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### Senior Center Response to COVID-19: Involvement with Vaccine Distribution

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# Senior Center Response to COVID-19: Involvement with Vaccine Distribution

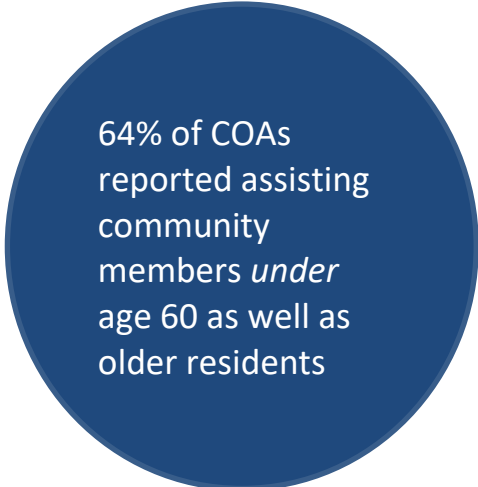
## Background

In early 2021, access to a COVID-19 vaccine was prioritized for older adults and people with multiple co-morbidities. Between high demand and emerging supply, and new systems for booking a vaccine appointment, many people had challenges getting an appointment. Senior centers across the state became a crucial resource for access to the vaccine and additional information about its efficacy and safety.

## Senior Centers functioned as an intermediary between residents and the State vaccination system

- **Most COAs made vaccine appointments on behalf of residents, connecting many thousands of residents with needed services**
  - 88% of the reporting COAs made a total of nearly 166,000 appointments, equivalent to more than 233,000 across the entire network<sup>1</sup>
- **COAs devoted thousands of hours to helping residents secure appointments**
  - Reporting COAs spent nearly 100,000 hours booking appointments for residents, equivalent to 140,000 hours across the entire network<sup>1</sup>
- **Many COAs described challenges faced while booking vaccine appointments**
  - *"Hours in the beginning, a half hour as time went on."*
  - *"Depended on when they came up for qualifying. Some was quick others it was days."*
  - *"Honestly the process was horrible. We didn't track the amount of endless hours trying to obtain appointments."*

<sup>1</sup> Based on the reporting COAs responses, estimations for all 350 COAs were calculated



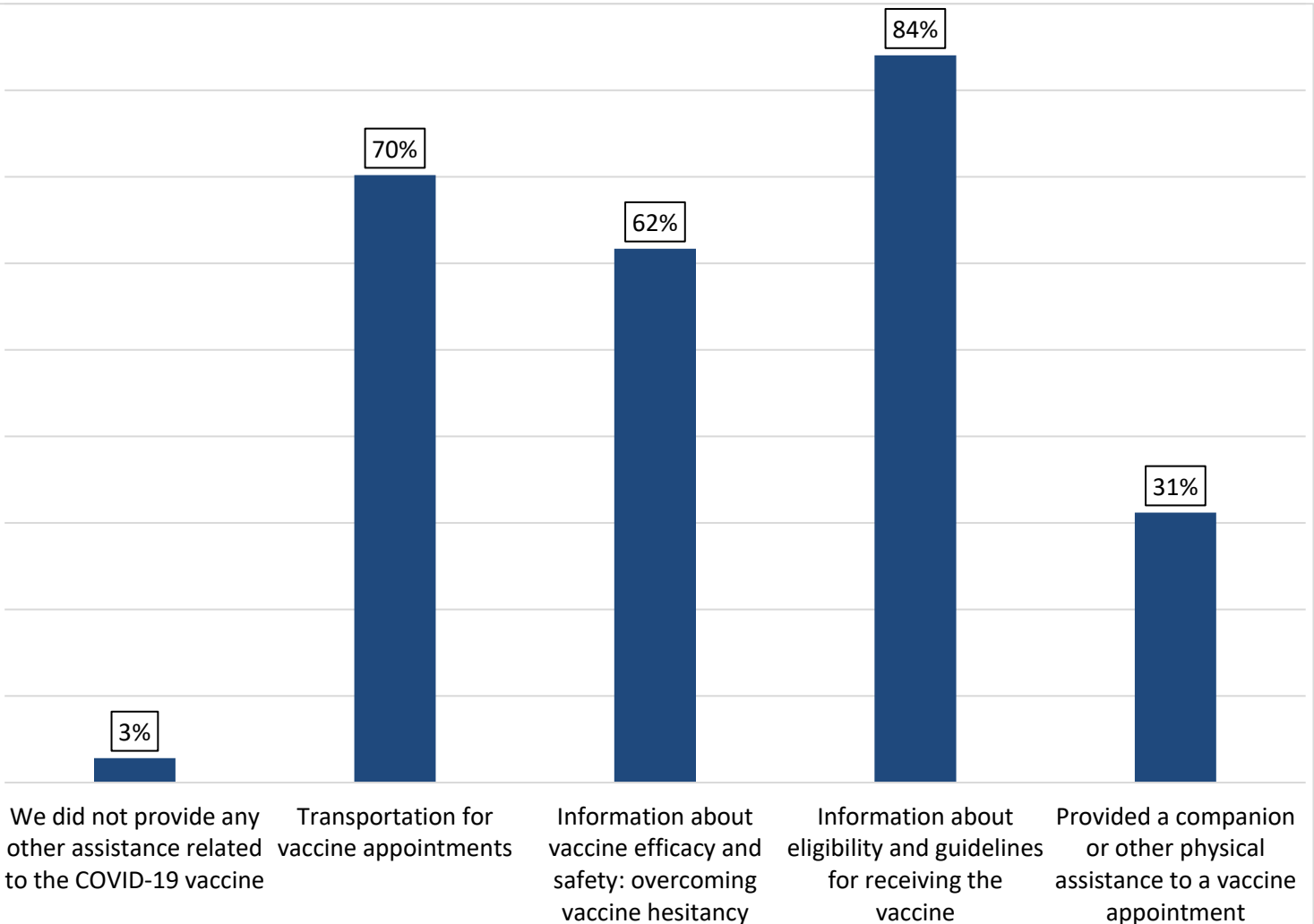
64% of COAs reported assisting community members *under* age 60 as well as older residents

## Senior Center buildings became locations for vaccine clinics

- **94 communities (34%)** reported hosting vaccine clinics at the COA
- **Nearly 2,000 clinics** were held at COAs
- **175,000 people** received a COVID-19 vaccination at a COA clinic

*"For months, we also partnered with our local community health center and turned our COA into a vaccine clinic. Our staff assisted with the clinic registration and operational tasks, which also focused on outreach to under-served populations in our region."*

## Senior Centers provided other assistance around the COVID-19 Vaccine



As a part of the MCOA Database project, three surveys were conducted with all Councils on Aging (COAs; also referred to as Senior Centers here) in Massachusetts to collect data about the organization, operations, and programs and services provided locally through COAs. Surveys were distributed in May 2020, August 2020, and November 2020. Each survey included a section of questions addressing current response to COVID-19. An additional survey was distributed in August 2021 solely focused on current COVID-19 response.

This fact sheet includes data highlights from 282 COAs that responded to the August 2021 survey (82% of all COAs). Over 1 year into the pandemic, COAs were returning to in-person operations and continuing to adapt to meet the social and mental health needs of their constituents.

To learn more about the MCOA Database and its contents, please contact us at [CSDRA@umb.edu](mailto:CSDRA@umb.edu).



Massachusetts  
Councils On Aging

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