

1999 Annual Report Executive Summary

Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida

In January of 1999, the Rural Federal Enterprise Community designation for the Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida (EASF) was secured through a rigorous application process led by the Community Foundation and Collier and Hendry County Government. Since the signing of the Memorandum-of-Agreement (MOA) on September 23, 1999, the EASF has made great strides in a very short period of time in a number of areas of its strategic plan. In the area of project management, EASF has hired full- and part-time, and contracted staff, has developed print and electronic material, and has developed its operational manual and procedures. In addition, EASF has been very active in working with its partners on leveraging funds. The grants submitted have been in the area of housing, education, and economic development. Since the federal designation EASF and its founding partners have submitted grants totally \$10,460,000. This is a 42 to one level of leveraging of the original USDA funds of \$250,000. The EASF has also been very active in meeting with community partners and developing strategic alliances. Leadership training has been provided to its representative Advisory Board and a community development training program entitled: "Select 10" will be presented to Advisory Board Members in order to increase community participation. However, EASF is not without its challenges. Immediate challenges involve ensuring active, representative participation by Advisory Board. A proposal will soon be presented that asks Advisory Board Members to broaden participation by having two standing committees that regularly meet in Immokalee and Hendry County, with a reporting umbrella committee.