



# Situation Analysis Report

## Albemarle County / City of Charlottesville

### 2013

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## Introduction

The Albemarle County / City of Charlottesville office of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) conducted a comprehensive situational analysis during 2013. The situational analysis process involved unit staff, the local Extension Leadership Council (ELC), and key stakeholders. A detailed unit profile was developed and additional data was gathered through a community needs survey. Data and information were analyzed, and priority issues were identified.

## Unit Profile

Albemarle County is located in the Northern Piedmont, at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, 100 miles southwest of Washington, D.C. and 70 miles northwest of Richmond, Virginia. It is the fifth largest county in Virginia, by geographic area, encompassing approximately 726 square miles. The City of Charlottesville is located within Albemarle County, and serves as the county seat. Both locations are rich in historic and natural beauty. The population is just under 100,000.

The percentage of children that fall below the poverty line, while lower than the national average, has increased to 11% over the last several years. The percentage of single parent households is 23% (higher than the national average of 20%).

Our area has a slightly higher percentage of adults, age 55 and over, compared with the rest of the state (27% vs. 24%).

Over 12% of Albemarle and Charlottesville households make less than \$15,000 per year, which is higher than the state average of 10%. Over 33% of local households make \$100,000 or more, which is higher than both the state and national averages, of 28% and 21% respectively. This indicates both a large number of lower income as well as upper income households.

According to a 2011 local study, "There are 7,099 families living in Charlottesville. Of these, 1,388 (19.6%/one out of every five) do not make enough money . . .to pay for food, clothing, shelter and utilities", and "rely on others (the government or nonprofits) to survive". This study also suggests that a total of 29% of families in the City of Charlottesville are not economically stable enough to be "self-sufficient". Source:

[http://www.cvillagechamber.com/fileadmin/files/pdf/11OrangeDotProject1\\_Parts\\_I\\_and\\_II-FINAL\\_.pdf](http://www.cvillagechamber.com/fileadmin/files/pdf/11OrangeDotProject1_Parts_I_and_II-FINAL_.pdf)

Incidence of adult obesity has increased over the last three years, from 23% to 27%.

Agricultural census data indicates that the number of farms and the number of acres that are farmed within the county decreased from 2002 to 2007 (4.7% decrease in the number of farms and 10.7% decrease in the number of acres that are farmed). This may be a result of the increased market value of land in the County, and increased development. Despite this, net income per farm has increased, as well as the number of horses, beef cattle, and chickens. Albemarle County is home to the third largest population of horses in the state.

## Community and Resident Perspectives

A community needs survey was developed to help further identify issues and concerns of local citizens. Extension Agents and ELC members distributed the survey to the public and to key stakeholders and focus groups within our community. Results were analyzed and key priority issues were identified.

### Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and resident perspectives data from above, the following top priority issues were identified for Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville.

#### Issue 1: Agriculture Sustainability

Agricultural Sustainability was identified as the top issue facing Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. This issue includes agricultural production and profitability, farm business management, equine and livestock management, small and/or less traditional agriculture business opportunities, beginning farmer education, as well as pasture and hay land management. VCE addresses this issue through a variety of Agriculture and Natural Resource programs, including: Pesticide Applicator Certification, weed/insect identification and pest management recommendations, soil analysis and fertilizer recommendations, research-based and commodity specific educational programs, individual consultations and advice, as well as on-line publications and access to university specialists.

#### Issue 2: Environment

Environmental issues were identified as the second most pressing issue facing Albemarle and the City of Charlottesville. Specific environmental issues identified include topics related to land use and land preservation, water quality, home gardening and landscaping, energy resources and conservation, and wildlife. Within the agriculture and home gardening arena, education related to low-impact pest management and invasive species control were strong needs that were identified.

VCE addresses this issue through our agricultural education programs which highlight best management practices and organic/environmentally friendly techniques. Our Master Gardener and Master Naturalists volunteer programs provide trained volunteers and advice to the public on home gardening, landscaping, conservation and wildlife conflicts. Our 4-H program provides naturalist and school gardening clubs, educational projects, and statewide knowledge and public speaking competitions on these topics, and we collaborate with other local agencies to provide Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences for every 4<sup>th</sup> grader in both the County and City). We also have an appointed position on the local Soil and Water Conservation District Board, and collaborate with other government and non-government agencies (NRCS, DCR, DOF, PEC, VOF, etc.).

### **Issue 3: Local Food Systems**

Local Food Systems was identified as the third most pressing issue for Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. This issue encompasses food safety, beginning farmer education, marketing of agricultural products, home gardening and food preservation. VCE addresses this issue through GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Training, researched-based educational programs for both beginning and experienced local farmers, Master Gardener volunteers (who provide advice and problem solving for the home gardener), food safety classes (ServSafe and Cooking for Crowds), and home canning and food preservation education.

### **Issue 4: Human Health and Nutrition**

Human Health and Nutrition was identified as the fourth most pressing issue facing Albemarle and the City of Charlottesville. This includes concerns about obesity, physical wellness, chronic disease management, and healthy eating habits. VCE addresses this issue through both our Family and Consumer Sciences programs and our 4-H Youth Development programs (In-school and after school programs like Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids, Organwise Guys, School Garden Programs with Master Gardner Volunteers, etc.).

### **Issue 5: Life Skills**

Life skills were identified as the fifth most pressing issue facing Albemarle and the City of Charlottesville. This issue includes customer service skills, job skills development, financial management skills, critical thinking and leadership development in youth, volunteerism and community service. All of VCE's program areas touch on aspects of this issue.