



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

*Florida-Rural Housing Service*

# Community Building

## Returning South Florida Migrant Farmworkers Come Home

### Outline Of Need:

Shifts in south Florida’s Miami-Dade County agriculture toward year-round nursery operations has reduced the numbers of farm worker migrating households. Migrant workers still employed in row crops and tropical fruit groves are now finding fewer affordable housing rentals upon their return to the area as more and more farm labor housing is rented year-round.

### How Rural Development Helped:

In 2010, with \$3 million in Section 514-516 Farm Labor Loan and Grant funding to nonprofit Everglades Community Association (ECA), 30 apartments were built and set aside for migrant households. By reserving these units in ECA’s Everglades Migrant Housing program, migrant farm laborers who travel to North Carolina, Ohio or other farming areas can find safe, decent rental housing when they return to south Florida.

The Rental Assistance that accompanied Rural Development’s investment ensures the newly constructed townhouse units remain affordable to



*Everglades Community Association’s Everglades Migrant Housing townhouse model offers 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom units, providing a home for returning migrant farm workers and their families.*

workers earning modest farm wages in an otherwise urban/suburban market. In FY 13, Rural Development obligated \$149,372 in rental assistance for ECA’s Everglades Migrant Housing.

### The Results:

Everglades Migrant Housing’s targeting of migrant families is working. In 2013, this rental community project had an occupancy rate of 99 percent with collection losses of less than \$500. Its 30 rental apartments are fully integrated into Everglades Village, a landscaped 120 acre campus replete with a community center, child care and after school programs, community health clinic, neighborhood retail space, credit union, community health clinic and a 10-acre park with sports fields.

This remarkable neighborhood provides more than 100 on-campus jobs, helps local farm employers retain a skilled workforce and, provides a place to call home for migrant, seasonal and year-round farm workers. RD’s investment in Everglades Migrant Housing means parents and children traveling to harvest crops return to a very special place rather than a mobile home priced at exorbitant rents.

## Fast Facts

- Program:** Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Program
- Investment:** \$2.0 million Direct Loan; \$1.0 million Grant (2010); \$149,372 Rental Assistance (2013—most recent year)
- Congressional District:** Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, District 25
- Partners:** Everglades Community Association and Florida Housing Finance Corporation
- Demographics:** Domestic Farm Laborers in southernmost Miami-Dade County, FL
- Impact:**
  - Migrant farm worker families will reside in safe, sanitary and affordable housing