

# **2021 Alachua County Syringe Exchange Program Assessment and Feasibility Survey Report**



Prepared by



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## Introduction

### Alachua County Syringe Exchange Program (SEP) Assessment and Feasibility Purpose and Process

In response to the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners' Solicitation of Interest (Ordinance No. 2020-20 Needle Exchange Program) issued in May 2021, WellFlorida Council proposed a comprehensive readiness and needs assessment as part of the planning process for a SEP in Alachua County. While WellFlorida Council proposed to take the leadership role, the assessment, feasibility discussions, and planning work will be a collaborative effort. Among the strategies employed are the engagement of a multi-disciplinary and diverse Advisory Council and collecting input from persons who would potentially use and/or benefit from the availability of a SEP in Alachua County.

## SEP Intercept Survey Methodology

### Process

WellFlorida Council developed an intercept survey with input from harm reduction advocates with Out of Harm's Reach, a Gainesville-based non-profit agency. The survey was designed to be administered face-to-face by trained individuals to Alachua County residents aged 18 years and older who are or were injection drug users in the past 90 days. The survey instrument included 21 questions and seven (7) demographic items and was tested for readability (i.e., Flesch Kincaid grade level score of 6.8 was achieved). Intercept survey participants were not required to give their full names nor addresses and no identifying information was attached to any survey documentation. The information gathered from the intercept interviews was entered by the interviewers into a Qualtrics® web-based surveying platform to secure and analyze the information.

A convenience sampling approach was utilized for conducting the intercept surveys, i.e., respondents were selected based on eligibility, accessibility and willingness to participate. Intercept survey participants were identified, contacted, and surveyed by Out of Harm's Reach harm reduction advocates who were trained on this survey technique in advance. Surveying was conducted from October 1 to October 31, 2021. A second collection of intercept surveys occurred from XX – January 31, 2022 through partners at UF Mobile Clinic where participants were identified, contacted, and surveyed by UF Mobile Clinic volunteers.

### Survey Limitations

Using the convenience sampling method to collect input for a program feasibility study and needs assessment process has its advantages, disadvantages and limitations. Information collected using this method can yield rich qualitative data for assessment and planning in a cost-efficient manner. Data are available relatively quickly to match the pace of an assessment and are useful to signal the beginning of changes or shifts in attitudes and behaviors. Among the disadvantages of convenience sampling are the potential for bias in data collection and sampling errors that could introduce inaccuracies. The convenience sampling method has its limitations. Survey participants were pre-selected which may have introduced selection bias. As such the results are not generalizable to the

entire population. Even with these limitations, valuable insights, perspectives, and opinions were generated and will contribute to gauging the feasibility of establishing a SEP in Alachua County.

## Survey Results

At the close of the two survey collection periods, 30 intercept surveys had been conducted. The general demographic factors collected on respondents who completed surveys are presented in Table 1. Tabulated results from survey items are presented in Tables 2 – 23 and Figures 1 – 3.

## Participant Profile

The table below shows the demographics of those who participated in the intercept survey. All of the participants were Alachua County adult residents who had injected drugs in the past 90 days. More than two thirds (73.3 percent) were under the age of 40 years. The majority of intercept survey participants were male (76.7 percent), were non-Hispanic (86.7 percent), and were White (76.7 percent). Ten (10.0) percent identified as transgender. Less than a quarter (20 percent) of participants reported having stable housing; 73.3 percent said they were homeless with another nearly 7 (6.7) percent in unstable or temporary housing.

**TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS OF SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM (SEP) INTERCEPT SURVEY RESPONDENTS, ALACHUA COUNTY, OCTOBER 2021**

Demographic Indicator	Survey Respondents n= 30	
	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
<b>18-24</b>	3	10.0
<b>25-29</b>	9	30.0
<b>30-39</b>	10	33.3
<b>40-49</b>	3	10.0
<b>50-59</b>	4	13.3
<b>60-64</b>	1	3.3
<b>65-69</b>	0	0
<b>Sex Assigned at Birth</b>		
<b>Male</b>	23	76.7
<b>Female</b>	7	23.3
<b>Intersex</b>	0	0
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0	0
<b>Identify as Transgender</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	3	10.0
<b>No</b>	26	86.7
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	1	3.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
<b>Hispanic or Latinx</b>	4	13.3
<b>Not Hispanic or Latinx</b>	26	86.7

Demographic Indicator	Survey Respondents n= 30	
	Number	Percent
Prefer not to answer	0	0
<b>Race</b>		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	3.3
Asian	0	0
Black or African American	4	13.3
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island	1	3.3
Two or More Races	1	0
White	23	76.7
Prefer not to answer	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Current Housing Status</b>		
Have stable/permanent housing	6	20.0
Have unstable or temporary housing	2	6.7
Am homeless	22	73.3

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

## Results by Survey Item

Figures and tables below summarize the responses to the survey questions. In general, at least the top five responses for each question are presented. There were 30 completed intercept surveys included in the analysis. Responses to questions in the following topic area are included:

Desired features of an SEP in Alachua County

Concerns about an SEP

Injecting drug use behaviors

**“Syringe exchange programs (SEPs) provide free sterile syringes and collect used syringes from injection drug users (IDUs) to reduce transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus, and hepatitis C virus (HCV). This service is free and legal. Clients who exchange syringes cannot be punished for using this service. Would you use a free syringe exchange program?”**

**TABLE 2: NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD USE A SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM, 2021**

Response	Number (Percent of Responses)
Yes	30 (100.0)
No, please tell us why not	0 (0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“Would you prefer the program services be available from a mobile unit that went to various locations on a schedule or permanent physical location?”**

**TABLE 3: PREFERENCE FOR MOBILE OR FIXED LOCATION FOR SYRINGE EXCHANGE SERVICES IN ALACHUA COUNTY, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Preference	Number (Percent of Responses)
<b>Mobile unit</b>	18 (60.0)
<b>Physical locations</b>	12 (40.0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“If services from a mobile unit were offered what locations would be most convenient?”**  
(Open text question)

**TABLE 4: SUGGESTED MOBILE UNIT LOCATIONS FOR SEP, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Suggested Locations	Number (Percent of Responses)
GRACE	17 (56.7)
Downtown	13 (43.3)
Holly Heights	5 (16.7)
Locations on bus route	3 (10.0)
Library downtown	3 (10.0)
Archer	5 (16.7)
St. Francis	2 (6.7)
Newberry	2 (6.7)
Tower Road	2 (3.7)
Windsor Apartments	2 (6.7)
Meridian	1 (3.3)
NE Gainesville	1 (3.3)
Westside Gainesville	1 (3.3)
Health Department	1 (3.3)
CVS or Walgreens	1 (3.3)
Museum Walk	1 (3.3)
34 <sup>th</sup> and Archer	1 (3.3)
Campus Walk	1 (3.3)
13 <sup>th</sup> Street Hotels	1 (3.3)
23 <sup>rd</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup>	1 (3.3)
I-75 Hotels	1 (3.3)
Courthouse	1 (3.3)
Porter’s Store at Main and 4 <sup>th</sup> St	1 (3.3)
Walmart	1 (3.3)
Areas that are poverty stricken	1 (3.3)
Where the camps are by the interstate	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“What fixed, physical locations would be most convenient?”** (Open text question)

**TABLE 5: SUGGESTED FIXED PHYSICAL LOCATIONS FOR SEP, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

<b>Suggested Locations</b>	<b>Number (Percent of Responses)</b>
GRACE	13 (43.3)
Downtown	10 (33.3)
Locations on bus route or bus station	3 (10.0)
University	2 (3.7)
Waldo	1 (3.3)
Hospital	1 (3.3)
Walmart	1 (3.3)
Butler Plaza	1 (3.3)
Midtown	1 (3.3)
Archer Road and 35 <sup>th</sup> St	1 (3.3)
Millhopper	1 (3.3)
Would not go – too visible	1 (3.3)
Near Archer Woods	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“What hours of operation would you suggest and what days of operation would you suggest?”**  
(Open text question)

**TABLE 6: SUGGESTED HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION FOR SEP, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

<b>Suggested Hours and Days of Operation</b>	<b>Number (Percent of Responses)</b>
24/7	8 (26.7)
7 days/week (8 or 9 am – 5 pm)	8 (26.7)
Monday - Friday	4 (13.3)
Evening hours	3 (10.0)
Afternoon hours	3 (10.0)
Morning hours	1 (3.3)
Weekends only	1 (3.3)
24/7 mobile unit	1 (3.3)
Saturday and Sunday 12 pm – 6 pm	1 (3.3)
Monday and Friday, 8 am – 3 pm	1 (3.3)
Friday-Wednesday, 12 pm – 12 am	1 (3.3)
12 hours per day	1 (3.3)
Noon – 8 pm; daily	1 (3.3)
8 am – 8 pm	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“Do you think a syringe exchange program would work in Alachua County?”**

**TABLE 7: WOULD A SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM WORK IN ALACHUA COUNTY, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES, 2021**

Response	Number (Percent of Responses)
Yes	30 (100.0)
No, please tell us why not	0 (0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“What are your concerns about syringe exchange services being offered?” (Open text question)**

**TABLE 8: CONCERNS ABOUT SYRINGE EXCHANGE SERVICES BEING OFFERED IN ALACHUA COUNTY, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES, 2021**

Concerns	Number (Percent of Responses)
No concerns	15 (50.0)
Privacy	4 (13.3)
Confidentiality	3 (10.0)
Legal ramifications	3 (10.0)
Safety	2 (6.7)
Being tracked or targeted by police	2 (6.7)
Discretion	2 (6.7)
Transportation	1 (3.3)
Information shared with police	1 (3.3)
Sustainability (being able to count on the program being there)	1 (3.3)
Disposal of used syringes in a secure way	1 (3.3)
Triggering use (when you have new syringes)	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.



**“What organizations would you trust to offer the syringe exchange program. If you cannot name a specific organization, tell us what type of organization you would trust or who you would trust to offer the program?”** (Open text question)

**TABLE 9: ORGANIZATIONS OR TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS TRUSTED TO OFFER SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES, 2021**

Organizations	Number (Percent of Responses)
Out of Harm’s Reach	13 (43.3)
Health Department	7 (23.0)
GRACE	6 (20.0)
UF mobile clinic/UF street medicine	4 (13.3)
Hospital	3 (10.0)
Pharmacy	2 (0.7)
Non-profit outreach program	2 (0.7)
Meridian	1 (3.3)
Red Cross	1 (3.3)
Salvation Army	1 (3.3)
WellFlorida	1 (3.3)
LifeSouth	1 (3.3)
Drug rehab center	1 (3.3)
Peers	1 (3.3)
Doctor/medical staff (no volunteers)	1 (3.3)
NAMI	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“Please fill in the blank. I would feel safe using the syringe exchange program if \_\_\_\_\_. (Please describe what would make you comfortable).”**

**TABLE 10: CONDITIONAL STATEMENTS ABOUT FEELING SAFE USING THE SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM, 2021**

I would feel safe using the SEP if: (grouped by theme)
<b>Privacy, Confidentiality</b>
I could ensure my confidentiality and knew the people offering the services or got to know them
it was confidential.
confidentiality was made a priority.
My privacy was respected.
information was confidential
they didn't ask for names or information.
the info is not shared with police.
knew police wouldn't receive info.
it were kept confidential, offered by people like Casey and Andrea at Grace
If it came to me
Making it look more like a home than a doctors office

<b>I would feel safe using the SEP if: (grouped by theme)</b>
<b>Safety</b>
there was a nurse on staff
there were no cops, the place was clean, and the operators wore street clothes
No law enforcement
I knew the syringes were sterile.
it was private, like in a Dr.'s office setting.
safety was a priority.
one way in, one way out, there were electronic dispensaries to increase security, medical degrees by staff
if needles were sealed and clean, pre-packaged.
<b>Program Attributes</b>
there was no judgement
it was fully legal and discreet
the same people were working each day
I was treated respectfully
services were offered at GRACE (x4)
I trusted the people who are exchanging, the sterility of the needles.
<b>No concerns (x 2)</b>

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

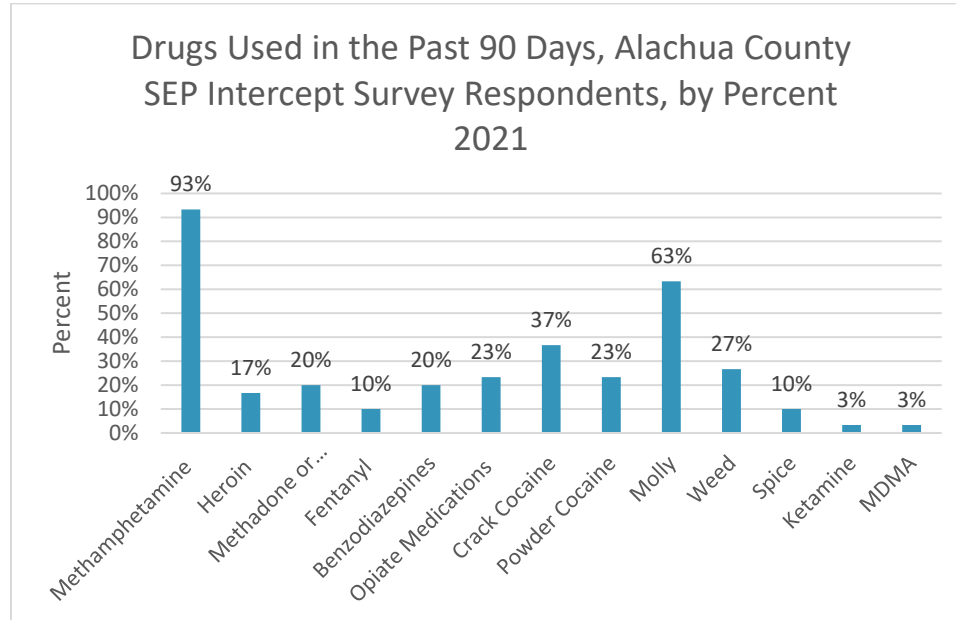
**“In the past 90 days, what drugs have you used? Select all that apply.”**

**TABLE 11: DRUGS USED IN THE PAST 90 DAYS, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

<b>Drugs Used</b>	<b>Number (Percent)</b>
Methamphetamine (Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.)	28 (93.3)
Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)	5 (16.7)
Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (medications used to treat opioid use disorder)	6 (20.0)
Fentanyl (China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.)	3 (10.0)
Benzodiazepines (Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies)	6 (20.0)
Opiate Medications (Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine)	7 (23.3)
Crack Cocaine	11 (36.7)
Powder Cocaine	7 (23.3)
Other:	
Molly	19 (63.3)
Weed	8 (26.7)
Spice	3 (10.0)
Ketamine	1 (3.3)
MDMA	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**FIGURE 1: DRUGS USED IN THE PAST 90 DAYS, BY PERCENT, 2021**



Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“In the past 90 days, what drugs did you inject? Select all that apply.”**

**TABLE 12: DRUGS INJECTED IN THE PAST 90 DAYS, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Drugs Injected	Number (Percent)
Methamphetamine (Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.)	28 (93.3)
Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)	4 (13.3)
Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (medications used to treat opioid use disorder)	4 (13.3)
Fentanyl (China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.)	2 (6.7)
Benzodiazepines (Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies)	3 (10.0)
Opiate Medications (Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine)	6 (20.0)
Crack Cocaine	5 (16.7)
Powder Cocaine	5 (16.7)
Other:	
Molly	18 (60.0)
MDMA	1 (3.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

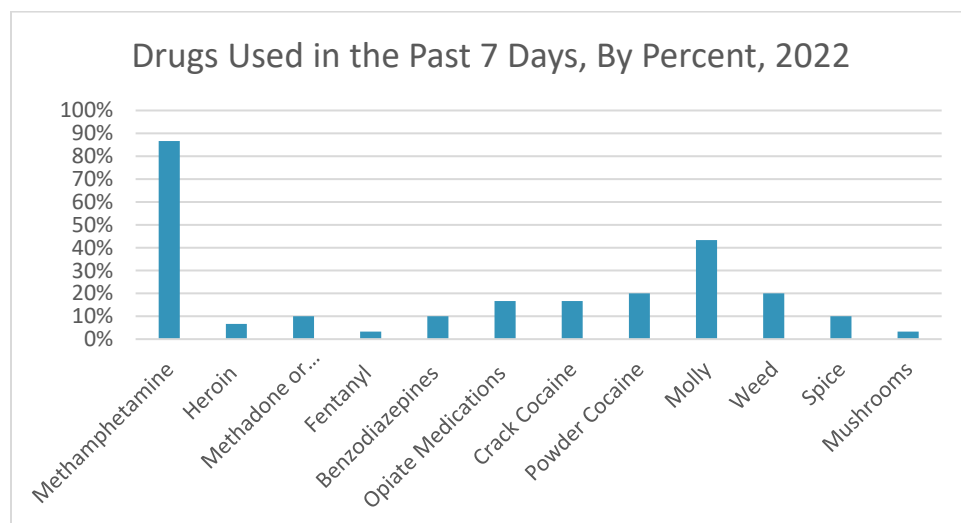
**“In the past 7 days, what drugs have you used? Select all that apply.”**

**TABLE 13: DRUGS USED IN THE PAST 7 DAYS, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Drugs Used	Number (Percent)
Methamphetamine (Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.)	26 (86.7)
Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)	2 (6.7)
Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (medications used to treat opioid use disorder)	3 (10.0)
Fentanyl (China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.)	1 (3.3)
Benzodiazepines (Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies)	3 (10.0)
Opiate Medications (Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine)	5 (16.7)
Crack Cocaine	5 (16.7)
Powder Cocaine	6 (20.0)
Other:	
Molly	13 (43.3)
Weed	6 (20.0)
Spice	3 (10.0)
Mushrooms	1 (3.3)
I have not used drugs in the past 7 days	2 (6.7)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**FIGURE 2: DRUGS USED IN THE PAST 7 DAYS, BY PERCENT, 2021**



Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

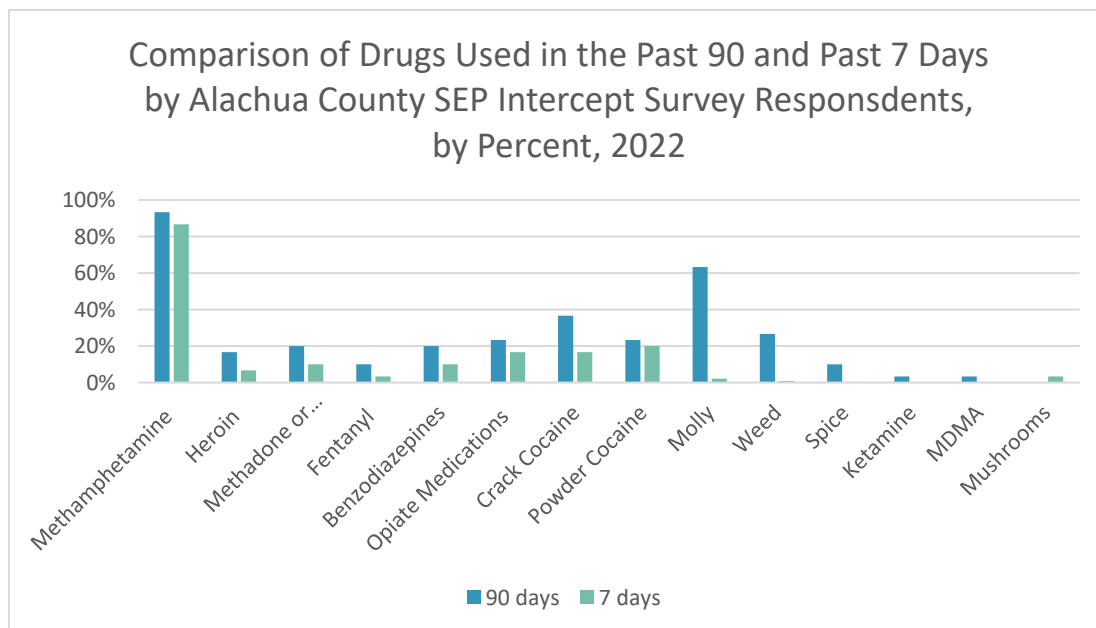
**“In the past 7 days, what drugs did you inject? Select all that apply.”**

**TABLE 14: DRUGS INJECTED IN THE PAST 7 DAYS, ALACHUA COUNTY SEP INTERCEPT SURVEY RESPONDENTS, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Drugs Injected	Number (Percent)
Methamphetamine (Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.)	24 (80.0)
Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)	2 (7.0)
Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (medications used to treat opioid use disorder)	3 (10.0)
Fentanyl (China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.)	1 (3.0)
Benzodiazepines (Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies)	3 (10.0)
Opiate Medications (Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine)	3 (12.0)
Crack Cocaine	2 (7.0)
Powder Cocaine	4 (13.0)
Other:	
Molly	13 (43.0)
Weed	0
Spice	0
Mushrooms	0
I have not injected drugs in the past 7 days	3 (10.0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**FIGURE 3: COMPARISON OF DRUGS USED IN THE PAST 90 DAYS AND PAST 7 DAYS, ALACHUA COUNTY SEP INTERCEPT SURVEY RESPONDENTS, BY PERCENT, 2021**



**“On an average injecting day, how many times do you inject? Select one response.”**

**TABLE 15: NUMBER OF TIMES INJECTING ON AN AVERAGE INJECTING DAY, ALACHUA COUNTY SEP INTERCEPT SURVEY RESPONDENTS, 2021**

Number of Times	Number (Percent of Responses)
1 time	3 (10.0)
2 times	2 (6.7)
3 times	7 (23.3)
4 times	4 (13.3)
5 times	5 (16.7)
6 or more times	9 (30.0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“In the past 7 days, on how many days did you inject any drug? Select one response.”**

**TABLE 16: IN THE PAST 7 DAYS NUMBER OF DAYS ON WHICH DRUGS WERE INJECTED, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Number of Days	Number (Percent of Responses)
0, did not inject any drug	5 (16.7)
1 day	3 (10.0)
2 days	4 (13.3)
3 days	3 (10.0)
4 days	1 (3.3)
5 days	3 (10.0)
6 days	0
7 days	11 (36.7)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“Do you inject drugs alone, with others, or both? Select one response.”**

**TABLE 17: INJECT DRUGS ALONE, WITH OTHERS, OR BOTH, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Response Options	Number (Percent of Responses)
Alone	5 (16.7)
With Others	4 (13.3)
Both alone and with others	21 (70.0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“In the past 90 days, how many different people did you share a syringe with? Select one response.”**

**TABLE 18: NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE SHARED SYRINGE WITH IN THE PAST 90 DAYS, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Response Options	Number (Percent of Responses)
1 other person	10 (33.3)
2 or more people	8 (26.7)
I did not share a syringe with anyone	12 (40.0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“In the past 90 days, how many different people did you share cookers, cotton, water or backload with? Select one response.”**

**TABLE 19: NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE SHARED COOKERS, COTTON, WATER OR BACKLOAD WITH IN THE PAST 90 DAYS, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Response Options	Number (Percent of Responses)
1 other person	6 (20.0)
2 or more people	11 (36.7)
I did not share cookers, cotton, water or backload with anyone	13 (43.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“Where do you get syringes?” (Open text question)**

**TABLE 20: LIST OF SOURCES OF SYRINGES, 2021**

Walgreens (x 10, 33.3 percent)
Friends (x 6, 20 percent)
GRACE (x 5, 16.7 percent)
CVS (x 5, 16.7 percent)
Peers (buy from x 3, 12 percent)
Pharmacy (generic pharmacy, no name associated) (x 4, 13.3 percent)
Amazon (x 2, 8 percent)
Dealer, dopeman (x 2, 8 percent)
UF Mobile Clinic (4 percent)
Other users (buy from) (3.3 percent)
Used sharps containers (3.3 percent)
Off the streets (3.3 percent)
Retail (3.3 percent)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“On average, how many times do you use a syringe before getting rid of it?”**

**TABLE 21: AVERAGE NUMBER OF TIMES SYRINGE IS USED BEFORE DISPOSING, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Response Options	Number (Percent of Responses)
1 time	2 (6.7)
2 times	5 (16.7)
3 times	2 (6.7)
4 times or more	21 (70.0)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“How do you dispose of syringes?” (Open text question)**

**TABLE 22: SYRINGE DISPOSAL METHODS, 2021**

Break tip, put cap back on, throw away (x 5, 16.7 percent)
Break tip, throw away in trash (x 5, 16.7 percent)
Sharps container (x 6, 20 percent)
Plastic bottle and throw away (x 4, 13.3 percent)
Burn (x 3, 10 percent)
Break tip, put needle in body of syringe, place in plastic bottle, throw away (x 2, 8 percent)
Put in a can and throw away (x2 6.7 percent)
Sharps container at GRACE (3.3 percent)
Clean, throw in garbage (3.3 percent)
Throw in the woods (3.3 percent)
Give away to another addict (3.3 percent)
Store all in one box, don't know how to dispose of them (3.3 percent)
Trash (3.3 percent)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.

**“Do you have overdose reversal medication such as Narcan?”**

**TABLE 23: HAVE OVERDOSE REVERSAL MEDICATION, BY NUMBER AND PERCENT, 2021**

Response	Number (Percent of Responses)
Yes	17 (56.7)
No	13 (43.3)

Source: Alachua County SEP Intercept Survey, October 2021. Prepared by WellFlorida Council, 2021.



# Summary

## Key Findings

- All (100 percent) of survey respondents said they **would use a SEP**
- All (100 percent) of survey respondents think an SEP **would work in Alachua County**
- Only 56.7 percent have **access to overdose reversal medication** such as Narcan

## Program Attributes

- 60 percent prefer a mobile unit, 40 percent prefer a fixed location
- Most frequently suggested locations for mobile services
  - GRACE (56.7 percent)
  - Downtown (43.3 percent)
  - Holly Heights (16.7 percent)
  - Various locations on or near Archer Road (approximately 20 percent)
- Most frequently suggested locations for fixed locations
  - GRACE (43.3 percent)
  - Downtown (33.3 percent)
  - Locations on bus route or bus station (10 percent)
- Most frequently suggested days and hours of operation
  - 24/7 (26.7 percent)
  - 7 days/week, 8/9 am – 5 pm (26.7 percent)
  - Monday-Friday (13.3 percent)

## Concerns about SEP Services (most frequently mentioned)

- No concerns (50 percent)
- Privacy (13.3 percent)
- Confidentiality, legal ramifications (10 percent each)
- Safety, being tracked/traced by police, lack of discretion (6.7 percent each)

## Conditions or SEP features that would make one feel safe to use the program (common themes)

- Assurance of privacy and confidentiality
- Assurance of safety
  - Personal physical safety
  - Trained personnel
- Respectful and judgment-free treatment of clients
- Trusted personnel

## Trusted Organizations (five most commonly mentioned)

- Out of Harm's Reach (43.3 percent)
- Health Department (23 percent)
- GRACE (20 percent)
- UF Mobile Clinic or Street Outreach (13.3 percent)
- Hospital (10 percent)

## Drug Use Behaviors of Intercept Survey Respondents

### Drugs used in past 90 days (top five by percent)

- Methamphetamine (93.3 percent)
- Molly (60.0 percent)
- Crack Cocaine (36.7 percent)
- Weed (26.7 percent)
- Powder Cocaine and Opiate Medications (23.3 percent each)

### Drugs injected in past 90 days (top four by percent)

- Methamphetamine (93.3 percent)
- Molly (60 percent)
- Opiates (20 percent)
- Powder Cocaine and Crack Cocaine (16.7 percent each)

### Drugs used in past 7 days (top five by percent)

- Methamphetamine (86.7 percent)
- Molly (43.3 percent)
- Weed and Powder Cocaine (20 percent each)
- Crack Cocaine, Opiates (16.7 percent each)

### Drugs injected in past 7 days (top three by percent)

- Methamphetamine (80 percent)
- Molly (43 percent)
- Crack Cocaine (13 percent)
- Methadone/Buprenorphine/Naltrexone, Benzodiazepines, and Opiates (10 percent each)

### Number of times injecting on an average injecting day (top three by percent)

- 6 or more times (30 percent)
- 5 times (16.7 percent)
- 4 times (13.3 percent)
- 3 times (23.3 percent)
- 2 times (6.7 percent)
- 1 time (10 percent)

### Number of days on which drugs were injected (past 7 days) (top three by percent)

- 7 days (36.7 percent)
- 0 days (16.7 percent)
- 2 days (13.3 percent)

### Inject alone or with others

- Both alone and with others (70 percent)
- Alone (16.7 percent)
- With others (13.3 percent)

## Syringe Use Behaviors of Intercept Survey Respondents

### Number of different people shared syringe with (past 90 days)

- Did not share with others (40 percent)
- 1 other (33.3 percent)

- 2 or more (26.7 percent)

Number of different people shared cookers, cotton, water or backload with (past 90 days)

- Did not share with others (43.3 percent)
- Two or more (36.7 percent)
- One (20 percent)

Where survey respondents get their syringes (most commonly mentioned sources)

- Walgreens (33 percent)
- Friends (20 percent)
- GRACE and CVS (16.7 percent each)
- Generic pharmacy (13.3 percent)

Syringe disposal methods (most commonly mentioned actions)

- Sharps container (20 percent)
- Break tip, put cap back on, throw away (16.7 percent)
- Break tip, throw away (16.7 percent)
- Plastic bottle and throw away (13.3 percent)
- Burn (10 percent)

## Next Steps

# Appendix

## Syringe Exchange Program Intercept Survey Tool

### Introduction

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to know your thoughts about a syringe exchange program for Alachua County. Syringe exchange programs (SEPs) provide free sterile syringes and collect used syringes from injection-drug users (IDUs) to reduce transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus, and hepatitis C virus (HCV). This service is free and legal. Clients cannot be penalized for exchanging syringes. WellFlorida, a nonprofit health planning council, wants to design a syringe exchange program in Alachua County that meets the needs of injection drug users. WellFlorida would like to ensure the locations, hours and services offered by the future syringe exchange program meet the needs of injection drug users. I am helping WellFlorida reach out to persons who inject drugs to better understand their needs. I would like to know your thoughts and opinions about the creation of a syringe exchange program in Alachua County. Are you willing to answer some questions about your needs and the creation of a syringe exchange program? Your confidentiality will be protected, and your name will not appear in any written report. It will take about 15 minutes to answer the questions. If you consent to participating in the survey, meet the eligibility criteria and complete the interview, you will receive \$20. Do you consent to participating? If yes, please sign and date below (this does not need to be your legal name).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Survey Eligibility

Are you 18 years of age or older?

- ☐ Yes (continue to next question)
- ☐ No (Unfortunately, you are not eligible for this survey)

In the past 90 days have you injected drugs?

- ☐ Yes (continue to next question)
- ☐ No (You are not eligible for this survey)

### Syringe Exchange Program

Syringe exchange programs (SEPs) provide free sterile syringes and collect used syringes from injection-drug users (IDUs) to reduce transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus, and hepatitis C virus (HCV). This service is free and legal. Clients who exchange syringes cannot be punished for using the service.

Would you use a free syringe exchange program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (if no, why not?)

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Would you prefer the program services be available from a mobile unit that went to various locations on a schedule or permanent physical locations?

- ☐ Mobile Unit
- ☐ Physical Locations

If services from a mobile unit were offered, what locations would be most convenient?

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What fixed, physical locations would be most convenient?

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What hours of operation would you suggest and what days of operation would you suggest?

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Do you think a syringe exchange program would work in Alachua County?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (if no, why not?)

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What are your concerns about syringe exchange services being offered?

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What organizations would you trust to offer the syringe exchange program? *(Prompt, if the person cannot name a specific organization they would trust, ask what type of organization they would trust to offer the program or who they would trust to offer the program)*

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Please fill in the blank: I would feel safe using the syringe exchange program if \_\_\_\_\_. (Please describe what would make you feel safe and comfortable; for example "if the services were offered at Grace Market.")

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## DRUG HISTORY

In the past 90 days, what drugs did you use? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Methamphetamine (*Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.*)
  - ☐ Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)
  - ☐ Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (*medications used to treat opioid use disorder*)
  - ☐ Fentanyl (*China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.*)
  - ☐ Benzodiazepines (*Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies*)
  - ☐ Opiate Medications (*Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine*)
  - ☐ Crack Cocaine
  - ☐ Powder Cocaine
  - ☐ Other (Tell us what drugs)
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In the past 90 days, what drugs did you inject? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Methamphetamine (*Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.*)
  - ☐ Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)
  - ☐ Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (*medications used to treat opioid use disorder*)
  - ☐ Fentanyl (*China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.*)
  - ☐ Benzodiazepines (*Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies*)
  - ☐ Opiate Medications (*Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine*)
  - ☐ Crack Cocaine
  - ☐ Powder Cocaine
  - ☐ Other (Tell us what drugs)
- 
- 

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In the past 7 days, what drugs did you use? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Methamphetamine (*Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.*)
  - ☐ Heroin (Smack, Snowball, etc.)
  - ☐ Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (*medications used to treat opioid use disorder*)
  - ☐ Fentanyl (*China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.*)
  - ☐ Benzodiazepines (*Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies*)
  - ☐ Opiate Medications (*Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine*)
  - ☐ Crack Cocaine
  - ☐ Powder Cocaine
  - ☐ Other (Tell us what drugs)
- 
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- ☐ I have not used drugs in the past 7 days (Skip the next two questions).

In the past 7 days, what drugs did you inject? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Methamphetamine (*Crystal, Crystal Meth, Glass, Ice, etc.*)
  - ☐ Heroin (*Smack, Snowball, etc.*)
  - ☐ Methadone or Buprenorphine or Naltrexone (*medications used to treat opioid use disorder*)
  - ☐ Fentanyl (*China Town, Great Bear, Poison, etc.*)
  - ☐ Benzodiazepines (*Bars, Benzos, Blues, Chill Pills, Downers, Nerve Pills, Planks, Tranks, Zannies*)
  - ☐ Opiate Medications (*Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Codeine, Morphine*)
  - ☐ Crack Cocaine
  - ☐ Powder Cocaine
  - ☐ Other (Tell us what drugs)
- 
- 

- ☐ I have not injected drugs in the past 7 days (Skip the next question.)

In the past 7 days, how many days did you inject any drug? (Select one response)

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7

On an average injecting day, how many times do you inject? (Select one response)

- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2 times
- ☐ 3 times
- ☐ 4 times
- ☐ 5 times
- ☐ 6 times or more

Do you inject drugs alone, with others, or both? (Select one response)

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ With others
- ☐ Both

In the past 90 days, how many different people did you share a syringe with? (Select one response)

- ☐ 1 other person
- ☐ 2 or more people
- ☐ I did not share a syringe with anyone

In the past 90 days, how many different people did you share cookers, cotton, water, or backload with?

- ☐ 1 other person
- ☐ 2 or more people
- ☐ I did not share cookers, cotton, water, or backload with anyone

Where do you get syringes?

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On average, how many times do you use a syringe before getting rid of it?

- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2 times
- ☐ 3 times
- ☐ 4 times or more

How do you dispose of used syringes?

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Do you have overdose reversal medication such as Narcan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (offer some if we have it available)

### **Tell us about you**

What is your age?

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-64
- ☐ 65-70
- ☐ 70 and older

What is your Ethnicity?

- ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
- ☐ Not Hispanic or Latinx
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Which racial group do you identify with?

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Two or more races
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other race not listed here
- ☐ Prefer not to answer



Sex assigned at birth:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Intersex
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Do you identify as “transgender”?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your current housing status? (Please select one)

- ☐ I have stable/permanent housing
- ☐ I have unstable or temporary housing
- ☐ I am homeless

Are you an Alachua County resident?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ What county do you live in? (Tell us) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this interview. Do you accept the \$20? If so, please sign and date below (please note this does not need to be your legal name):

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To be Filled out by Interviewer:

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Signature:

Location of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview:

(Exact address is not needed)