



# **Puerto Rico Strike Force Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity**

## **Strategic Plan for FY 2015**

### **Background**

The USDA's Strike Force Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity addresses specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Strike Force teams have facilitated collaboration with community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to these areas. Strike Force is an effort of USDA to coordinate its activities among all agencies to better serve the persistent poverty in communities and socially disadvantaged farmers to create self-sustaining, long-term economic development in areas of poverty, unemployment and general distress and to demonstrate how the communities can achieve self-sufficiency through innovative and comprehensive plans. The Strike Force initiative includes all USDA agencies in partnership with other federal agencies, state government agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and community and private groups.

### **Our Goals**

- Promote economic development in high poverty areas.
- Inform and educate the target areas about the USDA programs.
- Provide food security in poverty areas.
- Create a strategy with the partners to facilitate access to USDA programs.
- Provide technical and program assistance to meet the needs of identified groups.

### **Target Areas**

All municipalities of Puerto Rico are eligible for this initiative.

### **Partners:**

Puerto Rico has a working relationship with diverse institutions that have as common interest to assist groups and communities in rural areas with economic needs. These partners are from diverse federal and state government agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions and community leaders. The following is a list of these partners:

Rural Development  
Puerto Rico State Office  
654 Plaza  
654 Ave. Munoz Rivera Ste 601  
San Juan, PR 00918-4129  
Voice: 787-766-5095 Fax: 855-415-2625  
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**USDA Partners:** The federal agencies are not limited to those mentioned in this document.

Food and Nutrition Service  
Farm Service Agency  
Natural Resources and Conservation Service  
Rural Development  
National Appeals Division

**State Government:**

Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Extension Service  
Agricultural Vocacional  
Estaciones Experimentales  
WIPR  
Office of Special Communities

**Educational Institutions:**

Universidad de Puerto Rico  
Metropolitan University  
Interamerican University  
Sagrado Corazón University  
Instituto Universitario para Desarrollo de Comunidades  
UPR Mayaguez Campus  
Taller de Diseño Comunitario – School of Architects

**Non-profit organizations:**

RCAP Solution, Inc.  
National Rural Water Association  
Acción Social de PR  
INSEC  
Sila M. Calderón Foundation  
INTEC PR  
COFECC  
PR Chamber of Commerce  
PR Agronomist College  
Hogar CREA  
PathSone Corporation  
Team Challenge  
Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico

**For-profit organizations:**

Mortgage Bankers Association

## **Documentation Plan:**

- Progress reporting will be provided monthly (unless otherwise specified) to National Headquarters.
- Monthly Success Stories' Report.
- The Strike Force Coordinator together with the agencies coordinator will compile and conduct an analysis on the type of assistance provided and customers served on a quarterly basis. This information will be resumed at the close of the fiscal year.
- The Puerto Rico Strike Force Coordinator will prepare an end of year report that will be posted on the Strike Force websites. This report will be distributed to USDA agencies' employees and Strike Force partners to spotlight the efforts and successes throughout the state.

## **Communication Plan:**

General information related to the Strike Force initiative and programs is available via the USDA website. The participation of the state, area and local offices is fundamental for the initiative success. Each level office has the following functions and responsibilities:

### Area and local offices:

- Provide information to the general public about the Strike Force initiative and agencies programs.
- Participate and collaborate in local events and meetings.
- Engage community leaders to participate in this initiative.
- Identify local institutions or groups that can be part of this initiative.
- Identify challenges or barriers that prevent the participation of potential customers or communities.

### State Offices:

- Provide information to the news media about Strike Force initiative.
- Participate in events and meetings related to this initiative.
- Engage state government agencies, non-profit organizations and educational institutions to participate actively in the Strike Force initiative.
- Maintain effective communication and working relationship with the partner groups.
- Promote outreach strategies.
- Provide support to USDA area and local offices in the development of their functions and responsibilities.
- Prepare a quarterly activity schedule that will include the activities of all USDA agencies. The first activity schedule is included as attachment in this Business Plan.
- Perform evaluations about the progress of this initiative.

- Prepare an annual report to be sent to National Office.

### **Programs/Services:**

**Rural Development will utilize:** Single Family Housing, Multi-Family Housing, Community Facilities, Rural Utilities, Broadband, Business and Cooperative Services, Rural Energy for America Program, and servicing accounts.

**Farm Service Agency will utilize:** Direct Farm Ownership Loans, Direct Farm Operating Loan and Microloans, Guaranteed Farm Ownership, Guaranteed Operating, Guaranteed Conservation Loan, Dairy Margin Protection Program, Dairy Indemnity Payment Program, Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, Tree Assistance Program and Conservation Reserve Program.

**Natural Resources and Conservation Soil will utilize:** Environmental Quality Incentives Program (Conservation Innovation Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and Technical Services Providers), Conservation Stewardship Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and Conservation Technical Assistance

**Food and Nutrition Services will utilize:** Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) including the NAP-Ed (a nutrition education component) and NAP family markets (Farms to NAP initiative), and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP); National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), USDA Food Distribution (FD), and Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Special Supplemental Food Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).

### **Resources Needed:**

- Trained and committed staff
- Committed partners
- Flexible work hours
- Programs funds

### **Challenges:**

Insufficient staff to achieve the goals  
Insufficient funds to meet the goals  
Lack of knowledge about USDA programs

**Measurement of Success:**

- Total of partners sponsoring the initiative
- Number of loan applications received by program
- Number of grant application received by program
- Number of farmers, communities, groups and persons assisted by USDA
- Number of loans approved
- Number of grants approved
- Total amount disbursed in each program
- RD Contact

**Puerto Rico USDA StrikeForce Point of Contact:**

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United States Department of Agriculture  
StrikeForce Counties with Tribal Reservation Overlay



**Legend**

 StrikeForce Counties

Map Produced - March 16, 2015



## USDA StrikeForce Business Plan FY 2015 July-September Puerto Rico

Lead Agency	Date	Activity	Partner Organization	County (ies)	Completion Status	# of Participants
All USDA	06-07/15	Sharing information about where the Summer feeding sites are open	FNS, RD, FSA, UPR, Cooperative Extension	Open to children between 1 to 18 years old	In Progress	
FNS, RD	06-07/15	Increase participation of the MFH communities in the Summer Food Program	UPR & Cooperative Extension	Residents of selected MFH projects	In Progress	59 projects
All USDA	06-07/15	Promote farm to school initiative	FNS, RD, FSA, NRCS, UPR, Cooperative Service, PR Department of Agriculture & PR Dept. of Education	Open to all selected schools	In Progress	
RD, FNS, FSA	7/1/15	Second meeting to discuss strategies to assist farm producers to create a farmer's markets.	Pedro Zorrilla Conessione, Inc.	San Juan	100%	
RD	7/3/15	Puerto Rico Desarrolla Presentation of MFH Program	PR Department of Housing	San Juan PR Convention Center – Open to all participants	100%	
FSA	7/7/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Ciales Open to all interested		
FSA	7/9/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Lares Open to all interested		
FSA	7/15/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Jayuya Open to all interested		
FSA	7/17/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Barranquitas Open to all interested		
RD, FSA, NRCS	7/29/15	Meeting to discuss the project of Comunidad Húcar in Salinas, PR	Distrito Sudeste de Conservación	City hall of Salinas	100%	15

<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Partner Organization</b>	<b>County(ies)</b>	<b>Completion Status</b>	<b># of participants</b>
FNS, RD, NRCS	07-08/15	21 Community Gardens	Agricultural Extension Service & State Conservation Districts	14 municipalities Open to all MFH projects	In process	
RD	8/3/15	Puerto Rico se Levanta Housing activity	Departamento de la Vivienda de Puerto Rico	PR Convention Center Open to all interested	100%	
	8/3-5/15	Fair Puerto Rico Desarrolla	HUD & PR Housing Department	San Juan Open to all interested	100%	1,080
RD	8/6/15	Quinto Centenario Arcibo Meeting with official of Municipality of Arcibo	Municipality of Arcibo	Arecibo	100%	5
RD	8/10/15	Presentation of USDA-RD Programs ( CF & Business Programs)	Economic Development Administration	Hato Rey Minillas Building Open to all interested	100%	60
RD	8/11/15	Meeting with Mayor of Yabucoa to discuss the CF Programs	None	San Juan	100%	4
FSA	8/12/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Aibonito Open to all farmers		
RD		Camino a una Economía Solidaria – Presentation of CF Programs	Metropolitan University	San Juan Open to all interested	100%	60
RD	8/13/15	Meeting with Dr. Vidal Rosario, President of Breast Cancer Foundation to present CF program.	None	San Juan	100%	4
FNS, NRCS, RD	8/17/15	Meeting to discuss the progress with community gardens	Agriculture Extension Service	San Juan	100%	5
RD	8/17/15	American Supplier Initiative – B2B Matchmaking Event 2015	SBA	PR Convention Center-San Juan Open to all enterprisers interested	100%	25
FSA	8/19/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Villalba Open to all intetested		
RD	8/19/15	Préstamos Verdes y Energía Renovable	COSVI	San Juan Open to all interested	100%	29



Lead Agency	Date	Activity	Partner Organization	County(ies)	Completion Status	# of participants
RD	8/20/15	Junte Empresarial: Impulso a la agricultura	PR-SBTDC Banco Popular	Arecibo Universidad Interamericana Open to all interested	100%	92
		Congreso Nacional de Energía Eco Expo	Hispanic Marketing PR	San Juan Sheraton Hotel Open to all interested	100%	50
		Conference – OMME	FEMA & Oficina Manejo de Emergencias	Loiza Open to official of Municipality of Loiza	100%	15
		Meeting - Case Esther Elderly House	None	San Juan Addressed to official of Esther Elderly House	100%	2
FSA	8/21/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Las Marias Open to all interested		
RD	8/21/15	Meeting - Centro de Desarrollo Economico	Municipality of Trujillo Alto	Trujillo Alto	100%	4
		Meeting with official of Cancer Clinic in Cayey	None	San Juan	100%	4
RD	8/22/15	Housing Fair – PR Convention Center	Mortgage Bankers Association	San Juan Open to all interested	100%	380
RD	8/23/15	Housing Fair – PR Convention Center	Mortgage Bankers Association	San Juan Open to all interested	100%	290
RD	8/24/15	Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan Program & Rural Energy for America	Vega Coop Credit Union	Vega Alta Open to Administrator of Vega Coop		
RD	8/25/15	Meeting – Hacienda Caliche to discuss the B&I and CF Programs	None	Naranjito	100%	4
RD	8/26/15	Community Workshop	SBA PR District Office	San Juan Open to all microenterprises	100%	8

<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Partner Organization</b>	<b>County(ies)</b>	<b>Completion Status</b>	<b># of participants</b>
RD	8/27/2015	Round Table “Oportunidades para los Pequeños Negogios y su impacto en el Desarrollo de la Zona Sur Puerto Rico”	SBDC	Villa Sotomayor Adjuntas, PR Open to all interested		
FNS, RD, NRCS	9/1/15	Meeting to discuss matters related to community gardens	PR Department of Agriculture Extension Service	San Juan	100%	5
RD	9/2/15	Radio Broadcast at WKAQ Univision Radio	None	Guaynabo, PR Homebuyers with low and very low income	100%	5
RD	9/3/15	Orientation about REAP	None	Manati Official of Cooperatives	100%	5
FSA	9/9/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Adjuntas Open to all interested		
FSA	9/16/15	Farm Bill Information and Producer Educational Meeting	PR Department of Agriculture	Corozal Open to all interested		
RD	9/24/15	Seminario de SBA para veteranos, militares y empresarios	SBA	Hato Rey, PR Open to all interested		

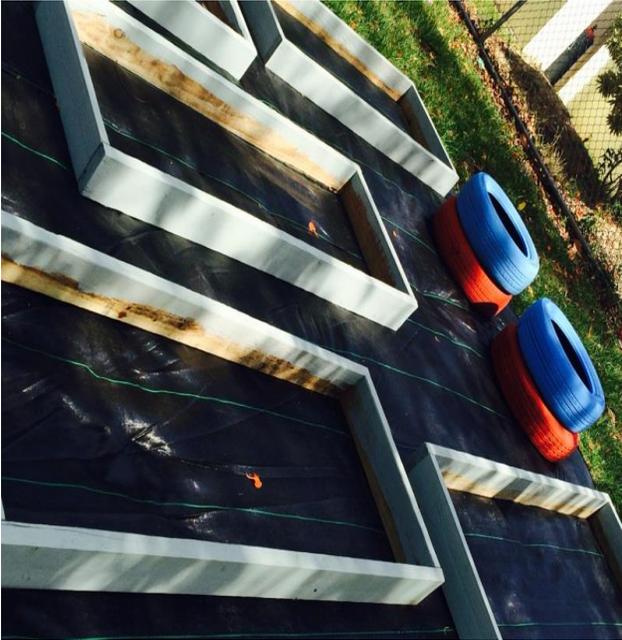
Espiritu Santo Apartments



San Alberto Apartments



Villa Julia Apartments



Villas de Manatí





Villas de Orocovix – Community Garden



PR First Strike Force Meeting Photos



4117



4120



4119



4134



4142



4129



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4215



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