

Synopsis of Projects for FY2016
2501 Selected Grantees
(Organized by state)

Alabama

- Tuskegee University - The overall goal for the one-year Tuskegee University Small Farmer Outreach, Training, and Technical Assistance Project is to conduct outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers (SDFs) to own and operate farms; and to provide information on loan applications and farmer programs. Through partnering with and accessing programs by state (Department of Agriculture and Industries, RC&D Councils) and federal (RMA, AMS, NIFA, RD, FSA, NRCS) agencies, the Project will serve the Black Belt and adjacent counties of South-central Alabama. Specific objectives are (1) to develop and implement programs so that eligible SDFs may apply for and acquire farm ownership and operating loans; (2) to assist SDFs access the full range of USDA programs including equipment, livestock, housing, youth loans, and grants including cost-share and specialty crops; (3) to develop and enhance farm and business management and marketing skills; (4) to develop the financial documentation of the farm and other applicable rural enterprises to the point where the owner graduates to a commercial lender; (5) to develop a long-range base for self-sustaining farm business analysis services through existing associations and institutions; and (6) to increase service to and participation of other SDFs and their family members. Additionally, special focus will address their property and estate planning as well as the recruitment and support of new and beginning and established veteran farmers. Over its one-year program period, the Project will reach its objectives through recruitment, assessment, information dissemination, group meetings, quarterly conferences, and one-on-one farm visits, and evaluations.

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 (see Map attachment). Alabama is a USDA StrikeForce State and the Black Belt Region is significant in geography (with its soil type and preponderance of small farms) as well as history and location for the majority of African American farmers and low socio-economic characteristics. In many cases, loans and grants initiated by the Tuskegee project were among the first for African American farmers in their counties.

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Alaska

- Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance - The proposed project uses information gathered from previous outreach efforts by ATCA and other partners. ATCA will use the data to develop techniques supported by USDA to address traditional subsistence and conventional agricultural needs of Alaska Native Villages with Tribal Conservation Districts. This is a collaborative project engaging federal, state, and community partners to increase relevance and applicability of USDA Programs to meet the needs for Tribes

on their lands and increase participation in USDA Programs. In addition, Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance works closely with USDA offices at a local, state, and national level through collaborative working sessions, conferences, and meetings developing useful and innovative agricultural strategies. Lastly, ATCA provides opportunities for training, education, and outreach to increase their capacity of the ATCDs to be eligible and participate in USDA programs and function at a level to have the tools and resources to implement on-the-ground conservation and agricultural projects.

Geographic Service Area: 16 Alaska Tribal Conservation Districts (ATCDs) totaling more than 75 million acres.

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Arizona

- Developing Innovation In Navajo Education, Inc. – Developing Innovations in Navajo Education (Dine Inc.), an Arizona non-profit organization and New Mexico State University are collaborating on the Native American Producers Success IV Project (NAPS IV). The project seeks to increase the profitability and sustainability of socially disadvantaged and veteran (SD&V) Navajo farmers and ranchers. The project’s geographic area includes six USDA StrikeForce counties – Coconino, Navajo and Apache in Arizona and San Juan, McKinley and Cibola in New Mexico. Project activities include improving SD&V Navajo farming and ranching operations through (1) producer workshops, on-farm/on-ranch technical assistance and mentoring, (2) agriculture resource fairs featuring programs and services provided by USDA agencies (NRCS, FSA, RMA), BIA, Navajo Nation, Extension and other organizations (3) direct assistance to farmers and ranchers in completing BIA and NRCS conservation plans required for the issue of land use permits, and implementation of systematic methods for collecting, recording and reporting crop yield data necessary to qualify for FSA and RMA crop insurance programs, and (4) and building the leadership and organizational capacity of the Navajo Farmer and Rancher Congress (NFRC), a producer advocacy group.

Geographic Service Area: The NAPS IV project will serve the 27,000 square mile area of the Navajo Nation including six USDA StrikeForce counties including Coconino, Navajo and Apache in Arizona and San Juan, McKinley and Cibola in New Mexico. The 2012 Census of Agriculture for American Indian Reservations (latest available information) identified over 16,000 farmers and ranchers within the Navajo Nation, all of whom will be potential clients for this project. The Navajo Nation encompasses 16,600,000 acres, of this, 1% (90,000 acres) is classified as cropland, 9% (1,464,000 acres) as forest land, and 88% (14,608,000 acres), as rangeland.

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- Little Colorado River Plateau Resource Conservation & Development – The objective of the Cibecue Farm and Ranch Revitalization program is to continue economic development efforts in Cibecue by improved production of traditional local foods through modern ranching and farming practices. These efforts follow on a 2013 USDA RD RBEG that identified opportunities in Cibecue and a 2014 First Nations Grant

focused on revitalization of Grasshopper Livestock Association. Cibecue is a poverty-stricken, isolated, socially-disadvantaged yet independent Apache community whose economic base has deteriorated in the past 50 years. This application seeks to reverse that. Partners have been meeting for more than three years under the leadership of the Little Colorado River Plateau RC&D Area, Inc., local “community champions”, White Mountain Apache Liaisons and the two Tribal Council members. Assistance is sought to upgrade cattle herds, infrastructure and facilities. A market, processor and distributor have been identified for Native Beef, which is a focus for high-end beef revitalization efforts. In addition, production and consumption of traditional, local Apache foods (corn, peaches, walnuts) is a focus of this grant application and efforts in Cibecue and environs. Youth in the Cibecue High School, the *only* Charter School on the Fort Apache reservation, is also critical. Summer and part-time jobs in conjunction with the University of Arizona College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and traditional farming and ranching practices *must* be passed on. Finally, marketing and educational practices to enable the community to stand on its own is the ultimate goal. Many years ago, this was the case. It is no longer.

Geographic Service Area: Navajo County, Arizona

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- Painted Desert Demonstration Projects, Inc. - The STAR School’s Outreach and Assistance Program for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers in Navajo Nation. The Program is intended to extend the STAR School’s existing school function to an Education Center, which will provide on-going assistance to the socially disadvantaged, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers in Navajo Nation and other Federally Recognized American Indian Tribes in Arizona. The Program will take a holistic approach to address all five priority areas identified by USDA. It will assist USDA’s commitments to Tribal organizations with outreach and public education, business development and planning, grant writing, and sustainable farming and renewable energy technologies demonstration. In addition, the Program will particularly focus on promoting local food, water education, and renewable energy. Innovative and effective outreach and technical assistance approach will be used to foster collaboration among USDA agencies, Native American Tribal entities, and the socially disadvantaged, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers in the community.

Geographic Service Area: The service areas cover 110 Chapters in Navajo Nation, including several Strike Force counties and the former “Bennett Freeze” areas, where the development was frozen for 40 years. The majority of Navajo Nation is also considered as “Food Desert”. In addition, through our partnership with the Southwest Indian Agricultural Association (SWIAA), Apex Applied Technology, Inc. (AATech) and the University of Arizona, the services offered here will be open to the members of all Federally Recognized Tribes in Arizona.

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Arkansas

- University of Arkansas System – This project will provide technical assistance and training to Veteran Producers (VPs) and Socially Disadvantaged Producers (SDPs) in

Arkansas. It is designed to address the needs of VPs and SDPs as identified in a 2016 survey taken on SDPs and VPs in the project area. The top four needs identified in the survey will be addressed by the objectives of the project. The objective of the project are as follows: To assist SDPs and VPs in obtaining credit by providing farm financial training along with training and technical assistance in completing USDA and other loan applications. To help SDPs and VPs improve their land by keeping them updated on USDA conservation programs, practices, and enhancements along with the financial incentives available to help producers install land improvement practices. To help SDPs and VPs control and manage the Glyphosate Resistant Pigweed in cropland. To help livestock producers improve their profit level by increasing their weaning rate and improving their grazing efficiency. SDPs and VPs will receive training and technical assistance in farm financial analysis, recordkeeping and in completing USDA loan applications. VPs and SDPs will be assisted in identifying and in installing land improving conservation practices in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and land enhancement practices in the Conservation Stewardship Program. SDPs and VPs will be counseled in selecting and implementing Cooperative Extension Service recommended GRP Plans. Livestock producers will be counseled on nutrition and pasture management and assisted in implementing production plans developed with livestock specialists.

Geographic Service Area: The project will be conducted in 8 StrikeForce Counties in eastern Arkansas and 3 StrikeForce counties in southwest Arkansas. In eastern Arkansas most of this area consist of the flat Mississippi Alluvial Plains Soils where most of the state's row crops (soybean, wheat, corn, cotton, sorghum, and rice) are grown. Many of the state's largest (acres) farms are located in the area. However, a part of this 8 county area in southeast Arkansas (parts of Chicot, Drew, and Ashley County) is similar to the southwest Arkansas West Gulf Coastal Plains Counties (Hempstead Howard, and Miller) that are rolling in topography and composed of Pine and Harwood forest with some crop and pastureland. Many beef cattle SDPs and VPs live in these areas. Most of the state's SDPs, who are African Americans live in eastern Arkansas. These producers are mainly row crop producers with some who have diversified or transitioned to vegetable producers. The livestock producers, mostly beef cattle, are in the southern counties. The following StrikeForce Counties are targeted in eastern Arkansas: Ashley, Arkansas, Chicot, Desha, Drew, Jefferson, Lee, and Lincoln. The following StrikeForce counties are targeted in southwest Arkansas: Hempstead, Howard, and Miller. Jefferson County, which is home to UAPB, is the county with the largest number of SDPs which is 109. There is a total of 486 SDPs in these counties

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- **East Arkansas Enterprise Community** – The goal of this project is to provide training, technical assistance and outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers, veterans and beginning alternative crop fruit and vegetable farmers, and youth to help them to own and operate successful farm enterprises; and, to increase their participation in USDA programs. Historically farmers in this region grow cotton, corn, soybeans and rice farms; however, this program will enable farmers with less than 100 acres of farm land to transition from row to alternative crop farming. They will grow food for direct sales to commercial and institutional buyers. This program is located in the East Arkansas Delta

region in Crittenden, Lee, Monroe, Phillips and Saint Francis Counties. The age socially disadvantaged farmers is above the state average and their numbers are slowly declining. This project will recruit and train new and beginning farmers and veterans; and help them own and operate successful farms to replace those who stopped farming. This program will also teach youth about careers in agriculture and provide opportunities for the exploration, orientation and preparation for agriculture careers including farming. This project will be implemented by the East Arkansas Enterprise Community (EAEC), Inc. The EAEC is a 501 © (3) organization that is headquartered in St. Francis County at 1000 Airport Road, P.O. Box 2212 Forrest City, AR 72336 Dr. Robert L. Cole is EAEC's director and he can be reached at 870-630-2005 or EAEC@sbcglobal.net.

Geographic Service Area: This project will serve Socially Disadvantaged farmers, new and beginning farmers, and socially disadvantaged youth in Crittenden, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, and St. Francis Counties in the State of Arkansas. These are StrikeForce Counties that have very high populations Socially Disadvantaged African American who will be trained to equitably participate in USDA programs, provided technical assistance and outreach to improve their farm enterprises. African American farmers are the third largest minority group in the country; however, almost half of the country saw a decrease in the number of black farmers over the past five years with 19 states reporting fewer black farmers in 2012 than reported in 2007. Four of the five project counties has majority Black or African American population. Collectively, socially disadvantaged groups including American Indian, Asian, Hispanic Origin, and others make up only between 1 to 3 % of the population in the counties in the project area. The population in Crittenden County is 51.2%; Lee County is 55.3%; Phillips County is 63.1%; and St. Francis County is 51.9%. There is a high level of poverty in the counties in the project area. There are seventy-five (75) counties in Arkansas and two of the counties in the project area rank 74th and 75th in per capita income or the average per-person income for the county. The per capita income for Lee, Phillips, and St. Francis counties is below the 2016 Federal Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia.

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- Arkansas Land and Community Development - Integrated Outreach Farm and Rural Support Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. The Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) and the USDA will partner to present the Arkansas 2501 program. While many large-scale operations may have modern technology, approximately 85% of Arkansas farms are considered small farms. Social and economic isolation has restricted the ability to structure cooperative organizations that would leverage individual strengths, harness rural resources, and improve the overall competitive position of local business owners and producers. ALCDC seeks to extend outreach, improve access, and build lasting relationships between USDA programs and socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, veterans, and youth. This goal is directly in line with ALCDC's mission to serve its minority farmer and rural resident membership base through advocacy related to land and asset retention, outreach, and technical assistance to historically underserved producers, including veterans and beginning farmers. This project will recruit and provide agriculture-related

services to 100 socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, 50 veteran farmers and ranchers, and 30 disadvantaged youth in the 42 county service area. Program participants will be identified through extensive regional recruitment, an established outreach network, and by referrals obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices. The project will provide comprehensive training and technical assistance including workshops, on-farm demonstrations, and dissemination of information through mailings and newsletters to ensure that each participant has a well-designed and thoroughly documented approach to production agriculture as a commercially viable and profitable business.

Geographic Service Area: The project area consists of 42 high poverty counties throughout southern, central, and eastern Arkansas, 19 of which are StrikeForce counties

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Colorado

- **First Nations Development Institute** – The goal of this First Nations Development Institute project is to provide training and outreach to two cohorts of 27 selected Native American farmers and ranchers that will increase their successful participation in USDA programs and build their capacity to manage agriculture and food systems operations in Native communities. The first cohort will be comprised of 12 Native farmers and ranchers who attended First Nations’ two-day Farm-to-School training in June 2016. At the conclusion of this training as well as through the provision of two days (16 hours) of consultant follow-up TA, these participants will have a draft business plan that will prepare them to apply to USDA for a Farm-To-School grant in fall 2017. The second cohort will be comprised of 15 Native farmers and ranchers who attended First Nations’ recent 2-day Business of Indian Agriculture trainings. Upon the completion of this training and TA follow-up, participants will have a completed business plan and will be prepared to apply for USDA loan programs, EQIP participation and/or USDA grants.

Geographic Service Area: This project will serve Native American farmers and ranchers in tribal communities.

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Florida

- **Florida A&M University** - Florida A&M University’s (FAMU) proposes to implement the North Florida Bridges of Opportunity in Agriculture for Socially Disadvantaged Populations (BOA) project. The project will be administered by the Cooperative Extension Program (CEP) in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) at FAMU. The real world problem BOA will address is the entrenched difficulty socially disadvantaged populations’ experience starting, expanding, and sustaining overtime agriculturally-based enterprises. Although available, USDA and other federal programs and services designed to increase the capacity of these populations to compete in the agricultural industry are often viewed by the population as inaccessible. To address this problem BOA will create six dynamic environments (one-stop-shopping) across north Florida where audiences will receive small group and individual culturally sensitive help accessing USDA programs and services. The innovativeness of the project rests in allowing end users to direct the flow of instruction and learning and hands-on-assistance that results in deliverables desired by them. Therefore, the objectives are to (a) increase human capital capacity of CEP, (b) facilitate access to markets, including alternative

markets, (c) stimulate entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture for youth, veterans and new/beginning agro entrepreneurs, (d) identify and provide initial outreach assessment to agricultural-based heir-property landholders, (e) Increase capacity for target service delivery audiences to receive ongoing services once the project ends. The anticipated deliverables: 42 workshops/trainings, six on-farm demonstration, 220 workshop/training participants, 105 receive direct technical assistance, three indigenous residents to implement service delivery.

Geographic Service Area: North Florida

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- **North South Institute, Inc.** - Scaling Up and Out – Helping Socially Disadvantaged, Veteran, Women, and Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers to Maximize Commercial Opportunities Using USDA Programs. With the support of 2501 programs over the past decade, the North-South Institute, Inc. (NSI) has implemented programs in Florida, the Delta (AR, LA, MS) & other Southern States (AL, GA, SC) to assist 34 clusters of Socially Disadvantaged, Veteran, Women, & Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers (SDFR, VF, WTF, & LRFR). Forty percent (40%) own, operate, or have the foundations to own Sustainable and Viable Farms & Ranches (SVFR); 20% need continued support to build SVFR; 20% receive support but are slow to yield desired results for SVFR; and 20% are new and beginning farmers lacking information on accessing USDA programs and technical knowledge of agricultural protocols to build SVFR. NSI proposes its Socially Disadvantaged Producers & Veterans Training & Outreach Scale Up and Out Program[®] to recruit, train, & support SDFR, VF, WTF, LRFR in Florida (13 selected counties) to own & operate their agricultural operations and use USDA's Basket of Services and Resources[™]. The project's goal is to transfer knowledge & activities in agriculture and agribusiness to 135-155 producers so that they may maximize efforts in creating real, sustainable commercial activities for selected value chains: specialty crops, small livestock, honey bee & value added specialty products. The project's objectives are to assist these producers in: (1) increasing agricultural productivity & (2) accessing commercial marketing opportunities thereby increasing local/domestic trade of Specialty Farm Products. The expected outcome is a platform of producers who have expanded operations and/or transitioned from low productivity, under/unemployment into commercially viable & economically sustainable enterprises.

Geographic Service Area: The project covers the following clusters and geographical areas: Cluster I. Socially Disadvantaged Small Farmers Women Tenant Farmers, Youth, Hispanic in Broward & Dade Counties - 6 NLMFRs & 35-40 OGFRs; Cluster II. Veterans, Women, Socially Disadvantaged and Limited Resource Farmers and Cooperatives in Florida in Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Okeechobee Counties - 5 NLMFRs & 35 OGFRs; Cluster III. Socially Disadvantaged Small Farmers in Palm Beach, Glade, Hendry, and Collier Counties - 4 NLMFRs & 25 OGFRs (note that Glades, Hendry, and Collier Counties are within the newly designated Rural Promise Zones of the Southwest FL Planning Commission); and Cluster IV. Socially Disadvantaged Small Farmers & Ranchers & Veterans in Jackson, Holmes & Gadsden Counties - 5 NLMFRs & 30-35 OGFRs. The program assists producers to expand farming operations and/or transition from underemployment and unemployment into a commercially viable and

economically sustainable enterprise on a commercial basis. The Three (3) Module Sessions are taught by Institute staff (Project Director, Chief Program Officer, Outreach Extension Officers) and Subject Matter Specialists/Trainers (SMS-T), identified in Section G in the four clusters identified covering 13 counties.

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Georgia

- **Global Growers Network** - Global Growers Farmer Outreach Project for Diverse Farmers in Georgia. The Global Growers Farmer Outreach Project for Diverse Farmers in Georgia will be implemented by a coalition of four metro Atlanta organizations and led by Global Growers Network. The project is designed to provide targeted outreach and specialized services for socially disadvantaged farmers, including refugees, immigrants, and U.S. born people of color by offering training, infrastructure and opportunities to enable safe, productive, and sustainable cultivation of culturally appropriate food for their families and communities. It will also provide the tools necessary for interested farmers to access both small-scale and wholesale market opportunities to ensure sustainable income-generation and increase distribution of local foods across the community and especially within socially disadvantaged communities. For both, it will facilitate increased connection to the offices and programs of the USDA.

Geographic Service Area: The program components will engage different geographic areas. The beginning farmer pipeline will target the area of Clarkston, GA and surrounding metro Atlanta, while the advanced farmer pipeline will expand the reach to include disadvantaged growers across the State of Georgia.

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Hawaii

- **Lei Ho'olaha** - Lei Ho'olaha CDFI is pleased to submit Project SOAR (Sustaining Opportunities in Agriculture & Resources) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO), for its Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, CFDA No. 10.443. LH respectfully requests funding in the amount of \$100,000 to assist socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers living on the islands of Maui and Molokai to SOAR towards becoming successful and viable Agripreneurs (knowledgeable farmers/ranchers and skillful entrepreneurs). Project SOAR's goal is to establish the Native Farmers Academy that will provide outreach, training and technical assistance to 10 Native Hawaiian and other socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers on Maui, and another 10 on Molokai. The Native Farmers Academy will achieve its project goal through the following objectives: (1) AgNetwork** to provide a support network for current and prospective Native farmers and ranchers to better access USDA local, state, regional, and national resources; (2) AgBasics** to provide the Ag side of AgBusiness to learning basic farm and ranch practices, coupled with traditional Hawaiian practices; (3) AgBusiness** to provide the business side of AgBusiness to become successful Agripreneurs; (4) AgPro* to will assist socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in owning and operating successful farms and ranches; (5) AgIncubator* to promote mentoring-networking-coaching opportunities to deepen practice in the Ag and Business sides of AgBusiness.

Geographic Service Area: Hawaii

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- **The Kohala Center** - Supporting Hawai'i's socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers with technical assistance and training. 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, a result of its relatively recent transition to a tourism-based economy coupled with the globalization of the world food supply. However with energy, transport, and input costs rising there is a growing urgency to address island economic and food security by increasing self-reliance through economic diversification that includes reviving agriculture and providing producers with the resources they need to reestablish a local food system. To these ends the proposed project will provide agricultural production and agribusiness technical assistance to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers (SDVFR) across the state, along with targeted formal agricultural instruction for beginning SDVFR and an agricultural internship for SD youth on Hawai'i Island. Individualized technical assistance will include: production, business, and market planning; financial management; capitalization strategies; access to USDA grants and loans; and links to land acquisition for 50 experienced SDVFR. A total of 25 Hawai'i Island SDVFR will also participate in a 16-week beginning farmer-rancher training program, receiving classroom and field-based instruction from university professors, extension agents, USDA agency staff, and agricultural professionals. An agricultural internship will allow 20 SD youth to gain knowledge of agricultural production and career opportunities. The long-term program goal is to enhance the capabilities of Hawai'i's existing SDVFR to own and manage viable and sustainable agricultural operations, recruit new SDVFR's into the profession, and increase community food security.

Geographic Service Area: This program will provide individualized technical assistance in agricultural business development to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers statewide, and provide formal agricultural training and internship opportunities to SDVFR residents of Hawai'i Island, where the TKC Demonstration Farm is located. The state of Hawai'i encompasses four counties, each its separate island or group of islands, with a total land area of 4,112,388 acres, of which 27% is designated as agricultural land (1,214,000 acres on Hawai'i Island alone)

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Louisiana

- **Southern University Agricultural & Mechanical College** - The overriding goal of the Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute is to promote small and family farm sustainability through enhanced business management skills, leadership development and the utilization of USDA programs and services. This goal is and will continue to be achieved by helping farmers become better leaders while enhancing their business and farm management skills. Class VI will be open to minority, socially disadvantaged, limited resource agricultural producers from each of the 18 states with an 1890 Land-grant university. Through a competitive process, 15 participants will be selected to enter into the Institute program. Training seminars, the primary mode of instruction, will be designed as highly interactive, experiential learning workshops. Participants will explore various seminar topics through group discussion, small/ large group exercises,

assessment tools, facilitator presentations, in-class exercises, pre / post seminar assignments and participant led discussions. The course of study will consist of training seminars, video lesson and study tours. As a result of this project, we expect a cadre of minority agricultural producers who are more informed, confident, capable and willing to assume leadership positions in their communities and the agricultural sector. It is anticipated that with the increased levels of confidence, self-esteem, knowledge & leadership skills, coupled with the enhanced farm / business management skills, the Institute participants will return to their farms and communities and share their knowledge and experiences with others. We expect socially disadvantaged producers in Louisiana to be in a position to continue their agricultural enterprises due to increased participation in USDA programs.

Geographic Service Area: This project is open to all socially disadvantaged producers in the following states strike force states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia as well as the other states with an 1890 institution of Oklahoma, Florida, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri and now Ohio. Participants from the previous classes have come from all of the above mentioned states except Virginia and West Virginia

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Maine

- **Cultivating Community** - Collaborating with More New American Food Growers to Create Land Access and to Advance their Production Skills, Market Access, Food Security, Economic Wellbeing, and Community Integration in Maine's Most Populous Counties. Cultivating Community will apply its 15 years' experience supporting the local food system and six years' experience developing the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP), the largest land-based farmer-training program in Maine, to implement "Collaborating with More New American Food Growers" in Cumberland and Androscoggin Counties. Our one-year project will increase multi-pronged outreach and service to multi-ethnic socially-disadvantaged New American producers/pro prospective producers, increasing their economic stability, food security, and community integration. We'll provide land access, training/technical assistance, market opportunity, and support for 20 farmers. We'll provide land access, technical assistance, and support for 70 advanced gardeners who may transition into part or full-time farming with access to our Fresh Start Farms Food Hub. We'll provide job skills, food production/preparation skills, and food-system education to 70 disadvantaged youth while mentoring 70 other teen ag - leaders from across Maine.

Geographic Service Area: The New American Sustainable Agriculture Project operates primarily at Packard-Littlefield Farm in Lisbon, outside Lewiston, in Androscoggin County. At this farm we are currently supporting 15 farmers and 30 community gardeners. We also support six farmers who have graduated from our training program and have established the cooperative New Roots Farm in a rural part of Lewiston. We provide training and education to vegetable gardeners in the Somali Bantu Community Mutual Assistance Association of Lewiston/Auburn and invite them to advance into the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project when they wish to do so. We maintain smaller secondary sites for 20 advanced gardeners at Tidewater Farm in Falmouth and for two farmers at Highland Farm in South Portland, both in Cumberland County. During the project period, we will be working to identify a second major growing site for producers of all ages in greater Portland.

- **Contact Info:** Craig Lapine, craig@cultivatingcommunity.org, 207-761-4769 Ext. 815

Michigan

- Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems - Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) will assist socially disadvantaged farmers (SDF) and Farmer Veterans to own and successfully operate viable farms/ranches in Michigan by: 1) facilitating and enhancing the development of two Multicultural Farmer Networks and one Farmer Veteran network within Michigan that will provide the support and education needed by SDF and Farmer Veterans and ranchers to become successful agriculture entrepreneurs; 2) create USDA Program Application Guides that aide SDF and Veterans in filling out required forms for USDA program access 3) create MIFFS Field Specialists to work one-on-one with SDF and Veterans to assist in navigating and applying for USDA programs; 4) linking our USDA agency partners with our farmer and non-profit customers; 5) Expanding MIFFS website to include a USDA resources page; 6) planning, marketing and facilitating a statewide conference with 18 workshops (covering many of the USDA programs and services) where SDF/Farmer Veterans come together to learn, share resources and begin networking; and 7) hosting four additional USDA 101 workshops in regional communities that are active within our Multicultural and Vets in Ag Networks.

Geographic Service Area: Michigan

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Minnesota

- Red Lake Band Of Chippewa Indians – Rebuilding Indian Agriculture Federally-Recognized Tribe: Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. Growing “good food” is not foreign to the Ojibwe. Now residing on 800,000 acres of the diminished Red Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota, they were a successful agrarian community, RL Indians agriculture produce fed members and surrounding communities alike. The goal of the RLLFI is to build a sustainable group of local producers on or near RL Reservation in Northern Minnesota by providing training, technical assistance and hands-on experiential learning, connection to resources and target market savvy to meet consumer demand. Increasing the number of local producers and providing continuing opportunities for education and sharing of information, the RLLFI will begin to develop a local foods economy that is familiar with agriculture practices, resource management and agri-business practices. During the project period, RLLFI with USDA and U of Minnesota partners will deliver a monthly schedule of training/networking that ranges from soil management to market delivery. USDA resources will be on hand at trainings to build relationships and trust with local producers to ensure continuity of services during and after the project. Local producers will have access to high-tunnels, land, equipment, tilling services, business planning and loan funds to support the growth of their private farm enterprises. An average 15 participants will attend each monthly event receiving 36 hours training; 36 hours hands-on and 10 hours individual TA. We expect to grow/create/support 6 new full-time ag producer businesses per year. We are building for the future - reestablishing a way of life and self-sufficiency for today and the Seventh Generation.

Geographic Service Area: Red Lake Reservation in Northern Minnesota

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- Fond Du Lac Tribal & Community College - The Bimaaji'idiwin Tribal Agricultural Outreach project will build upon the success of the 2011 OAO funded Ojibwe Garden and further the agricultural outreach for the Fond du Lac Band and throughout the Ojibwe Ceded Territories (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan). Our project goals will provide training through hands-on technique learning opportunities in the Ojibwe Demonstration and Research Garden and through agricultural business workshops, promote participation with USDA programs through the Tribal Agriculture and Small Business Conference at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and build relationships between beginning and established farmers with our "Best Practices" farm tours.

Geographic Service Area: The Bimaaji'idiwin project will focus on Fond du Lac Band members as well as all community members in the geographic area served by Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. This includes the Minnesota counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Pine, and Saint Louis as well as the greater Ceded Territories in Wisconsin and Michigan. The Band has approximately 3800 enrolled members, owns 4,800 acres, with about 22,000 acres in trust. Most of this land is covered by forests and water, but well interspersed with agricultural land.

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Mississippi

- Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance Inc. – Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance (MMFA) recognizes the need to provide outreach and technical assistance that will carve the way for socially disadvantaged farmers or veteran farmers and ranchers to face the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, MMFA seeks to provide outreach and technical assistance to 150 socially disadvantaged farmers or veteran farmers and ranchers in five northeast Mississippi counties (Calhoun, Chickasaw, Clay, Monroe, Oktibbeha) on how to: (1) obtain, own and operate successful farms and ranches, (2) improve participation in obtaining USDA and other agricultural programs assistance (3) introduce agricultural-related information through innovative outreach and technical assistance programs, and (4) introduce agricultural education targeting socially disadvantaged youth and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and workers, including but not limited to Strike Force and Promise Zone areas. The selected counties are located in rural areas as defined by USDA. In addition, all of the counties are communities designated by USDA's Strike Force Initiative as areas of high need-characterized, as high unemployment and low per capita income and as compared to state and national averages. We anticipate that at least 80% of program participants will enhanced awareness, improve knowledge and adopt sustainable agricultural practices in their farming operations; engage in good farm management practice, identify new marketing opportunities; change their skepticism about the federal and state agricultural programs after getting exposure to program information. Project staff including the hired program evaluation specialist will evaluate,

document and report the outcomes and impacts of the funded grant to the funding and other interested agencies.

Geographic Service Area: The following Strike Force counties in Northeast Mississippi: Calhoun, Chickasaw, Clay, Monroe, Oktibbeha

- **Contact Info:** Carolyn G. Jones mmfa@netzero.net, 662-213-2433

- Mississippi Association of Cooperatives – Infusing and Implementing to Improve Farm Income. The overall goal of the proposed project is to infuse technology, inform of USDA programs, and implement an educational outreach program to improve 150 socially disadvantaged farmers, rancher sand veterans farm income and enhance their quality of life through better farm management practices, financial management, and marketing of a profitable mix of traditional and alternative enterprises production in eight south eastern and central and Mississippi counties (Forrest Jefferson Davis, Pearl River, Lamar, Lawrence, Noxubee, Perry, and Rankin). However the objectives for this projects are as follows: (1) Improve the overall farm income of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through farm business, financial, and risk management; (2) Ensure profitability and sustain ability of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in and commercial fruit and vegetable production; (3) Inform socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers of USDA program to enhance farm operations and management; (4) Introduce agricultural related information to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through innovative outreach technical assistance techniques; (5) Assist beginning farmers and youth to become engage in agriculture enterprises to secure the next generation of farmers. Outreach and assistance will be conducted by the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives and its collaborators: Alcorn State University Small Farm Development Center and Extension Program, Mississippi State University Extension Service and federal, state, and local agencies. The collaborative effort will assist participants to increase farm income by infusing technology, informing of USDA programs, and implementing an educational outreach program.

Geographic Service Area: Counties affected in MS: Forrest, Jefferson Davis, Pearl River, Lamar, Lawrence, Noxubee, Perry and Rankin

- **Contact Info:** Ben Burkett, benburkett601@gmail.com, 601-310-5223

- Tougaloo College – The Tougaloo College Farm Aid Program will provide 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. The geographical service area for the project is in the Mississippi Delta region and includes 7 underserved counties: Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica and Washington. Hinds, Madison and Yazoo counties will also be part of the catchment area for the program. The project's overarching goals are to: (1) assist SDVFRs in owning and operating farms and ranches through increased participation in USDA programs and services; and (2) demonstrate agriculture's connection to access to healthy food and community and economic development. The specific goals of the program are to: (1) improve participation among socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in

owning and operating successful farms and ranches through increased awareness about USDA programs; (2) improve participation among socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in USDA programs by providing technical assistance; and, (3) introduce agriculture-related information to socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers through innovative outreach and technical assistance techniques. To provide outreach services, assistance, training and advocacy, the project will establish and utilize two primary components: Agriculture Outreach and Advocacy (AOA) Centers and a Food Policy Council.

Geographic Service Area: The geographical service area for the project is in the Mississippi Delta region and includes 7 underserved counties: Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica and Washington. Hinds, Madison and Yazoo counties will also be part of the catchment area for the program

○ **Contact Info:** Sandra Hayes, shayes@tougaloo.edu, 601-977-6179

- **Tri-County Agricultural Cooperative** - The Tri-County Agricultural Cooperative (TCAC) approach proposes to satisfy two primary needs for the targeted rural counties in the Mississippi Delta. First, the program will increase the production of sustainable vegetables. Secondly, this project will improve economic conditions in the area through the development of agricultural businesses. TCAC will initiate the program by recruiting and organizing socially disadvantaged new and existing farmers into a Farm Cooperative. The Cooperative will then partner with USDA agencies to provide outreach awareness sessions to educate socially disadvantaged farmers on the opportunities and programs that they offer. In addition to outreach awareness on USDA programs, technical assistance with vegetable production, marketing, establishment of a marketing plans, faith-based marketing models, and food processing will be included. Techniques for responding to the needs of new and current socially disadvantaged farmers interested in livestock, specialty crops, and herbs, small acreage of table-top vegetables, etc. will be developed. These outreach and technical assistance techniques will focus on four key areas: Corp Production, Safe Food Processing, Diversified Marketing and Church (faith-based) Pilot Demonstration Sites. Expected project outcomes include the development of a marketing and communications, and the development of diversified markets for fresh vegetables. Anticipated benefits will include: a). 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. b). increased health benefits resulting from access to fresh produce, reducing susceptibility to various harmful diseases, and c). increasing agricultural business and employment.

Geographic Service Area: 10 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** - Energizing Rural Communities with Hand-on Trainings, Outreach and Technical Assistance. The overall project goal is to enhance the profitability and sustainability of small and limited resource farmers/ranchers and their quality of life. Therefore, this project will educate 150 socially disadvantaged farmers

and ranchers in eight eastern Mississippi Counties (Tippah, Winston, Wayne, Clark, Union, Choctaw, Greene and Jasper) on how to: 1) enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities, and improving attitudes towards owning and operating farms and ranches 2) assist with the knowledge, understanding and participation in available USDA and other agricultural programs 3) fortify pre-existing relationships between socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and USDA local, state, regional and national offices. 4) assist youths with engaging in agricultural enterprises to safeguard the next generation of the farming population. The selected counties are all located in rural areas as defined by USDA. In addition, the majority of counties are communities designated by USDA's Strike Force Initiative as areas of high need-characterized, as high unemployment and low per capita income and as compared to state and national averages. We anticipate that at least 80% of program participants will enhanced awareness, improve knowledge and adopt sustainable agricultural practices in their farming operations; engage in good farm management practice, identify new marketing opportunities; change their skepticism about the federal and state agricultural programs after getting exposure to program information. Project staff including the hired program evaluation specialist will evaluate, document and report the outcomes and impacts of the funded grant to the funding and other interested agencies.

- **Geographic Service Area:** The following Mississippi counties: Tippah, Winston, Wayne, Clarke, Union, Choctaw, Greene, Jasper
 - **Contact Info:** Frank Taylor, fltaylor@bellsouth.net, 601-291-2704

Missouri

- Lincoln University - Lincoln University of Missouri requests a renewal grant to build on the success achieved during the past year of OAO support. The goal of the project is to directly assist Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (SDVFR), located in Southeast Missouri (SEMO) in being successful with their farm businesses. This will be accomplished through one-on-one technical assistance and workshops targeted to SDVFRs (Priority Area (PA) 1&4); building relationships between the SDVFR, their community, and the USDA (PA 1&3); and connecting them with the resources available to them through their local USDA offices (PA 2&3). Our second goal is to leverage these funds to expand the Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP) in Missouri. By implementing the program through the OAO funds, we believe we will show the need for this work in the region, and Lincoln University will adopt the program into the ISFOP, thereby expanding the impact of the program in years to come. Three staff members will be hired to serve nine counties in SEMO. Through outreach to the USDA, MU extension, Community Based-Organizations, and Agricultural businesses, the staff will identify, recruit, and assist the SDVFR in the community. Once SDVFR are identified and recruited, staff will help them navigate the resources available and disseminate the latest relevant farming and ranching information. Conducting workshops and conferences will be another outreach tool to reach and assist new farmers. The ultimate goal is to help boost their farm/ranch income through one-on-one help.
Geographic Service Area: Missouri
 - **Contact Info:** Touria E. Eaton, eatont@lincolnu.edu, 573-681-5174

- University Of Missouri System – The proposed project, Missouri Outreach and Assistance for Latino, Veteran, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers will assist enterprises in the farming and agribusiness sector. Many of these groups lack general farm management skills and knowledge of government agriculture programs. Consequently, faculty from MU Extension will scale up existing outreach programs and technical assistance resources to address the five priority areas using a multi-faceted approach. MU Extension serves every county across the state, and is a partnership of the University of Missouri, a land-grant university, its campuses, Lincoln University, and the people of Missouri through county extension councils. Over a 12 month period, Extension faculty will conduct eight workshops; four in English and four in Spanish, on “Understanding the Alphabet Soup of USDA Programs.” We will also use the MU Extension developed Grow Your Farm (GYF) unique curriculum designed for beginning farmers. As such, four GYF courses are planned across the state. Business planning and cash flow sessions from the GYF curriculum will also be offered in Spanish. As a result of this project, 100% of those attending will increase their knowledge of USDA Programs and the importance of business plan development. Over 30% of participants will apply for a USDA program, and 75% will complete the GYF course with a draft business plan. Quantitative and qualitative measures in Spanish and English will be used to measure Pre/post knowledge gained with anticipated change in behavior actions.

Geographic Service Area: Statewide geographic areas will include the following Missouri regions and their designated counties. With StrikeForce Initiative and Promise Zone areas also indicated: (1) East Central Region: Fort Leonard Wood post area includes StrikeForce Initiative counties of: Morgan, Miller, and Phelps. (2) Urban Region includes Promise Zone of St. Louis in St. Louis County, StrikeForce Initiative counties: St. Francois and Ste. Genevieve, and Scott AFB in Illinois, near St. Louis metro area. (3) West Central Region around Whiteman AFB, in Johnson County includes St. Clair, StrikeForce Initiative County. (4) Southwest Region includes StrikeForce Initiative counties of: Barry, Greene, Lawrence, McDonald, and Newton.

 - **Contact Info:** Karen Funkenbusch, funkenbuschk@missouri.edu, 573-884-1268

Montana

- Fort Peck Community College – Fort Peck Community College, the lead institution and Montana State University, the partnering institution, are committed to delivering a project that is designed to meet the priorities of the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program. The long-term goal of this project is assist socially disadvantaged American Indian farmers and ranchers (SDAIFRs) to connect their cultural values with academic and practical knowledge through educational outreach and technical assistance that addresses tribal land use policies, livestock and crop marketing, and Federal Farm Policy leading to improved sustainability of their ranching and farming operations. Over the course of the year, FPCC and MSU will take on the task of providing SDAIFRs with tools and resources that will improve the sustainability of their agricultural operations by delivering the following outcome based objectives: (1) Develop and deliver educational outreach to educate SDAIFRs on Agricultural Resource Management policies adopted by the Fort Peck Tribes; (2) Develop and deliver an education programs to introduce strategies for effective and sustainable agricultural practices on the Fort Peck Reservation, as well as increase awareness for Federal Farm Programs that can improve the sustainability of their operations. These include programs such as Price Loss Coverage, Agricultural Risk

Coverage, the Supplementary Insurance Coverage Option, the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, and new innovations in the Federal Crop insurance Program (programs managed either by the USDA Farm Service Agency or the USDA Risk Management Agency) on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

Geographic Service Area: Montana

- **Contact Info:** Craig Smith, csmith@fpcc.edu, 406-768-5555

Nevada

- University Of Nevada, Reno - The project team lead out of the University of Nevada, Reno – Cooperative Extension is responding to this RFP to resubmit this proposal and offer over 80 years of valuable and extensive expertise in working with American Indian populations, and proposes to hold 6 two-day educational workshops and one-on-one education, throughout the year, to producers in financial management, record keeping, business planning and marketing, taxes on Indian land, Indian land tenure, Indian land leasing, and water rights to facilitate USDA program implementation in six Western states. The project team has assessed the needs of American Indians through the use of a variety of outreach and assistance methods in the six state project area, which includes: Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, South Dakota, and Montana. The Project Director is American Indian and lives on the Walker River Reservation within the project area. The project team is fluent in outreach and assistance models, works well with language barriers, and is connected professionally and socially on the majority of reservations within the project area. The project team will build upon their previously funded “*American Indian Farmer and Rancher Outreach and Assistance Improvement Project*” and the “*American Indian Outreach and Assistant Project*” to offer one-on-one outreach. Partnerships include tribes in the project area, USDA, Farm Service Agency, 1994 tribal colleges, the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program and Intertribal Agricultural Council.

Geographic Service Area The project team has assessed the needs of American Indians through the use of a variety of outreach and assistance methods in the six state project area, which includes: Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, South Dakota, and Montana.

- **Contact Info:** Staci Emm, emms@unce.unr.edu, 775-945-3444

New Mexico

- Desert Forge Foundation – Home to 23,800 farms, 43.9 million acres of farmland, significant amounts of rangeland, and rich in cultural food traditions--farming, ranching and food product manufacturing is a viable economic endeavor in New Mexico. The state has approximately 6,000 recently-returned combat veterans in need of employment. Thousands of non-veteran New Mexicans are struggling economically. New Mexicans spend approximately 4.0-billion dollars per year on food; just 3% of those dollars stay in the state. Through a social enterprise farm and outreach, the Desert Forge Foundation, Warrior Farmer Project (WFP) trains those in need to take up farming, ranching, and value added product businesses in order to improve their economic conditions. WFP’s demonstration farm site is located on a historical ranch which is part of the Atrisco Land

Grant adjacent to the City of Albuquerque. This land-grant is one of few Spanish colonial grants still legally intact in the United States, and one continuously owned by the original settlers and their heirs since the seventeenth century concession. WFP Phase II will provide outreach to veterans statewide, including tribal communities. Outreach will include technical assistance in creating new or improving farm, ranch, value added enterprises and marketing. WFP will partner with the USDA and Rural Coalition staff to interface farmer needs with USDA programs and requirements, offering guidance and connecting farmers and communities to USDA programs.

- **Geographic Service Area:** State of New Mexico, all counties and cities in the state including the 19 Pueblos, two Apache and Navajo reservations
 - **Contact Info:** Marie Campos, cpipi@outlook.com, 505-660-0002

- New Mexico Acequia Association – The purpose of the New Mexico Acequia Outreach Project is to strengthen the agricultural operations of the farmers and ranchers who use acequias or community ditches in New Mexico. Acequias are the centuries-old irrigation systems in New Mexico that support the livelihood of thousands of predominantly Hispanic farmers and ranchers who rely upon surface water irrigation for their agricultural operations. The project will build upon over twenty years of experience in conducting statewide outreach, educational, and technical assistance to Hispanic farmers and ranchers. Through a statewide membership base and network, the New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA) will conduct innovative outreach, education, and technical assistance to improve agricultural operations through irrigation efficiency and to increase participation in USDA programs. The NMAA will work closely with the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) to ensure that acequias meet eligibility requirements in order to participate in the NRCS Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and the NRCS New Mexico Acequia Initiative. Eligibility will require that numerous individual producers sign up with the FSA through their local USDA field office. Altogether, these efforts will benefit an estimate 275 farmers and ranchers. Additionally, the NMAA will provide innovative technical assistance to producers through demonstration workshops and a farmer training program aimed at new and beginning farmers. These efforts will benefit an estimated seventy-five producers resulting in at least twenty new USDA applications. NMAA will conduct broad outreach reaching over 6,000 individuals through a quarterly newsletter featuring successful farming operations and effective implementation of projects supported by USDA programs.

Geographic Service Area: The membership of acequia communities is predominantly Hispanic, concentrated in New Mexico counties with the highest rates of persistent rural poverty including Rio Arriba, Taos, Mora, San Miguel, Sandoval, and Guadalupe. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the number of minority farmers in New Mexico is on the rise. The number of Hispanics farmers increased by 45% over a five year period from 2007 to 2012 and made up about 53% of the farm operators in the state (an increase of 10% from 2007 to 2012). Furthermore, in the acequia rich region of north central New Mexico, Hispanics now make up about 68 % of the farm operators. The project will also cover rural and semi-rural areas of Santa Fe (Chimayo, Cundiyo,

Pojoaque) and Bernalillo (South Valley) counties where there are high concentrations of Hispanic farmers.

- **Contact Info:** Serafina Lombardi, serafina@lasacequias.org, 505-995-9644

North Carolina

- Conetoe Family Life Center - Established in 2006, Conetoe Family Life Center (CFLC) has designed an agriculture and agri-business program for minority youth and residents in eastern North Carolina. Our Community Farm Program in 2015, produced more than 45,000 pounds of food from its summer and fall crops. The initiative was recognized nationally as one of the top ten CNN Heroes in 2015 for engaging young people in the planning, planting, harvesting, preparation and marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables. The geographic service area includes three eastern North Carolina Counties, Edgecombe, Nash and Martin with a population of 171,426 people. In 2016, each one is ranked as a Tier 1 county and counted among the state's 40 most distressed areas. While these communities face enormous economic challenges, farming and agri-business entrepreneurs and to ensure that veteran farmers have access to the programs, services and recourse offered by USDA. Funding through this project will expand current agricultural programs by training youth to become certified Junior Master Gardeners. Additionally, minority veteran farmers will be linked to staff, resources, and information provided by USDA's local, state, regional, and national offices. The proposed budget for this project is \$187,995

Geographic Service Area: The geographic service area includes three eastern North Carolina Counties, Edgecombe, Nash and Martin with a population of 171,426 people

- **Contact Info:** Garrie Wright Moore, garriemr@yahoo.com, 252-563-5411
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- Whitaker Small Farm Group Inc. – This project is focused to provide outreach, training and technical assistance to the minority farmers and owners within the USDA Strike Force Counties of Eastern, N.C. Minorities who enters WFSG project will intern at the Virginia State University Research Farm. They will be exposed to agriculture, hydroponics, aquaculture, greenhouse, and \$43,560.00 per acre potential. These interns will be there to shadow the specialist and transfer some of the knowledge to the home farm. This farm research site is the closest one to most of the Strike Force Counties. Minority farm owners in the Strike Force Counties will be trained to become niche/specialty farmers. They will be taught innovative and creative ways of growing vegetables and fruits in a greenhouse/high tunnel. We have an advanced degree Food and Nutritionist who will conduct training in value added to enable farmers preserve their produce for a premium price. They will also be trained in direct marketing. We will introduce minority farmers to new and lucrative ventures such as vermiculture and beekeeping. Since honey is an income producer and an interesting avenue, the master bee keeper on our team will train farmers in the art of honey making and bee keeping. There is much interest here from minority farmers and owners to be trained in bee keeping. WFSG will train in land retention strategies and work with all USDA Agencies to create program awareness and enhance participation among minorities.

Geographic Service Area: The target audience will be selected from Duplin, Sampson, Warren, Wayne, Johnston, Robeson, Hertford, Northampton, Halifax and Bertie several other counties in the Eastern and Central parts of North Carolina state. The project area falls within the heart of the USDA Strike force Initiative counties which are mostly persistent-poverty counties.

- **Contact Info:** Charles Whitaker, c.l.w.whitaker@comcast.net, 919-412-1432

Ohio

- **Asian Service Action Inc.** – The Refugee/Immigrant Agricultural Project of Northeast Ohio (RAP-NEO) provides training, technical assistance, mentoring, linguistic assistance, entrepreneurial education and other support to assist socially disadvantaged refugees and immigrants start small farm enterprises around rural Summit and urban Cuyahoga counties in Ohio. It aims to build the capacity and increase the number of socially disadvantaged farmers (SDFs) in the area; and to shape and develop local infrastructure, policies and practices that support SDFs in the long-term. RAP-NEO's long-term goals include: (1) Educating beginning farmers from lower socio-economic backgrounds who face linguistic and cultural barriers and/or confront other societal barriers to becoming productive farmers and ranchers but are able to contribute significantly and add value to the local community;(2) Fostering and supporting sustainable local agriculture, helping to reverse the nearly \$2 million decrease in market value of crops produced from the region (based on the period 2002 to 2012); (3) Enhancing community capacity by supporting a team of individuals with diverse areas of expertise to come together, share talents and knowledge, and build partnerships that can continue to support SDFs; (4) Developing innovative models of teaching and learning that focus systematically on farmers, consumers, and policymakers, thus providing a holistic approach to long-term sustainability. With 2016 OASDVFR funding, the RAP-NEO Program will train 75 SDFs, leading to at least 4 new immigrant/refugee farmers operating a small farm enterprise and at least \$25,000 from sales of agricultural products, leading to increased economic stability of SDFs within Northeast Ohio.
- **Geographic Service Area:** Northeast Ohio
 - **Contact Info:** Michael Byun, mbyun@asiaohio.org, 330-535-3263

Oklahoma

- **Choctaw Nation Of Oklahoma** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, a federally-recognized tribe and 2501 Program applicant, is located in southeastern Oklahoma with a vast tribal service area covering 10,613 square miles. The Choctaw Nation is a non-reservation-based tribe, meaning it is “integrated” and tribal members live in communities with citizens of all races. The Choctaw Nation is the third largest tribal population with 176,682 tribal members worldwide and the tribal service area is home to 52,351 Native Americans, 30% of which reside in Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha Counties, three of the neediest counties in Oklahoma. The Choctaw Nation is also home to a Presidential Promise Zone designation, USDA Food Desert and USDA StrikeForce designations. These three designations reflect the tremendous and long-term socioeconomic needs facing citizens within the tribal boundaries. The Choctaw Nation is requesting \$165,823 in funding to conduct a 12-month project to address the needs that exist among the region's veterans, minority producers and disadvantaged youth in the 11

county service area. The Project's Scope of Work will provide for expansion of USDA's current education and outreach efforts by providing direct, culturally-appropriate community outreach activities and agricultural education at the grassroots level-where those in need are found. The ultimate goal of the project is to improve participation in USDA programs and development of the region's human, physical, technical, and financial agriculture infrastructure which will lead to long term economic growth, prosperity and resiliency among those who need it most.

Geographic Service Area: Southeastern Oklahoma with a vast tribal service area covering 10,613 square miles.

- **Contact Info:** Nikki Schuth, nschuth@choctawnation.com, 580-924-8280

- **Langston University** – This project is entitled, “Outreach and Technical Assistance for Oklahoma Small and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers.” Langston University's Cooperative Extension Program will conduct this project. Langston University is Oklahoma's 1890 Land Grant University. It was established in 1897 under the Second Morrill Act. Langston University has a long and distinguished history of conducting excellent, impacting research in agriculture and extending research-based information to the citizens of Oklahoma. As the only historically black college and university in Oklahoma and also a land grant university, Langston University has programs tailored to meet the needs of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and veteran farmers and ranchers. Previously, Langston University had a productive program to provide vital outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers. The University presently retains a component of that program and employs one Extension Specialist who continues to provide outreach services. The model is still in place and will be enhanced and reactivated with the funding of this project request.
Geographic Service Area: Oklahoma has seventy-seven (77) counties. Previously, our Outreach and Technical Assistance Small Producers Project reached forty-four (44) of those counties. Those counties are located primarily in the eastern, southeastern, south central and southwestern parts of the state. Each of the 44 counties previously served represented the highest populations of socially disadvantaged producers. Funding this project will allow the Cooperative Extension Program at Langston University to reactivate its outreach and technical assistance efforts with socially disadvantaged clientele in more of the counties that were previously serviced.
 - **Contact Info:** Vernon L. Jones, vjones@langston.edu, 405-466-6151

- **Oklahoma Women in Agriculture Association** - This project seeks funding to provide innovative agriculture education, technical training and expand sustainable agribusiness opportunities. The project will extend to multicultural socially disadvantaged farmers and veteran farmers and ranchers in rural and urban communities worldwide. *Activities.* National Women In Agriculture Association (“NWIAA”) project will address needs such as: (1) ownership and operation of farms, entrepreneurial development by socially disadvantaged famers and veterans; (2) increase the numbers of minority farmers to participate in USDA programs; (3) continue building relationships between socially disadvantaged farmers and USDA's local, state, regional and national agencies; and (4)

provide innovative outreach and technical assistance in the following areas: value added products, direct marketing careers in agriculture local and urban food production and availability, crop insurance, food safety, health and economic development. Project Director, Dr. Tammy Gray-Steele and a project assistant will attend an annual training conference that will not exceed \$1,000, for both. *Outputs/Outcomes* the two (2) primary expected outcomes of this project are: (1) Make lower income minority communities a healthier place to live; and (2) Increase the number of at-risk youth, beginning minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and veterans to become active agriculture leaders in underserved communities; and to participate in USDA programs. Oklahoma is the Strike Force state and geographical area where the majority of this project will impact. The target audiences will be over 1,800 at-risk youth, 500,000 plus Native Americans, 10,000 black females and 114,000 Latino citizens will be linked to USDA programs.

Geographic Service Area: (1) the rural Oklahoma Native American reservations with a population of over 500,000 plus citizens; (2) 340,000 Veterans living that live in the state of Oklahoma; (3) the Latino Southside community which consists of 158,000 Hispanic citizens; and (4) in the Afro-American Eastside community which consists of approximately 1,800 school age at risk youth within a five mile radius of NWIAA's Sustainable Agriculture Science Academy.

- **Contact Info:** Tammy Gray-Steele, womeninag@gmail.com, 405-424-4623

Pennsylvania

- Common Market Philadelphia Inc. – The mission of Common Market Philadelphia, Inc.[D.B.A. The Common Market (TCM)] is to connect communities with good food from sustainable family farms. We strive to improve food security, farm viability and community and ecological health. TCM supports a values-driven regional food system that is fair to growers, farm workers, consumers and the environment. Our nonprofit enterprise builds an interdependent distribution network that links farmers who strive to produce safe, quality products and protect the environment, with institutions and retailers who seek to implement food procurement practices that are socially responsible and environmentally sound. TCM emerged out of community organizing efforts of our co-founders and co-executive directors, Tatiana Garcia Granados and Haile Johnston-residents of Strawberry Mansion, one of Philadelphia's most poor neighborhoods. Strawberry Mansion is a neighborhood rich in community, culture, and heritage, but lacking in access to healthy food. The vision for TCM arose from the collective desire of local food and food-access advocates to affect the distribution constraints of locally grown food, simultaneously improving both the viability of local farms and the food security of our region. TCM launched in 2008 with the mission to empower, strengthen and connect two vulnerable populations: sustainable family farmers and low income urban communities.

Geographic Service Area: Lehigh County and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Contact Info: Sam Arnold, sam@thecommonmarket.org, 215-275-3435 Ext. 8

South Carolina

- Center for Heirs Property Preservation – The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (the Center), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization located in Charleston, SC, is expanding upon

its current work to conduct the proposed Landowner Outreach and Assistance Project (the Project) to serve primarily low-wealth, rural, socially disadvantaged (SD) African American landowners—farmers, ranchers and forest landowners—who live in the South Carolina counties of: Allendale, Bamberg, Berkeley, Clarendon, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg, Sumter and Williamsburg. All of these counties with the exception of Berkeley County are StrikeForce counties; Allendale, Bamberg, Colleton and Jasper are located within a Promise Zone. Special emphasis will be placed on working with SD landowners who own heirs' property (i.e., land owned by groups of legally undetermined joint heirs), which is a critical barrier to successfully owning farming/forestry enterprises. The Center's goals for this Project are to: (1) increase the ability of socially disadvantaged landowners to operate their ranches/farms and (2) cultivate appreciation of the environment and natural resources among youth through agricultural education. The primary activities to be implemented are: awareness presentations, Woodland Community Advocate Institutes, HP/Forestry seminars, title/landowner assessments, legal technical assistance, forestry workshops, Rural & Limited Resource Landowner Symposium and forestry technical assistance. At the heart of the Center's success over the last eleven years is its ability to impart knowledge, gain the trust of these landowners and connect them with the professionals who can help them help themselves begin the journey to move out of generational poverty.

- **Geographic Service Area:** The following counties in South Carolina: Allendale; Bamberg; Berkeley; Clarendon; Colleton; Dorchester; Hampton; Jasper; Orangeburg; Sumter; Williamsburg
 - **Contact Info:** Jennie Stephens, jstephens@heirsproperty.org, 843-745-7055

South Dakota

- Hunkpati Investments, Inc. – Hunkpati Family Farms with a Future program will use a customized science and business-based curriculum developed to work within traditional Native concepts and values to guide 100 youth and their parents, grandparents or guardians, through a managed mentorship program on the real life issues and solutions surrounding their current farms or future agricultural business ownership; including USDA resources that will assist in making them successful. This project will take a holistic approach by addressing both beginning and intermediate levels of resource need and operational information, from credit assistance, accessing capital, to hands on technical assistance like FSMA compliance, on individual family farms and in local cooperative gardens and orchards. The Hunkpati mentoring model, language, as well as culturally and age-appropriate methods of knowledge transfer will be used, to train disadvantaged, veteran and beginning farmers and ranchers in a broad age group through the interest and support of the youth programs. The ultimate goal of this project will be to present agriculture as a viable economic driver for families and the local community while being attentive to cultural needs and practices, increasing the number of farmers at the local market within the next year. This program will also create the basis for succession planning and intergenerational farming operations in and around the reservation areas surrounding Ft Thompson and Lower Brule, South Dakota.
Geographic Service Area: Ft Thompson and Lower Brule, South Dakota.
- **Contact Info:** Tally Colombe, tally.colombe@hunkpati.org, 605-245-2148

Texas

- Texas State University – Given the large number of socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in Texas, many who are small producers, combined with the growing consumer population of Central Texas, who increasing demand locally sourced and organic agricultural products, there are educational, communication, and resource gaps as well as market opportunities for underserved farmers in Central Texas. Thus, the goal of Texas State University’s “Reaching Underserved Rural Agricultural Latinos and Veterans” (RURAL-V) project is to serve over 360 socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers through online and in-person and educational events, and deliver information to over 200 farmers per month via a website communication hub. Specifically, RURAL-V will enable underserved farmers in Central Texas to access and utilize USDA resources, supply growing local markets, and enhance their businesses in greater numbers. To reach this goal, RURAL-V will develop and deliver the following educational resources: 1) eight webinars on crop and aquaponics production, farmer-owned cooperatives, food safety, legal and insurance issues, and risk management; 2) two two-day workshops on accessing USDA programs and regional resources; 3) three farm/USDA site tours to build farmer networks and exchange technical information; and 4) a website that will be a repository of information, including the recorded webinars. Given technical and informational exchange will happen via the online component of RURAL-V, producers beyond those in Central Texas will benefit, such that more underserved farmers develop and grow sustainable farming and ranching businesses.

Geographic Service Area: Central Texas

- **Contact Info:** W. Scott Erwin, Sr., grants@txstate.edu, 512-245-2102
 - The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley – The organizations conducting this project, the *StrikeForce Outreach and Technical Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers*, include the applicant organization and leading Hispanic Serving Institution and USDA-designated Hispanic Serving Agricultural College and University, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; and two leading Community-Based Organizations (CBO): Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers-CBO and Texas/Mexico Border Coalition-CBO. The project assists farmers and ranchers by—providing training and technical assistance on niche markets and specialty crops, direct-marketing techniques, development of marketing cooperatives, and planting and growing techniques at demonstration sites; introducing USDA-FSA farm-operating and -ownership loan and disaster-assistance programs, NRCS conservation programs, RMA insurance programs, AMS farmers-market programs, and RD cooperative-development and value-added programs; identifying needy farmers and ranchers and inviting them to participate in USDA programs; planning, developing, and conducting a series of outreach events and developing success story articles to introduce USDA programs and agriculture-related information; and, introducing agricultural education targeting women and beginning farmers, including but not limited to StrikeForce areas.
- Geographic Service Area:** The geographical area served by this project includes 95 counties in Texas and 10 counties in New Mexico. This area includes 66 StrikeForce Counties: 58% of all Texas’ StrikeForce counties, and 33% of all New Mexico’s StrikeForce counties. The need for this project is further reinforced by the demographic characteristics of its geographical service area: according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the project’s service area has almost 20% of all socially disadvantaged operators in the U.S.
- **Contact Info:** Carlos F. Lago, carlos.lago@utrgv.edu, 956-343-8435

- National Immigrant Farming Initiative, Inc. – Rural Progress with Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Veterans and Ranchers Implementing an Extension Education Partnership. The National Immigrant Farming Initiative (NIFI) proposes a project with the long-term goal of assisting limited resource Hispanic producers in owning and operating viable agricultural enterprises. With a network of training partners serving as hubs in three distinct areas: Paso del Norte region, Southern tip of Texas, and South Central Florida, we will provide outreach and technical assistance designed to support socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers with the knowledge, skills and tools to make good farm business decisions and enhance enterprise sustainability. Each area consists mainly of StrikeForce counties. NIFI’s proposal addresses all five of the 2501 Program priorities by assisting mainly Hispanic farmers and ranchers (including veterans) in running successful agricultural businesses. NIFI will support participation in programs and build relationships among socially disadvantaged farmers and USDA and Extension staff. NIFI will provide agriculture training and technical assistance through innovative techniques that are linguistically accessible and culturally appropriate including: Production, business and marketing training; Land access and natural resource management and planning; One-to-one training, mentoring, and internships; • Building capacity of USDA agricultural service providers. NIFI expects to support, at least, 150 socially disadvantaged producers in improving their agricultural enterprises. NIFI will engage, at least, 40 Cooperative Extension and USDA agricultural service providers with information and facilitating new relationships with socially disadvantaged farmers.

Geographic Service Area: South Texas Region and South Central Florida Region

 - **Contact Info:** Rigoberto Delgado, rigo@immigrantfarmers.org, 915-490-3180

West Virginia

- West Virginia State University - This project would build off of and expand the currently active West Virginia Minority and Veteran Farmers Program funded during the 2015 funding cycle. The project will focus 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 will allow 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. The program will focus on five major counties: Kanawha, Cabell, Logan, Raleigh and McDowell. 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, minority and youth growers as possible and educate these participants on alternative agricultural production methods that can be utilized in urban and rural settings. The project will include demonstration sites which can be used for hands-on educational opportunities for these participants. The Project Director is Brad Cochran and he can be contacted by email at bcochran2@wvstateu.edu or by phone at 304-204-4021. Additional project support will be supplied from the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, West Virginia AgrAbility, the West Virginia National Guard and Keep Your Faith Corporation.

Geographic Service Area: The program will focus on five major counties within West Virginia: Kanawha, Cabell, Logan, Raleigh and McDowell.

- **Contact Info:** Bradford Cochran, bcochran2@wvstateu.edu, 304-204-4021