



# Lydia B. Stokes Foundation Community Investment Fund Grant Award

Alachua County Resiliency Office

Presentation by Dr. Betsy Riley, Sustainability Manager

# Presentation Outline

- Overview of EMPOWER Coalition
- Overview of grant award and project concept
- Description of proposed solar array
- Description of proposed expansion of ACEEP eligibility
- Staff Recommendations

# THE ALACHUA COUNTY EMPOWER PROJECT

August 18, 2025



- The EMPOWER Project was inspired by a 2021 countywide event sponsored by the NAACP Environmental & Climate Justice Committee (ECJC) forum focused on transitioning to 100% clean energy
- In 2022, the EMPOWER team applied for and won an award from the United States Department of Energy (DOE) Local Energy Action Program (LEAP) Grant to develop a pilot plan to achieve this
- EMPOWER was selected as one of 24 communities (the only one in Florida) and is receiving technical assistance from the DOE and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) for Technical assistance through March 2024

<https://www.energy.gov/communitiesLEAP/communities-leap>



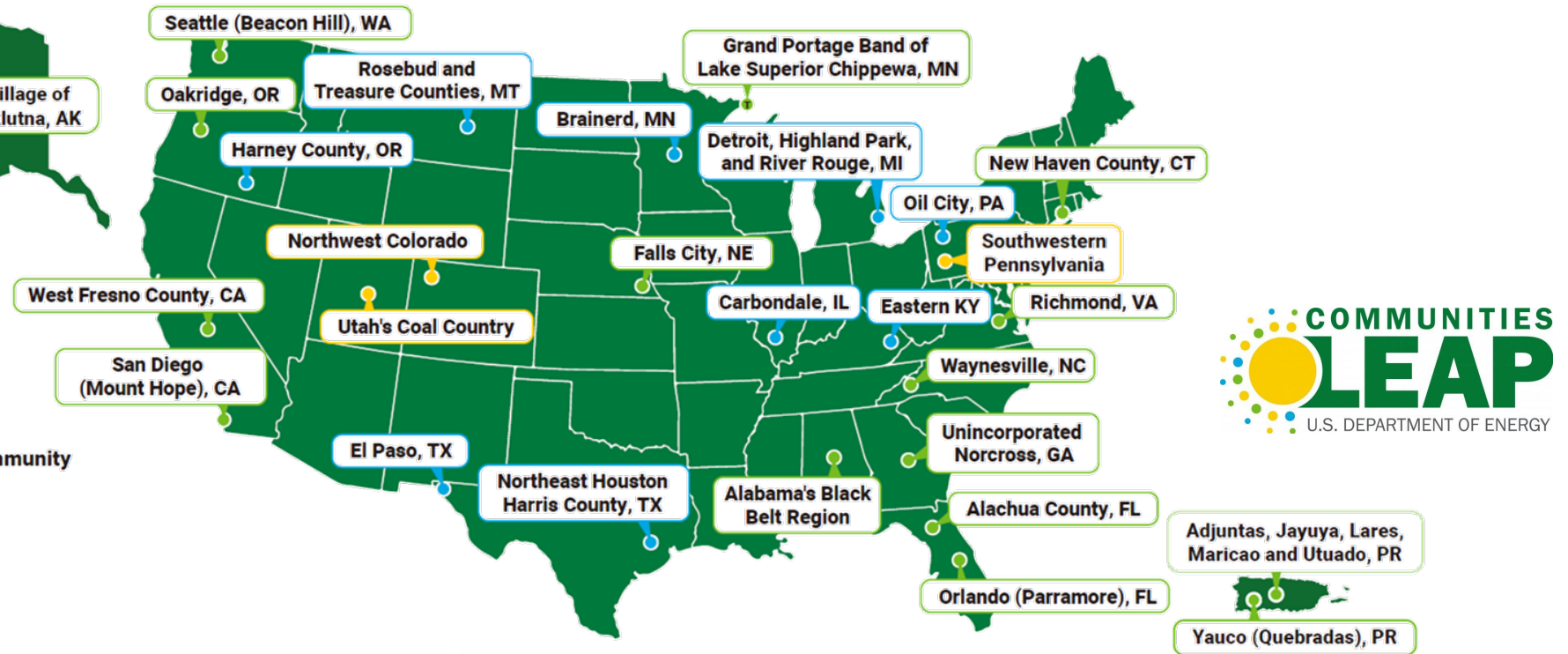
# THE ALACHUA COUNTY EMPOWER PROJECT

August 18, 2025

- In 2024, Alachua County won the Communities LEAP grant for a second time, an accomplishment shared by only one other member of the inaugural cohort.
- This distinction, combined with extraordinary efforts at community engagement and coalition building on the part of community EMPOWER partners, caught the attention of a private donor, the Lydia B. Stokes Foundation who wanted to help our local communities reach their energy goals.



- Disadvantaged Community
- Energy Community
- Both



LYDIA B. STOKES GRANT AWARD



# ABOUT COMMUNITIES LEAP



- The Communities LEAP program aims to facilitate sustained community-wide economic empowerment
- This opportunity is specifically open to low-income, energy-burdened communities that are also experiencing either direct environmental justice impacts, or direct economic impacts from a shift away from historical reliance on fossil fuels.
- The Alachua County EMPOWER Coalition includes three local communities:
  - Springhill/Sugarhill
  - Greater Duval
  - SWAG





# ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING EMPOWER PROJECT



CareerSource  
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA



Springhill Neighborhood  
Association



LYDIA B. STOKES GRANT AWARD



# EXPANDED WEATHERIZATION BENEFITS

- Lower utility bills and costs
- Improve the livability & comfort of homes
- Increase home & community value
- Increase resilience to climate change
- Improve home health and health outcomes
- New job opportunities in the growing green economy
- Increase neighborhood stability



Saving money and  
resources, together.



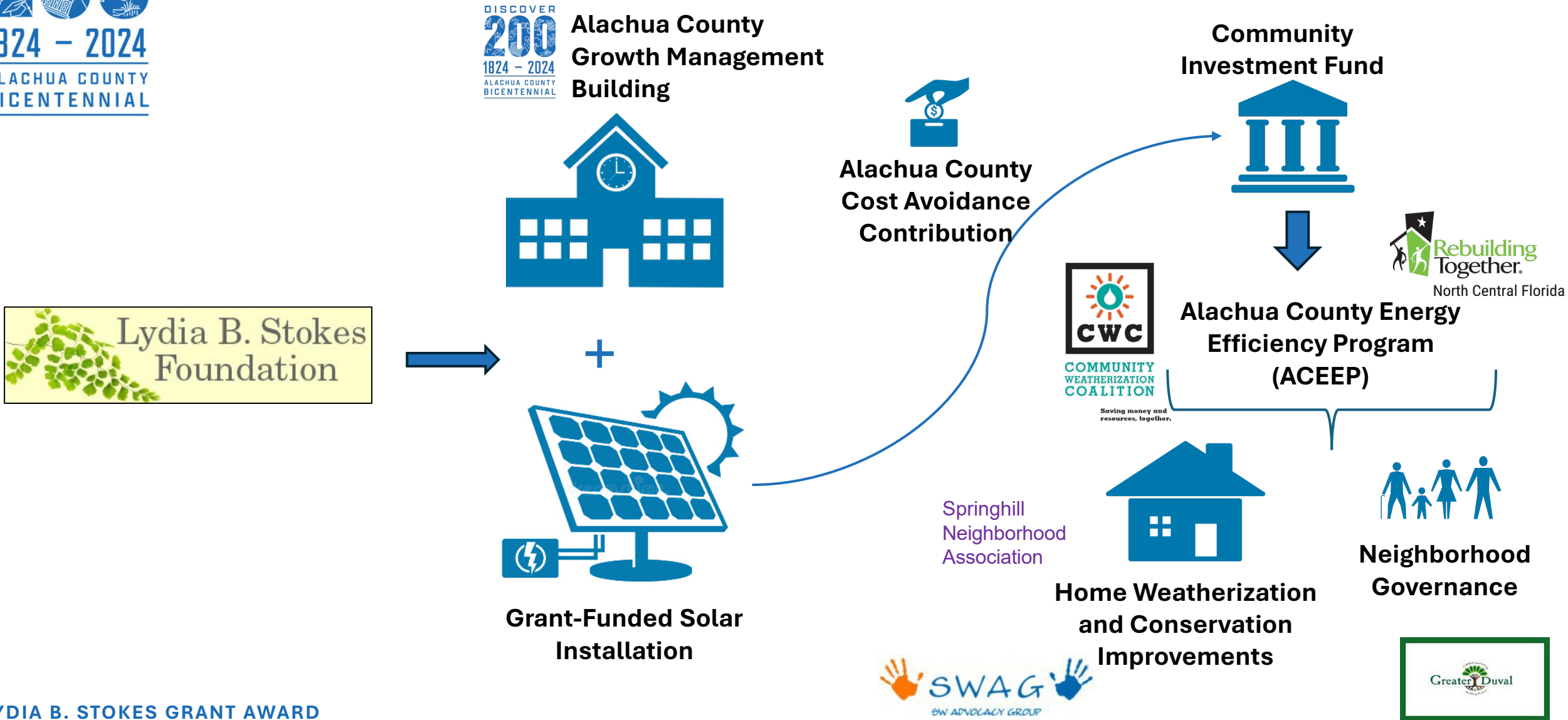
# Lydia B. Stokes Foundation

Founded in 1959, the Lydia B. Stokes Foundation is focused community building as the foundation for larger social change.

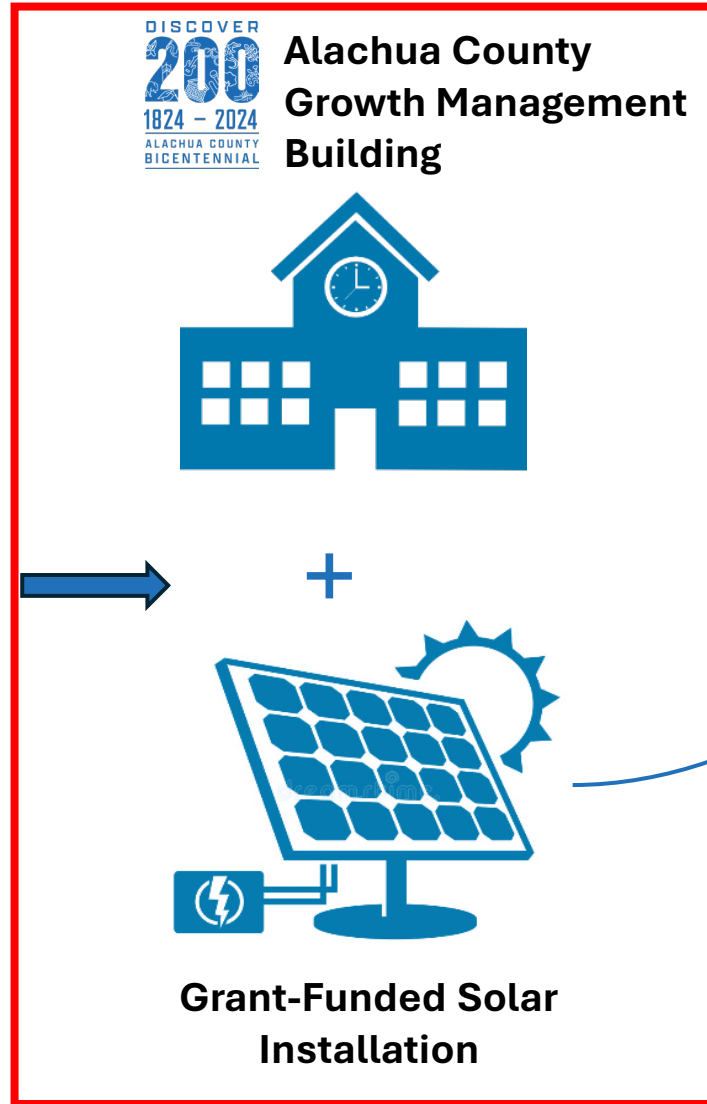
*“Our matured focus is to nest our remaining capacity and legacy into the work of our grantees, metamorphosing our form completely into their groundwork; helping nurture them to build more cohesive, sustainable and dynamic communities.”*



# Community Investment Fund Flow of Funds and Major Programs



# Community Investment Fund Flow of Funds and Major Programs



Grant Award: \$100,000

**Alachua County Cost Avoidance Contribution**

**Community Investment Fund**



**Alachua County Energy Efficiency Program (ACEEP)**



Saving money and resources, together.

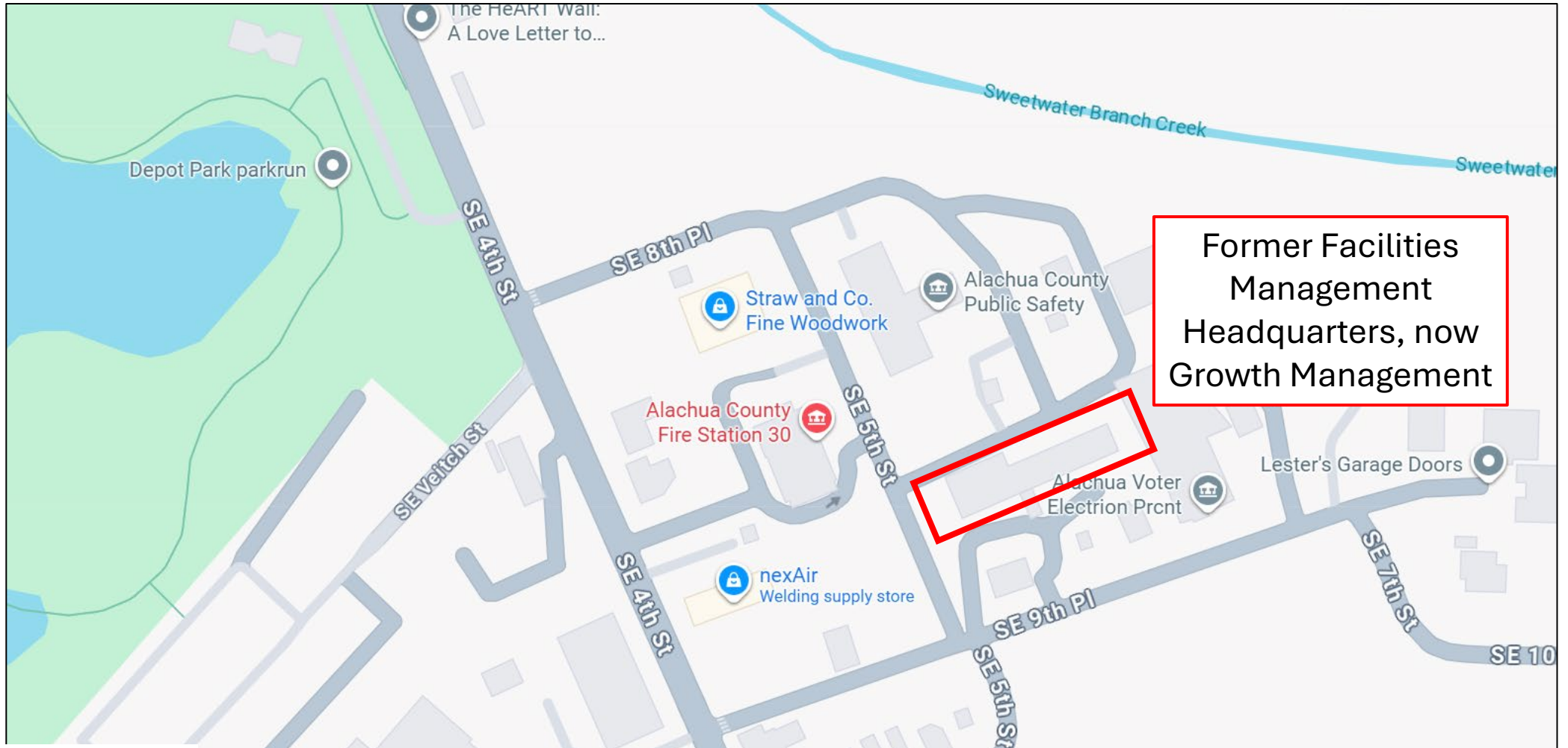
Springhill  
Neighborhood  
Association

**Home Weatherization and Conservation Improvements**

**Neighborhood Governance**



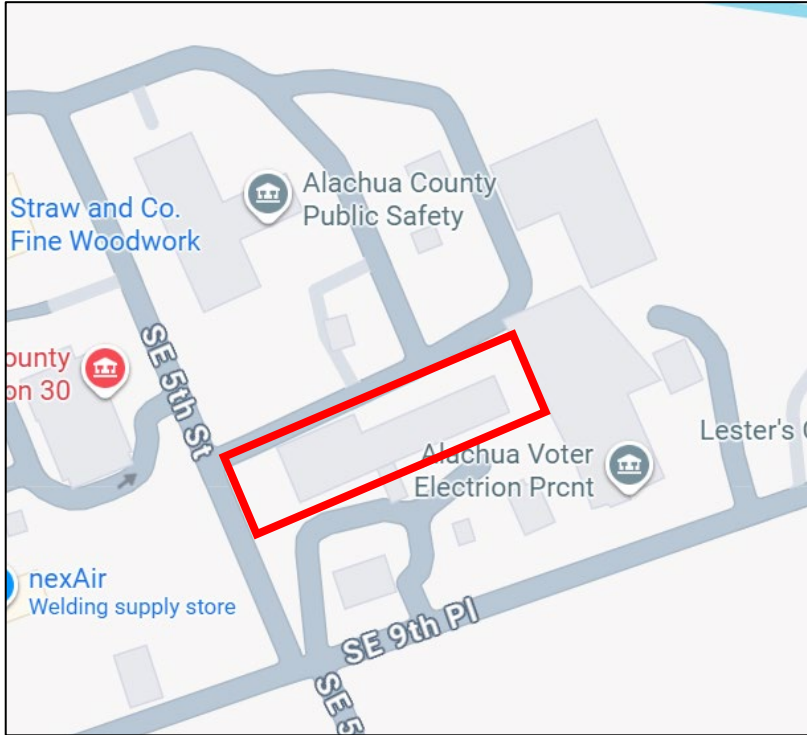
# Proposed Solar Installation Location



Former Facilities  
Management  
Headquarters, now  
Growth Management

# Proposed Solar Installation Location

Facility Name	Facilities Management/ Growth Management
Utility Provider	Gainesville Regional Utilities
Facility Size (SF)	8,644 sq ft (3,600 sq ft south-facing)
Appr. Energy Use	60,782 kWh/year
System Productivity	76,692 kWh/year
Cost of Energy	\$8,744/year
Unit Cost of Energy	\$0.204/kWh



Solar Deployment Area	Size (square feet)	kW	Estimated System Cost
Rooftop	3,600	54	\$113,400



# Solar Installation Proposed Timeline

## ***Phase 1: Project Initiation and Planning (September 2025 – December 2025)***

Task 1.1: Develop Project Scope of Work for solar installation

Task 1.2: Coordinate with GRU for Net Metering Agreement

Task 1.3: Finalize technical specifications and detailed work plan for solar installation

Task 1.4: Develop final construction plans and specification

## ***Phase 2: Procurement and Contract Awards (January 2026 – April 2026)***

Task 2.1: Issue Solicitation for Solar PV System Design, Procurement, and Installation

Task 2.2: Review Solicitation Responses and Select Contractor

Task 2.3: Finalized signed contract with selected contractor

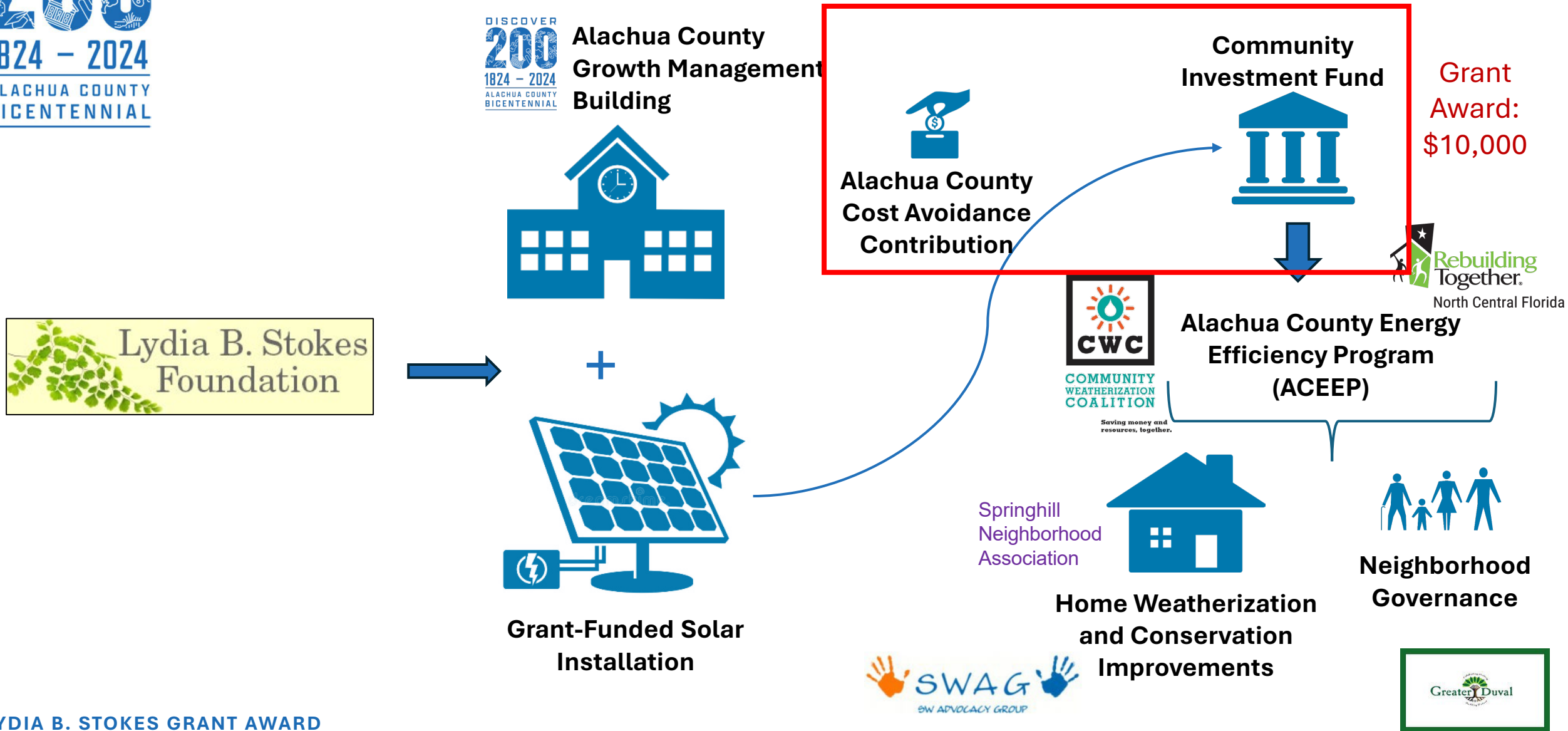
## ***Phase 3: Project Execution and Commissioning (May 2026 – August 2026)***

Task 3.1: Design and Permitting

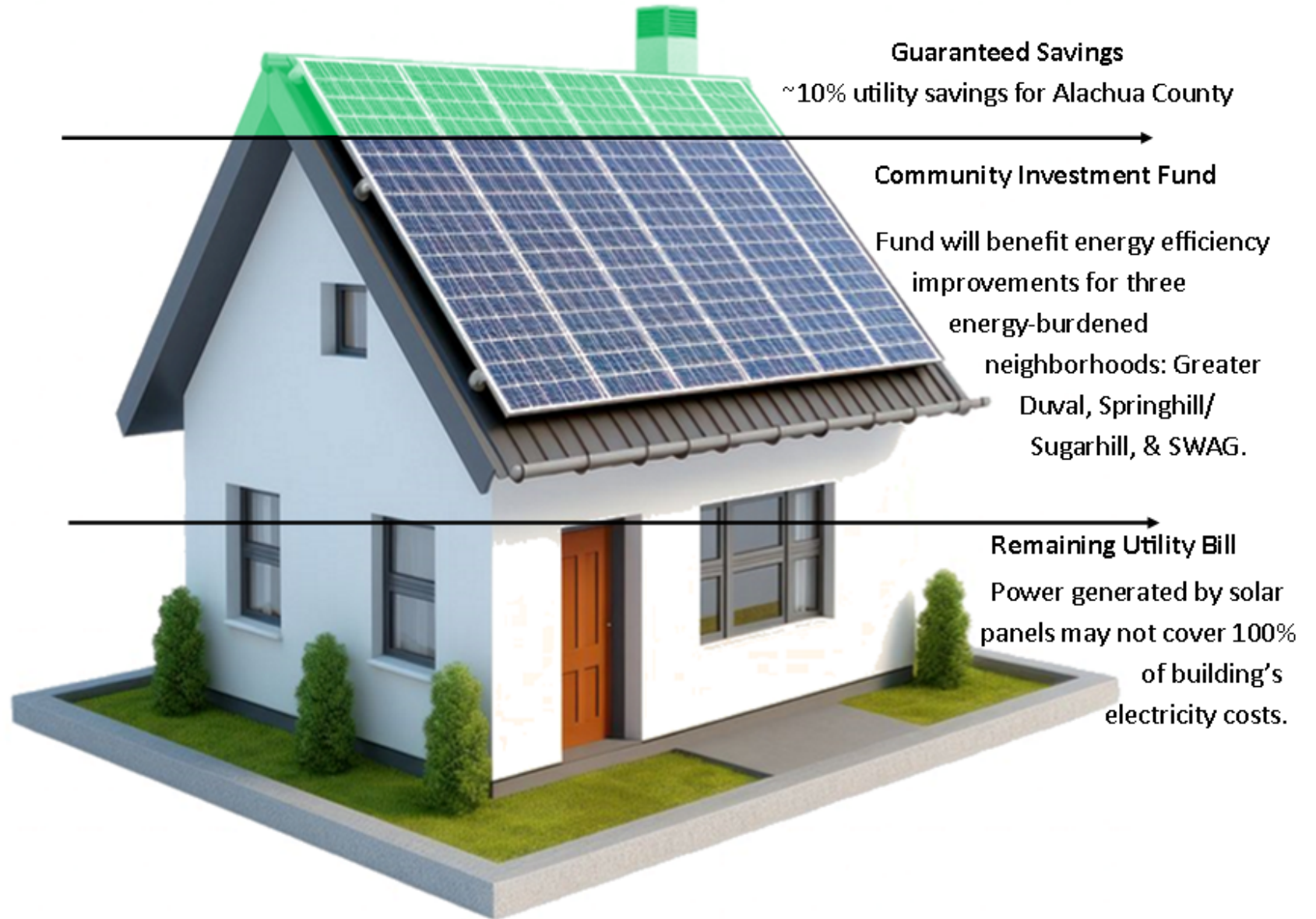
Task 3.2: Construction and Installation

Task 3.3: Connection to electrical grid (i.e. project “online” per IRA reimbursement requirements)

# Community Investment Fund Flow of Funds and Major Programs



# EMPOWER Grant Proposal



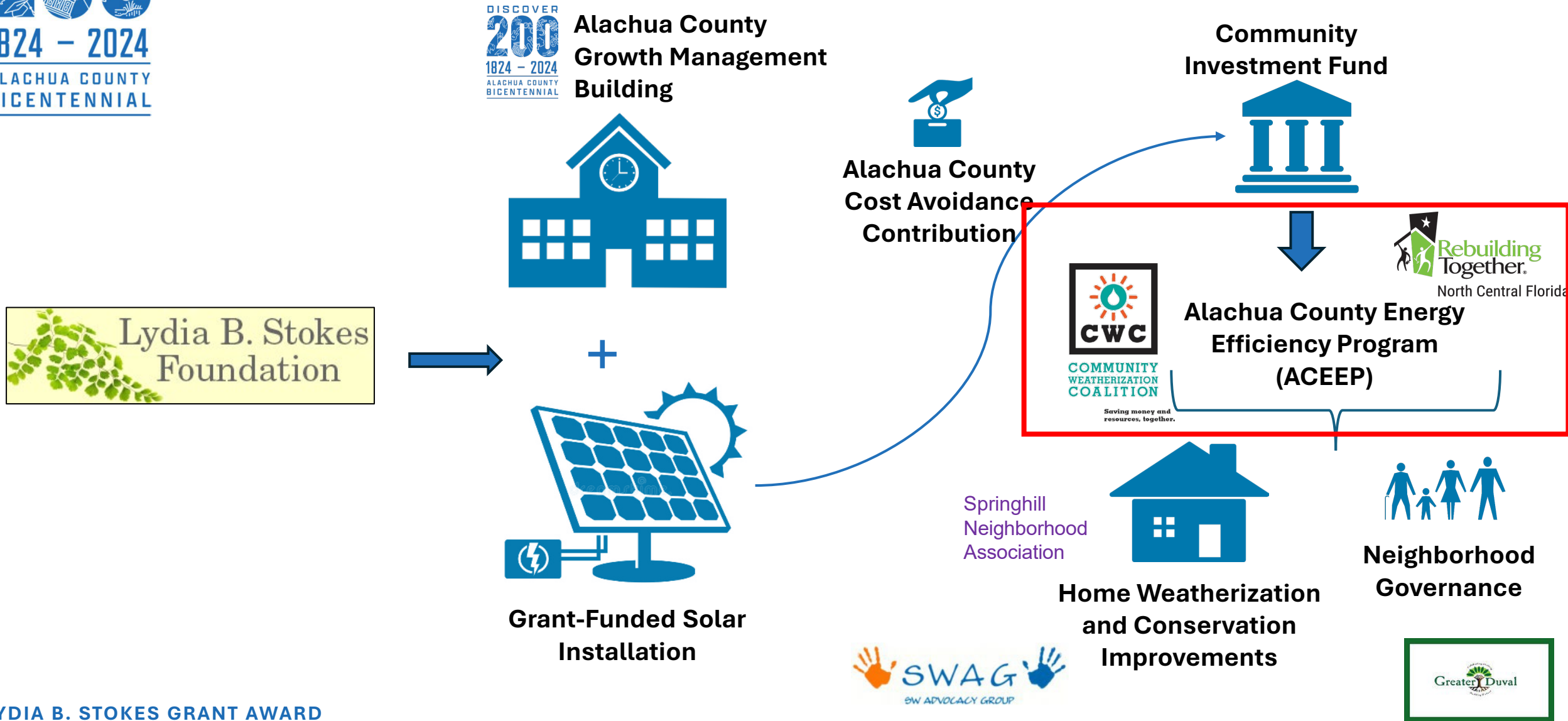


# Community Investment Fund Cost Savings Estimate

Year	Estimated Productivity	Savings Per kWh	Energy Value	10% Savings	Estimated Insurance	Estimated O&M	Net Contribution
1	71,184 kWh	\$0.20	\$14,237	(\$1,424)	(\$270)	(\$486)	\$12,057
2	70,611 kWh	\$0.21	\$14,475	(\$1,448)	(\$1,727)	(\$3,124)	\$8,177
3	70,042 kWh	\$0.21	\$14,718	(\$1,472)	(\$1,770)	(\$3,218)	\$8,258
4	69,479 kWh	\$0.22	\$14,964	(\$1,496)	(\$1,815)	(\$3,314)	\$8,339
5	68,919 kWh	\$0.23	\$15,215	(\$1,521)	(\$1,860)	(\$3,414)	\$8,419
...							
26	58,160 kWh	\$0.37	\$21,565	(\$2,157)	(\$3,124)	(\$6,350)	\$9,935
27	57,692 kWh	\$0.38	\$21,926	(\$2,193)	(\$3,202)	(\$6,541)	\$9,991
28	57,228 kWh	\$0.39	\$22,294	(\$2,229)	(\$3,282)	(\$6,737)	\$10,045
29	56,767 kWh	\$0.40	\$22,667	(\$2,267)	(\$3,364)	(\$6,939)	\$10,097
30	56,310 kWh	\$0.41	\$23,047	(\$2,305)	(\$3,448)	(\$7,147)	\$10,147
Totals	1,904,000 kWh		\$549,047	(\$54,905)	(\$73,976)	(\$144,296)	\$279,837



# Community Investment Fund Flow of Funds and Major Programs



# EMPOWER and ACEEP

Rather than a new program,  
staff proposes to link the  
upgrades to established  
programming.

The Alachua County Energy  
Efficiency Program (ACEEP)  
already:

- **sets income guidelines**

## Renters

*Please note that the information contained on this website is informational only, and does not replace the information, standards, and requirements outlined in the formal paperwork that participants will fill out as part of their participation in this program.*

### Program Eligibility

- You (the renter) rent your unit and it's not also owner-occupied
- You (the renter) pays utilities for your unit
- Unit(s) is within Alachua County
- Unit is structurally sound
- Your landlord would also like to participate

Because this is a low-income affordable housing program, there are additional requirements that you, the renter, must meet to show that you qualify as low-income. **There are many different ways to qualify for this program. If you do not qualify in one way, please keep reading, as you may qualify another way.**

The following are all pathways for eligibility in this program. If any of the following apply to you, please [complete an application here](#) and program staff will reach out to you.

- Your household makes 50% or less of the Area Median Income for Alachua County, OR

# EMPOWER and ACEEP

Rather than a new program,  
staff proposes to link the  
upgrades to established  
programming.

The Alachua County Energy  
Efficiency Program (ACEEP)  
already:

- **Identifies energy efficiency upgrades that have been vetted to make a difference**

## Renters

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### + Program Eligibility

### - Qualifying Upgrades

The following upgrades are allowable expenses under this program. Your landlord could choose to accept between \$5,000 and \$15,000 to improve your unit.

### Envelope Upgrades

- **Wall insulation.** Add insulation to building walls. Preference is given if post-implementation R-value exceeds the current building energy code minimum.
- **Attic/Roof/Ceiling insulation.** Add insulation to building attic/roof/ceiling. Preference is given if post-implementation R-value exceeds the current building energy code minimum.
- **Air sealing.** Seal air leaks with fire caulk to reduce air infiltration. Includes caulking, weather stripping, and sealing around doors, windows, and other locations of uncontrolled airflow. Where feasible, a blower door test should be conducted to measure air leakage before and after measure

# EMPOWER and ACEEP

Rather than a new program,  
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programming.

The Alachua County Energy  
Efficiency Program (ACEEP)  
already:

- **Underwent two years of  
pilot testing**

## Renters

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+ Program Eligibility

+ Qualifying Upgrades

+ Affordability Commitment

- Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are the *benefits* of participating as a renter?**

Tenants receive weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades in their rental unit, to help lower utility bills.

### **What are the *costs* of participating as a renter?**

Renters are not required to pay any money in order to participate in ACEEP. Renters must devote some time to submitting the appropriate paperwork, and work with program staff to coordinate the pre-assessment tune-up and contracted upgrades.

### **What does program participation look like for a renter?**

Renters who wish to participate will need to submit the appropriate



# EMPOWER and ACEEP

Rather than a new program,  
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The Alachua County Energy  
Efficiency Program (ACEEP)  
already:

- **Was nationally recognized  
by the American Council for  
an Energy-Efficient  
Economy**

LYDIA B. STOKES GRANT AWARD

Alachua County Resiliency Office 2025

## About the Program

*Please note that the information contained on this website is informational only, and does not replace the information, standards, and requirements outlined in the formal paperwork that participants will fill out as part of their participation in this program.*

The Alachua County Energy Efficiency Program (ACEEP) is designed to help lower utility bills for Alachua County residents by creating a fund to improve the energy efficiency of rental units. Participating units can request home upgrades ranging from better attic insulation to more energy efficient electrical appliances such as refrigerators and air conditioners.

Participants can receive up to \$15,000 per rental unit. Participating property owners will be asked to commit to maintaining the affordability of the unit for a length of time depending on their chosen award amount.

Participation in the program requires the consent of both the renter and the property owner. To learn more, you can select the "Property Owner" or "Renter" tab at the top of this page, or the "FAQ" tab to read Frequently Asked Questions about the specifics of the program.

This program is for all renters in Alachua County, including the County's smaller municipalities, and the City of Gainesville. If you are looking for a similar program run by the City of Gainesville and available to Gainesville homeowners, you can [find information about GRU's LEEP<sup>Plus</sup> program here](#)

Environmental Protection Department

# EMPOWER and ACEEP

Because ACEEP is for renters only, **homeowners in energy-burdened communities are typically not eligible.**

## About the Program

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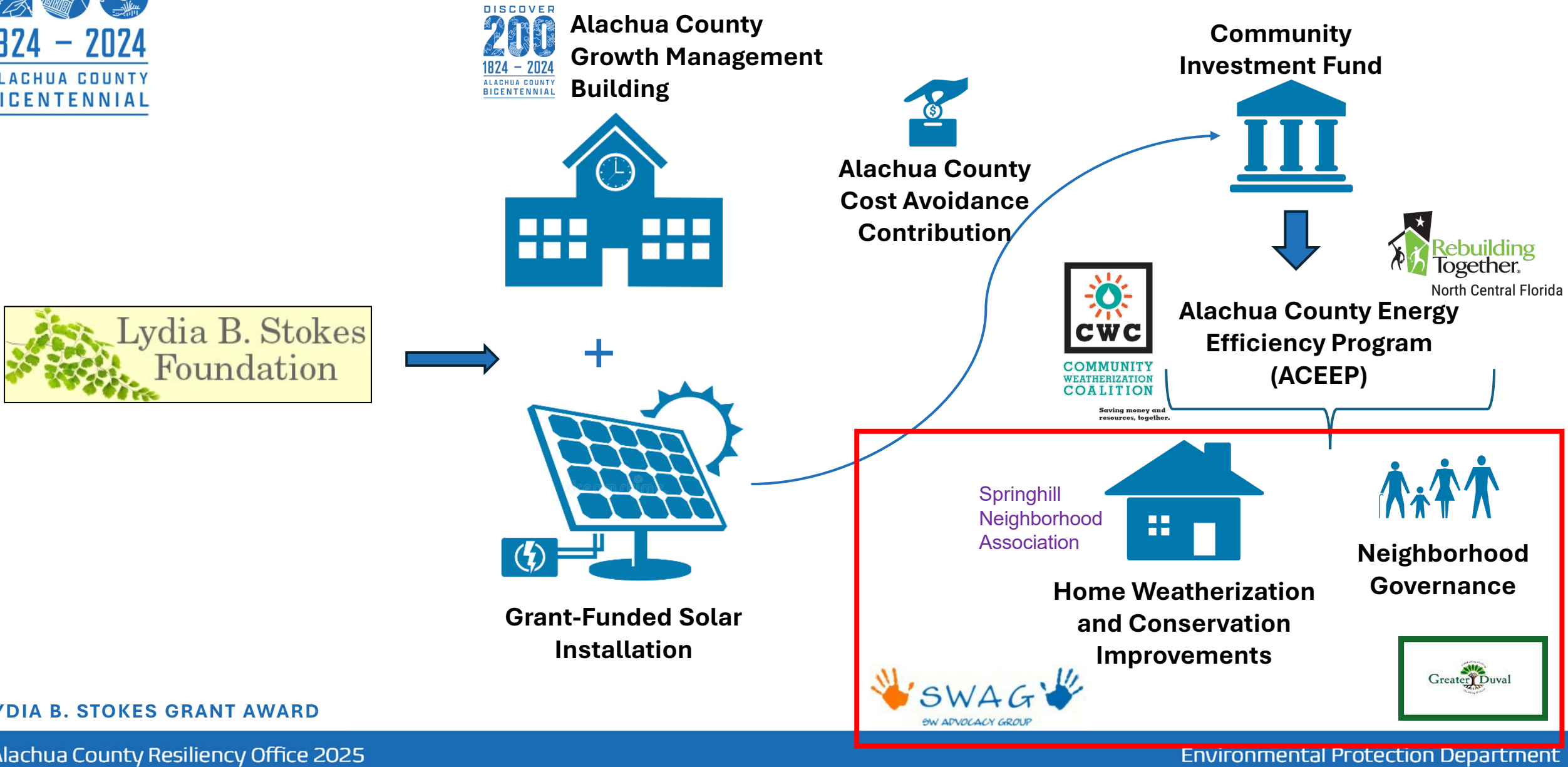
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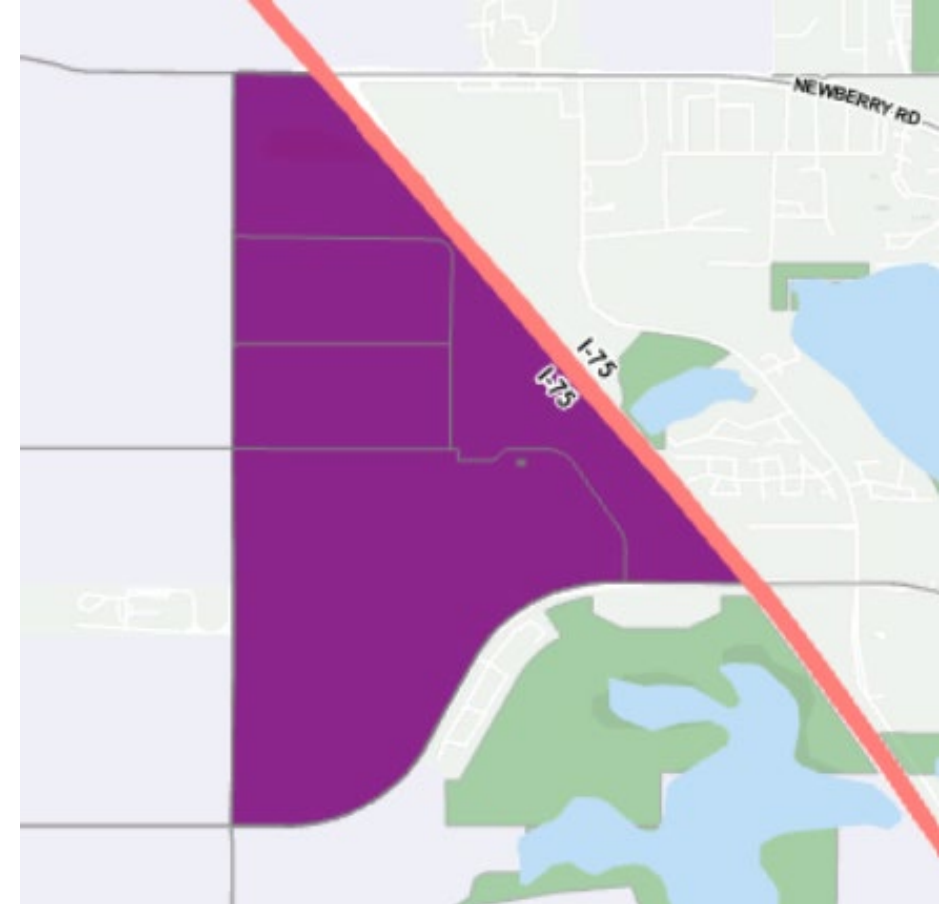
# Community Investment Fund Flow of Funds and Major Programs



# EMPOWER and ACEEP

In Staff Recommendations, staff will propose:

- The creation of a new, separate CIF funding line
- Approval to use this funding line for ACEEP projects
- The expansion of ACEEP, using the CIF funding line only, for homeowners in EMPOWER neighborhoods (see map)



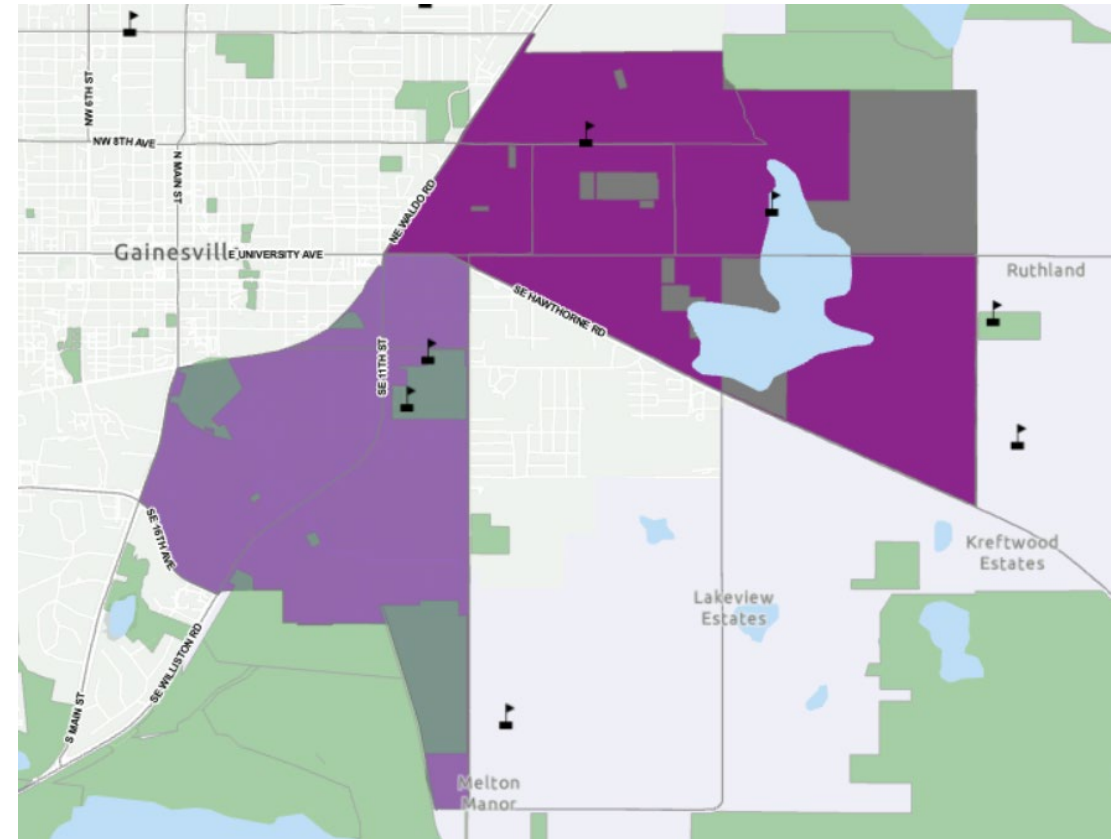
Location of the Southwest Advocacy Group (SWAG) neighborhood, an EMPOWER partner



# EMPOWER and ACEEP

In Staff Recommendations,  
staff will propose:

- Approval to begin the appropriate procurement to hire a contractor to administer new CIF funding line through ACEEP



Locations of the Springhill/Sugarhill and Great Duval neighborhoods,  
two EMPOWER partners. (Maps pending final review)



# Community Engagement



## Community Meetings

- February 18, 2023: Initial Meeting
- June 13, 2024
- August 22, 2024
- December 10, 2024
- March 4, 2025
- April 29, 2025
- July 8, 2025
- August 26, 2025 (planned)

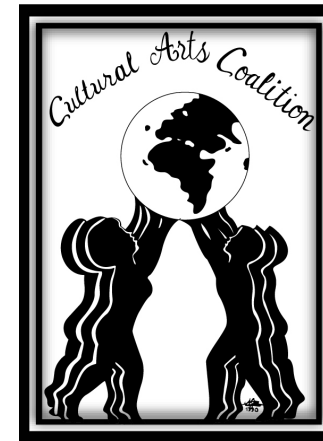
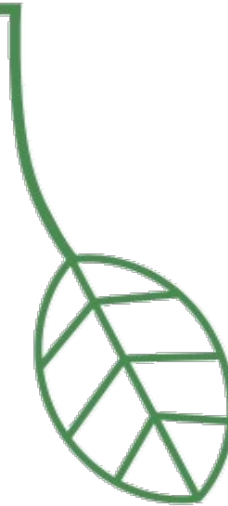




# Community Engagement



Honor community work by directing contractor to work with EMPOWER communities to identify qualified applicants



Saving money and  
resources, together.



# STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approve County acceptance of the grant funding from the Lydia B. Stokes Foundation authorize the BOCC Chair to sign the grant agreement contract.
- Approve County staff to begin procurement processes for construction of a solar array per the scope of work.
- Approve County staff to create a new funding line structure for the Community Investment Fund (CIF) to receive Lydia B. Stokes grant dollars and future utility savings dollars for the life of the solar panel array.
- Approve County staff to expand the Alachua County Energy Efficiency Program (ACEEP) to include homeowners in EMPOWER Coalition partner neighborhoods.
- Approve County staff to begin procurement proceedings for a contractor to administer CIF per ACEEP and appropriate requirements.