



DC Department of Human Services

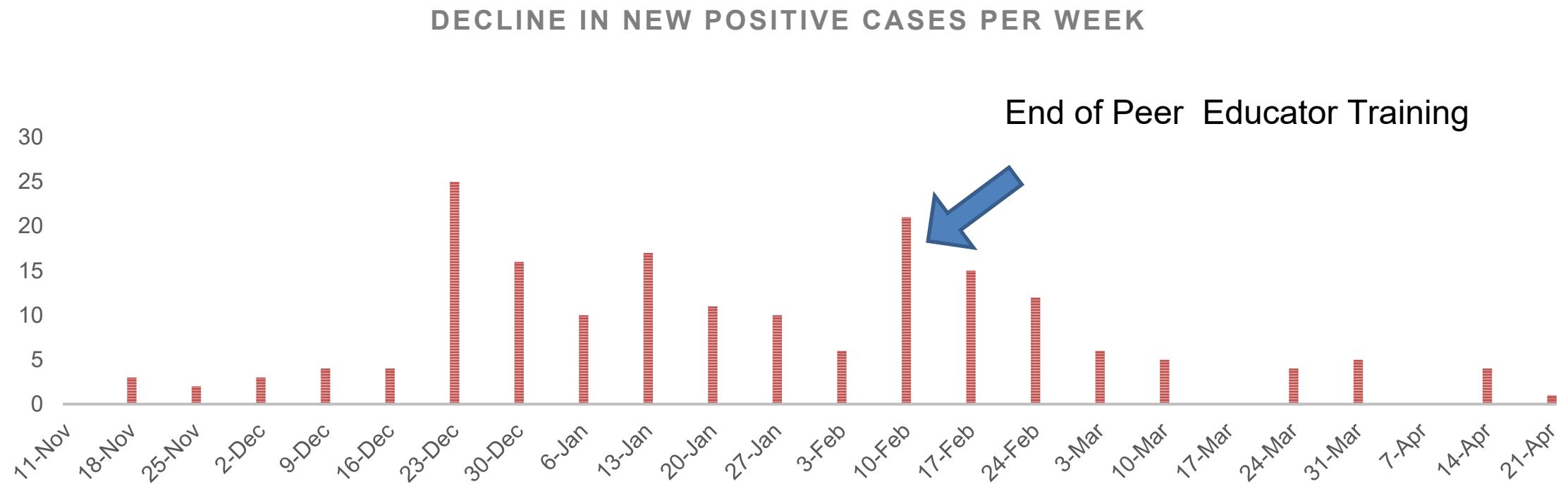
# COVID-19 Peer Educator Program: Program Evaluation, Lessons Learned, & Recommendations for Cohort #2

May 11, 2021

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Overview

- The COVID-19 Peer Educator Program is a paid short-term employment opportunity for low-barrier shelter residents to learn about COVID-19 & encourage protective measures and vaccine participation at the shelter.
- Program had three components:
  - Complete 20 hours of training on COVID-19 with DC Health and DHS officials
    - The training also included 1:1 employment assessments and information about housing opportunities as well as connections to ICH and other peer employment programs.
  - Conduct Peer to Peer Engagement & Listening Sessions to share information and training
  - Attend follow-up meetings to share results of peer engagement and provide resident feedback on shelter operations

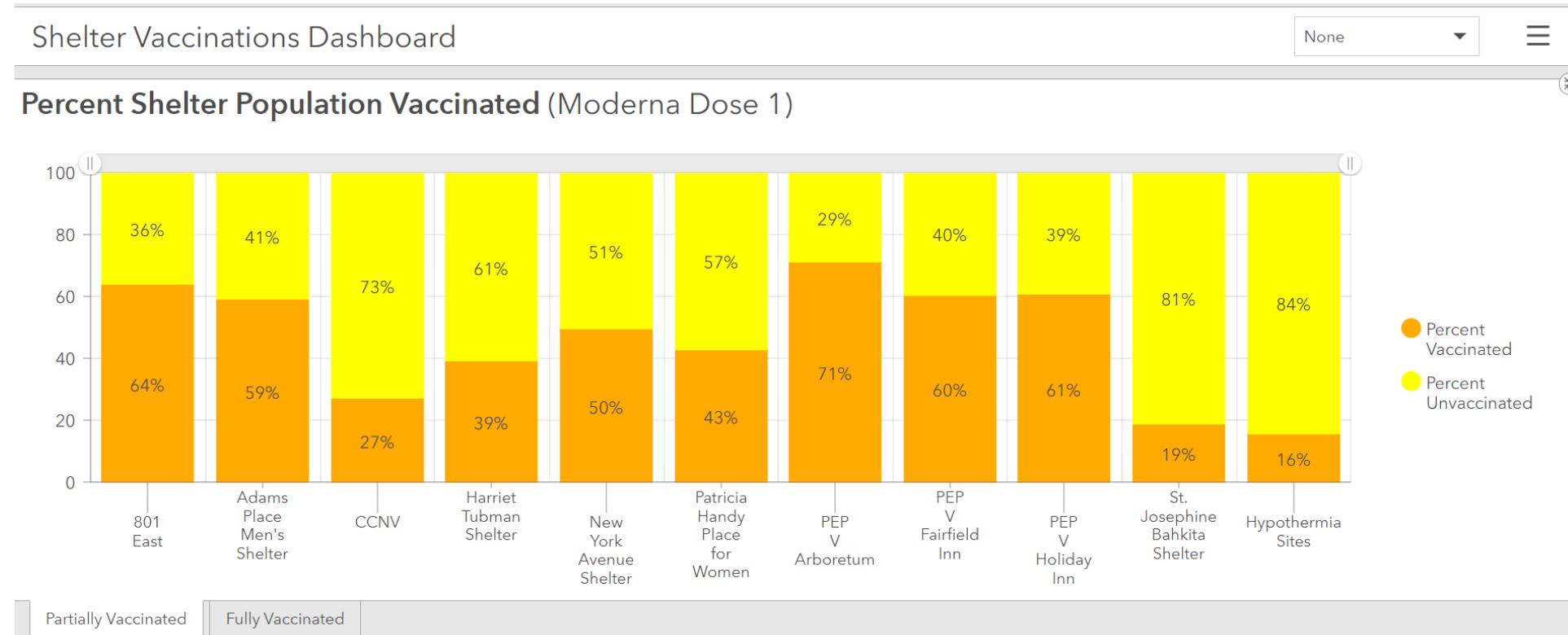
# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Big Picture Trends



New Cases Per Week Declined after Training Finished

\*\*Declines are due to many different reasons. This program is one contributor out of many.

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Big Picture Trends



2,505 total doses had been administered at the end of the program

\*\*Vaccine rates are successful due to many different reasons. This program is one contributor out of many.

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

## **Shelter Manager Feedback:**

- 100% report the rate of mask wearing has increased
- 100% report the rate of social distancing has increased
- 100% report there is renewed interest in the shelter around continuing protective measures
- 100% report the Peer Educator Program was effective in increasing compliance to protective measures.

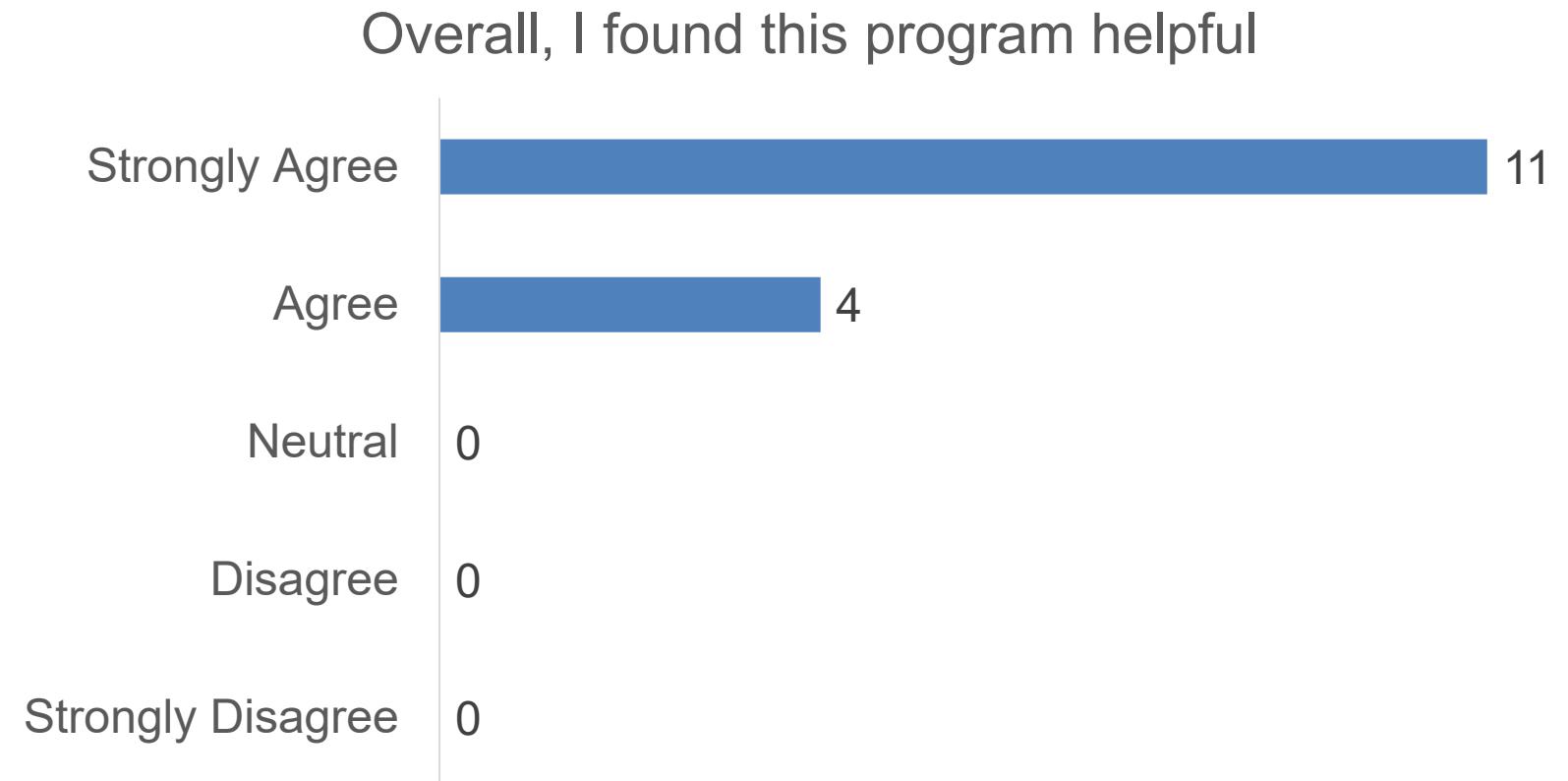
# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

## **Shelter Manager Feedback:**

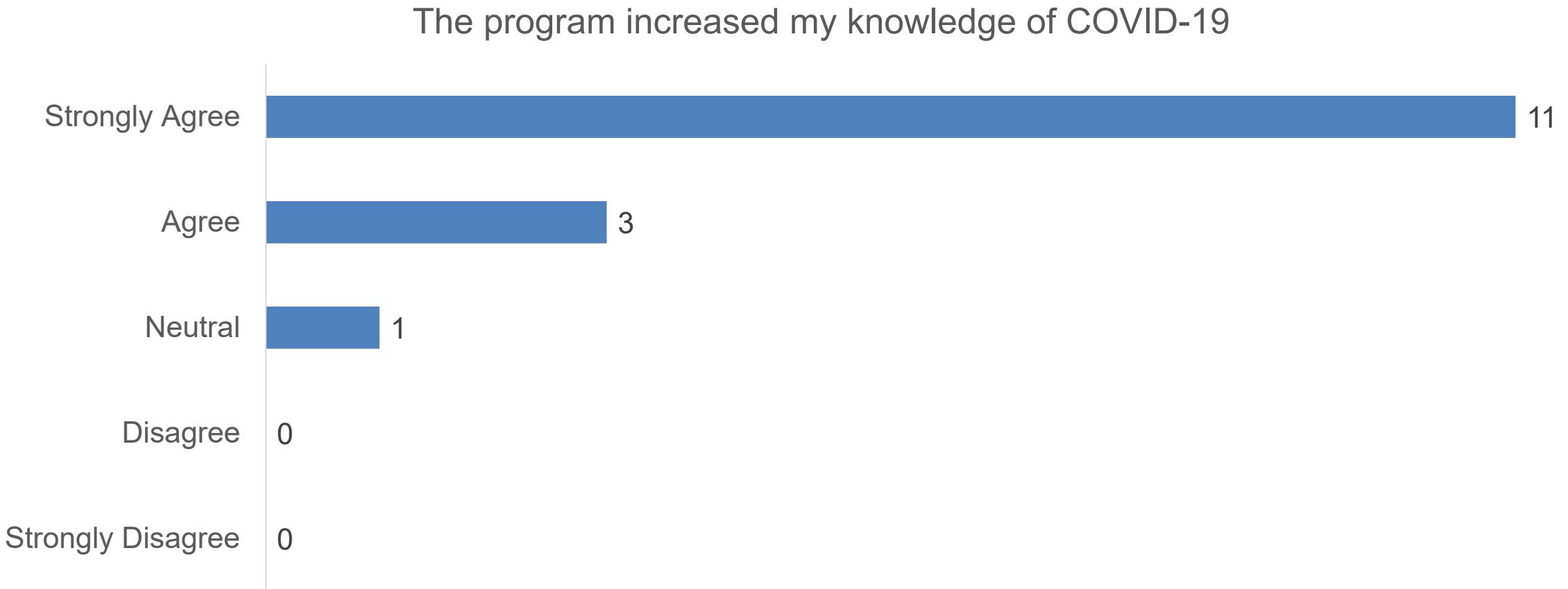
- “The peer educators have shown leadership at the shelter to continue protective measures”
- “Yes, I have noticed a difference in the residents since this program. I saw an increase of residents wanting to participate in getting the vaccine”
- “The classes have been effective and education for our residents. The women have also enjoyed the bingo sessions and have taken the protective measures more seriously”
- “Since the inceptions of the Peer Educator Program at 801 East Shelter, the Peer Educators have definitely been a compliment to the staff in addressing residents about the importance of COVID-19 protocols. Mask wearing, social distancing, and hygienic compliance has greatly improved”

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

15 out of 26 Peers  
Submitted Program  
Evaluations – We are still  
trying to gather the  
remaining 11.

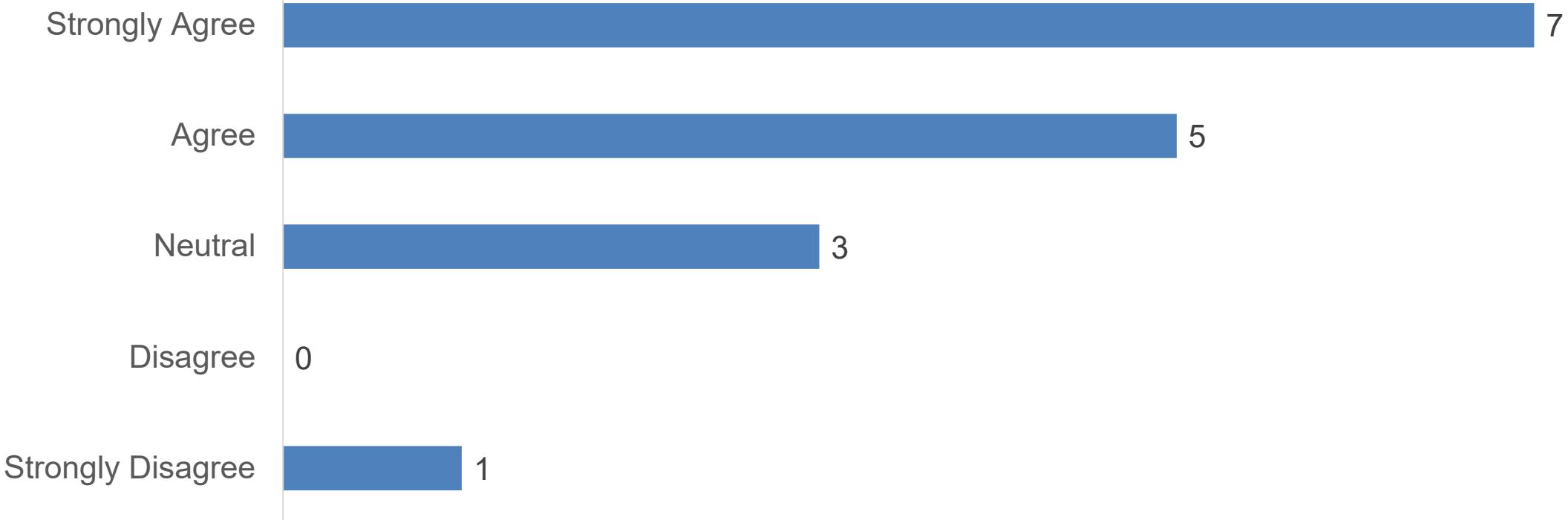


# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation



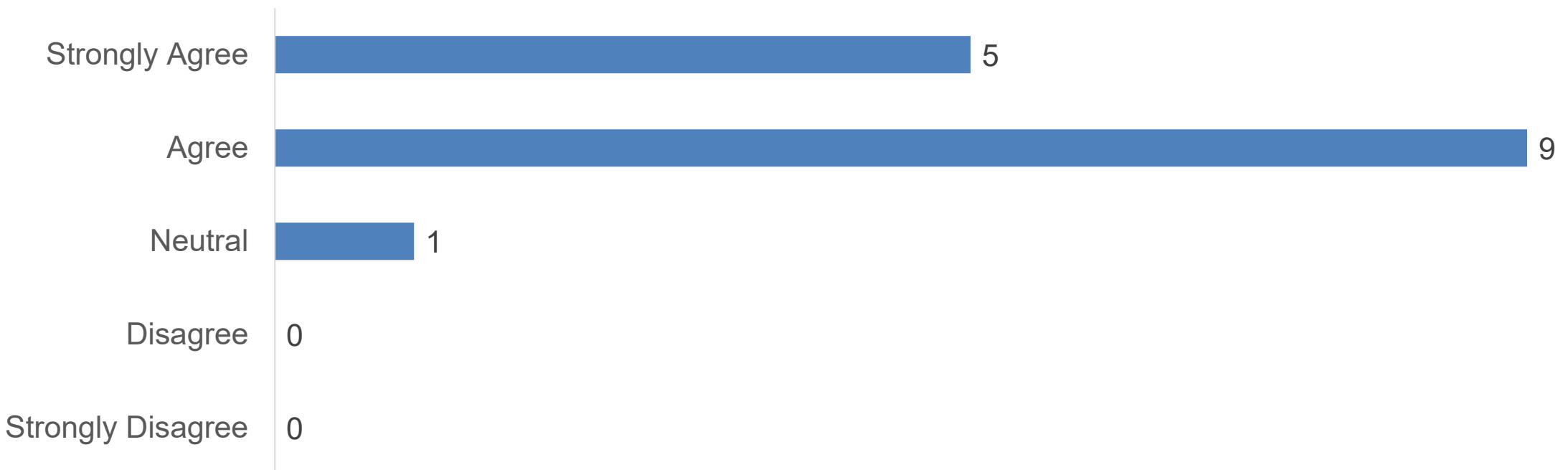
# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

This program connected me to additional resources



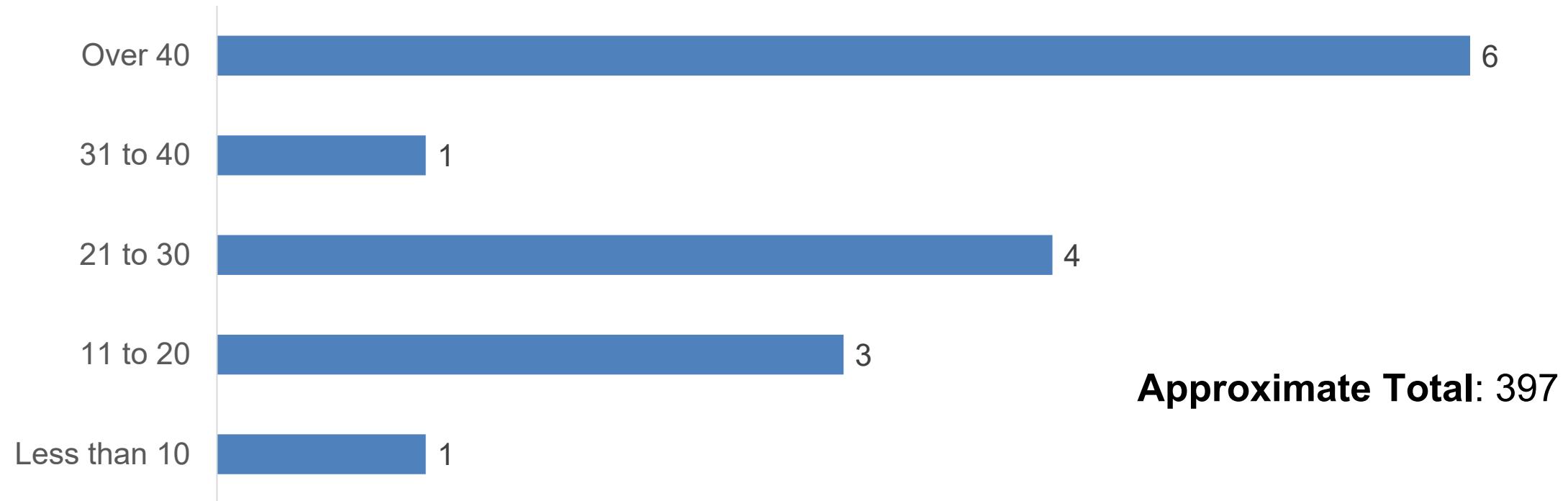
# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

I believe I made a positive change in the shelter through my involvement with this program



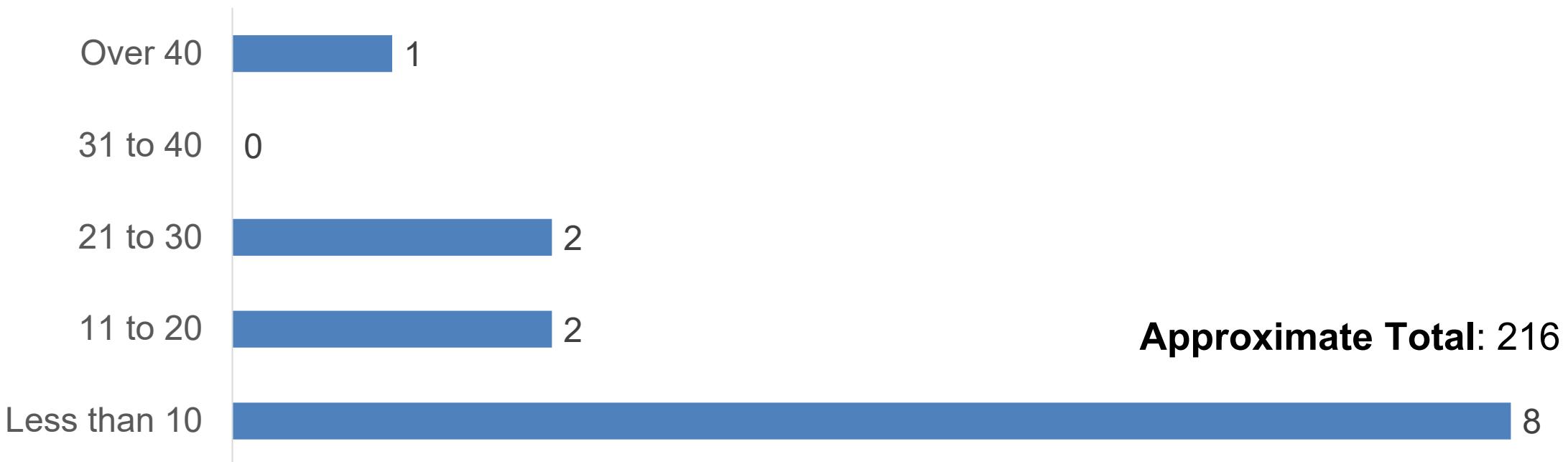
# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

Approximately how many shelter residents did you talk to about getting the vaccine?



# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

Of the people you spoke with about the vaccine, approximately how many people decided to get vaccinated as a result of your conversation?



# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

Did you have a job interview during this program?



# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

Did you secure employment while you were part of this program?



# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

Did you secure employment while you were part of this program?



# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

Did you secure housing while you were part of the program?



# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

## What did you find most helpful about the program?

- “Having points of contact and dedicated information sessions. It's helpful to have reliable, authoritative sources that can answer questions and point to other resources”
- “The people”
- “The daily information and the honesty”
- “Knowing more about covid-19”
- “Its structure. Structure lends purpose, and everyone needs purpose”
- “Debunking the myths about COVID-19 and the vaccine plus how you can transmit the virus”
- “All of the information about statistics and numbers of people infected throughout the homeless population”
- “Protection”
- “Telling people about getting vaccinated and social distancing”
- “I learned a lot about COVID”
- “Ms. Judy, Ms. Jasmine, Ms. Maddie, and Ms. Cathy they make learning so easy about this”

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

## How can we make the program better?

- “Encourage the members from each shelter to work together as a team. The high rate of attrition, coupled with the fact that everyone may not have interacted with each other prior to the program meant that the opportunity for coordinated efforts fell by the wayside and made things a lot less effective at my shelter.”
- “Push the youth”
- “Keep up the good work”
- “Having another and let people from the 1st supervise ”
- “The program itself is perfect. I believe people are looking for an opportunity for self improvement”
- “I think the program is ok. I see no faults. ”
- “I think it would be so cool if we went out in teams and spoke to homeless living on the streets, giving them some essentials and masks and cosmetics ”
- “By starting another Peer Educator Program”
- “Extend the program and continue doing everything to educate shelter residents about COVID”

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Program Evaluation

**Do you have any other feedback to share?**

- “Thank you for being willing to listen to us throughout. Is easy to underestimate how regularly shelter residents have their concerns ignored or dismissed. ”
- “Thank you for making a big difference in my life with this program.”
- “Continue doing everything possible to educate shelter residents about COVID. ”

# Other Programmatic Outcomes

- The Peers helped make a [COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Video](#)
- The Peers issued a survey about vaccine hesitancy in shelter
- The Peers did outreach at CCNV before a vaccine clinic
- DHS highlighted the program in multiple news stories
- The Peers gave valuable feedback on shelter operations
- The Peers held COVID-19 Bingo and selected COVID-19 Champions (shelter residents who exemplify following protective measures)

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Lessons Learned

## Recruitment

- Make the selection process competitive – the peers felt honored to be selected and it was seen as a prestigious position.
- Don't limit participation to ONLY peers who agree to get the vaccine from the outset – it was meaningful to have peers who were skeptical of the vaccine at first and then were convinced to get it after the training talk to peers.
- Partnership & communication with the shelter managers was essential – they helped recruit the amazing group of peers we selected. They were also key in helping the peers secure space for the listening sessions.

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Lessons Learned

## Budget/Financial

- Include more in budget for incentives – throughout the program we added incentives for the Peers and shelter residents – gift cards, t shirts, hats, prizes for participating in listening sessions.
- Need to set clear & realistic payment schedule from the beginning - The first payments were issued later than we expected (through no one's fault) but it caused a lot of anxiety among the peers.
- Encourage all peers to use the cash app (we could install on their work phone) to avoid any confusion on mailed checks.
- Build in more hours for ad hoc outreach events & outreach to other shelters

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Lessons Learned

## Oversight

- Provide more oversight/TA on peer engagement outreach. 7 peers did not complete their lists prior to graduation.
- Encourage the peers at the same shelter to work more closely together as a team.

## Gathering and implementing resident feedback

- Fortunately, there were some quick fixes e.g. broken soap dispensers, unsupportive staff, provide data sheets, help issue a UIR complaint, but most of the issues raised require more time to implement meaningful change, which can be difficult and discouraging. We worked hard to manage expectations and did a lot of work to show how the work will continue after the program.
- In the future, it would be helpful to have more support internally to complete the 'easier lift' items.

# COVID-19 Peer Educators: Recommendations

## Recommendations for Cohort #2

- Include more funding & support for outreach outside of the shelter
- Include youth shelters
- Include more money in the budget for incentives