



As you are no doubt aware, **thousands of your neighbors and** friends in the five-county region of Southwest Florida are currently unemployed. **A few facts to consider:**

- Unemployment figures released in early March 2010 from Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation cite the following rates: Lee 14%, Charlotte 13.8%, Hendry 14.9%, Glades 11.9%, and Collier 12.7%.
- The Brookings Institute reported in March that Lee County ranked last for job market performance among the nation's top 100 metro areas.
- Although it is difficult to secure statistics for the under-employed, we know that our nonprofit agencies in the five-county region have seen a huge increase in the demand for services for food, housing assistance, employment assistance, and a wide range of other needs.
- Roughly 85% of all businesses in our region are classified as small business. Collectively, these small businesses generate 60% of the \$20 billion in total GDP earned in our region in one year.

These are sobering statistics that give us reason to pause.
How can we help our neighbors in need?

Local partners throughout our region have joined together to announce the creation of the **Southwest Florida MicroEnterprise Project**, a multi-partner, regional initiative matching the under-employed and unemployed with proven opportunities for job creation.

The **Southwest Florida MicroEnterprise Project** will provide training and loans for individuals with low-to-moderate income and/or other disadvantages, especially for the unemployed, **to start their own businesses**. We are collaborating with many regional partners to provide **loan servicing, training, recruitment, mentoring, and management**. The project launch date is **May 1, 2010**.

The project involves the collaborative efforts of many agencies, each with a specific task and role. In addition to general program oversight, the Southwest Florida Community Foundation is responsible for securing funding commitments of **\$350,000 for the projected three-year budgeted costs**. While the Community Foundation has made a three-year commitment to help seed this project, program partners **expect the project will last much longer**. The Community Foundation will be working with all partner organizations to identify and secure other funders to ensure the project's success **beyond the first three years**.

We believe strongly in both the necessity of this endeavor and the potential of this project to reap substantial benefits to individuals, families, and ultimately **our Southwest Florida region of Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Hendry, and Glades counties**. This project will help people get back on their feet and ease some of the burden on our overtaxed nonprofit sector. The **Southwest Florida MicroEnterprise Project** has been created in a spirit of proactive focus, determination, and optimism. We anticipate that **hundreds of individuals** will be assisted through this program and will move toward **successful small business creation**.

Will you join us by becoming a financial supporter? All gifts are tax-deductible and you will have the satisfaction of knowing your dollars will be used efficiently, locally, and for the economic empowerment of those most in need. For more information, visit www.floridacommunity.com/micro-enterprise, or contact the Southwest Florida Community Foundation to set up an appointment to discuss how your charitable contribution to the **Southwest Florida MicroEnterprise Project** can change lives.

The Southwest Florida MicroEnterprise Project

Three Year Funding Goal: \$287,000 (originally \$350,000, but \$63,000 already committed as of 3/25/10.)

Funding Plan:

Donor (s)	Will donate	% of Goal	Total Gifts	Portion Raised Toward Goal
1	\$57,400	20%	\$57,000	\$57,000
2	\$28,700	20%	\$57,000	\$114,000
5	\$10,000	17%	\$50,000	\$164,000
6	\$5,000	Approx. 10%	\$30,000	\$194,000
10	\$3,000	Approx. 10%	\$30,000	\$224,000
30	\$1,000	Approx. 10%	\$30,000	\$254,000
Many	\$1000 or less	Approx. 10%	\$33,000	\$287,000
				\$287,000

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: I am interested in this project and would like to support it in *each* of its three years. How would this be accomplished?

A. Below is an example of different options for giving if you are interested in supporting the Southwest Florida MicroEnterprise Project in each of the three years.

Commitment	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
\$57,400	\$19,133	\$19,133	\$19,133
\$28,700	\$9,566	\$9,566	\$9,566
\$10,000	\$3,400	\$3,300	\$3,300
\$5,000	\$1,666	\$1,666	\$1,666
\$3,000	\$1000	\$1000	\$1000

Q: I would like to support this project but I prefer to give a one-time gift. Can I do this?

A. Yes. Donors may make a one-time gift to the project. Contact the Community Foundation at 239-274-5900.

Q: I am interested in hearing about the success of the program. Will you be providing progress updates?

A: Yes. The Southwest Florida Community Foundation will provide updates regarding all aspects of the program through: fact sheets, our website (www.floridacommunity.com), a special presentation at our annual reception in November, and throughout the year. However, donors and supporters may contact us at any time with inquiries.

Thank you for considering how you can financially support this important community partnership project. Please contact the Southwest Florida Community Foundation at **239-274-5900** if you would like more information.