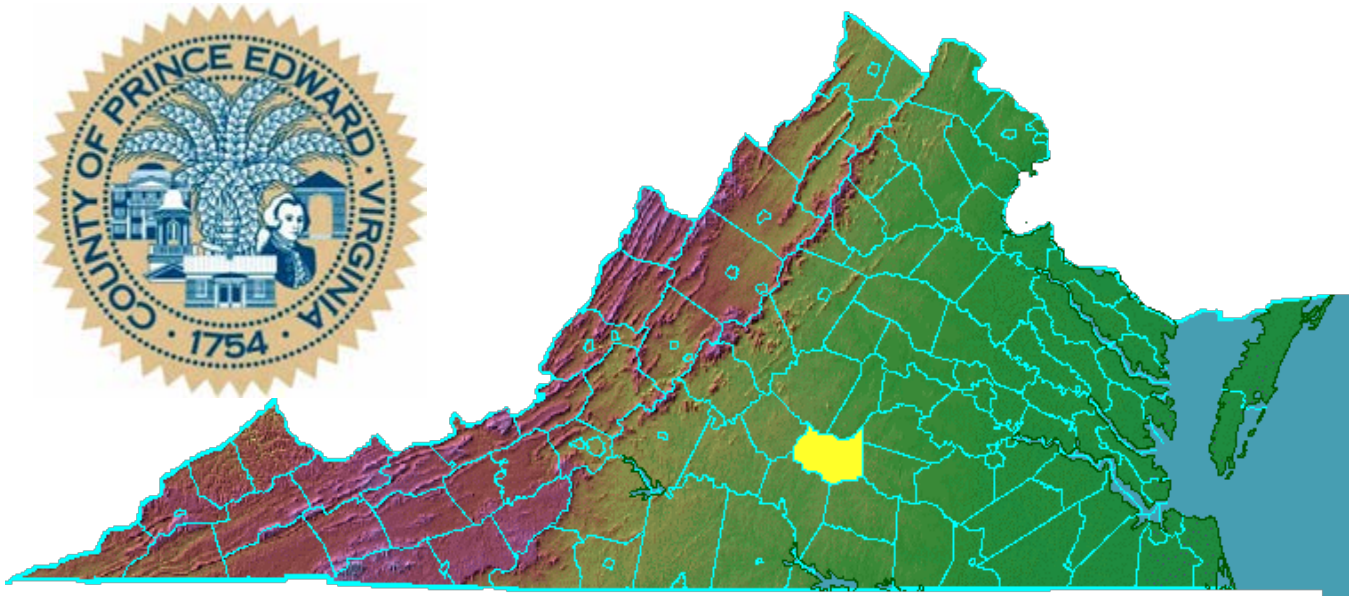


# Prince Edward County 2023 Situation Analysis Report



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Table 1. Priority Issues and Planned Unit Response

Priority Issue	Planned Unit Response
<b>Strengthening the local food system and access to safe, high quality food</b>	<p>Continue to address these needs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with the FACES Food Pantry</li> <li>• Education in the community and</li> <li>• Demonstration gardens</li> <li>• Incentives through the SNAP-Ed program</li> <li>• Improvement in the community food system by connecting more growers to the low-income, disabled, and underserved community residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success in this area will involve exposing youth to impactful experiences inside and outside of our community</li> <li>• Providing them with leadership opportunities and guiding them through making important decisions for themselves</li> <li>• Partnerships with the local schools is paramount for successful programming to be offered to the applicable ages</li> <li>• 4-H will partner with other program areas to offer diverse opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Protecting Water Quality, freshwater resources, and reducing misuse and overuse of pesticides and fertilizers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships with several local agencies will aid in addressing this need in our community.</li> <li>• Programming can include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seminars and programs on best practices to maintain good water quality</li> <li>○ Providing opportunities to volunteers to do local waterway cleanups</li> <li>○ Providing educational programming to local producers in the proper use of pesticides and fertilizers</li> <li>○ Providing educational programming to homeowners in the proper use of these chemicals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Introduction

The Prince Edward Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and Extension Staff collaborated to conduct a community needs assessment during the 2023 calendar year resulting in a comprehensive situation analysis.

Data was gathered from numerous sources to compile the comprehensive report. The unit profile was developed from statistics obtained from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census, the Virginia Employment Commission, County Health Rankings, and Prince Edward County Public Schools. Community input was sought using a variety of tools, including a survey (available online and in hard copy), an abbreviated survey card, Key Informant Interviews, and a Community Needs Assessment Forum. There were 51 responses to our survey plus individual interviews and a focus group. Response data was analyzed and used in conjunction with ELC feedback to identify and prioritize community issues. Some of the identified issues fall within VCE's mandate to provide "learning experiences that improve economic, environmental, and social well-being," while others are outside of Extension's scope. The findings of the 2023 Situation Analysis will be used to develop VCE programs specifically designed to meet the needs of Prince Edward County residents.

## Unit Profile

Prince Edward County is a predominantly rural county with a land area of 350 square miles and a population density of 62.4 inhabitants per square mile. Known as the "Heart of Virginia," it is centrally located, approximately an hour's drive from the cities of Richmond, Charlottesville, and Lynchburg. The county seat, Farmville, serves as the economic hub of Planning District 14. Prince Edward County is home to both Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College

## Population Data

According to the United States Census Bureau, the population of Prince Edward in the year 2020 was 21,846. This reflects a 6.5 % decrease from 2010. (23,368 in 2010 's and 21,846 in 2020)

As the population of the county decreased, the distribution of the population in each age bracket remained steady. Residents ages 65 and older comprise 16.9% of Prince Edward's population. This is slightly higher than the state average of 14.6%.

The racial makeup of Prince Edward County is 63.7% white and 32.3% African American. Two percent (2%) of the population reports two or more races. The Hispanic population is 4.1% and the Asian population is 1.3%.

## Housing

In 2022, there were 9,229 housing units in the county. Of these, 61.7% are owner occupied. The median value of owner-occupied units is about \$160,800, the same as the state median property value in 2021, and the homeownership rate was 61.7%.

Thirteen percent of households are classified by County Health Rankings as having a severe housing problem, which could mean, overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities or lack of plumbing facilities.

## Income and Poverty

In 2021, the median household income in Prince Edward was \$49,019 and per capita income was \$21,455. The corresponding state figures are \$80,615 and \$43,267, respectively.

In 2022, 13.9% of the population was living with severe housing problems. From 2014 to 2022, the indicator declined 3.58%. CountyHealthRankings.org reported that 25% of Prince Edward County children live in poverty in 2021. Across the State of Virginia, 13% of children live in poverty. The United States average is 17%. The

Annie E. Casey Foundation found that in 2020, Prince Edward’s children fell below the poverty line at a rate twice that of children statewide – 27% versus 12.2%. According to the Virginia Department of Education, 28% of Prince Edward’s children are living in poverty.

## **Education**

Prince Edward Public Schools consist of an Elementary, Middle, and High School, all located on a single campus at the juncture of Routes 15 and 460. During the 2023-2024 school year, 1,816 students were enrolled in the Public School System. This is down from 2,134 in 2017-2018.

The Prince Edward Public School System also boasts a Career and Technical Education Center. Statistics from the Virginia Employment Commission show that within the county 15% of adults aged 18 years and older have not finished high school or earned their GED. 30% possess only a high school diploma or GED, 32% have some college, 6% have an associate’s degree, and 10% have a bachelor’s degree, and 8% have a graduate or professional degree. State rates for educational attainment are higher, with only 11% having never finished high school, 7% holding an associate’s, 20% holding a bachelor’s, and 13% holding a graduate or professional degree.

## **Employment**

The five largest employers in Prince Edward are Longwood University, Centra Health, Prince Edward County Public Schools, Wal-Mart, and Hampden-Sydney College. By industry, 79% of the jobs in the county are in the Government (Local, State, and Federal), Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail sectors.

In 2022, unemployment in Prince Edward County was 3.9% compared to 2.9% for Virginia and 3.6% nationally.

## **Community Health**

Out of 133 Virginia localities, County Health Rankings ranked Prince Edward 97th for Health Outcomes (length and quality of life), and 86th for Health Factors (health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment). Physical environment was the top ranking where we were 41st.

The adult obesity rate is 39%. Of adults, 10% are uninsured, 21% are current smokers, and 13% of those 20 and older have been diagnosed with diabetes.

## **Agriculture**

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture—the most recent data available—there are 341 farms in Prince Edward County, with an average size of 204 acres. Altogether, Prince Edward’s farms cover 69,531 acres, or 31% of the county’s land area. The number of farms and total acreage have both declined since 2017. 138 farms had less than \$2,500 in sales, 90 had between \$2,500 and \$9,999, 94 had between \$10,000 and \$99,999, and 19 had sales greater than \$100,000. Average net cash farm income was \$15,233.

There were 39,842 bushels of corn for grain harvested and 8,261 bushels of wheat for grain harvested. In terms of livestock, the 2017 Census inventoried 3,730,500 chickens sold. Current numbers would certainly be affected due to the closure of Tyson chicken houses in the county. 10,562 head of cattle were in the county with 3,692 head of cattle sold.

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

Based on the information established in the Unit Profile, staff and Extension Leadership Council, members worked to develop surveys that would reflect unbiased opinions of the citizens in Prince Edward County. In addition to the surveys, the ELC members and staff spoke with key representatives. The surveys were distributed

to residents attending programs, consumers and producers at the farmers market, businesses, agencies, educators, volunteers, and other audiences throughout the community. There are over 50 direct respondents, not including discussions with specific groups where information was also collected and valued.

## Community Issues

Priority issues were established by examining data provided from the situation analysis survey. Options were provided to those surveyed to rate items from 1 to 5 with a higher number indicating that more effort should be put into that issue. Priority Issues (nonsequential) are in the next section. A table with higher rated focus areas is below:

Table 2. Priority items from situation analysis

Issue	Rating
Strengthening the local food system	4.24
Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills	4.18
Protecting Water Quality	4.14
Helping communities improve their quality of life	4.12
Ensuring safe, high quality food	4.10
Afterschool programming	4.10
Day Camps Programming	4.06
Teen Programming	4.06
Reducing misuse and overuse of pesticides and fertilizers	4.04
Addressing Hunger Issues	4.02
Promoting agricultural, natural resources, and environmental literacy	4.02
Protecting freshwater resources	3.96
STEM	3.90
Outdoor Skills	3.90
Leadership Development	3.78
Building capacity for farm to school programming	3.75
Teaching good money habits	3.49

### Priority Issue 1: Strengthening the local food system and access to safe, high quality food

Prince Edward County is considered a food desert. As defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, food deserts are parts of the country devoid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers. Because Prince Edward County has a large elderly and rural population, it is noted that transportation to and from the main stores could greatly contribute to the issue. Prince Edward County has one main town, Farmville, where most stores with healthy options are located. This town is not central to the county. From our statewide survey, it was shown that "Ensuring safe, high quality foods" was also a high priority.

Related focus areas from our survey are below:

Table 3. Priority items of issue 1 gathered from situation analysis

Priority Item	Rating
Strengthening the local food system	4.24
Ensuring safe, high quality food	4.10
Addressing Hunger Issues	4.02

Related comments from the survey when asked: What is the most pressing community issue for VCE to address in Prince Edward County and why do you think that is?

- “There needs to be better grocery store options. Like an Aldi's where can if veggies are .55. When I asked about this I was told our county makes too much money for an Aldi's to come here. I don't believe it was ever even looked into.”
- “Access to healthy food”
- “Nutrition, food safety, health and weight. Far too many people consume foods that are unhealthy. Loaded with preservatives, empty calories, harmful dyes, deadly fats. VCE could be the leader in education for healthier communities with fresh pesticide free food growing, preservation and preparation.”
- “nutrition”

## Priority Issue 2: Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills

Promoting the development of healthy and productive citizens is always a priority. Through this survey it was found that developing leadership skills was especially important. There are many issues facing our youth and more opportunities to make poor decisions than ever. It’s increasingly important to find ways to reach our youth and guide them through impactful programming opportunities.

Related focus areas from our survey are below:

Table 4. Priority items of issue 2 gathered from situation analysis

Priority Item	Rating
Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills	4.18
Teen Programming	4.06
Leadership Development	3.78

Related comments from the survey when asked: What is the most pressing community issue for VCE to address in Prince Edward County and why do you think that is?

- “Rural teens/young adults can find it difficult to travel for community activities/employment opportunities/training”
- “Empowering all our youth is important to the community as a whole because they will one day be where we are and we need them well equipped as things like technology evolves constantly”
- “... empowering youth. I chose this as the next generation needs to be aware of the other issues - and help support and solve any problems. I know there is a strong 4-H in Prince Edward - but what of reaching inside the schools starting with pre-K and through high school and start an awareness program? VCE has so much to offer to the "adults" - so maybe begin a structured hands-on, information timeline that matches to current SOLS of the state? example: habitat recognition starts in kindergarten so hook it onto plants, conditions, dangers, etc.”

- “After school programs for Youth; Hands on programs for Youth - Less technology”
- “Teaching youngsters, the importance of Agriculture in their lives & community advancement. “

### **Priority Issue 3: Protecting Water Quality, freshwater resources, and reducing misuse and overuse of pesticides and fertilizers**

Environmental issues were obvious from reviewing our survey. Protecting freshwater and the quality of our water stood out as focus areas that those surveyed want us to pay particular attention to. This is comparable to state results where 75% of respondents selected “Protecting Water Quality” as high (4) or very high (5).

Related focus areas from our survey are below:

Table 5. Priority items of issue 3 gathered from situation analysis

<b>Priority Item</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Protecting Water Quality	4.14
Reducing misuse and overuse of pesticides and fertilizers	4.04
Protecting freshwater resources	3.96

Related comments from the survey when asked: What is the most pressing community issue for VCE to address in Prince Edward County and why do you think that is?

- “I would hope that VCE is using its full suite of resources available to it to educate Virginians on how to improve their lives through understanding the current destructive practices that are happening in our communities and offering alternatives that have been proven to be both sustainable and safer practices concerning helping steward natural resources and supporting agriculture to advance the wellbeing of all Virginians “
- “Clean the appomattox river and its banks, esp. throughout town “
- “Pond maintenance and issues”
- "stewarding natural resources while supporting agriculture”
- “Most importantly the support of agricultue to advance the wellbeing of all Virginians is the goal we should dtrive for. The others will fall into place once we focus on empowering our youth to improve our environment by sutewarding natural resources to strengthen our food supply and improving our overall health. Our youngsters are the biggest hope of having a brighter future if we share with them the concerns they we face in a damaged environment that is daily failing us. Alerting them to the problems and charing them to explore remediations and re-direction will lead to an improved life for the future.“

## **Future Programming to Address Community Issues**

### **Priority Issue 1: Strengthening the local food system and access to safe, high quality food**

Prince Edward Virginia Cooperative Extension can continue to address these needs through collaboration with the FACES Food Pantry, education in the community and demonstration gardens, especially on growing your own food for adults and youth alike, incentives through the SNAP-Ed program, and improvement in the community food system by connecting more growers to the low-income, disabled, and underserved community residents. Partnerships with local producers and retailers is essential to addressing these needs. Significant time will be required for the effects of these efforts to show in future surveys.

## **Priority Issue 2: Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills**

Prince Edward 4-H can address this issue through numerous opportunities provided to the agent from Virginia 4-H. Success in this area will involve exposing youth to impactful experiences inside and outside of our community. Providing them with leadership opportunities and guiding them through making important decisions for themselves will all aid in the goal of fostering healthy and productive adults in the community. Partnerships with the local schools is paramount for successful programming to be offered to the applicable ages. 4-H will partner with other program areas to offer diverse opportunities.

## **Priority Issue 3: Protecting Water Quality, freshwater resources, and reducing misuse and overuse of pesticides and fertilizers**

Partnerships with several local agencies will aid in addressing this need in our community. A major partner will be the Soil and Water Conservation District. Partnerships with 4-H will help educate future stewards of the environment on best practices when dealing with our waterways. Programming can include seminars and programs on best practices to maintain good water quality, providing opportunities to volunteers to do local waterway cleanups, providing educational programming to local producers in the proper use of pesticides and fertilizers, and providing educational programming to homeowners in the proper use of these chemicals.



## Appendices

### Appendix A: Email Example of Needs Assessment Survey



### Are you interested in educational programming?

Prince Edward County Extension wants you to help us identify needs in the community by completing a short survey. We greatly appreciate your participation. Click the link or scan the QR code below.

[Needs Assessment Survey](#)



### Appendix B: Website Example of Needs Assessment Survey

Prince Edward County Needs Assessment Survey

August 1, 2023, 9am – October 18, 2023 11 pm.

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Prince Edward County Office is conducting a needs assessment this year. This survey will help us identify community needs, which then can help shape our Extension programming.

It would be helpful to us if you could take about 10 minutes to complete this survey. You do not need to be familiar with our programs or have participated in any of our programs. We would like to hear from lots of people, the more feedback, the better.

Please help us by sharing this survey with others who live or work in Prince Edward County. Please share the survey link with your contacts, networks and connections. Again, it is not necessary to have participation in Extension programs before.

Needs Assessment Survey Link: [https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eez00QAmxJ7Dkpg](https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eez00QAmxJ7Dkpg)

We also plan to print and distribute the survey and use the Offline app.

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