



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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## Situation Analysis Report



## Stafford County 2013

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## Introduction

Stafford County conducted a comprehensive situation analysis during the calendar year 2013. The situation analysis process was led by Stafford VCE staff with support from the Extension Leadership Council (ELC). The analysis involved the development of a Stafford 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 Stafford VCE staff and the ELC and priority issues were identified.

At the September ELC meeting the situation analysis process was discussed with the members and a strategy was developed. The ELC determined that utilizing an issue-based survey would reach a wider range of stakeholders in Stafford. Forty-two key issues were chosen from the VCE Situation Analysis Resource website for relevance to Stafford County demographics. About 400 surveys were sent to Stafford residents via email. Email addresses were gathered from contacts made through the three program areas as well as ELC member's contact lists. Approximately 10% of residents who received surveys responded.

## Unit Profile

Stafford County is located just across the Rappahannock River from the City of Fredericksburg. Stafford County today is considered part of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Many residents commute to work in Washington and its environs north on Interstate Highway 95, U.S. Route 1, and Virginia Railway Express.

The total population of Stafford County in 2012 was 134,352. This shows an increase of about 12% from 2007. Stafford County is the 7th most populated county in the state of Virginia out of 93 counties.

Approximately 1/3 (about 32%) of the total population of Stafford County was between 0-20 years of age in 2011. This compares to 26% of the total population of Virginia and 27% nationally that is between the ages of 0-20. Programming needs in child development, life skills/decision making for youth, teen leadership, and youth activities are an important goal in a

community with such a high percentage of youth.

The data indicated that the Hispanic population of Stafford County is 10% compared to 8.4% for the state of Virginia.

The median household income of Stafford County residents is \$94,658, which is \$32,267 higher when compared to the median household income for the state of Virginia. Persons below poverty level are only 4.4% in Stafford County compared to 10.7% for the state of Virginia.

Farm acreage has decreased 24% in Stafford County from 2007 through 2011.

The teen birth rate for teens between the ages 15 and 19 has decreased by 20% from 2010 through 2013; however, it is 24 per 1000 teens compared to the national rate of 21 per 1000 teens.

About 92% of persons 25 years or older are high school graduates compared to 87% for the state of Virginia.

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

According to the survey results, there were 14 issues that were rated above 4.5 on a scale of 1-5. Eight of those items identified youth issues as a concern to Stafford County stakeholders. These issues include; Teen Leadership, Teen Community Involvement, Child Development, Life Skills/Decision Making for Youth, Youth Volunteers, Youth Violence, and Youth Activities.

Other issues that were rated above 4.5 are; Parenting, Leadership, Nutrition, Science and Technology, and the Environment.

## Survey participant comments:

### Youth Issues

- Stafford needs to improve youth services. There is not much available for students after school.
- Our youth are the future and I feel we are not doing enough to facilitate positive outcomes in them. We are leaving them to the streets to teach them. I would provide more detailed info if I had more time.
- Youth volunteers. I think if there was more opportunities for youth volunteerism there would be less youth problems.
- Youth activities, there needs to be places available for young people to be active. During the summer months in Stafford the young people hang out at the library to use the computers because it is indoors and free. There is not a place where they can play sports for free. When there is too much down time they create less than positive activities.
- I am always interested in youth community services that my children can get involved with. It is difficult in this area (Stafford) to find organizations that accept teenagers.
- Youth Community Center: I believe that if our teens had a place to call their own where they were taught responsibility for their community and were offered free/low cost activities at the center that we could curb inappropriate actions by our teens.
- Youth responsibility and accountability. Mentorship opportunities and continuing education on the values/morals held true that founded our country.

### Nutrition Issues

- Nutrition - It is the basis of a healthy population. Education on nutrition has been flawed for the past 50 years, by lobbying of the meat, poultry, and dairy industries providing educational information and materials to our school system. We need to begin to reverse this inaccurate teaching and get on track with what is scientifically proven to be accurate. There are many books written by doctors in the last 25 years, showing valid research that our current food pyramid is not the best nutrition for our population. I

believe this education must begin at the school level to begin to correct old long held inaccuracies.

## Environmental Issues

- Environment: Environmental protection is essential for all aspects of life. We need more public education at both the youth and adult level.
- Water quality: Very important for every resident to be assured that they can drink Stafford water without questioning its quality.

## Priority Issues

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

### Issue 1: Youth Activities

Youth Activities was the highest rated issue in Stafford County. This issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources.

- Currently have in-school programs at several schools with large potential for growth
- Currently have 8 community/special interest clubs for after-school/evening activities
- 4-H Junior Camp offered every summer
- Day camps offered in partnership with Stafford Junction, an under-served Stafford community

### Issue 2: Teen Community Involvement/Youth Volunteers

This issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources.

- Implemented Stafford County 4-H Teens in Action 4-H Clubs in fall 2013. Club focuses on community service in Stafford County

### **Issue 3: Youth Violence**

This issue is currently being addressed with current VCE unit resources.

- Currently have program at the Chaplin Youth Center for court-involved youth and horticultural career skills training.
- Partner with Stafford County Sheriff's Office for DARE Day.

### **Issue 4: Teen Leadership/Leadership**

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Implemented Stafford County 4-H Teens in Action 4-H Clubs in fall 2013.
- Teen leadership opportunities are available at 4-H Junior Camp, Day Camps, and community events

### **Issue 5: Nutrition**

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources, with a large potential for expansion with the hiring of a Family and Consumer Science Extension Agent in the area.

- Organ WiseGuys and Teen Cuisine is being taught by 4-H Agent and volunteers in 3 county schools.

### **Issue 6: Environment**

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Integrated Pest Management is taught in class to all new Master Gardeners.
- Smart Greens Lawns program implemented in 2012 gives a detailed individualized report to home-owners for Best Lawn Practices to reduce fertilizer and pesticide application.
- A re-certification program is given for commercial pesticide applicators as well as private pesticide applicators every year.
- A 3 week training course is given every year to prepare workers in the green industry to become certified pesticide applicators.