



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**



## StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

# WEST VIRGINIA

[www.usda.gov/strikeforce](http://www.usda.gov/strikeforce)

### West Virginia Fast Facts - 2015

State's Child Poverty Rate:	25.5%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	17.4%
StrikeForce State Since:	2015
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	29
Total Outreach Events:	19
Number of Community Partners:	30
Total USDA Projects:	1,169
Total USDA Investments:	\$82.5 million

### Contacts

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### Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners

American Federation of Teachers  
GROW Appalachia  
Hatfield-McCoy Trail Association  
Reconnecting McDowell  
West Virginia Development Office  
West Virginia Community Development HUB  
West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition  
Regional Planning & Development Councils (11 in WV)  
West Virginia Department of Agriculture  
West Virginia Department of Education – Office of Child Nutrition

Currently, 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. More than one third of rural Americans, and one in four rural children live in poverty. Kids growing up in families earning twice the poverty threshold are nearly three times as likely as other children to have poor health, are more likely to finish two fewer years of school, and are more likely to earn half as much money in their adult lives.

Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is key to our Nation's future. In 2010, Secretary Vilsack established USDA's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, StrikeForce teams have collaborated with more than 1,500 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

These efforts have invested more than \$23.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across more than twenty states. In 2016, StrikeForce expanded to include Florida, Missouri, Montana, and Ohio. Now, USDA StrikeForce teams will operate in 970 counties in 25 states and Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future.

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### StrikeForce At Work

#### StrikeForce Initiative Impacting Local Foods in WV

In West Virginia, the StrikeForce initiative has made a positive difference statewide with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Rural Development (RD). One example of all three agencies working together is the Heart & Hand House located in the small town of Philippi.

According to Executive Director Brenda Hunt, the Heart & Hand House's Community Garden Market "promotes the health and well-being of our community in more ways than one. Its impact can be measured not only in terms of the financial capital generated within the local economy, but also in terms of intellectual capital that comes from the sharing of ideas and education about how to grow and prepare local foods, as well as social capital resulting from the interaction among community members who come to the market."

To support the Market Place and Community Garden Market, RD provided a \$50,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG). Specifically, funds were used to upgrade the HVAC system, complete structural improvements, and purchase equipment required to operate "The Market Place," a local foods Café and Aggregation Center. The project allows local producers to increase capacity and participate in sales to local schools and other institutions in West Virginia. This follows another \$23,700 Community Facilities Grant to support the structural upgrades, new flooring and a new sign.

# StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity in West Virginia

[www.usda.gov/strikeforce](http://www.usda.gov/strikeforce)

## 1,169 Projects in 2015 = \$82.5 Million Invested



**42**  
Jobs Created  
or Saved



**670,150**  
Summer  
Meals for Kids



**281**  
Farmers  
Assisted



**2,962**  
Home  
Investments

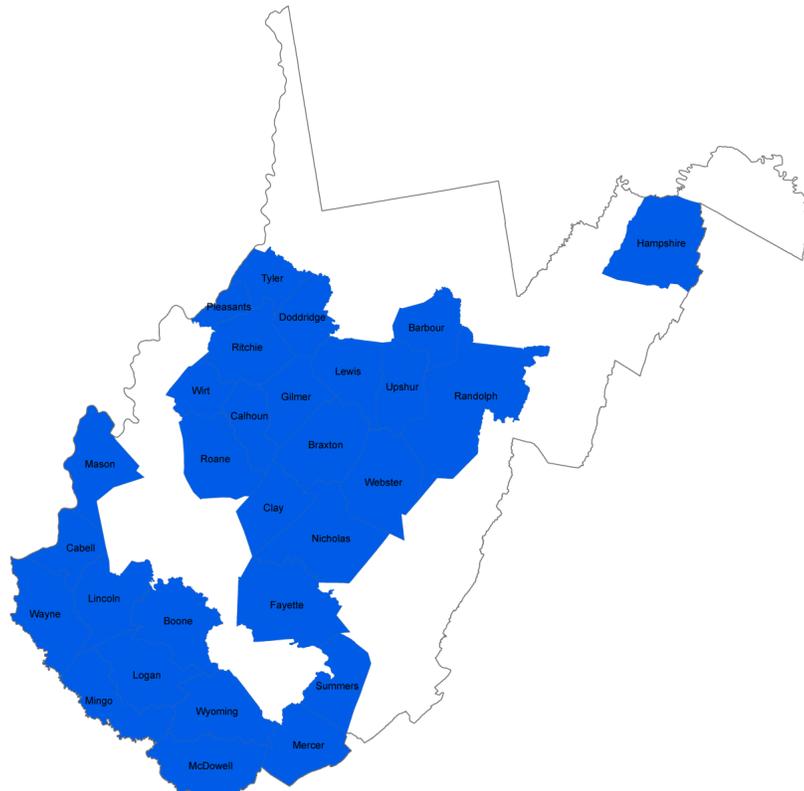


**360**  
Conservation  
Efforts



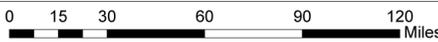
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### STRIKEFORCE MAP SERIES FINAL: West Virginia Persistent Poverty StrikeForce Counties



**Legend**

- State
- Counties



Map Produced - January 14, 2014

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Data Sources: May Current Data From The Following Sources:  
ESRI World Physical Map Base Data Layers  
2000 CENSUS TIGER Data - CENSUS\_TIGR00  
2010 CENSUS TIGER Data - CENSUS\_TIGR10  
USGS National State Boundaries data set  
NCEES - ERS FY2010 School Lunch Participation CORE Data  
From U.S. Department of Education National Center For Education  
Statistics, [nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/colleges/instrs.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/colleges/instrs.asp)  
USDA/RD/CORR Data Sets Retrieving RD Program Specific Data  
USDA/RD/RUS, RRS, RHE, OMA/CIO Data Sources  
USDA/OCE/EMO Departmental Data Resources  
Housing and Urban Development Data  
Environmental Protection Agency Data  
Tele Atlas 2008

MAP PRODUCED BY:  
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