plans into action; Farm & Enterprise Business Planning; and Marketing Planning. Our project solves a perennial gap in the food system by linking producers of specialty crops and honey to include Greens, Southern Peas, Ethnic, Cuban and Hispanic Produce, Asian Beans and Herbs with regional markets in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and New York. The Institute will assist producers in expanding farming operations and/or transition from underemployment and unemployment into a commercially viable and economically sustainable enterprise on a commercial basis.

Geographic Service Area: The program has been streamlined to focus on targeted beneficiaries from 32 counties in six (6) clusters and their correlating USDA local service centers (FSA, NRCS, and RD): Cluster # 1 (3 Counties): Broward, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade.

Cluster # 2 (5 Counties): Charlotte, Lee, Glades, Hendry, Collier. Cluster # 3 (6 Counties): DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin. Cluster # 4 (4 Counties): Brevard, Osceola, Indian River, Polk. Cluster # 5 (7 Counties): Duval, Orange, Seminole, Volusia, Lake, Sumter, Citrus. Cluster # 6 (7 Counties): Alachua, Columbia, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Jackson, Madison, Marion.

- Contact Info: Samuel Scott, nsied2002@aol.com, (954) 434-8220

Georgia

Georgia Organics, Inc.—Empowering Community Representatives to Expand USDA Outreach and Agricultural Proficiency in Georgia. Georgia Organics delivers outreach to socially disadvantaged and veteran producers by connecting agricultural producers inside specific geographical communities with innovative technical education and assistance. Georgia Organics will leverage our 2016 conference in Columbus to deliver four educational sessions highlighting: the cooperative model and the West Georgia Farmer’s Cooperative to train its growing membership; the organizing work of the Latino Outreach Council; the Veteran Farmers Working Group to lead a veterans-based outreach initiative; and best practices of groups involved in outreach to SDVFRs. Georgia Organics will provide support to the West Georgia Farmer’s Cooperative and Healthy Living Farms in the form of full scholarships for some members to attend the conference as well as provide financial assistance, consulting, and logistical support to the ongoing work of the Latino Outreach Council and to the creation of an independent Veteran Farmers Working Group. Lastly, Georgia Organics will create five new videos spotlighting veteran producers and their endeavor to succeed as farmers.

Geographic Service Area: Much of Georgia including Atlanta, Columbus, Albany, and Hamilton; specifically the counties of Fulton, Muscogee, Harris, and Dougherty, and potentially the counties of Mitchell, Baker, Calhoun, Randolph, Terrell, Lee, Worth, and Colquitt.

- Contact Info: Michael Wall, michael@georgiaorganics.org, (678) 702-0400

- The Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council (GTRCDC)—Our project will assist SDVFRs in southwest Georgia who are under increasing economic and environmental pressure. Through educational outreach, technical assistance, and technology adoption, this project will enhance SDVFR profitability and environmental sustainability. Project goals are: to provide four demonstration workshops that will feature information on farm conservation planning, soil/nutrient management, new and current USDA programs, heir property, estate planning, product and commodity marketing, and drip irrigation. We will develop and facilitate a farmer mentoring pilot project on four farms, which will help grow the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and veteran producers. We will also produce five innovative videos that will highlight: producers from diverse socially disadvantaged communities; the importance of a mentoring program; how to develop a conservation plan; and the importance of completing NRCS-approved plans.

Geographic Service Area: This project is focuses in the Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council region of Southwest Georgia (Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Calhoun, Colquitt, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Decatur, Early, Dougherty, Grady,

Macon, Miller, Mitchell, Randolph, Seminole, Taylor, Terrell, Thomas, Wilcox, and Worth) all of which all but three counties are designated as Strike Force communities.

- Contact Info: Billy Roland, billywroland@gmail.com, (229) 723-3841

- Quarterman, James dba FMG Farm— **AGRO-BIOMASS CO-OP** operates as a producer owned Co-Op to assist SDVFRs in growing biomass crops and collecting Ag crop and wood residue to produce biomass which will ultimately assist them in successfully owning and operating farms and ranches. The goal is to increase ownership and energy efficient production while also allowing for better stewardship of the land, air and water by introducing biomass production as an ecological alternative crop for rural economic development; increasing participation in USDA Value-Added Producer, Rural Cooperative Development, and other programs and services; manufacturing a bio-based and cellulosic fuel product; providing environmentally sound growing and Ag-residue collecting practices to participate in NRCS funding programs; and building relationships between member, local, state and county government to help create jobs. Our goal is to establish a biomass supply chain to build refineries and manufacturing plants for economical restoration in these persistent poverty StrikeForce counties.

Geographic Service Area: Much of the StrikeForce region of Georgia.

- Contact Info: James Quarterman, jqman@msn.com, (678) 715-1047

Hawaii

- The Kohala Center—Technical assistance and training for Hawai‘i’s socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers (SDVFRs). While Hawai‘i has abundant fertile lands and a 12-month growing season, the state imports approximately 90% of its food from U.S. mainland and international markets. With energy, transport, and import costs rising there is a growing urgency to address economic and food security by reestablishing a local food system, increasing island self-reliance and economic diversification, and providing agricultural producers statewide with assistance in production and business development. Our project will provide agriculturally-based technical assistance to SDVFRs across the state to include business and market planning, land acquisition, financial capitalization strategies, and business accounting. SDVFRs will be recruited to participate in a 16-week farmer training and mentorship program, and receive instruction from university professors, extension agents, USDA agency staff, and agricultural professionals. Our goal is to enhance their capabilities in running viable agricultural operations and to increase local food production.

Geographic Service Area: State of Hawai‘i

- Contact Info: C.J. Davis, cdavis@kohalacenter.org, (808) 443-2762

Idaho

- Mountain States Group, Inc. (Jannus, Inc.)—Global Gardens Land-based Farmer Training for Refugees and Native Americans in Idaho assists farmers and ranchers with cultural, linguistic, or economic barriers to help create sustainable, profitable, independent small farm businesses.

Our project will: help refugee farmers establish new farming operations on incubator farms; increase farmers' knowledge of organic vegetable production, marketing, business planning, and related topics; make business loans available to farmers; initiate a farmers' market on the Duck Valley Reservation; improve family health and nutrition; and increase participation in USDA programs, including produce sales to SNAP customers and applications to the NRCS Hoop House program. Advanced growers will develop independent land leases and CSA programs. Through this project, we will develop curriculum for use with refugee and Native American growers, and share it with other programs.

Geographic Service Area: We have two target audiences for this project. One is resettled refugees living in Boise, ID. The other is Native American residents of the Duck Valley reservation on the Idaho/Nevada border.

- Contact Info: Karan Tucker, ktucker@jannus.org, (208) 336-5533

Kentucky

- Kentucky State University—Assisting Veteran, Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers to Improve Their Profitability through Direct Marketing, Local Food Systems and USDA Programs in Kentucky, including many StrikeForce and Promise Zone counties. The recent recession put Kentucky's socially disadvantaged, veteran, and beginning farmers in precarious positions, particularly when they depended on tobacco as their primary farm income. Many Kentucky high schools teach FFA students to raise tobacco. Youthful, mid-life, veteran, and post-career beginning farmers found that the farms they inherited, bought, or leased no longer had federal tobacco support programs. In partnership with Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, USDA- NRCS, Fort Knox Warrior Transition Battalion, and the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, our project will assist SDVFRs emphasizing USDA programs, including assistance with applications, mentoring and follow-up assistance, local food systems, marketing systems, value-added techniques, and production techniques to beginning and SDVFRs throughout Kentucky, through one-on-one and group Extension activities, "Third Thursday" workshops, meetings, tours, and field days.

Geographic Service Area: Kentucky statewide, including all of Kentucky's Promise Zone counties and many of Kentucky's Strike Force Zone counties.

- Contact Info: Mary Spor, mary.spor@kysu.edu, (502) 597-6684

Louisiana

- Southern University and A&M College—Enhancing Profitability of Louisiana's Small Family Farms. Our project addresses three of the most significant problems confronting beginning farmers and SDVFRs operating small and mid-sized farms; low net farm income, ease in making farm related decisions, and the inability to access USDA programs and services. Factors contributing to these issues are management, business, and leadership inexperience. Our overall goal is to promote small and family farm sustainability through enhanced business management skills, leadership development, and the utilization of USDA programs and services. Using a number of educational activities such as growers schools, on and off farm training workshops, farm tours, conferences and a leadership class, we will assist

farmers in becoming better leaders while enhancing their business and farm management skills. We will also engage Louisiana's youth to increase their awareness and understanding of the agricultural industry. Outreach efforts will include traditional extension methods and online and personal contact.

Geographic Service Area: This project will target socially disadvantaged, veteran and beginning producers in the persistent poverty strike force parishes (counties) in the state of Louisiana, as well as the other parishes. It is important to note that 44 of the 64 parishes in the state are strike force parishes.

- Contact Info: Gina Eubanks, gina_eubanks@suagcenter.com, (225) 771-2242

Maryland

- University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)—Small Farm Outreach Initiative for Limited-Resource, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran Farmers and Landowners. UMES will establish a partnership agreement with USDA-Office of Advocacy and Outreach to implement a Small Farm Outreach Initiative for Limited-Resource, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran Farmers and Landowners in Maryland and along the Delmarva Peninsula. The project will equip farmers with the knowledge, skills, and ability needed to own and operate a farm business successfully. We will develop a Small Farm Intensive Program that will consist of a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on demonstrations, farm tours, and extracurricular activities that will strengthen farmers' knowledge and skill-base on select agricultural subjects. The project will: increase their awareness and participation of USDA programs; enable them to make knowledgeable business decisions in compliance with financial lending requirements and agricultural and environmental regulations; and educate farmers on diversification, alternative enterprise opportunities, and sustainability.

Geographic Service Area: Although the proposed project will be available to all farmers regardless of their county/state of residence, it is likely that the majority of farmer and landowner participants will be come from the Southern MD region (5 MD counties) and along the Delmarva Peninsula which consists of (4) MD counties, (2) Virginia counties, and (1) DE county.

- Contact Info: Juliette Bell, jbell@umes.edu, (410) 651-6101

Michigan

- Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems(MIFFS)—Connecting with USDA through Trusted Networks. The MIFFS council works toward creating and enabling networks of small-scale urban and rural farms to give rise to strong local food networks, developing incubator farms to encourage opportunities for beginning and SDVFRs and supporting underserved farmers and food systems. We assist underserved farmers in owning and successfully operating farms/ranches in Michigan by: enhancing development of multicultural and veteran farmer networks to provide the support and education needed to become successful agriculture entrepreneurs; documenting farmer-friendly perspective guides describing the process and benefits of enrolling in USDA programs; developing success stories that illustrate the process of accessing USDA programs; linking our USDA agency

partners with our farmer and non-profit customers; and providing a statewide conference with workshops that provide training and networking opportunities.

Geographic Service Area: Michigan

- Contact Info: Michelle Napier-Dunnings, michelle@miffs.org, (517) 432-0712

Minnesota

- **Hmong National Development, Inc. (HND)**—The Leading, Engaging and Promoting Hmong Farmers Program (LEAP) creates economic prosperity by advancing the business and entrepreneurial skills of Southeast Asian farmers and ranchers by emphasizing connections to USDA resources and introduction of costs savings methods, improved efficiencies, and expanded product offerings. Workshops provide peer to peer technical assistance. We will also advance the Asian American Pacific Islander Farmer/Rancher/Fishermen Network (AAPIFN), a national network of organizations that work with farmers and local and regional USDA offices across the country. Hmong farm ownership in the Ozarks is rapidly expanding; however, lack of understanding in American agricultural practices has led to an overwhelming number of Hmong farm operators facing financial hardship and mortgage foreclosure. Through an innovative outreach model, HND utilizes experienced Hmong farmers as mentors to reach farmers isolated by language barriers offering group education and individual technical assistance on USDA programs, financial resources, and agricultural practices.

Geographic Service Area: HND will serve farmers and ranchers in the Ozarks region of Arkansas and Missouri, and secondarily serve AAPI farmers nationally through the coordination of the Asian American Pacific Islander Farmer/Rancher/Fishermen Network (AAPIFN). Locally based services will target Hmong farmers in the Arkansas StrikeForce Persistent Poverty counties of Madison, Franklin, Johnson, Sebastian and Scott, which surround HND's offices in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

- Contact Info: Bao Vang, baov@hmong.org, (651) 495-1507
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- **Latino Economic Development CE**—LEDC OASDVFR Project. Our project represents the continuing collaboration of two immigrant-founded and immigrant-led community-based nonprofits to assist low-income, beginning Latino and Hmong farmers in our region in a culturally-appropriate and linguistically-accessible way. We will assist socially disadvantaged farmers in areas of Minnesota and Western Wisconsin by providing direct training and assistance with land ownership, increased profitability, and sustainability. Using the vehicle of community-based Hmong and Spanish language radio and television, we will also reach a much broader audience to inform the public about immigrant farming successes and USDA programs and resources. Our goal is to increase the utilization of USDA programs by immigrant farmers and to build lasting relationships between Latino and Hmong immigrant communities and USDA staff. We will leverage our award with funding from many other sources as part of a comprehensive community-based food system plan, linking immigrant farmers and low-income communities together in the production, distribution, and consumption of locally-grown, healthy food.

Geographic Service Area: Our program will deliver culturally-appropriate and language specific training to both Hmong and Latino farmers and ranchers throughout Minnesota, and in the Western half of Wisconsin.

- Contact Info: Mario Hernandez, mario@ledc-mn.org, (651) 395-4040

Mississippi

- Alcorn State University Education Building Corporation—Agriculture is Mississippi's number one industry, employing approximately 29 percent of the state's labor force either directly or indirectly. Agriculture makes a substantial contribution to all 82 Mississippi counties. Our project will: provide potential farmers/ranchers the technical assistance needed to prepare an acceptable application for farm loans through USDA and other lending agencies training and technical assistance; conduct training in financial management; conduct workshops, tours and field days statewide to inform SDVFRs about USDA programs and services; and make one-on-one farm visits, conduct meetings and workshops. Our project will also offer one-on-one and group skills training in computers using innovative software to assist SDVFRs in keeping track of their farm records and storing data as it relates to their day to day farm operation and will lead to better time management and productivity, tracking farm records, completing loan applications, farm management, online taxes, etc. We will collaborate with local NRCS and FSA agencies to assist in training SDVFRs and Mississippi youth on decision-making through computerized programs, and other educational programs on accessibility and competitiveness in the marketplace through the use of modern technological innovations.

Geographic Service Area: Alcorn State University will focus on its outreach efforts in eleven of the sixty-six Strike Force counties; Adams, Bolivar, Copiah, Claiborne, Hinds, Lincoln, Jefferson, Jones, Pike, Quitman and Warren. Other county included is Rankin County.

- Contact Info: Donzell Lee, dlee@alcorn.edu, (601) 877-6142

- Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance, Inc.—Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance Small Farm Outreach and Technical Assistance Project. Our project will assist SDVFRs in owning and operating farms and ranches while increasing their participation in agricultural programs and services provided by USDA. We provide education on available opportunities which will assist SDVFRs in becoming more sustainable, profitable, organized, and informed. Outreach and technical assistance will be in the areas of farm financial management, farm plans and land ownership. Our organization has a proven approach to farm management education through outreach and technical assistance which will enhance the capacity of socially disadvantaged farmers and veteran farmers and ranchers to embrace and employ realistic farm planning, land ownership and access USDA programs.

Geographic Service Area: Serving socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers located primarily in eight strike force counties in Northeast Mississippi to include Calhoun, Chickasaw, Clay, Lafayette, Lowndes, Monroe, Noxubee, and Oktibbeha.

- Contact Info: Carolyn Jones, mmfa@netzero.net, (662) 213-2433

- Tugaloo College—Our project provides comprehensive services to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers' (SDVFRs) residing in the Mississippi Delta, one of the largest contiguous agricultural areas in the United States with an area of more than 4 million acres. It seeks to respond to issues expressed by SDVFRs concerning financial literacy, education, as well as language and cultural differences, and barriers. The need for technical assistance and support, information from expert sources, advocates, practical advice and infrastructure are common themes expressed by SDVFR's. The program's overarching goals are: assist SDVFRs in owning and operating farms and ranches through increased participation in USDA programs and services and demonstrating agriculture's connection and access to healthy food and community and economic development.

Geographic Service Area: The geographical service area is in the Mississippi Delta region and includes 8 underserved counties: Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Yazoo, and Washington.

- Contact Info: Kerry Thomas, kthomas@tugaloo.edu, (601) 977-4463

- Tri-County Agricultural Cooperative (TCAC)—Our project will improve economic conditions in targeted rural counties in the Mississippi Delta through the development of agricultural businesses and increasing the production of sustainable vegetables. TCAC will recruit and organize socially disadvantaged new and existing farmers into a Farm Cooperative, partner with USDA agencies, and provide outreach awareness sessions to inform SDVFRs on USDA programs and resource opportunities. Additionally, TCAC will provide technical assistance with vegetable production, marketing, establishment of a marketing plans, faith-based marketing models, and food processing techniques. TCAC will also develop initiatives to assist farmers with production of livestock, specialty crops, herbs, and small acreage of table-top vegetables. Initiatives will focus on four key areas: crop production, safe food processing, diversified marketing, and church (faith-based) pilot demonstration sites, all of which will promote marketing and communications development and a more diversified market for fresh vegetables. Benefits will include: (1) increased availability of fresh and frozen vegetables in neighborhood locations, supermarkets, homes and faith-based venues, and an expansion of the Wal-Mart pea initiatives; (2) increased health benefits resulting from access to fresh produce, reducing susceptibility to various harmful diseases; (3) an increase in agricultural business and employment.

Geographic Service Area: Ten Mississippi Delta Counties: Bolivar, Coahoma, Grenada, Lafayette, Panola, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica and Yalobusha.

- Contact Info: Robert Gates, RGates@tricountycoop.org, (601) 624-5682

- Winston County Self Help—Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers in Rural Eastern Mississippi. SDVFRs will receive information and assistance on completing loan applications, farmer programs, sustainable production practices, niche market development, and improved financial and risk management strategies. Education, training, and technical assistance will be provided by farm management specialists through a series of field day events, demonstrations, and in workshops in partnership with Mississippi State University and Alcorn State University extension personnel and USDA agencies. Farmers will gain knowledge and skills on utilizing

sustainable agricultural practices in their farming operations and will gain confidence in accessing federal and state agency programs.

Geographic Service Area: Rural Eastern Mississippi

- Contact Info: Frank Taylor, ftaylor@bellsouth.net, (601) 294-2704

Missouri

- Lincoln University—Enhancing Farm Profitability and Livelihood of Minority, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers, and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers in Southeast Missouri. Our project directly assists SDVFRs with one-on-one technical assistance and workshops specifically designed for building community relationships and connecting them with available USDA resources, ultimately enabling farmers and ranchers in becoming successful in their farm businesses. Lincoln University will adopt the program into the Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program thereby expanding the impact of the program in years to come. Utilizing outreach tools, information, and resources and in partnership with USDA, MU extension, Community Based-Organizations, and agricultural businesses, our project will identify, recruit, and assist underserved SDVFRs in the community through organizing and hosting workshops and conferences, one-on-one assistance, and dissemination of current farming and ranching techniques and practices. Ultimately our goal is to assist SDVFRs in economically boosting their farming and ranching operations and overall success.

Geographic Service Area: The Missouri Extension System has grouped 114 counties into eight regions. Currently ISFOP serves in the East-Central, the West-Central, and the South-West regions. Expansion of the program will serve SDFRVFR in the nine counties in the Bootheel to include New Madrid, Dunklin, Permisco, Mississippi, Scott, Stoddard, Butler, Wayne, and Bollinger.

- Contact Info: Dona Mckinney, mckinneyd@lincolnu.edu, 573-681-5062

Montana

- NACDC Financial Services, Inc.—Sustainability for Montana's Native American Farmers and Ranchers. Our project will grow and strengthen the number of beginning Native farmers and ranchers on four Indian reservations in Montana by helping them build and access financial and business tools needed to make informed decisions and enhance the sustainability of their operations. 100% of the project budget will go towards serving Native American farmers and ranchers. The primary goal of the project is to strengthen Montana's reservation economies by growing and strengthening the sustainability of Native American farmers' and ranchers' operations through training, technical assistance and increased access to resources. NACDCFS will work with partners and consultants to centralize resources on one website, connect Native American farmers and ranchers to existing USDA resources, and provide training and technical assistance to help build economic stability for Native American farming and ranching operations. Project outcomes will include increasing the business, financial and agriculture-related technical skills of Native American farmers and ranchers, and enhancing their by increasing the productivity or profitability of their operations and their participation in USDA programs.

Geographic Service Area: The four reservations that will be served in the project are Blackfeet Reservation, Fort Belknap Reservation, Crow Reservation, and Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

- Contact Info: Andrea Main, angiem@3rivers.net, (406) 338-2992

- National Center for Appropriate Technology, Inc. (NCAT)—Cultivating Success with Veteran Farmers in Kentucky and West Virginia. NCAT will partner with Growing Warriors (GW) to provide trainings through a series of workshops, field activities, and technical assistance to farmers. GW will provide on-the-ground support for trainings, local outreach and participant recruitment for veteran and refugee farmers. NCAT will provide expert trainers and utilize our extensive library of sustainable and organic agricultural production materials to train participants. Workshops will: guide participants through the process of whole-farm planning and will work with each participant to develop specific farm goals and a farm business plan; information and assistance with USDA programs and resources; provide farm business management exercises, hands-on experiences and training in sustainable crop and livestock production. NCAT will provide project participants with ongoing personalized one-on-one technical assistance throughout the project.

Geographic Service Area: This project will target socially-disadvantaged, refugee/immigrant and military veteran farmers in Kentucky and West Virginia. Project training locations will be Louisville and Springfield Kentucky and Williamson, West Virginia.

- Contact Info: Kathleen Hadley, kathleenh@ncat.org, (406) 494-4572

New Mexico

- New Mexico State University—Northern New Mexico Outreach Project. **Agriculture** serves as the core of the culture, custom, tradition and language of both the American Indian and the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers of northern New Mexico and continues to be a vital economic component to the region. Loss of **agriculture** in the region will directly affect the loss of culture and custom, adding to the economic and social hardship of American Indian and Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers. Through a coordinated effort lead by the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service's *Northern New Mexico Outreach Project*, American Indian and Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers from northern New Mexico will be made aware of USDA programs that can benefit their ability to own and operate their farms and ranches; are individually assisted in participating in USDA programs; assisted in developing markets to increase profitability; and through research-based educational and technical assistance programs that are specifically developed for the target audience, will become a vital and participating entity in US agriculture.

Geographic Service Area: The target region of the project will include the fourteen northern New Mexico counties which include: Rio Arriba, Taos, Mora, San Juan, McKinley, San Miguel, Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Torrance, Sandoval, Valencia, Colfax, Guadalupe, and Cibola; the eighteen Native American Pueblos that comprise the Eight Northern Pueblos Council Tribes (ENPCT) and the Ten Southern Pueblos Council Tribes (TSPCT) as well as the Jicarilla Apache and Eastern Navajo Nations that reside within these counties.

- Contact Info: Alisha Giron, ogc@nmsu.edu, (575) 646-1590

New York

- International Rescue Committee, Inc. (IRC)—New Roots: Serving Socially Disadvantaged Farmers in Phoenix, Salt Lake City and Sacramento. The IRC will assist SDVFRs by developing their skills in agribusiness and bolstering their participation in USDA programs by helping them enhance their skills and ability to achieve improved production and income. IRC will also increase the dissemination and outreach of agribusiness management and marketing information with the use of a new “marketing for success” tool and that will increase access to USDA services. The IRC will provide classroom training, one-on-one technical support, and hands-on, field-based classes. In addition, we will expand our current classroom curriculum to pilot new content on marketing and provide assistance with: land access, aggregation and distribution; financial and small business planning; facilitation of capital; and conservation planning. We will also facilitate peer-to-peer learning through webinars, group calls, and a face-to-face meetings.

Geographic Service Area: The project will focus on farmers who reside in Phoenix, Arizona (Maricopa and Pinal Counties), SLC, Utah (Salt Lake County) and a new site in Sacramento (Sacramento and Yolo Counties).

- Contact Info: Nancy Otterstrom, Nancy.Otterstrom@rescue.org, (212) 551-3065

North Carolina

- North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University—As much as 44% of disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and veteran farmers do not know about any USDA program. Our goal is to partner with non-profit organizations, farmer associations, and other stakeholders to provide technical assistance to this underserved group to assist them with: access to land; development of business skills; and improved participation in USDA programs. We will also provide assistive technology training for individuals with disabilities and information and education on technology-based entrepreneurship. Other training and education will include: land tenure arrangements; business and financial planning; farm management techniques; soil, water, and nutrition management; entrepreneurship, information technology; market research analyses; and others will be developed in either a workshop setting or on one-on-one training. We will also host a USDA information sharing conference to help build their relationship with local, state, and national USDA officials.

Geographic Service Area: Most of the target counties are included in the "Black Belt" region of North Carolina. It covers all the Coastal Region and Northern and Northeastern Piedmont Regions.

- Contact Info: Barry Burks, divofres@ncat.edu, (336) 334-7995

Ohio

- Central State University—The Building Sustainable Networks for Agribusiness Enterprises for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SNAF) will build longitudinal networks, supporting agreements, practices, and access. The SNAF project will: engage and build relationships between current and prospective farmers; introduce, inform, and strengthen

connections with USDA offices through university and community-partner resources; prepare current/prospective farmers to more effectively participate in USDA programs; develop pathways to leverage university research and faculty supporting both the science and the business of sustainable agriculture practices; and expand adult-learner and non-traditional student involvement through cross-generational and cross-discipline opportunities. The SNAF project will close an identified capacity gap between on-going land grant and institutional investments with the addition of targeted extension resources, faculty, subject experts, and support.

Geographic Service Area: Ohio and surrounding states.

- Contact Info: Cynthia Jackson-Hammond, chammond@centralstate.edu, (937) 376-6332

Oklahoma

- Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, Inc.—Outreach for Economically Vibrant and Sustainable Farms and Ranches in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Our project is designed to increase participation of farmers and ranchers in USDA, state, regional and Tribal assistance programs, to introduce farming and ranching opportunities to MCN veterans, to improve sustainable agriculture and financial literacy skills of MCN farmers and ranchers and to address the complicated land use issues of ownership and access to Restricted lands in the Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Oklahoma. This project will provide culturally appropriate training opportunities on small farms and ranches, financial literacy, and access to Restricted lands and sustainable agriculture skills.

Geographic Service Area: This project will include a federally recognized Indian Tribe with a boundary covering 4713 square miles, including eight entire counties and portions of two counties. Six of the counties in the MCN boundary are USDA designated StrikeForce counties.

- Contact Info: Lizanne Holata, lholata@mvsokokefood.org, (918) 756-5915

Oregon

- Adelante Mujeres— Coalition for the Advancement of Latino Farmers (CALF): Outreach and Technical Assistance in Oregon. CALF is comprised of four community-based organizations in four separate counties: Adelante Mujeres, the Linfield Center for the Northwest, Huerto de la Familia, The Next Door/ Raices. Project goals include: deliver individualized, practical technical assistance that provides the skills needed for socially disadvantaged Latino farmers to operate successful farming businesses; assist new and beginning Latino farmers with access to land and marketing outlets for their farming operations; strengthen relationships between coalition partners and USDA's local, state, regional and national offices in order to represent the needs of small-scale Latino farmers, and to encourage scale-specific and culturally appropriate programs and services; and serve more Latino farmers in the region by bringing together collaborating partners of the Coalition to share best practices and outreach efforts.

Geographic Service Area: CALF is comprised of four community-based organizations in four separate counties: Adelante Mujeres, the Linfield Center for the Northwest, Huerto de la Familia, The Next Door/ Raices. CALF provides training and support to socially disadvantaged Latino farmers in the Pacific Northwest through the joint efforts of allied partners for increased viability of their small-scale farming operations.

- Contact Info: Anne Morse, amorse@adelantemujeres.org, (503) 992-0078, ext. 208

Pennsylvania

- **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)**—PHS City Harvest Philly Farms For All Program: Training the Next Generation of Philly Farmers to Feed the Philadelphia Region. We currently support urban food production sites in Philadelphia with technical support, education, materials and supplies and beginning farmer training towards organic production. Our network includes over one hundred beginning farmer entrepreneurial producers engaged in produce sales at the neighborhood level in Philadelphia, Camden and neighboring counties. Many production sites are managed by socially disadvantaged producers and many directly engage in beginning farmer training for SDVFR producers. Our project will continue to strengthen training initiatives for these producers by continuing to provide them with targeted rigorous training opportunities through our annual speaker series. It will also provide support for two deeper pilot entrepreneurial projects for trainees. City Harvest along with collaborative partners of PHS, will implement a pilot cutting greens project in Strawberry Mansion with partner East Park Revitalization Alliance and a pilot floriculture project with Nationalities Service Center.

Geographic Service Area: The neighborhoods of Philadelphia, Camden, and other neighboring counties.

- Contact Info: David Schneck, dschneck@pennhort.org, (215) 988-1624

Rhode Island

- **Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT)**—Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers Southside Community Land Trust, Rhode Island. SCLT will conduct outreach, training and technical assistance for SDVFRs and beginning farmers through meaningful exposure to best practices and USDA programs. SCLT will increase the number and success of SDVFRs and beginning farmers by: developing USDA and Best Practices workshops, materials and providing assistance with applications to USDA programs; providing production, marketing, and financial training, and technical assistance; assisting farmers with accessing farm sites in urban and rural Rhode Island; and expanding outreach to veteran serving organizations and enroll veteran farmers in farm training programs. SCLT will assist SDVFRs in obtaining access to land and provide information on farm infrastructure, increasing productivity, maximizing yields using season extension, livestock, bio-intensive and other methods. SCLT will provide training and technical assistance with marketing at farmers markets; accepting WIC/SNAP benefits; small business operations such as record keeping and financial planning; business development assistance; and development of apprenticeship opportunities.

Geographic Service Area: The project area includes all of Rhode Island.

- Contact Info: Margaret DeVos, margaret@southsideclt.org, (401) 273-9419

South Carolina

- **United Farmers USA, Inc.**—Project Outreach, Education and Training (POET). Our project will enhance the coordination of the outreach, technical assistance, and education efforts within South Carolina Districts identified as having the highest concentrations of SDVFRs in strike force areas. Our activities will facilitate services and provide assistance in: owning and operating successful farms, ranches and forest land areas; participating equitably in the full range of USDA programs; and providing other innovative agricultural related outreach, technical assistance and education through workshops, farm demonstrations, small support groups and one on one mentorship. SDVFRs and new and beginning farmers, ranchers and forest landowners will become knowledgeable in owning and operating a successful farm or ranch and in USDA programs and services.

Geographic Service Area: South Carolina Districts 6 & 7 serving 9 counties (Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter and Williamsburg) which have been identified as having the highest concentrations of SDFRVFR in the middle of the strike force area.

- Contact Info: Frances Gibson, bentondot@aol.com, (843) 319-7212

Tennessee

- **Tennessee State University**— Educating and Training Socially Disadvantaged Tennessee Farmers, Veteran Farmers and Landowners. Our project will: continue to identify, educate, train, and assist Tennessee's small, beginning and existing minority and veteran farmers in managing their land sustainably and growing their production bases to increase their income; find, create and develop new and niche markets and alternative markets; encourage farm growth by educating and training new and existing farmers and provide sponsorship to new and existing producers to attend the SAWG conferences in 2016; and increase SDVFR participation in USDA Farm Bill Programs, through outreach and educational efforts. Our project will encourage and assist SDVFRs operate presently owned farms more efficiently and/or purchase new farmland to become new and successful farmers and producers. We will provide educational and outreach programs through "The New Farmers Academy," conferences, and workshops developed for new farmers to assist in farm management, financial management, niche plant production, effective and new marketing, modern production techniques, record keeping, and risk management.

Geographic Service Area: The main targeted geographical areas are in 50 counties located statewide throughout Tennessee, including the East Tennessee region of Johnson County (northeastern) and Chattanooga (southeastern).

- Contact Info: Lesia Crumpton-Young, research@tnstate.edu, (615) 963-1621

Texas

- Gleaning Network of Texas—North Texas Agriculture Success Initiative. Our project focuses on SDVFRs in the urban area of Dallas County and surrounding metropolitan areas to provide education, connections to USDA programs, and opportunities for conference attendance, and individual guidance to assist in the success of farming enterprises. Partnering with Prairie View A&M University, GROW North Texas will provide workshops and resources to reach 400 socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers. The project will also provide more intensive training for individuals with the Dallas-based veteran program Farmers Assisting Returning Military (FARM) and additional organizations in the area. The North Texas Agriculture Success Initiative will strengthen the local food system by strengthening the economic viability and stability of the many socially disadvantaged and veteran run farms and ranches in the Dallas/Fort Worth and surrounding area.

Geographic Service Area: This project will concentrate on Dallas County, Texas, but it will also offer workshops to farmers and ranchers within the North Texas area. Fort Worth, Texas and Tarrant County.

- Contact Info: Susie Marshall, susie@grownorthtexas.org, 972-814-0928

- Prairie View A&M University—Building Collaborative Partnership For Assistance To Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. The Cooperative Extension Program (CEP) will provide leadership for the project working collaboratively with three community-based organizations (CBO), The Landowners Association of Texas (LAT), 100 Ranchers Inc., and Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers Association (TSFRA) to enhance land ownership and productivity that strengthens the agricultural productive capacity among minority producers in Texas. Our project will identify, train, and mentor agricultural producers in an effort to assist SDVFRs in owning and operating agricultural enterprises while increasing their participation in programs and services provided by USDA. Through this partnership, these organizations will help to identify farmers and ranchers, host education meetings, provide mentoring and leadership, while the university will provide educational programming and technical assistance. Local USDA Agencies will provide guidance and support for project implementation. Project priority areas include: continuing to improve participation of SDVFRs in USDA programs and building relationships with USDA officials; and expanding outreach initiatives in other counties.

Geographic Service Area: Ten counties in east central Texas that are designated as Strike-Force (SF) Counties as well as strike force counties in the Valley region within the State.

- Contact Info: Cajetan Akujuobi, amwalker@tamus.edu, (936) 261-1689

- University of Texas - Pan American—StrikeForce Initiative for OASDVFR. Our project focuses on serving Black/African American, Hispanic, Veteran and other Socially Disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by providing assistance in owning and operating successful farms and ranches by providing training and technical assistance on niche markets and specialty crops, direct marketing techniques, development of marketing cooperatives, and demonstrating planting and growing techniques at demonstration sites. We will also improve SDVFRs participation in and assistance with USDA programs such as farm-operating and

ownership loan and disaster-assistance programs; conservation-programs, insurance programs, farmers'-market programs, and cooperative-development and value-added programs. We will assist SDVFRs in building relationships with USDA's local and regional offices, providing innovative training, and technical assistance techniques by planning, developing, and conducting a series of outreach events; developing a video product that ties USDA programs to the success of these farmers; and developing success story articles to highlight the benefits of participating in USDA programs.

Geographic Service Area: The geographical area served by this project includes 97 counties in Texas and 10 counties in New Mexico. The project serves 68 StrikeForce Counties, including 60% of all Texas' StrikeForce counties and 33% of all New Mexico's StrikeForce counties.

- Contact Info: Sayed Sadiq Shah, sadiq@utpa.edu, (956) 665-2889

Vermont

- University of Vermont & State Agricultural College—Improving Access to Cooperative Extension and USDA Programs and Services for Vermont Resettled Refugee Farmers. Our project will assist socially-disadvantaged, beginning resettled refugee farmers in obtaining access to community-based, Cooperative Extension and USDA programs and services, providing advanced technical assistance, and build working relationships between farmers and community-based, Extension and USDA service providers to increase farmers' receptiveness about available programs and services. We will produce two culturally appropriate, documentary outreach videos introducing relevance of and access to Cooperative Extension and USDA programs. We will hold two workshops to screen each video and stimulate discussion and follow up. We will match participating farmers with relevant referrals throughout the project. We will also help farmers prioritize and implement effective strategies for addressing enterprise bottlenecks and build skills intended to empower farmers to improve marketing, crop production, land tenure and greenhouse production. To achieve skills building, we will implement an innovative "Skills Self-Assessment" method, providing resources for farmers to thoroughly assess their own needs and we will provide regular technical assistance and training to address prioritized needs.

Geographic Service Area: Refugees and immigrants from coming from Vietnam, Bosnia, Somalia, and Bhutan who have resettled in Chittenden County area in Vermont.

- Contact Info: Jennifer Gagnon, spa@uvm.edu, (802) 656-3360

Virginia

- Virginia State University—Empowering Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (SDVFRs) in Virginia Through Outreach, Training, and Technical Assistance. Our project will empower SDVFRs in Virginia by equipping them with the tools and skills needed to make informed decisions in owning and operating sustained farm businesses, while increasing their participation in USDA programs and services through outreach, training, and technical assistance, thereby enhancing their economic opportunities and quality of life. We will assist SDVFRs by: improving their level of participation in USDA programs, and to close

the service delivery gaps that limit them from equitable participation in these programs; enhance their knowledge on farm estate, financial, and business planning and management; enhance their knowledge and skills to own, retain, and operate sustainable and profitable farm enterprises; increase farm profitability by improving marketing strategies, identifying new markets and connecting them to existing markets.

Geographic Service Area: The project area includes a total of 59 counties, including Strikeforce areas throughout Virginia.

- Contact Info: Omar Faison, orspoffice@vsu.edu, (804) 631-3330

Washington

- Washington State University (WSU)—Outreach and Assistance for Socially-Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. Our project will empower veteran and socially-disadvantaged populations to acquire the knowledge, skills, and contacts necessary to evaluate, start, and carry out a profitable small-scale agricultural venture. WSU Spokane County Extension, in partnership with the Spokane Conservation District, and local USDA agency and community partner, will: organize and present a symposium with a focus on introducing veterans to farming and develop a Veterans-on-the-Farm program to teach them how to evaluate an agricultural enterprise as a career. The symposium will include a series of workshops with top-tier speakers who are knowledgeable and have the experience to address issues that veterans face as they consider and begin farm enterprises. The Veterans-on-the-Farm program will use the Cultivating Success curricula, including Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching and Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Business Planning. Two additional courses will be developed: Specialty Crop Production and Tractor and Implement Selection, Use, and Maintenance. Courses will be augmented with guest lectures from experienced farmers and representatives of USDA agencies and include farm tours, particularly where USDA programs have played a role in the success of the farm.

Geographic Service Area: The Inland Northwest and Spokane County areas of Washington.

- Contact Info: Dan Nordquist, ogrd@wsu.edu, (509) 335-9661

West Virginia

- West Virginia State University—West Virginia State University Kanawha Valley Veteran and Minority Farmer Education Program in West Virginia. Our project focuses on the education of veteran and minority farmers in West Virginia to help make them more productive and more profitable in the coming years. The program allows veteran and minority participants the opportunity to learn the basics of agriculture through a series of hands-on workshops on topics that will be determined based upon survey results from these farmers. This project will focus on urban areas of the state. West Virginia State University Extension Service has ongoing projects in these areas which will allow the program participants additional places to practice what they are learning, especially in regards to raised bed production and small fruit production. The overall goals of the project are to reach as many veteran and minority individuals and families as possible and to help them become more interested and engaged in agriculture or to help them be more productive and/or profitable in their current agricultural operations. Additional project support

will be supplied from the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, West Virginia AgrAbility and the West Virginia National Guard.

Geographic Service Area: The project will service the Charleston-Huntington corridor (including Kanawha, Putnam and Cabell counties), as well as the bordering counties and the cities of Charleston and Huntington.

- Contact Info: Brunetta Gamble-Dillard, bdillard@wvstateu.edu, (304) 766-4133

Wisconsin

- Linda & Gene Farley Center for Peace Justice and Sustainability, Inc.—The Building Bridges: Connections, Resources and Technical Assistance For Socially-disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers In Wisconsin and Minnesota project is a comprehensive, collaborative approach to meeting the needs of SDVFRs in Wisconsin and Minnesota by providing extensive services that link farmers with resources, training, networks, and USDA programs to support their success in owning and operating farm businesses. The Building Bridges project will leverage existing resources in the region to strengthen outreach to a growing population of underserved farmers. Strategies will include: land-based incubator farms with training programs; technical assistance for farmers to access USDA programs; cultural-competency training and new relationships for FSA staff; conferences providing agriculture-related information; and research, legal and technical assistance to meet the farmland needs of socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers. Partners on this project include experienced community-based organizations Minnesota Food Association, Farmers' Legal Action Group, Farmer Veteran Coalition and Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES); veteran-owned farm Peacefully Organic Produce; and local FSA offices in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Geographic Service Area: Wisconsin and Minnesota

- Contact Info: Allison Goin, allisongoin@gmail.com, (612) 558-6183

- Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, Inc.—Outreach and Training Support (OATS) for American Indian Farmers in Northwest Wisconsin. The primary goals of OATS are to: increase the number of farmers; enhance the business practices of beginning and existing farmers to allow them to succeed in promoting their business in food markets; and connect farmers with USDA conservation programs to amplify their chances for sustained success. OATS will focus on providing beginning and existing education through workshops and customized trainings with a culturally appropriate emphasis and through intensive outreach to increase knowledge of and participation in USDA programs. Five Tribes will be served throughout a ten-county region in northwest Wisconsin. Each of the Tribes to be served by the project has a food distribution program funded through the USDA. By building an agricultural infrastructure within Tribes, it will reduce the dependence on USDA commodity programs and build food sovereignty. Food then can become a driver for cultural revitalization, improving community health, and economic development. Partners include the Land Stewardship Project, Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (NWWIB), and Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council.

Geographic Service Area: OATS will focus on a ten-county region in northwest Wisconsin including Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, and Washburn counties. This region is home to five Tribal nations: Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, and St Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin.

- Contact Info: Bradford Gingras, bgingras@nwcep.org, (715) 682-9141

- Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin—Our project addresses OAO’s priority to increase participation of socially disadvantaged American Indian tribal members and veterans into agriculture as food producers and ranchers and in participating in USDA programs to build healthy communities for their people. The Oneida Tribe, in a mentor/protégé role will bridge the barriers facing Tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan in their agricultural development through: experiential learning sessions on tribal agricultural lands; creation of a forum for peer-to-peer technical learning exchanges with involvement from USDA representatives; and quarterly distance learning engagements to ensure continued development of agricultural projects and USDA relationships. The initiative will provide enhanced learning through culturally appropriate materials and trainers, to ensure appropriate support for successful outcomes.

Geographic Service Area: Our geographic focus will center on three states of the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST) region, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan, which contains 34 Federally recognized tribes/reservations.

- Contact Info: Melinda Danforth, grant@oneidanation.org, (920) 869-4363