



# The EMPOWER Coalition in Alachua County, FL



EMPOWER is a LEAP Community grassroots coalition of community-based organizations, local government and utility, workforce development and private solar installers that have been working for over two years with local associations from three neighborhoods of Alachua County that experience extreme energy burden and poverty. The Community Clean Energy Prize will support implementation of an innovative pilot institutional solar leasing program that will generate funds for a Community Fund to benefit underserved communities.

The Coalition will use Prize funding to implement our first leased solar installation on a county building and to develop the procedural infrastructures for the program, establish the Community Fund, and set up a participatory governance structure to manage the Fund, using \$40,000 generated from the lease funds and the IRA direct payment funds. The Fund will be used to benefit residents of underserved communities through home energy efficiency services and access to green jobs opportunities.

The pilot project will reduce energy costs by 20% for 10-20 homes in the first year and generate yearly lease funds to support energy efficiency services averaging \$4,000 to 5-6 homes, displacing 60 tons<sup>3</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub>. Funds will grow over time as the program expands through inclusion of additional funding for more buildings.