



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report

City of Portsmouth

2013

Portsmouth Extension Staff

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Portsmouth Extension Leadership Council

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Introduction

As an important part of the Extension Programming Model, the Portsmouth Extension Office conducted an updated situation analysis during 2013. The results of this analysis will be used by Agents and Technicians to better direct educational programming for the Portsmouth Community.

The analysis began in September of 2013 with a discussion at the September Portsmouth Extension Leadership Council (ELC) meeting. A unit profile obtained from Virginia Cooperative Extension for Portsmouth was provided to ELC members. A survey was developed by ELC members and office staff to gain a better understanding of specific points from a community perspective. Priority issues including Youth, Health and Families, from the 2008 Situation analysis showed up to be areas of concern in 2013. The following report will discuss priority issues and outline how VCE might be able to better serve the community regarding them.

Timeline

- Fall 2013 – ELC introduced to process.
- September 2013 – Office staff and ELC members gather to discuss the Unit profile provided by VCE.
- October 2013 – Unit demographic data analyzed and main issues and trends determined. ELC determined priorities to gather community perspective on Youth, Education, the Environment and Health.
- October 2013 – ELC members and staff meet to develop and issue survey for gathering community perspectives.
- November 2013 - ELC members and Portsmouth staff distribute a survey through ELC contacts, Health Department and staff contacts to Portsmouth citizens concerning programming issues.
- November 2013 - Unit Coordinator, Cyndi Wyskiewicz, tabulates survey results using Qualtrics.com.
- November 2013 – Unit Coordinator, Cyndi Wyskiewicz, completed final write-up of situation analysis.
- January 2013 – Situation Analysis Report will be presented to Margaret Thorne, Department Head, Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services.

Unit Profile

Portsmouth was first surveyed by Capt. John Smith in 1608 and founded by Col. William Crawford in 1752. One of the oldest cities in the country, Portsmouth has a great deal of history including being the site of the storied Civil War battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac. Its first neighborhoods were near the water where the Olde Towne and Cradock sections of the city are now. In Olde Towne, many of the houses built in the late 1700's are still standing. It is the single largest collection of historic housing in the country.

Portsmouth hosts a variety of industries, the most prominent being associated with the U.S. government as defense and maritime – industry contracting. The maritime industry ranges from port commerce to ship repair. Portsmouth is home to one of the largest shipyards and the largest privately – owned terminals in the world. In addition to maritime, Portsmouth's target industries include modeling and simulation, retail, and healthcare.

Today, the City of Portsmouth is a 30 square mile, urban area and part of one of the largest metropolitan areas on the East Coast. Neighboring cities include Chesapeake, Norfolk, Suffolk and Virginia Beach. Part of the world's largest, natural harbor, Hampton Roads, Portsmouth is only 18 miles from the open sea and home to mile marker zero on the Intracoastal Waterway. Bordered by the Elizabeth and James Rivers on the east, west and north and by the City of Suffolk on the south, Portsmouth has no room for further land annexation.

Community and Resident Perspectives

Population, Demographic and income Statistics

(Source: US Census data, Portsmouth Economic Development report 2012, Bureau of Labor statistics)

Total Population 95,535

Demographic Breakdown

African American	48,532
Caucasian	42,800
Other	4,203

Age and Gender Statistics

Female Population	49,487- 51.8%
Male population	46,048- 48.2%
Median Age	35

Significant Age Trends

- 26% of the population is under the age of 18
 - most of that group is under age 14
- 13% of the population over the age of 65

- 40% of the population is 25-55
- at 60+, the majority of the population is female

Employment and income

Total Civilian Employment	44,988
Unemployment rate (Portsmouth/region)	7.6%/5.8%
Median Household Income	\$43,674
Estimated per capita income in 2011	\$22,001

Employment and Income Trends

- The income per capita in Portsmouth is 19.4% less than the state average and 13.6% less than the National average.
- Unemployment rate is nearly 25% higher than regional average.
- Portsmouth ranks substantially lower than the State average in all income areas.
- The medium household income in Portsmouth is 19.2% less than the state average and 13.1% less than the National average.
- **The poverty level in Portsmouth is 41.2% greater than the state average and 31.5% greater than the National Average.**
- **Persons in Portsmouth living at or below the poverty level is 60% (15.9%) higher than the statewide level. (9.5%)**
- **24% of families with children under 18 live below the poverty level.**

Education Statistics

(Source: US Census Data, Easidemographics.com, Virginia Department of Education)

- Teacher salaries are the lowest in the state and state-wide salaries rank 45th in the nation.
- Portsmouth high schools have only an 83.1% graduation rate amongst high school seniors.
- The high school dropout rate is 12.7%. This is over 2 times higher than the state average of 5.9%. Portsmouth is in the top five highest dropout rates in the state.
- Nearly 12% of the population DOES NOT has a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Extra-curricular education programs include, but are not limited to:
 - summer reading program (Portsmouth Libraries)
 - fire safety for 4th grade (Portsmouth Fire Department)
 - Life Skills Training – drug prevention (Portsmouth Police Department)
 - SOL offerings for K-12 – Portsmouth Museums,
 - Character Counts! – VCE 4-H,
 - Recreation center summer programs (Park and Recreation Dept.)
 - 6 to Six- before and after school program ((Park and Recreation Dept.)

Crime (Source: 2012 FBI Report of Offenses Known to Law Enforcement)

- The violent crime rate in Portsmouth is the sixth highest in the state and 1.2 times the national average.
- The property crime rate for Portsmouth in 2012 was 5%.

Health Statistics

(Source: Virginia Department of Health)

- Portsmouth has a significantly higher rate of heart disease, stroke and diabetes than the state average.
- Non-marital births account for 52% of all births in Portsmouth compared to 38% in the Planning District.
- Teen pregnancy rates are twice that as compared to the State average.
- Portsmouth's adult obesity rate is 10% higher (39%) that the state average (28%) and 13% percent higher than the national average.

Environmental Statistics and Issues

(Source: US Census, Virginia Department of Conservation and Natural Resources)

Degradation of Chesapeake Bay & local waterways

Major pollutants

- Sediments
- Nutrients
- Toxicants

Major Causes

- Impervious surface
 - causes run-off of pollutants
 - Hampton Roads is 21% impervious surface area
 - If over 10% - stream water degraded
- If over 25% - stream communities degraded Urban development
 - Degrades watershed
 - From 1970-1990 land conversion and housing outpaced population growth
- 40% of the land in Hampton Roads is developed
 - 35% water or watershed
 - Expecting an 11% increase in population in next 20 years.

Priority Issues

Based on the community survey and the unit profile, the following issues were identified for the city of Portsmouth. Some are similar issues that were identified in past situation analysis, while other are identified as emerging issues. VCE will be able to focus resources and energy on some of the issues but some will be best handled through other city agencies and departments.

Key Issue 1: Life Skills / Character Development for Youth

According to the situation analysis surveys completed by Portsmouth residents there are many issues facing youth today that need to be addressed. It is evident that there is a need for programming for all youth between the ages of 5 and 19. The issue of raising youth with positive character traits and life skills was considered an important issue by 60% of survey participants. Character development and education is a cornerstone of the Virginia 4-H program. This is an issue that should start with the parent in the home. However, due to the current economy and the fact that many people are in poor financial situations, it would be beneficial to provide career and economic education programs to Portsmouth youth. This is especially teenagers due to the fact that they are approaching entering the work force and dealing with financial issues. Many youth have an unreal sense of the cost of housing, cars, and have never been taught some of the most basic life skills.

Some of these issues can be addressed within the Portsmouth Public schools and are best addressed by educators and parents through local and state channels. Parental involvement needs to be addressed by local PTA's and individual teachers. The 4-H Youth Extension agent can assist the public school teachers by providing character education to youth between the ages of 5 and 19 in Portsmouth. Delivery methods may include community clubs, after school programming, military 4-H clubs, Cloverbud groups, and even 4-H camping. By providing positive character education using programs such as Character Counts! Youth will gain a better understanding of positive behavior and strive to model this behavior at home and school. Programs such as reality store and high school financial planning programs can help educate youth about the realities of living in the real world and budgeting. Portsmouth VCE has held a reality store at Wilson High School for the past two years. These programs can be offered through recreation centers as well as in schools to reach the largest amount of youth. In addition, Virginia 4-H also offers Citizenship and Leadership curriculum. Programs such as Character Counts!, 4-H club involvement and leadership, and community service help teach youth the values of being a productive citizen of their community and give them the confidence to pursue other leadership roles in the future. Portsmouth 4-H can accommodate all of these ages through various delivery modes such as community 4-H clubs, in school 4-H clubs, after school 4-H programming, military 4-H clubs, 4-H school enrichment, Clover bud 4-H groups, and 4-H camping.

Unfortunately, Portsmouth is without a 4-H extension agent at this time. The former agent started many new programs for youth. Without a strong 4-H agent advocating for youth programs, VCE will not be able to completely address this or any youth issues until another agent is hired.

Key Issue 2: Youth Violence and Other Risk Prevention for Youth

According to the 2013 Portsmouth situation analysis surveys conducted, one of the greatest concerns amongst Portsmouth residents is gang violence, safety, and youth and drugs. Although there has been a 3% decrease in the number of gang related violence in Portsmouth, (source-Portsmouth Police Department) in the last two years, residents of Portsmouth are still very concerned about youth violence in the city. Portsmouth's Police Department has a Gang Investigations Task Force whose job is to coordinate efforts to track and dismantle gangs and to discourage juveniles from joining. While the awareness of gangs still exists in the city, police efforts have been stepped up to prosecute gang related juvenile offenders as adults.

Many children gravitate towards gang activity because they are searching for acceptance and are looking for an extracurricular activity. 4-H can address the issue of gang violence by working through schools and community recreation centers to provide children with positive outlets and giving them a chance to interact with others while participating in an educational activity. Through programs such as Character Counts! and other positive character education programs, youth will learn the pillars of good character and be challenged to exhibit these characteristics in their day-to-day lives. The main goal is to get the youth involved at a young age before they are exposed to possible gang membership and teach them that they have many options as opposed to joining a gang, becoming involved in violent activities or resorting to drug use. Education and involvement are two vital steps in the process to keeping youth out of gang and drug activity.

Key Issue 3: Child Development/Parenting

Based on the 2013 Portsmouth situation analysis survey, the developmental stages during infancy and childhood have been reported as a major concern within our community. 57% of Portsmouth children live in single parent households. Teen pregnancy rates are twice that as compared to the State average. 28% of Portsmouth's children live in poverty. There is a strong need for education focused around the family and home life. Residents stressed a need for more family programs and more parental involvement in activities with their children.

To address this need, FCS will utilize appropriate Virginia Cooperative Extension's (VCE) Child Development and Parenting curriculums and FCS developed programs, and explore local funding sources for these like the Weed and Seed grant. (specific for high-risk children and families). One new VCE curriculum that will be considered, because it strongly supports this issue is, "Project Lift" that applies research about effective parenting. The Child Development education will be promoted throughout the city with the provision of training and presentations at public libraries, local university and faith-based child care centers, and Pre-K-12 public schools.

Key Issue 4: Aging Populations

The percentage of the Portsmouth population that is over age 65 is 13%. This age group will continue to increase as baby boomers retire. As residents age, they can become more isolated due to declining physical capacities, restricted incomes and difficulty utilizing transportation to get places. There are programs and activities in Portsmouth that seniors can participate in but they are underused and under publicized. Transportation to get to these programs is often difficult as seniors are no longer able to drive to the offered programs themselves.

Outreach to the senior population experiencing isolation, restricted incomes, inactivity, and depression is needed. Wellness and community resource educational programs, to include management of financial resources, will be made available to senior centers, nursing homes, and at faith-based organizations. Current instrumental, community partnerships with senior agencies will be built upon, in addition to, new ones formed. One example is at the Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority's senior residential sites.

Key Issue 5: Nutrition, Wellness and Obesity

Health statistics show Portsmouth as having a disproportionately high rate of heart attack, stroke, childhood obesity and diabetes when compared to our region Portsmouth's adult obesity rate is 10% higher (39%) that the state average(28%) and 13% percent higher than the national average. According to the 2013 situation analysis survey, the most important issue regarding health and wellness is learning healthy eating habits and nutrition. Also, 41% of participants listed chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer as an important issue in Portsmouth. Due to the high number of limited resource residents in Portsmouth the issue of preparation of healthy, nutritious, low-cost meals is important. Due to limited resources, many families have problems maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition and wellness, and obesity, remain ongoing problems of significance. The determination of FCS programs that will impact surrounding these issues is very selective and specific because the outcomes of our efforts are can greatly contribute to the quality of life for our citizens. Walk a Weigh (adapted by University of Georgia Extension) and Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids are two of a few successful VCE curriculum options, used regularly that have been proven to motivate healthy lifestyles changes. To promote positive change in general health and wellness, chronic diseases, and obesity rates, these programs as well as other effective FCS programs, will be implemented. Collaborations will be developed with partners who strongly support VCE with resolving these community issues to strengthen individuals and families. These partnerships include *Healthy Portsmouth* and the *Mayor's Initiative*, *Virginia Cooperative Extension's Family Nutrition and Nutrition Outreach programs*, *Portsmouth Horticulture and Master Gardener's* and *4-H youth programs*, and the *Portsmouth Extension Leadership Council (ELC)*. A recent addition to the Family and Consumer Sciences is the *Portsmouth Master Food Volunteers (MFV)* program. The MFVs are ready to assist with this effort through the expansion of program delivery and the ability to reach broad, diverse audiences within the community.

Key Issue 6: Water Quality/Quantity

Water quality and conservation are key issues in a city that is surrounded by water. The direct use of pesticides and fertilizers by both consumers and commercial businesses has a direct impact on our ground water. Recent reports on Bay heath have shown serious set-backs which have adversely affected crabbing, fishing (both commercial and sport), oyster harvests and recreation across the Chesapeake Bay. Much of this pollution comes from urban areas with large amounts of impervious surface. Run-off from these surfaces carries sediments, toxicants, such as motor oil and household chemicals, and nutrients, especially nitrogen from lawn fertilizers and animal manure, straight to the Bay. These build up in the water and Bay sediment, choking out native vegetation and marine life.

VCE works in several capacities to raise awareness and educate residents and pesticide applicators about reducing pollution in the Bay. Area Horticulture Agents provide six pesticide recertification programs around the Hampton Roads area which reach over 400 pesticide applicators a year and have specific information on safe and appropriate pesticide use. In Portsmouth, the Horticulture Agent works with local agencies and the public school system to deliver SOL-compatible, watershed curriculum to area elementary schools. The Master Gardener Volunteers demonstrate proper fertilizer use and Bayscaping techniques to area residents through both hands-on programming and demonstration gardens. Master Gardeners have been given advanced training as water stewards to address these water concerns. They are in the process of holding rain barrel workshops for residents and groups as a water conservation technique. The water stewards have also increased public awareness about buffer areas in Portsmouth by providing education on proper plants for tidal wetland areas to prevent erosion into the waterways.

Key Issue 7: Lack of Urban Gardening and Local Foods

Survey participants felt that there is not enough attention giving to urban gardening and local foods in a city that is definitely urban. Most residents in Portsmouth lack big areas to grow food and garden. Residents are interested in learning new ways to grow fresh food in small spaces but do not know where to start. Growing their own food is a trend that is increasing in popularity, especially in urban areas. Having access to fresh fruits and vegetables is another trend that is increasing in urban areas. This ties in with the local food movement where people need to know where to find fresh produce. Parts of Portsmouth are considered food deserts – areas where there is not a grocery store within a five mile radius. This makes it harder for families to obtain fresh food choices for their meals. Many children do not know where their food comes from or eat fresh vegetables.

The Horticulture agent in Portsmouth had partnered with the Olde Towne business association to bring back the farmers market. This was started up again in 2009. The farmers market has been a great avenue for residents to obtain local produce. Master Gardener Volunteers have an information booth at this market every week where they share information to visitors about how to grow their own food. VCE tries to promote this market in its other programming efforts. VCE has also partnered with Healthy Portsmouth- a city wide initiative to improve the health and well-being of Portsmouth residents. Part of this initiative focuses on community gardens.

VCE has worked with two groups in the past year that have had an interest in starting community gardens. Master Gardener Volunteers and the Horticulture agent have worked to provide education on gardening, vegetables varieties to grow, programs for youth in the garden and getting the community involved. Efforts have now been started to get raised beds for growing vegetables into the elementary schools. This will help children learn how to grow fresh vegetables.

Other issues of importance: The Consequences of Poverty

When evaluating the data from for the 2008 Situation Analysis, the most striking issue we came upon was the level of poverty in the City of Portsmouth. This is still a major concern in 2013. The poverty level in Portsmouth is 41.2% greater than the state average and 31.5% greater than the National Average. Persons in Portsmouth living at or below the poverty level are 60%(15.9) higher than the statewide level.

With 24% of families living at, below or near the poverty level, these families face a myriad of problems. Many lack access to proper health care, do not receive quality education, do not (or cannot) participate in extracurricular school activities and have little access to advanced education/training. In addition, those living near the poverty level often have trouble buying healthy foods and providing balanced meals for their families. For many of these families, the poverty cycle is one that last for generations, not just a few months or years.

Breaking this cycle is difficult and requires a multi-pronged approach from various levels of local, state and federal services. Although we may never be able to eradicate poverty or completely eliminate its consequences, by continuing to build on the partnerships we have already established, VCE will be able to supply valuable services to Portsmouth's underserved families for many years to come. VCE's contribution comes by working closely with Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing, Portsmouth Social Services, WIC and various private groups throughout the City. By partnering with these groups, we can deliver targeted programming on financial management, nutrition, and healthy eating on a budget. VCE has a 4-H program that can provide significant entrepreneurial, character and educational skills to underserved youth. Unfortunately, Portsmouth is without a 4-H extension agent at this time.

Other issues of Importance: Extension Staffing

How well priority issues can be met is largely a factor of Extension staffing. The city of Portsmouth has a population of over 95,000 residents. The staff currently consists of two full time agents, a part time program assistant and an administrative assistant. With a staff of this size, Extension's reach is limited. Additional staff is required to meet the needs of the youth in the city.

Other issues of Importance: Promotion of Extension Program

The unit survey indicated a need for more promotion of the services offered from VCE. The survey indicated that many people feel the community is not aware of all of the programs offered through VCE and what it can offer their families. Many people are not aware of the unit

office or still think of it as just a 4-H program for livestock and showing animals when we have no livestock or large agriculture left in Portsmouth.

Greater marketing of programs is needed for the Portsmouth Office in all three program areas, 4-H Youth Development, Environmental Horticulture and Family and Consumer Science. Although the local newspaper is used to advertise classes and events, a wider range of media outlets and social media can be used. We need to let the public know about our services and how we can help them. The use of VCE volunteers to help with marketing efforts could be one way to get the word out to a larger population in Portsmouth.

Survey information continued on next page...

Portsmouth Community Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about issues in Portsmouth. Please take a couple of minutes to share your opinions. The results of this survey will help in shaping Virginia Cooperative Extension programs in Portsmouth. The survey is completely anonymous. Please respond to the survey by **Friday, November 22, 2013**.

1. Please rate the importance of the following issues in Portsmouth.

Families and Communities

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
Aging Populations	<input type="radio"/>				
Child Development	<input type="radio"/>				
Chronic Diseases	<input type="radio"/>				
Finances/Financial Management	<input type="radio"/>				
Food, Nutrition and Health	<input type="radio"/>				
Food Safety/Preservation	<input type="radio"/>				
Obesity	<input type="radio"/>				

Environment Horticulture

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
Environmental Quality-air/ soil	<input type="radio"/>				
Local Foods-accessibility, community linkages	<input type="radio"/>				
Pests/Pesticide safety	<input type="radio"/>				
Urban Gardening	<input type="radio"/>				
Water Quality/Quantity	<input type="radio"/>				
Other_____	<input type="radio"/>				

Youth Development

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
Before, During and After School Programs	<input type="radio"/>				
Career Awareness	<input type="radio"/>				
Increase S.T.E.M. (Science Technology, Engineering and Math) Education	<input type="radio"/>				
Life Skills/Character Development	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth Commitment to Learning	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth Community Involvement	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth Activities	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth Leadership	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth Violence	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth Volunteering	<input type="radio"/>				
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>				

For the issues you rated very important, please select the top three and provide additional information in the boxes below on why you feel they are important for Portsmouth and what you think might be done to address them.

Issue 1: Please type in the issue name, why you feel it is important, and what might be done to address it.

Issue 2: Please type in the issue name, why you feel it is important, and what might be done to address it.

Issue 3: Please type in the issue name, why you feel it is important, and what might be done to address it.

Please provide any additional information on what direction you believe Extension programs should take in Portsmouth.

How familiar are you with Virginia Cooperative Extension?

- Very familiar
- Familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not familiar at all

Have you ever participated in educational programs offered by Virginia Cooperative Extension?

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes to the above question, which VCE educational program(s) did you participate in and what was the value to you?

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

In which category is your current age?

- under 18 19-29
- 30-39 40-49
- 50-59 60-64
- 65+

Which category best describes your race?

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- More than one Race
- Black or African American
- Other _____

Which category best describes your ethnicity?

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Thank you for completing the survey.

Please return your survey to the Portsmouth Extension Office-105 Utah Street, Portsmouth, VA 23701. Your survey can be faxed to 757-393-8009 or emailed to cyndiw@vt.edu. Call 757-393-5314 for more information.

Portsmouth Survey Concerns

Youth

- More involvement in schools
- Before during and after school care 3
- Youth violence 8
- Youth activities/programs 5
- Youth Leadership 1
- Career awareness 2
- Youth commitment to learning 3
- Youth Development
- School gardens
- Childhood Obesity 1
- After school programs
- After school gardening programs
- Job training for young men
- Youth Volunteering 2
- Youth Community involvement 6
- Life skills/Character development 10
- Increase school technology
- S.T.E.M. Programs 4

Families

- Health and mental wellness
- Financial Management 3
- Job vocational training
- Family stability

Health/Nutrition

- Child development/parenting 3
- Obesity 6
- Chronic disease

- Food safety/preservation
- Food/ Nutrition 4
- Healthy eating habits/nutrition 3

Senior Citizens

- Aging Populations 9
- Senior activity centers

Environmental issues

- Urban gardening 12
- Develop the empty lots in Portsmouth into gardens
- Increased tree canopy 5
- Local foods 7
- Chemical/pesticide use 5
- Air quality
- Water quality 7

City/Economy Issues

- Community involvement 4
- Economic development

Miscellaneous

- More press about VCE programs, mission 5
- More flexibility with VCE Programs (day-vs. evening)
- More Extension Programs for adults
- More use of technology in Programs