



**Virginia Cooperative Extension**

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# Situation Analysis Report

## Powhatan County

# 2013

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## Introduction

Powhatan County conducted a comprehensive situation analysis during the calendar year 2013. The situation analysis process was led by the Extension Leadership Council (ELC). This process involved the development of a Powhatan County Unit Profile, as well as gathering community and resident perspectives on issues and problems in the county. Data and information from these two activities were analyzed by the ELC and priority issues were identified.

The ELC met multiple times during the situation analysis process, while a sub-committee met once. Although a final face-to-face meeting with the entire ELC did not take place, a draft of the situation analysis was electronically distributed to ELC members for review before submitting the final version. The ELC initially discussed the need to update the situation analysis in March 2012 because no revisions had taken place since the original product in 2004. At the following quarterly meeting, the ELC was provided with an overview of the process to create an updated situation analysis. The initial task involved the development of a unit profile. Powhatan was selected as a pilot county to work with VCE state staff to create an initial profile. At the March 2013 meeting, data from the draft profile was reviewed by ELC members and comments were provided through a Skype session with VCE state staff. During the June 2013 meeting, a unit profile was developed and ELC members reviewed the product and several issues were discussed based on the data presented. At the September 2013 meeting, the ELC determined the best way to gather perspectives from residents was to conduct a community needs assessment, as well as identify several local leaders to interview as key informants. A sub-committee met to discuss key findings from the needs assessment and informant interviews. As a result of this discussion, the top priority issues for Powhatan County were identified, including those that could be addressed with current VCE resources and those that were outside the scope of current VCE resources.

## Unit Profile

In May 1777, the Virginia General Assembly created the County of Powhatan out of land from the eastern portion of Cumberland County between the Appomattox and James Rivers. In 1850, a small portion of Chesterfield County was annexed, creating what today is the 262 square mile county of Powhatan. In Virginia, there are nine counties bearing American Indian names. Only one, Powhatan, is named for an American Indian chief. "Chief Powhatan," father of the famous American Indian princess, Pocahontas, was one of the greatest and is today one of the most well-known of the American Indian chiefs.

The 262 square mile county (174,080 acres) is located in the Central Piedmont physiographic province. The landscape features gently rolling hills with elevations ranging from 150 to 400 feet above sea level. Drainage is provided by the Appomattox and James Rivers.

Powhatan serves as a bedroom community for the greater Richmond area. The majority of citizens who reside in the County also commute to work outside of Powhatan. The unemployment rate of 5.8% in Powhatan increased from 3% in 2010 but is still slightly under that of the state.

The 2011 U.S. Census reports a population of 28,702 citizens in Powhatan County which reflects a 22% increase in the past 10 years. From 2000 to 2008, the housing market boomed in Powhatan until the recession in 2008 which resulted in an economy that has been slowly recovering since. The population consists of 83.5% white and 13.5% black citizens and less than 2% in all other races. There are 10,243 homes in the County, which reflects an increase from 7,509 over a ten-year period.

Incomes decreased in those households making under \$49,999 in the past 10 years. However, an increase was observed in household incomes of \$100,000 and above during the same period. Data on the average household income in Powhatan indicated an increase from \$65,666 in 2000 to \$84,639 in 2011. The Census projects incomes to continue this divide among lower and higher household incomes in Powhatan well into 2017. This increase in the upper range of household incomes when compared to the decrease in lower range incomes led to additional questions regarding the need to support County human services. The average home value in Powhatan is \$260,160 which indicates an increase of \$50,000 between 2010 and 2011. This is almost \$6,000 above the average home value in Virginia.

Data on children in poverty indicated a 4% increase, as well as a 7% increase of children in single-parent households. The population involving those ages 25 to 44 reflected a decline of 5.1% since 2000, while the number of residents over age 45 continued to grow. The population with the largest increase of 5.6% involved the age group between 55 and 64. Populations projected by 2017 support the trend of an aging population with a steady increase in the 55 and above population reflected. This increase led to further questions about affordable housing, health care facilities and lack of transportation.

Data indicated that diabetic screenings increased by 10% since 2010. Powhatan's score of 86% now equals the state average in 2013.

On a positive note, data indicated the number of teenage pregnancies decreased since 2010 from 21 to 14, per 1,000 females age 15 to 18. This is considerably under the state average of 32.

The number of uninsured residents in clinical care dropped by 4% since 2010 and now falls under the state average.

The 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture showed a 45% decrease in land in farms since the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture. However, the market value of products sold has increased by 8% with over \$8.7 million sold in 2007. The Census also showed a decrease in the average farm size with 10-49 acres being the size almost half of the farms fell under. Although this is showing an increase in small farms there are still numerous large scale farms within the County, making the agricultural industry very diverse. There has been an increase in market value of farms as well as the market value of their equipment and machines. The 2007 Agriculture Census also showed that 173 males and 55 females engaged in production agriculture. Also based on Census data for Powhatan County, 88 producers said farming is

their primary occupation while 140 principal operators said farming is not their primary occupation.

The increased development of the equine industry generates much economic value at the local level. Powhatan has many equine operations where the owner obtains his or her main income from the business. Based on the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service (2008), almost half of Virginia's horses were primarily used for pleasure riding in 2006. The new Powhatan State Park, Powhatan Wildlife Management Area, and Belmead Stables at St. Francis/St. Emma are three great opportunities that bring in recreational horseback riders to the county. There are many lesson, training, breeding and boarding horse barns in the county as well.

Traditional operations still center on cow/calf, row crops, vegetable production and nurseries. There is limited production in dairy and poultry. There has been an increase in the specialty crop area including organic, hydroponics, value added products, and more. The 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture was conducted and will be made available in 2014 to reflect a more accurate representation of Powhatan County's agriculture and the changes since 2007.

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

Based on issue areas identified in the unit profile, the ELC identified a community needs assessment as the best tool to reach a large audience. Various distribution methods were selected, including emailing current VCE contacts directly, posting a link to the survey on the VCE unit website, as well as on the unit Facebook page, and publishing in the local newspaper. All county churches and local government offices received either a hard copy of the survey or an email to the link. Hard copies of the survey were also available during a VCE volunteer recognition event. ELC members distributed the assessment to contacts as well. A total of 185 completed surveys were returned.

Key issues identified in the community needs assessment were agriculture sustainability/preservation, environment, leadership, family well-being, and life skills/decision making for youth. Other specific areas that were noted as very important to residents include agriculture production/profitability, career education, animals/livestock, community planning, financial management, food safety/preservation, nutrition education, teen community involvement, teen leadership, youth activities and youth volunteers.

Staff also interviewed several key leaders in the community from the county administrator's office and social services. Specific issues identified included: lack of employment opportunities, transportation, affordable housing, preservation of environment and natural resources, and a need for business (including agribusiness options) to aid the economy.

## Priority Issues

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

### Issue 1: Family Well-Being

This issue is not being addressed adequately by VCE or other agencies in Powhatan County, but could be appropriately addressed by VCE if a Family and Consumer Science (FCS) Extension Agent were on staff full-time. The issue of family well-being encompasses many dimensions, including mental, physical, social, financial, and spiritual health. Extension offers many programs across these dimensions. Although Extension offers a wide range of programs that impact family well-being, additional programs are needed. For example, the unit profile data indicate that the incident rate for diabetes screening in Powhatan County is high. Additional food and nutrition programs may help better address this concern. Extension should maintain quality programs that address family well-being issues and should look for opportunities to expand program offerings across healthy family dimensions. FCS agents from surrounding counties assist occasionally and VCE currently addresses the youth aspect of nutrition and financial education. However, programming in these areas could certainly expand with the addition of this position.

Specific issues within this related area also noted in the community needs assessment included career education, child development, financial management, food safety and preservation, youth and adult nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and parenting.

### Issue 2: Agriculture Sustainability and Preservation

Although Extension is meeting some of the needs for agriculture support in Powhatan County, there are opportunities to expand agriculture programming for both adult and youth audiences. This issue is being addressed by VCE and other agencies in Powhatan County, but could be more adequately addressed by VCE through increased Extension staffing to work in support of agriculture. Currently, there is only a part-time Agriculture Extension Agent employed in Powhatan. Expanding this position to full-time could more adequately fill this need. On some levels, this issue is currently being addressed with existing unit VCE resources but additional support is needed to meet the needs. Also, volunteers are a very valuable resource in helping Extension to meet educational programming needs. Increased efforts to recruit new volunteers and to tap into potential volunteers within the senior citizen community could possibly help to extend Extension's reach throughout the county, but the training and supervision of volunteers also requires staff time. Expanded efforts to reach more residents are needed.

Specific issues within this related area also noted in the community needs assessment included agriculture production and profitability, animals and livestock, agriculture marketing, food safety and preservation, local food systems, and public awareness of agriculture.

### **Issue 3: Life Skills and Decision Making**

Although Extension offers a wide range of programs that impact youth in Powhatan, additional programs are needed. Extension should maintain quality programs that address issues involving youth, and should look for opportunities to expand program offerings across youth and family dimensions. On some levels, this issue is currently being addressed with existing unit VCE resources. For example, the county has three horse clubs, an outdoors club, a 4-H livestock club, as well as several 4-H shooting clubs which all focus on life skills and decision making. A strong 4-H camping program also provides local youth with life skills and decision making learning opportunities. Much like the agriculture program, however, volunteers are a very valuable resource in helping Extension to meet educational programming needs of youth. Increased efforts to recruit new volunteers and to tap into potential volunteers within the senior citizen community could possibly help to extend Extension's reach throughout the county, but the training and supervision of volunteers also requires staff time. With increased Extension staffing, additional focus could be given to increasing the number of afterschool programs offered in Powhatan.

Specific issues within this related area also noted in the community needs assessment included teen community involvement, teen leadership, youth activities, youth violence, and youth volunteers.

### **Issue 4: Environment**

This issue is being addressed by VCE or other agencies in Powhatan County, but could be more adequately targeted with additional Extension staffing. Educators trained in VCE's Community Viability program are available to assist existing Extension staff with programs related to areas such as land use and community planning. Agribusiness and maintaining the rural character of the county are areas noted as local issues through the key informant interviews. With support from community viability specialists, these areas can be addressed locally through educational programs.

Household water quality programs in Powhatan are currently offered through VCE, while educational resources are available for residents with concerns about mold and prevention. With increased Extension staffing, additional focus could be given to increasing the amount of educational programs offered that target the environment. Specific issues within this related area also noted in the community needs assessment included land use, community planning, local government, mold prevention and household water quality.

### **Issue 5: Aging Population**

Specific issues related to the aging population noted in the community needs assessment included community services, chronic disease, long-term care, transportation, affordable housing and nutrition for adults. Although Extension offers a wide range of programs that impact Powhatan's aging population, additional programs are needed. There are certain areas that Extension cannot impact but may be able to offer increased educational programming in

support of these areas through additional Extension staffing in the program area of family and consumer sciences.

The availability of affordable housing is an issue noted in the needs assessment for Powhatan's senior citizens, as well as for first time buyers. As indicated in the unit profile, the average value of housing jumped from \$210,112 in 2000 to \$260,160 in 2011. Although Extension cannot impact housing costs, they can help citizens better cope with these increases through programs focused on debt management and financial planning for home ownership. In addition, through currently offered programs like the Reality Store, Extension can educate youth to be more aware of housing costs. Through these types of programs, youth better understand how education can help them achieve future dreams of home ownership.

## Appendices

Lambert, M. Unit Profile, Powhatan. 2013.

[http://www.intra.ext.vt.edu/support/documents/powhatanunitprofile\\_000.pdf](http://www.intra.ext.vt.edu/support/documents/powhatanunitprofile_000.pdf)

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