



**Virginia Cooperative Extension**

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

# Situation Analysis Report

## Henrico County

# 2013

### Henrico County Extension Staff

Karen Carter, Unit Coordinator, Extension Agent, Horticulture  
Kendra Young, Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development  
Kim Edmonds, Extension Agent, Family and Community Sciences  
Lisa Sanderson, Extension Agent, Horticulture  
Kristina Yager, Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development  
Karen Henley, FNP Program Assistant  
Marlene Larios, Horticulture Program Assistant

### Henrico County Extension Leadership Council

Nancy Drumheller, Extension Leadership Council Chairperson  
Barbara McGarry, Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District

## Introduction

In order to identify the key characteristics that define Henrico County and the key issues facing its citizens, the Henrico County unit of Virginia Cooperative Extension conducted a situation analysis from July to November, 2013. The Henrico Extension Leadership Council (ELC), comprised of volunteers and unit staff, took responsibility for implementing the three basic steps of the process: development of the Henrico County unit profile, assessment of needs from community and resident perspectives, and analysis of data collected to determine program direction.

The ELC held three general membership meetings to plan for and complete the situation analysis. Much was accomplished in a short period of time due to the condensed timeline for the process:

Meeting	Agenda Items
July 16	Organize for Action Identify Available Resources Initial Issues Forum with Henrico ELC
September 10	Unit Profile presentations David Conmy, Henrico County Planning Department Kendell Ryan, Henrico County IT Department, GIS
November 12	Issues Prioritization

The July 16 meeting included an issues forum facilitated by Lisa Sanderson, Henrico Extension Horticulture Agent. Members and guests present divided into small working groups to discuss and prioritize issues facing Henrico residents. Each sub-group then reported back to the group as a whole. Many similarities were noted between the issues identified and a summary is included in the ***Community and Resident Perspectives*** section of this report.

Various programming sub-committee and informal group meetings were held between the three general ELC meetings to complete various tasks such as development of the unit profile. At the September 10 meeting, David Conmy with the Henrico County Planning Department shared a PowerPoint presentation to explain the demographic data provided by the U.S. Census obtained via the 2010 Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. Kendell Ryan, Henrico County IT Department, GIS, presented a web-based viewer created using the Census data that presents in map form of the distribution of several population attributes across Henrico County in a series of 12 layers: Total Population, Hispanic or Latin Population, African American Population, White Population, Asian Population, Other Population, Median Household Income, Schools, Churches, Libraries, Recreation and Park Facilities, and Aerial Photos. These maps are available for staff and volunteers to use for program planning

and are located on the Henrico County Server at WIT 356. They can also be viewed at the following URL without password entry:

<http://henrico.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=742c707fa23e4b478b325251d27f9dbe&basemapgroupowner=rya001&basemapgrouptitle=%E2%80%99HenricoWeb%20App%20Basemaps%E2%80%99>

The needs assessment phase included an issues forum conducted at the July ELC meeting; a community survey developed by FCS Extension Agent Kim Edmonds that was administered on-line and via hard copy at various community events and Extension meetings; and key informant interviews conducted by volunteers and staff using a template developed by 4-H Agent Kendra Young.

*Continued on next page...*

## Unit Profile

### Overview

Henrico County is located in the central portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is comprised of 156,238 acres, or 244 square miles. The County is bordered to the south/southeast by the James River and the City of Richmond, which separates Henrico from Chesterfield County. New Kent and Charles City Counties lie to the east. To the west, Tuckahoe Creek defines Henrico's boundary with Goochland County, and the Chickahominy River to the north forms the boundary with Hanover County.

The Fall Line divides the county east and west, with the eastern section in the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the western section in the Piedmont Plateau. Interstate 95 is a commonly used dividing line when reference is made to the county's western and eastern halves. The topography is gently rolling and elevations vary from sea level to 350 feet.

### Demographics

The total population reported by the 2010 Census was 306,935—a 17.02% increase from the 2000 Census population total of 262,300. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS), this ranks Henrico County fifth among Virginia's 136 cities and counties (behind Fairfax County, City of Virginia Beach, Prince William County and Chesterfield County). Based on the approved 2012 *Continuing, Comprehensive and Coordinated Transportation Data Report (3-C Report)*, the county's estimated population was 318,158.

The population growth rate of 17.02% over the last ten years is higher than the state average rate of 13.03% and is much higher than the national average rate of 9.71%. Henrico County is ranked #33 out of 132 localities in Virginia in terms of growth rate. The county has sustained a period of steady population growth for over 30 years, with an average population increase of about two percent (2%) per year.

The population density is approximately 1,258 people per square mile, which is much higher than the state average density of 187 people per square mile.

The most prevalent race in Henrico County is White, representing 59.20% of the total population. As of the 2000 Census, the Fairfield magisterial district was the only minority-majority district in the County; population figures from the 2010 Census revealed there are now two minority-majority districts, Fairfield and Varina, with Black or African American being the prevalent race. The Three Chopt district has the largest Asian population and the Brookland district has the largest Hispanic or Latino population.

## Population by Race and Ethnicity

	2010 Census		2000 Census		Change
<b>Total Population</b>	306,935		262,300		17.02%
<b>Population by Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>					
White	181,719	59.20%	180,761	68.91%	0.53%
Black or African American	90,669	29.54%	64,805	24.71%	39.91%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1,012	0.33%	920	0.35%	10%
Asian	20,052	6.53%	9,451	3.60%	112.17%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	127	0.04%	82	0.03%	54.88%
Some Other Race	6,157	2.01%	2,562	0.98%	140.32%
Two or More Races	7,199	2.35%	3,719	1.42%	93.57%
Hispanic or Latino	15,001	4.89%	5,946	2.27%	152.29%

## Population by Race and Ethnicity Across Magisterial Districts

	Henrico County	Brookland	Fairfield	Three Chopt	Tuckahoe	Varina
<b>Total Population</b>	306,935	62,793	59,058	63,227	63,227	58,630
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>						
White	174,799	<b>39,403</b>	16,333	<b>44,333</b>	<b>49,485</b>	25,245
Black or African American	89,449	11,629	<b>37,308</b>	4,973	5,532	<b>30,007</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	844	167	131	123	102	321
Asian	19,956	4,624	1,561	9,958	3,374	439
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	112	34	31	11	15	21
Some Other Race	792	250	136	162	168	76
Two or More Races	5,982	1,250	1,243	1,372	1,012	1,105
Hispanic or Latino	15,001	5,436	2,315	2,295	3,539	1,416

## Population by Age

	2011 Henrico	Percent	Description	Total/Percent
<b>Total Population</b>	303,845	100%		
<b>Population by Age</b>				
0-4	20,299	6.68%	Pre-school children	20,299 / 6.68%
5-9	20,091	6.61%	School-aged children	60,311 / 19.85%
10-14	20,649	6.80%		
15-19	19,571	6.44%		
20-24	18,162	5.98%		
25-34	43,446	14.30%	Younger adults	105,926 / 34.86%
35-44	44,318	14.59%		
45-54	45,670	15.03%		
55-59	19,385	6.38%	Baby Boomers – “Age Wave”	80,106 / 26.36%
60-64	15,051	4.95%		
65-74	18,507	6.09%		
75-84	12,769	4.20%	Seniors	37,203 / 12.24%
85+	5,927	1.95%		

The median age in Henrico County varied over the last 20 years. Between 1990 and 2000, the average median age grew from 35.7 to 39.7 years. Between 2000 and 2010, the average median age dropped from 39.7 to 37.3.

Henrico school-age population, children aged 5-19 years, totals 60,311 individuals and comprises 19.85% of the total population.

The largest age contingent in Henrico’s population is made up of adults aged 25-54 years. This group represents 133,434 individuals, or 43.91% of the total population. However, Henrico County planners anticipate that it is the Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, that will have largest impact on the County’s resources in the next decade. Gerontologist Ken Dychtwald created the concept of the “Age Wave” to describe the influence of the Baby Boomer generation on society throughout their life spans. As the Baby Boomers grow older, Dychtwald postulates that they will “put unprecedented pressure on families, communities, and governments as [they] strain entitlements, elder care, health care delivery, and pensions.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Ken Dychtwald." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 29 Nov. 2013. Web. 03 Dec. 2013.

## Henrico Households

According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS), the median household income for Henrico County is \$61,206—a 22.2% increase from 2002 (\$50,088). As of the 2010 Census, Henrico was ranked #36 of 132 localities in Virginia for this measure. The ACS reported that the median family income is \$76,206. Of the estimated 122,919 households in Henrico, the 2007-2011 ACS also reported that 8,423 of them (6.9%) received Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the prior twelve months.

Approximately 10.2% of Henrico County citizens and 8.2% of Henrico families live below the poverty level. The former measure is lower than the state average of 11.1%, but the latter is higher than the state average of 7.8%. Among its student population of 50,473 children (FY 2012-13), Henrico County Public Schools had 18,743 students (37.13%) who qualified for free or reduced lunches.

In 2012 there were 124,000 households in Henrico County and the average household size was 2.5 people. Families made up 65% of these households. This figure includes both married-couple families (46%) and other families (18%). Of other families, 8% were female householders with no husband present and living with their own children who were younger than 18 years old. Non-family households made up 35% of all households in Henrico. Most of the non-family households were people living alone, but some were composed of people living in households in which no one was related to the householder. Thirty-three percent (33%) of all households had one or more people under the age of 18, and 25% of all households had one or more people 65 years old and over. These households also included 5,800 grandparents who lived with their grandchildren under 18 years old. Of those grandparents, 47% of them had financial responsibility for their grandchildren.

Teenage pregnancy has declined over the last several years. According to the Virginia Department of Health, the teen pregnancy rate in 2005 was 7.2 per 1,000 females aged 10-17 and in 2011 the rate was 5.1 per 1,000 females aged 10-17.

## Henrico's Health

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 69.2% of American adults aged 20 years and over are overweight, including those classified as obese (2009-2010). Among Virginia's adults aged 18 and over, 60.4% were overweight and 27.3% were obese. Henrico County's obesity rate is 29%, which is higher than the state rate. Excess weight and obesity have been linked to a variety of diseases including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women nationally. According to data reported by the Virginia Department of Health for 2006-2010, the cancer death rate for Henrico County was 173.7 (per 100,000 deaths), which is below the Virginia annual death rate from cancer of 179.3 (per 100,000 deaths). Both of these rates are trending downward for the period covered.

Diabetes affects an estimated 25.8 million Americans (8.3% of the population) according to the CDC. The Virginia Department of Health reports that 9% of Henrico's population (20 years and older) are living with diabetes.

The average Henrico County education level is higher than both the state and national averages. The average education index for Henrico is 14.10, ranking the county #19 in a list of the top 30 localities in Virginia (based on ACS 2010 data) with #1 being the lowest ranking and #30 the highest. Only 12 localities have a higher average education index in Virginia.

## **Henrico's Agriculture**

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, farmland in Henrico County totaled 20,096 acres, covering only 12.86% of the county's land area. This is a 28.6% decrease in farmland acreage from that reported in the 2002 Census of Agriculture (28,135 acres).

There were a total of 178 farms and the average farm size was 113 acres (a 4% and 26% reduction from 2002, respectively.) However, the market value of products sold increased 11% from 2002 to a total of \$8,482,000. The vast majority of these sales were attributable to crops (\$8,183,000) with only 4% from livestock sales.

Seventy-seven of 178 principal operators reported their primary occupation to be farming. Of these principal operators, 131 were male and 47 were female. Of all farm operators, 236 were White, 36 were Black or African American, and 1 was Asian. There were no operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin.

The market value of all agricultural products produced in Henrico totaled more than \$8.4 million in 2007. Crops accounted for 96% of these receipts (\$8.2 million). Nursery and greenhouse products accounted for the largest percentage of these crop receipts (\$4.6 million, 56.4% of total), ranking them the leading source of agricultural income in the county. Grain sales ranked second, accounting for 37% of the value of crops sold. Top crops included soybeans for beans, corn for grain, wheat for grain, and forages, totaling 10,117 acres (50% of total farm acreage.)

One hundred and fifty farms reported their market value of production at less than \$20,000. Nine farms reported market value of production at \$100,000 or more, with six of these nine reporting \$500,000 or more.

Traditional agricultural production in Henrico has been and will continue to be impacted by encroaching urban development.

## Land Use

The Henrico County Planning Department annually prepares an assessment of population and housing growth in the *Continuing, Comprehensive and Coordinated Transportation Data Report (3-C Report)*. The 2012 3-C Report estimates the land use by acreage in the county in 2012 was 25% residential, 19% commercial/industrial/public and 56% undeveloped (includes agricultural land use). This mix of residential and commercial land use is within the parameters outlined in the Henrico County 2026 Comprehensive Plan.<sup>2</sup>

The 2026 Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Henrico County Board of Supervisors in August of 2009, has several goals, objectives and policies that support agriculture and conservation in the county including the following:

Economic Objective 17: Support the viability, operational efficiency, and productivity of the county's agricultural resources for current and future generations.

General Development Policy 12: Encourage the preservation of private open space by supporting the use of conservation and open space easements to preserve land use in each Land Use Group/Classification, provided such easements do not adversely impact planned infrastructure or the pattern of development in the area.

Rural Keystone Policy 4: Promote the idea of agriculture as a desirable use, subject to potential change and transition to other more intense uses. While the open nature of agriculture is enjoyed by many, and the open space is a valued community amenity, discourage the view of agriculture as permanent open space, and do not expect farmers to carry the burden of providing this amenity.

Rural Keystone Policy 5: Encourage creative, unique and niche forms of agriculture such farmers' markets, agri-tourism and value-added opportunities.

Rural Keystone Policy 6: Encourage the use of agricultural science-based Best Management Practices to minimize erosion and groundwater and surface water contamination.

Rural Keystone Policy 7: Encourage low density, rural residential development to area that minimize conflicts between residential and agricultural land uses and maintain rural character of the county.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Henrico County 2026 Comprehensive Plan includes an economic objective that maintains an approximate ratio of non-residential and residential land uses that supports a tax base ratio of at least 65% residential to 35% commercial (non-residential).

## Community and Resident Perspectives

The Henrico County Unit received community and resident perspectives from an issues forum, key informant interviews, and a community survey.

### Issues Forum

An issues forum was held with the Henrico Extension Leadership Council on July 16, 2013. Specific issues identified were:

- Education on private pond and lake management:
  - Dock construction requirements
  - Nutrient management
  - Chesapeake Bay requirements
  - BMPs (Best Management Practices)
- Helping families make sound financial decisions;
- Financial literacy inclusive of personal information protection;
- Teaching food origin and healthy eating habits;
- Teaching residents food safety and preservation methods;
- [Support for] urban agriculture;
- Pesticide application [education] for families and caregivers;
- Environmental management and outreach (strategies) with special emphasis on youth;
- Expand 4-H to the elementary schools such as after school programs;
- Expansion and education on community gardens to neighborhood areas and encourage residents to produce their own food;
- Partnerships with Farmers' Markets, workforce development, Asian Chamber of Commerce, youth culture, and community garden sites;
- Utilize new technologies and methods to help address local issues including access to local, healthy foods;
- Emergency preparedness;
- Impact of technology has decreased personal communication skills – importance of talking, writing, and communicating for understanding;
- Nutrition, health and fitness – cost, special needs, availability, and importance of personal and community well-being;
- Community building (neighborhoods/areas) awareness of others and volunteering opportunity;
- Diversity appreciation and cultural awareness – cohesiveness;
- Education for private homeowners regarding Beaver Management;
- Educate youth on reducing and reusing in addition to recycling;
- Legalize backyard chickens;
- Seeding and maintenance of county and private roadside/drainage ditches;
- Education regarding brush piles;

- Adult education:
  - Riparian buffers
  - Private landowner fertilizer application
  - Fall leaf management
- Litter is out of control;
- Personal property maintenance and awareness;
- Community building (neighborhoods/areas) awareness of others and volunteering opportunity;
- Personal finance and career awareness and life skills training.

## **Key Informant Interviews**

Members of the Henrico ELC also conducted key informant interviews. The key informants were from the Richmond Regional Home Educators; Virginia Farm Bureau Federation; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency; Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District; Lakeside Farmers Market, Strange's Nursery, Henrico County Federal Preschool Programs; and Henrico County Mental Health.

The key informant interviews from the ELC Agriculture Committee focused on three themes.

- Transitioning from traditional agriculture to high intensity/high value, small farm systems: issues identified include improving awareness and use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits at local farmers markets, vegetable production and small farm opportunities.
- Agriculture risk management and agriculture profitability: issues identified included hiring and retaining a quality workforce and transitioning the farm operation to the next generation.
- Creating and maintaining sustainable landscapes: issues identified include trees planted improperly, water quality, nutrient management, and pest management.

The major issue that surfaced from the remaining key informant interviews was education. Key informants identified an emphasis on test scores in public schools that has led to neglect in other areas of education. A concern identified by the interviews was improving parental support and engagement to ensure academic success. A close relationship with the School Board is needed to ensure adequate resources for all Henrico schools. In addition, the need for addressing mental health issues at an early age was identified. One key informant identified population growth and diversity as an issue not being addressed. Understanding and awareness within the school system of the importance of agriculture is a key challenge.

## Community Survey

The Henrico County Unit developed a survey to identify community issues. The survey was posted to the Henrico County website and distributed at educational programs. In addition, a flyer was created with the link to the survey and distributed at county-wide events. An effort was made to reach the Spanish-speaking population in the county by distributing the survey to a faith-based organization with many of its members drawn from this population. Fifty-seven respondents completed the English survey and eight respondents completed the Spanish survey.

Based on the survey results, the top five issues identified as **very important** were:

- Water Quality/Quantity
- Environment
- Aging Population
- Child Development
- Health and Life Skills/Decision Making for Youth (tie)

Based on the survey results the top five issues identified as **somewhat important** were:

- Agriculture Production/Profitability
- Agriculture Marketing
- Consumer Issues
- Public Awareness of Agriculture
- Animals/Livestock

Based on the Spanish survey results the top five issues identified as **very important** were:

- Care of children before and after school
- Child Development
- Housing
- Parenting
- Water Quality

When asked to rank the top three issues most important to them, English-speaking respondents indicated: youth, health, and child development/parenting. Spanish-speaking respondents indicated: health (education and providers), jobs, day care and other community services.

## Priority Issues

### Issue 1: Water Quality

Water quality was identified as a priority issue in the key informant interviews, the community surveys, and the issues forum. Three main areas were identified through this community input: Nutrient management, the pollution diet for the Chesapeake Bay, and environmental concerns.

Henrico County is bordered in part by two rivers. The Chickahominy River borders the northern portion of the county and the James River borders portions of the south. Approximately half of the land area of Henrico County drains directly into the Chickahominy River or its tributaries, and eventually into the James River, while the southern half of the county drains directly into the James River or its tributaries. Large segments of the James River and the Chickahominy River, including their tributaries in Henrico County, have been identified as having impairments (bacterial and sediment) according to the Virginia list of impaired stream segments.

The James River Association's *2011 State of the James Report* contends that, "Pollution is the greatest factor affecting the health of the James River." In addition, the long-term average sediment level in the James has not improved; nitrogen continues to exceed limits set for the river; and phosphorus reductions have stalled.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) was established in December of 2010 creating a "pollution diet" to work toward restoring clean waters in the Chesapeake Bay and its contributing lakes and rivers. As part of the "pollution diet", TMDL reports are required for the impaired segments in Henrico County.

Since the 2004 Situation Analysis, a large tract of land in western Henrico County was converted from agricultural use to high-end shopping and residential use, and now includes a significantly increased amount of impervious surfaces. Based on the large amount of residential development in Henrico, homeowners and green industry service personnel make critical decisions regarding the application of fertilizers and pesticides. Improper decisions can exacerbate existing impairments and/or lead to new impairments in local rivers and tributaries, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

### Status:

Henrico Extension currently offers programming which addresses the needs of both the homeowner and the green industry. Programs that are currently in place which focus on nutrient management and water quality for the homeowner include the SMART Lawns program, Homeowner Horticulture Series, Horticulture Helpline, Plant Clinics, and Special Event Information Booths. All include the promotion of soil testing. Henrico County citizens are eligible to receive two free soil tests per household per year, thanks

to a grant-funded effort coordinated by the Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Living Greener Program, currently in its implementation phase, is designed to educate homeowners adjacent to impaired waterways in Henrico County about how to establish BMP's to mitigate the impaired waters, ultimately leading to a cleaner Bay. The Master Gardeners in Henrico County are instrumental in providing the support for these educational programs in cooperation with a part-time horticulture technician and two horticulture extension agents. Programs in both pesticide and fertilizer applicator certification and recertification educate the green industry on the safe use of pesticides and fertilizers, leading to reduced impairment of tributaries, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

*This issue is being addressed to some extent by VCE resources. Additional efforts need to be explored to better address this issue.*

## **Issue 2: Healthy Lifestyles**

In Henrico County the community needs to become more aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The Henrico Extension issues forum and community survey identified two key focus areas: improving nutrition and physical activity; disease prevention/management.

### **Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity**

Being overweight is growing at epidemic rates among U.S. children, adolescents and adults. Proper nutrition, physical activity, and positive body image are all important to achieve and maintain healthy weights. Adults and youth both need to have the same information outlining a healthy diet, correct portion sizes, and the appropriate amount of activity for their body types. Many individuals have not seen the MyPlate image nor have they reviewed the 2010 Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) dietary guidelines. These agencies provide advice about consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices, and being physically active to attain and maintain a healthy weight, reduce risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health.

#### **Status:**

Henrico Extension currently addresses this issue by offering community workshops, in-school and afterschool educational programs, and by having interactive displays at public events. During these events and hands-on activities 5 to 10 minutes of physical activity is often incorporated to reinforce the healthy lifestyle message. The best approach to a healthy lifestyle is through prevention of unhealthy habits. The Henrico Extension office uses the following adult- and youth-based curricula to teach nutrition and physical activity concepts: Youth - Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids, Teen Cuisine,

Health Rocks, Food Friends, OrganWise Guys; Adult- Balanced Living with Diabetes, Eat Healthy Be Active, Eat Smart Move More.

## **Disease Prevention and Management**

According to vital statistics provided by the Virginia Department of Health the leading causes of death in Henrico County during 2011 were cancer, heart disease, and cerebrovascular diseases. There is a need for educational programming on preventative health care related to chronic diseases. Stress is also an important factor in an individual's overall health, but is often overlooked. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, continued strain on the body from routine stress over time may lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and anxiety disorder. Regular exercise, a healthy diet, and stress coping techniques are recommended methods to help individuals manage unhealthy stress.

### **Status:**

Since the Henrico Extension Offices' educational programs are focused around a healthy lifestyle, many of the curriculums mentioned earlier are being used to address the prevention of these diseases within the community. The recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are promoted. The 2010 guidelines encourage Americans to focus on eating a healthful diet — one that focuses on foods and beverages that help achieve and maintain a healthy weight, promote health, and prevent disease.

Many of the programs offered by Henrico Extension encourage at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity for adults and youth. The Balanced Living with Diabetes program provides education for individuals managing diabetes through portion control and healthy food choices. The Health Rocks curriculum specifically addresses life skills that lead to healthy lifestyle choices with an emphasis on youth smoking and tobacco use prevention. This program helps youth understand the peer influences and health consequences of tobacco, drug, and alcohol use. It engages youth and adults in partnership to develop and implement community strategies that promote healthy lifestyle choices.

Currently, there is no Extension curriculum to address the issue of stress management.

*This issue is being addressed to some extent by VCE resources. Additional efforts need to be explored to better address this issue.*

### **Issue 3: Strengthening Our Families and Communities**

At the issues forum and in the community survey conducted by the Henrico Extension Office, four topics related to strengthening families and communities were identified: parenting; understanding child development; youth violence and bullying; and financial and consumer education.

Children live within families which are located within communities. When we invest in children, we are investing in community and economic development. Likewise, when we support communities, we support the families that live in them. And when families are supported, children are more likely to grow up happy and healthy, free from the risk of maltreatment and violence. By recognizing and building on existing strengths within communities and families, we can support all families in providing a healthy, safe, and loving environment for their children. Encouraging responsible parenting and adult mentoring produces strong, resilient families.

Youth violence and bullying is a public health issues for individuals, families, and communities. The most frequent discipline violation in Virginia's school divisions is classified as "defiance" (15.8% or 27,958 violations). The next most common types of juvenile incidents that occurred in Virginia's schools are fighting (7,215 violations, 4.1%) and bullying (6,118 violations, 3.5%). Bullying can be prevented, especially when the power of a community is brought together. Community-wide strategies can help identify and support children who are bullied, redirect the behavior of children who bully, and change the attitudes of adults and youth who tolerate bullying behaviors in peer groups, schools, and communities.

According to the 2012 National Financial Capability Study conducted by the FINRA Foundation (Financial Industry Regulation Authority), individuals and families must grapple with a variety of financial decisions, ranging from choosing a bank and managing various kinds of debt to planning for retirement and purchasing insurance. Even the simplest of these decisions requires at least some basic financial knowledge and competency, while the more complicated decisions are challenging even for experts. Individuals and families see the need for family finance and consumer education, which both strengthens the family and the economic community.

In addition to adults, teens were also identified to have a need for financial education. Teens are eager to take on adult obligations such as earning money and managing credit cards, but many lack the financial education to effectively fulfill them. A survey of high school students conducted by Americans for Consumer Education and Competition found that 82% of the students failed a basic quiz on financial concepts and consumer spending.

The Financial Literacy Survey of adults, conducted in 2012 on behalf of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling and the Network Branded Prepaid Card Association, revealed that two in five U.S. adults gave themselves a C, D, or F on their knowledge of

personal finance; 56% admit that they do not have a budget; and one-third, or more than 77 million Americans, do not pay all of their bills on time. Without basic financial education to address this behavior, individuals and families may face serious financial setbacks such as credit card debt; spending beyond one's financial means; poor purchasing decisions; and possibly bankruptcy.

**Status:**

Henrico Extension currently offers parenting classes to better educate and instruct individuals on being nurturing parents for their children's physical and emotional development. When parents and children have strong, positive feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, guidance, and protection. Parents need to know the various stages they go through at different ages, which is covered in the VCE Ages & Stages educational material and the LIFT (Learning in Families Together) curriculum. Discipline is both more effective and more nurturing when parents know how to set and enforce limits, and encourage appropriate behaviors based on the child's age and level of development. Courses are offered to Early Childhood Educators to strengthen and reinforce positive human development skills and information that can be passed on to parents of youth in their care. In addition, county-wide babysitting workshops are delivered to potential caretakers of children in partnership with county libraries.

Bullying and youth violence solutions require widespread, sustained efforts in families, schools, and communities. Parents can keep the lines of communication open, encourage kids to do what they love, and model how to treat others with kindness and respect. The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. Entire families can get involved in the Henrico 4-H Youth Development and Volunteer program which has positive character development programs such as Character Counts. There are 4-H clubs that offer leadership and life skills development, community service projects, and opportunities for personal achievement. The time and energy spent together can help strengthen family unity in a fun and educational hands-on learning setting. Research shows that a youth's relationship with a consistent, stable, and caring adult in the early years is associated in later life with better academic grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress. When parents spend time and energy discovering and paying attention to their children's needs, no matter what age, they are rewarded with positive, open, and trusting relationships with their children and will find parenting easier and more enjoyable.

Financial education courses are currently being offered for Henrico County citizens to teach critical thinking skills related to consumers' goals, needs, and wants. This type of education helps local citizens understand their rights and become more informed consumers. Educational workshops are offered to teach a range of basic financial concepts including spending plans, understanding credit and financial institutions, and recordkeeping. Tax preparation assistance is given on an annual basis to those who meet income guidelines, with a special focus on the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Henrico VCE offers and fully supports the youth focused consumer education program called LifeSmarts, sponsored by the National Consumers League. LifeSmarts is an innovative competition that tests students on their knowledge of personal finance, health and safety, the environment, technology, and consumer rights and responsibilities. LifeSmarts is designed to encourage middle and high school students to think seriously about important consumer issues through a challenging, game-show format. Henrico County 4-H and FCS Agents have made special efforts to increase local and regional participation in this national program by partnering with several public school systems throughout Virginia.

Broad-based partnerships are necessary to create lasting change in how communities think about supporting families. Networking with other organizations provides greater opportunities to identify strategies for ensuring that all parents in our community have the skills, support, and resources they need to care for their children. The Henrico Extension Office currently partners with some organizations but could explore additional partnerships with faith-based communities, courts, media, parents and caregivers, child development centers, and schools to further our common mission to strengthen the family and community.

*This issue is being addressed to some extent by VCE resources. Additional efforts need to be explored to better address this issue.*

#### **Issue 4: Local Food Production/Urban Agriculture**

Based on information received in the key informant interviews, the community surveys, and the issues forum, support for urban agriculture has been identified as a priority issue, specifically noting: changing land use; rural/urban interface conflicts, movement from producer focus to consumer focus, and increased demand for local foods.

Based on statistics compiled for the Unit Profile, it is clear that while the population of Henrico County continues to grow, farmland acreage continues to decrease. Land previously in crop and livestock production is becoming high-density residential and commercial development. The most recent example is a 30-acre parcel of prime agricultural land in western Henrico County that was sold for the development of a future 420-apartment and business complex project. Henrico County's continued reduction in farmland reinforces the trend from a producer-focused agricultural community to a consumer-focused one.

Residential development intermingled with currently farmed property creates rural and urban interface conflicts. Homeowners who move into residences in close proximity to farming operations can have problems with dust, odor, late-night farming operations due to harvest deadlines, and slow-moving farm vehicles on roads. Farmers must cope with vehicles moving too fast—creating safety issues with their farm vehicles— and

increased complaints from homeowners over pesticide use and other farming activities perceived as interfering with the suburban lifestyle.

Henrico County has an increased interest in local foods that can be obtained through many sources: farmers' markets, farm and roadside stands, community-supported agriculture (CSA's), co-ops, niche and specialty producers, pick-your-own farm operations, grocery stores highlighting local foods, and those other resources. In addition to purchasing local foods, community gardens provide residents the opportunity to grow their own foods. The sheer number and diversity of opportunities consumers have for obtaining local foods is a clear reflection of the increased demand for the same.

**Status:**

Henrico Extension currently offers programming which addresses the needs of both the consumer and the producer. One current program offered by Henrico Extension promoting local foods is the Gardens Growing Families community garden program established in 2008 which supports residents growing their own food. Gardens Growing Families is a community gardening initiative of the Henrico Extension Office that provides opportunity for lower-income residents to learn gardening techniques that hopefully result in an increased harvest for their families. Henrico Master Gardeners volunteer numerous hours to activities such as the Horticulture Helpline, Plant Clinics, and the Speakers' Bureau to help educate Henrico residents on home food production and preservation.

In addition to Henrico Extension educational programs for the increasing number of residential consumers, there are many local foods opportunities in Henrico County. The farmers' markets in Henrico County (West End Farmers' Market and Lakeside Farmers' Market) provide an excellent opportunity for educational outreach to residents who may need information on growing their own food, nutrition, and food safety. A consistent Extension presence at the local farmers' markets would provide an excellent means of outreach to local producers. Programs designed to educate the producer can include resources for the production of specialty crops. As farm sizes decline, the opportunities exist to have smaller niche crops produced in the county.

*This issue is being addressed to some extent by VCE resources. Additional efforts need to be explored to better address this issue.*