

# SEPTIC to SEWER

## Informational Needs and Perceptions of Miami-Dade County Residents

The purpose of this study was to examine Miami-Dade County residents' perceptions, informational needs and informational delivery preferences regarding septic to sewer conversion projects. This information will assist local governments in facilitating homeowners' conversion from an onsite wastewater treatment system to a centralized sewer system. Data was collected in November and December 2020 with 209 Florida homeowners in Miami-Dade County who currently use a septic system as their wastewater treatment system.



### PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO CONVERSION

Respondents were asked about their perceived external and internal barriers to converting from a septic system to a sewer system. The external factors respondents agreed with the most as being barriers to converting to a sewer system were lack of a sewer hook-up in their area, inconvenience of construction in their community and disruptions on their property associated with construction.

The internal-type factors respondents agreed with most as being barriers to converting to a sewer system were not knowing how to begin the process of converting to a sewer system, fear of large-scale sewer spills and not having enough information about homeowner responsibilities in the process.

When asked about possible dispersion of upfront conversion costs, 89% of respondents indicated they would be more likely to convert to a sewer system if the up-front costs were dispersed over time.

### WOULD YOU CONVERT TO A SEWER SYSTEM IF THE UP-FRONT COSTS WERE DISPERSED OVER TIME?



■ YES — 89%

■ NO — 11%

### PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF CONVERSION

When asked about their perceived benefits of converting from a septic to sewer system, respondents agreed most that converting from a septic system to sewer system reduces maintenance burdens on homeowners, is better for human health, reduces water pollution and improves environmental health.

When asked how useful various informational topics about septic to sewer conversion would be to them, respondents identified the most useful topics as: community programs or regulations, evidence-based benefits for the environment, the responsibility of homeowners in the conversion process, evidence-based benefits for Florida communities and evidence-based benefits for homeowners.

### MOST USEFUL SEPTIC TO SEWER TOPICS

**1** Programs and regulations for community septic to sewer projects

**2** Evidence-based benefits for the environment

**3** The responsibility of homeowners in septic to sewer conversion

**4** Evidence-based benefits for Florida communities

**5** Evidence-based benefits for homeowners

Respondents identified websites, short online videos and print material mailed to them as the most useful methods of delivery for receiving information about septic to sewer conversion.

### PREFERRED FORMATS OF SEPTIC TO SEWER INFORMATION DELIVERY



WEBSITES



SHORT ONLINE VIDEOS



MAILED PRINT MATERIALS

Rampold, S. D., Krinsky, L., Telg, R. W., & Warner, L. (2021). Florida homeowners' knowledge, perceptions, and informational needs regarding septic to sewer conversion: A look at Martin, Brevard, and Miami-Dade Counties. PIE2020/21-06. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education.

