The Impact of COVID-19 on Rural and Tribal Water and Wastewater Systems

FINDINGS FROM THE RCAP NETWORK NATIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

Has the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted your system’s financial position, or do you anticipate negative impacts?

- 36.4% : Yes
- 27.2% : No
- 36.4% : Not sure

FLORIDA

The Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP), the Southeast RCAP, provides accessible and affordable water and wastewater facilities, promotes community development, and helps residents become fully self-sufficient. SERCAP’s staff administer long-term technical assistance to Water/Wastewater Utilities, Rural Communities, Public Service Authorities, and Planning District Commissions in order to improve compliance, efficiency, capacity, and long-term sustainability. Visit sercap.org for more info.

FACILITIES TYPE:

36% water | 64% both
0% wastewater

5-6: Average full-time staff size
Many supplement with part-time, contract or volunteer staff

Has the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted your system's financial position, or do you anticipate negative impacts?

- 36.4% : Yes
- 27.2% : No
- 36.4% : Not sure

11 respondents

81% of respondents were small systems

≈ 5,549 residents
Average system size of respondent

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

How long respondents can continue to pay for all system expenses under the current financial circumstances due to COVID-19:

- N/A: Already could not cover all costs
- Less than 2 months
- 2 to 6 months
- 7 to 12 months
- More than a year
- Don’t know/ too early to tell
- Don’t want to answer

18% of all FL respondents cannot sustain losses for more than six months of current financial conditions

Challenges faced because of financial conditions:

- Delays/limitations to capital improvement
- Maintaining their system
- N/A

75% of small systems indicated they experienced a decrease in revenues, comparing April 2019 to April 2020

FL small system respondent median monthly revenue decrease (n = 3)

$5,750

About the survey: In early May, the RCAP Network surveyed communities to understand the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural and tribal water and wastewater systems. Results are from systems the RCAP Network serves and are not representative of all small systems. These results, however, provide an important snapshot of rural and tribal experiences so policymakers can make informed decisions on how to address these issues during COVID-19 recovery.