



Situation Analysis Report



City of Suffolk

2013

City of Suffolk Extension Staff

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Introduction

City of Suffolk conducted a situation analysis for the calendar year 2013. The process was led by the Unit Coordinator with the help of the Extension Leadership Council, office unit staff, and community partners. All information and data gathered was collected and distributed to Extension Leadership Council Members to identify key issues.

The Extension Leadership Council along with Unit Staff met for standard quarterly meeting. The situation analysis process was described along with guidelines and expectations. Extension Leadership Council members were contacted several times throughout the Situation Analysis process through mailing, and e-mail for feedback and data. This information was collected and contributed to the process of creating the Unit Profile. The Extension Leadership Council also through previous meetings have expressed key partnerships for programming needs in which those key stakeholder individuals were contacted for data collection and feedback. City of Suffolk Citizens, Extension Leadership Council Members, and Community Leaders are very engaged within the community and participate in several key organizations, thus leading to the process of identifying a number of issues that can be addressed through the services of Virginia Cooperative Extension. The process that was used to collect data was the distribution of an electronic community survey along with paper mailings to those citizens that do not have computer access.

Unit Profile

City of Suffolk is located in the southeastern part of Virginia, and is the largest city in the State of Virginia. City of Suffolk is surrounded by several other South Hampton Roads cities and the Western Tidewater area.

According to the City Profile and Statistical Digest 2012-2013 the data indicates the City of Suffolk:

- The second fastest growing city in the Commonwealth. The number of residents has increased 34.6 % from 63,677 in 2000 to 85,692 in 2011, almost three times higher than any other city in Hampton Roads.
- The City of Suffolk has become more diverse over the last 10 years. Residents of Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Two or more races comprise 4.3% of the City's population compared to 2.3% in 2000. Suffolk's Hispanic population increased from 1.3 % to 3.2%. African-American residents decreased 0.8% and White residents 0.8% as a percentage of the City's population.
- The unemployment rate is 6.6%, higher than the region (6.3%) and state averages (5.6%).
- Food Stamp recipients have increased 68% over the last 5 years.

- School Enrollment has increased 8% over the last 10 years.
- The high school dropout rate is 10.8% and higher than most other cities in the region and the state average (7.1%).
- The On-Time Graduation Rate is 81.2%, fourth highest in the region.
- Teen pregnancy has declined 28% since 2000. The teen pregnancy rate is 28.1 per 1,000 citizens, lower than the region average, but higher than the state average.
- According to Census Data, the City of Suffolk has a rich agriculture background in which total farms has increased from 247 farms in 2002 to 311 farms in 2007.
- The adult obesity rate for the City of Suffolk has increased from 30.0% in 2010 to 32.0% in 2013.

Community and Resident Perspectives

From the issues identified in the Unit Profile, a community survey was constructed and distributed to all Extension Leadership Council Members, Key City Leaders of Departments, City Council Members, Community Members, School Officials, Master Gardeners, 4-H Volunteers, Food Nutrition Program Volunteers, and local Farmers.

Priority Issues

According to the data collected from the Community Survey, the following key issues ranked high within the results with statements from those that completed the survey, beneath the issue is how Virginia Cooperative Extension can address, or already address the issue:

- **Water Quality/Quantity**
 - Without clean water all the ecosystems will collapse. Enforce septic clean-out, check sewer lines on a regular schedule so we do not have ruptures. Give incentives to homeowners to reduce storm-water run-off.
 - Rivers and streams are suffering from storm water runoff. Educate more people on the importance of planting trees, and native shrubs to control runoff.

Virginia Cooperative Extension has a rich agricultural program in which Water Quality can be addressed through various delivery modes, partnerships, and expertise from Water Quality Specialists. This issue is in the process of being addressed in the months ahead and the primary focus will be well water quality. In terms of enforcing septic clean-out, and checking sewer lines, Virginia Cooperative Extension does not address those issues.

- **Health**

- Health is important to community. And personal health needs to be improved. This will also decrease health cost and spending. Free health and nutrition workshops in the community and affordable fitness programs.
- Health is important due to the cost of health care. To address this you can develop measures and programs on healthy living.

Virginia Cooperative Extension City of Suffolk Unit values the importance of Health among citizens. The Agricultural Extension Agent, 4-H Extension Agent, and Family Nutrition Program Assistants in the City of Suffolk Unit Office address various Health Initiatives within programming. The Extension Agents and staff continue to get continued trainings to focus on preserving one's health overall.

- **Careers**

- Careers are very important to communities and society as a whole, need to survive and serve others. Productivity is important. More training on the job for positions instead of turning people away for lack of experience.

Virginia Cooperative Extension City of Suffolk Unit addresses careers currently with youth and agricultural programming. 4-H Youth Programming offers curriculum on Career Exploration and offers great programs such as the Reality Store Event. The Agricultural program offers youth the opportunity to experience and explore careers in agriculture.

- **Before and After School Issues**

- Child care after school with many parents (Mom and Dad) working, a real need for early school years (children) to stay after school hours. More schools need to address this issue.
- Youth Activities-our youth need meaningful activities that will help them to grow and to be good citizens. They need adequate recreational activities and facilities as well as activities that teach life skills. We must prepare our youth for the future and provide opportunities to help them to be responsible adults.

Virginia Cooperative Extension City of Suffolk Unit currently addresses after school programming with a partnership between 4-H and Suffolk Department of Parks and Recreation. Volunteers are needed to have an increase of after school programs/clubs throughout the entire city as well as an increase in partnerships.