

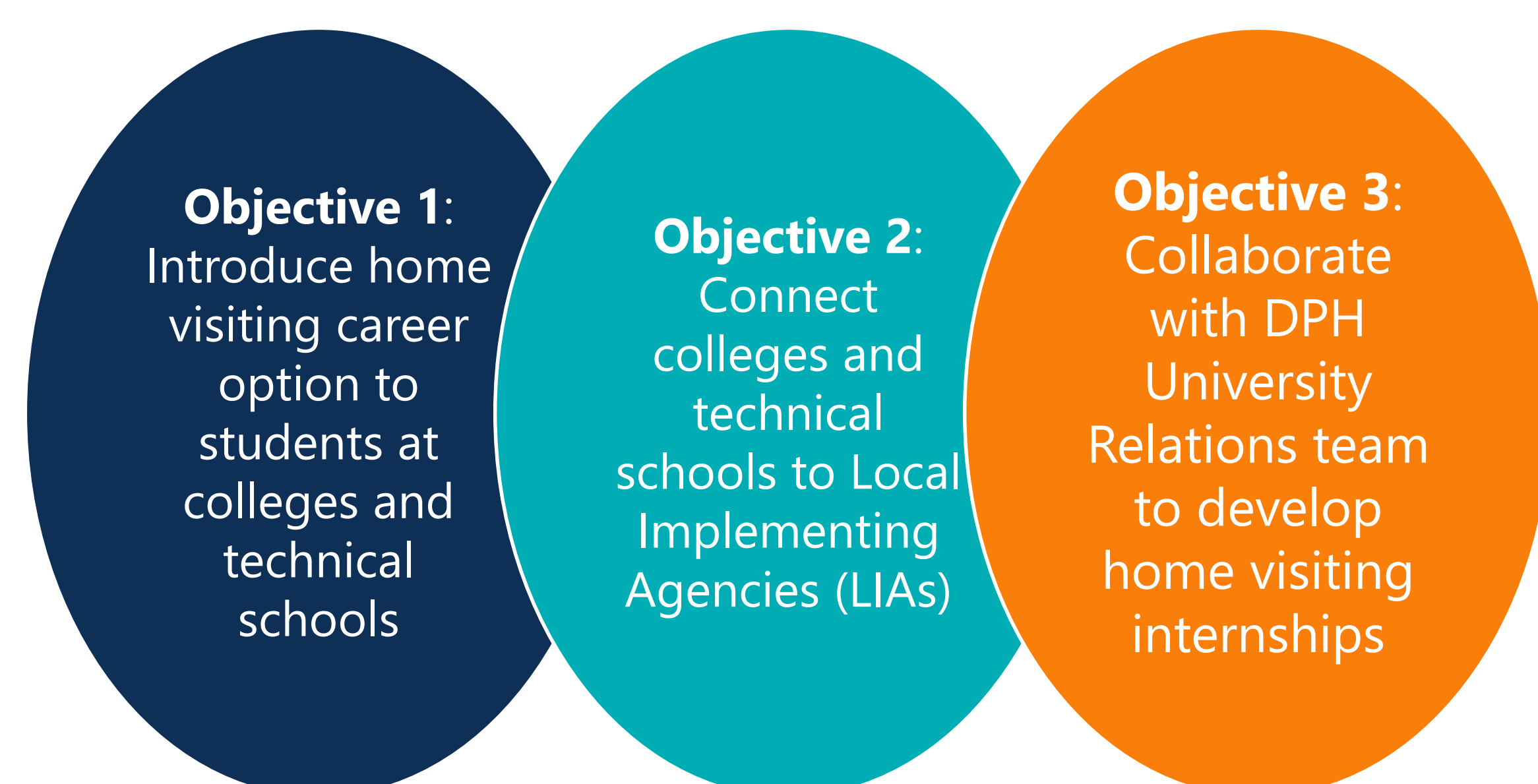
Enhancing the Home Visiting Workforce through Partnering with Post-Secondary Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program received the Innovation Grant to create the first multi-tiered model for professional development growth of the MIECHV workforce. One key priority area of the model included improving the skills of the current workforce by developing a partnership with technical schools and colleges in areas surrounding MIECHV Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs). This deliverable was executed by connecting with the Office of Career Development and/or the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at each identified school and speaking to staff and/or students about home visiting as a viable career option. Over 300 students, staff and educators at 62 colleges and technical schools were contacted; many of which were unfamiliar with the field. Additionally, the DPH MIECHV program collaborated internally with the Agency's University Relations program to create opportunities for students to intern at home visiting sites. This effort not only increased interagency collaboration within DPH, it also established or expanded relationships between home visiting agencies and post-secondary institutions where none existed previously. The DPH MIECHV program aimed to address this key priority area with the following objectives:



METHODS

- Informal interviews were conducted with program managers at all 12 MIECHV funded home visiting sites to assess current relationships with their local colleges and technical schools.
- Early childhood education programs at each college and technical school were contacted by phone or emailed to request appointments to provide presentations about home visiting as a viable career choice for students.
- Students, staff and faculty were introduced to the field of home visiting through in-class presentations and career fairs from February 2019 – May 2019.
- DPH Home Visiting program collaborated with the DPH University Relations program to develop home visiting internships at home visiting sites.
- A paper (pre/post) survey was devised and administered to students attending all the in-class presentations.
- An online survey was created and emailed to students who participated in home visiting internships.
- Home Visiting Career toolkits were developed and distributed to colleges, technical schools and home visiting agencies throughout the state. The career toolkits contained collateral outlining requirements to becoming a home visitor; a registry of where home visiting programs are located; and the potential impact home visitation can have on the overall wellbeing of at-risk families.

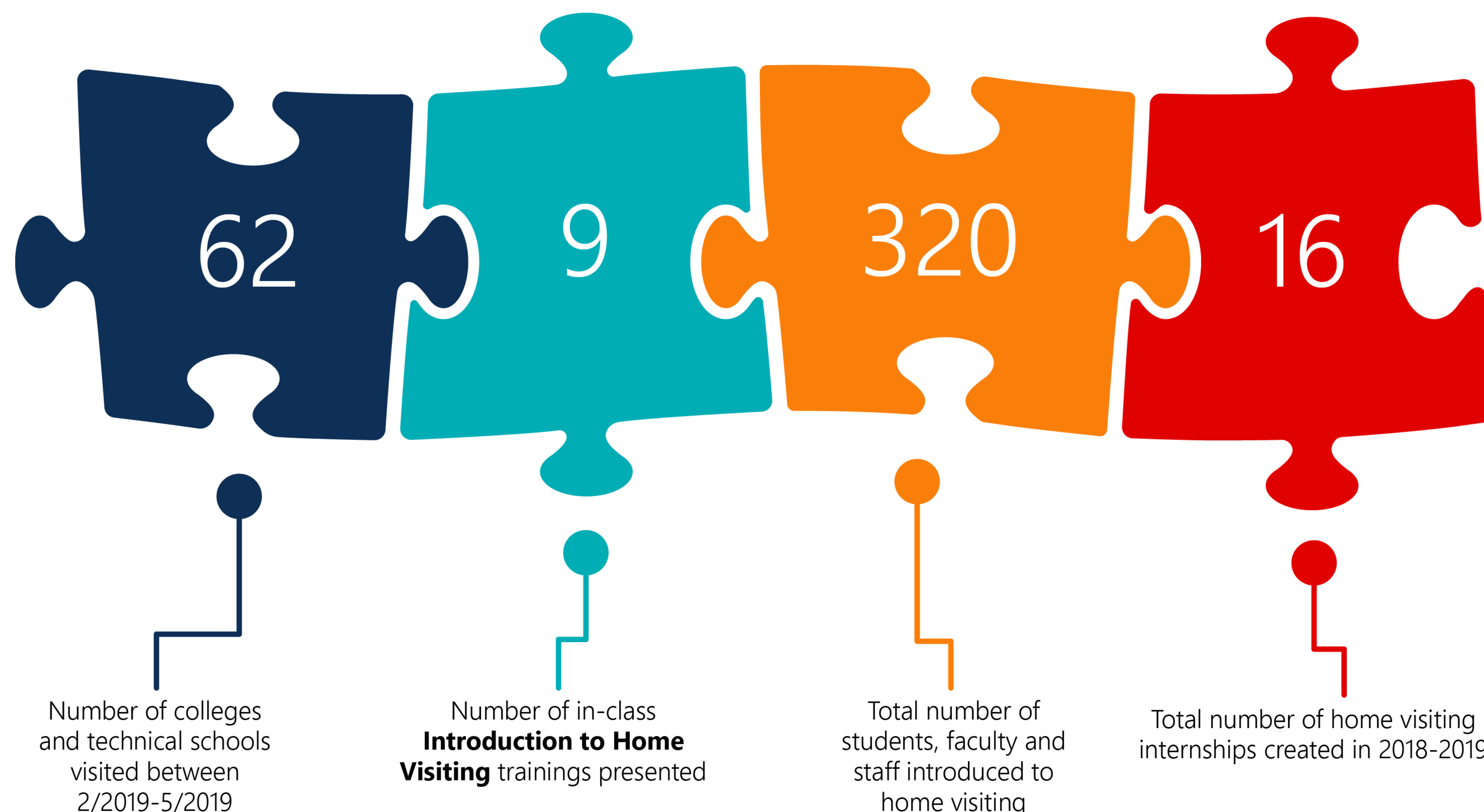
DISCUSSION

In the fall of 2018, the home visiting internship program was piloted with two schools and two MIECHV sites. Columbus State University partnered with the local MIECHV site to provide internships for three students and Athens Technical College partnered with their local site to provide an internship for one student. During the internship, students participated in preparing group connection activities; shadowed home visitors and assisted with preparing sites for the Parents As Teachers (PAT) accreditation. Internship program objectives were developed through collaborative efforts between the school's academic advisor and the MIECHV program manager.

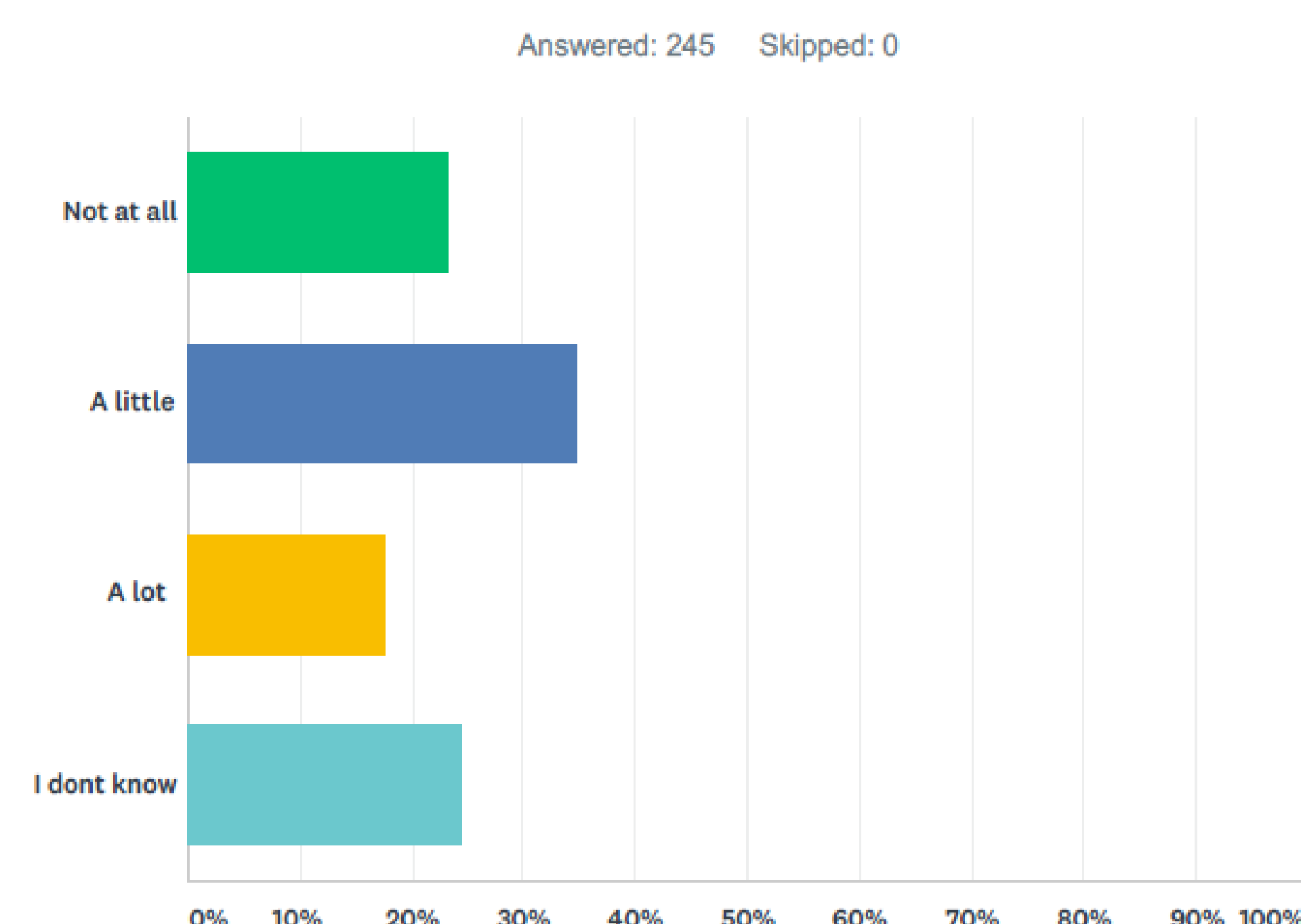
Presentations were conducted at colleges and technical schools in 2019 that introduced the field of home visiting to students studying early childhood education, public health and social work. This was later expanded to students studying health promotion, child development and music. The presentations included the definition of a home visitor, requirements to become a home visitor, and current models used in Georgia. The positive response to the presentations resulted in an intensified interest in home visiting and expansion of home visiting internships from 4 to 14 placements throughout the state during the summer of 2019.

The DPH University Relations Coordinator assisted the Innovation Coordinator program in developing relationships with schools and establishing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for internships. University Relations ensured internship objectives were mutually beneficial for DPH and each of the participating schools.

RESULTS

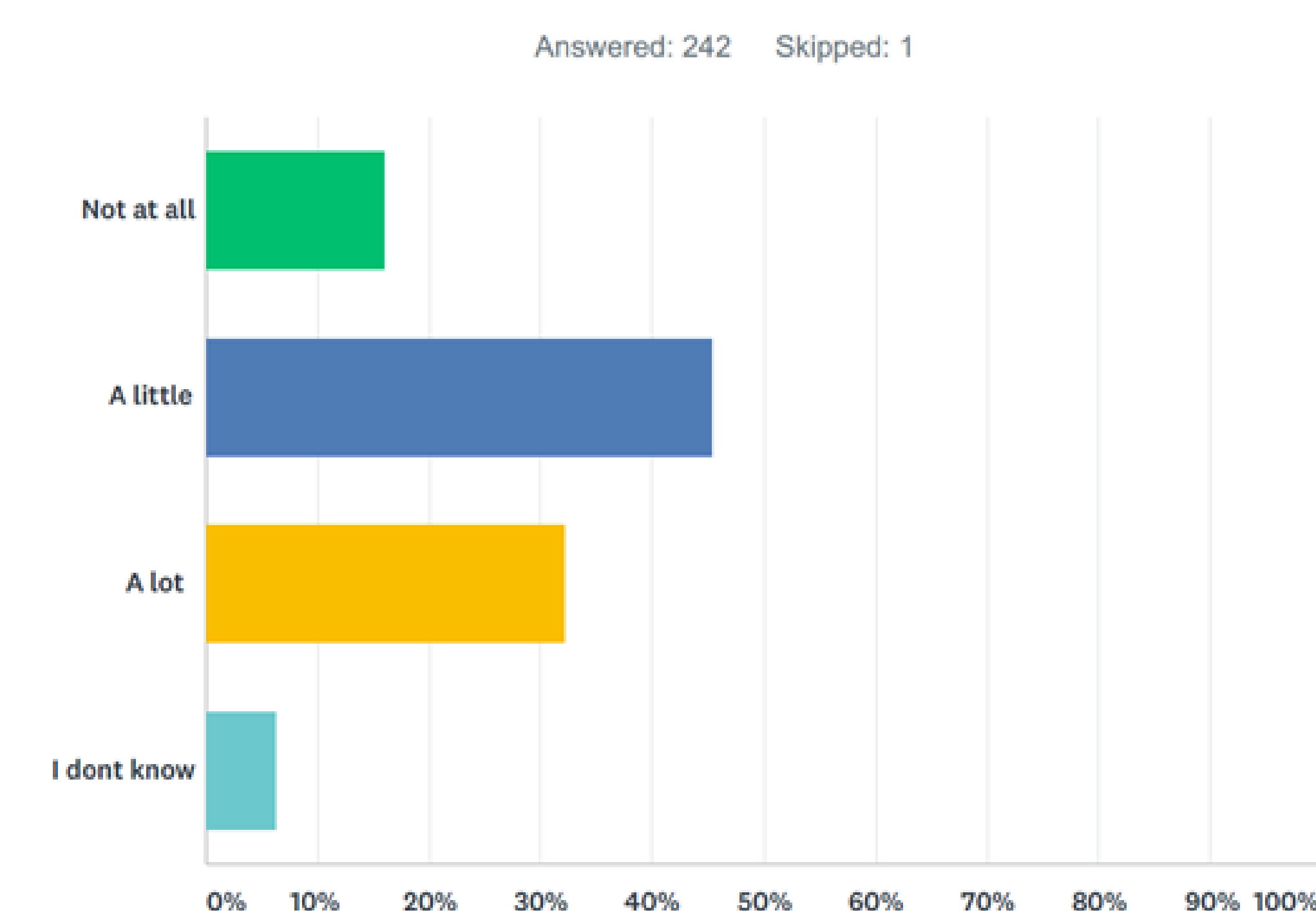


How interested are you in a career as a home visitor?



Pre-presentation survey results

How interested are you in a career as a home visitor?



Post-presentation survey results

- MIECHV program managers were invited to participate in presentations at local colleges and technical schools. The program manager at the Columbus MIECHV site participated in the presentation at Columbus State University and the program manager from the Augusta MIECHV site participated in the presentation at Augusta Technical College. Students were able to learn about home visiting from the state and local level. After the presentation at Columbus State University students contacted the program manager directly to inquire about home visiting internship and employment opportunities.
- The Innovation Program worked with University Relations to develop the candidate description for the home visiting internship program positions. University Relations also leveraged existing relationships with colleges and technical schools and initiated relationships with others to obtain MOUs for home visiting internships.
- Home visiting toolkits were distributed to 99 academic institutions and 14 MIECHV home visiting LIAs.
- 42% (n=102) of students were interested in a home visiting internship after the *Introduction to Home Visiting* presentation, compared to 29% (n=71) prior to the presentation.
- 32% (n=78) of students were interested in a home visiting career after the *Introduction to Home Visiting* presentation, compared to 17% (n=43) prior to the presentation.

CONCLUSIONS

In the process of launching the first multi-tiered model for professional development growth of the MIECHV workforce, the DPH MIECHV Innovation team also amplified the quality of the home visiting workforce. The Innovation team established a network channel to students from colleges and technical schools to home visiting agencies throughout the state. One key component to the network is sustaining continued engagement with colleges and technical schools. Students, faculty and staff at over 60% of colleges and technical schools visited had no prior knowledge of home visiting. Those with prior knowledge only related home visiting to a service of other agencies and had no knowledge of evidenced-based home visiting or the role of the home visitor. Continued engagement with colleges and technical schools will allow the field of home visiting to be a viable career option for graduating students which will strengthen Georgia's home visiting workforce.

The DPH MIECHV team plans to continue this engagement by assisting home visiting sites in developing and maintaining relationships with local colleges and technical schools. The DPH MIECHV team has extended its partnership with the Agency's University Relations team by providing them with home visiting career materials to be shared at career fairs and other outreach events.

The DPH MIECHV team will also continue to assist home visiting agencies in providing internship opportunities. Combining these efforts will ensure that students have consistent exposure to home visiting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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