



Situation Analysis Report

Culpeper County

2018

UNIT Extension Staff

Becky Gartner, Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, Unit Coordinator

Cristy Mosely, 4-H Extension Agent

Carl Stafford, Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Agent

Shaw Appling, Horticulture Extension Agent

JoAnna Kilby, 4-H Program Assistant

Brenda Watkevich, Family Nutrition Program Assistant, Adults

Georgette Mosley, Family Nutrition Program Assistant, Youth

Jennifer Fichthorn, Opioid Program Coordinator

Cindy Atkin, Unit Administrative Assistant

Heather Thompson, Unit Administrative Support

UNIT Extension Leadership Council

Larmie Wilson, Chair
Jennifer Houck
Susan Ishmael
Brian Thompson
Roger Suder
Jack Frazier, ExOfficio, Board of Supervisors

Introduction

The Culpeper County Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and the Culpeper County VCE staff conducted a comprehensive Situational Analysis during June – December 2017. The VCE staff and ELC members worked together to develop and distribute the survey in the County. The on-line survey was shared with non-profit organizations, 4-H parents and volunteers, Master Gardeners, Culpeper County employees, Culpeper County public schools and agricultural user groups. The survey link was posted in a news article, on the Culpeper County VCE website and the Culpeper County 4-H Facebook page. The VCE staff manned a booth at Culpeperfest and had participants who stopped by the booth complete the survey in return for a chance to enter a drawing for a door prize.

Key informant interviews were conducted with farmers, agribusiness personnel, Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission employees, teachers, nursery business owners and Master Gardeners.

Once the data was collected, the ELC members and VCE staff met to go over the results and prioritize the issues.

Unit Profile

Culpeper County is located in the north-central Piedmont region of Virginia. The 2010 Census counted 46,689 residents and the 2020 projection is for 50,912 residents. This is a 9.04% increase and relates to a steady and consistent population growth trend that was started in 2000. The majority of the population are white (35,058), black or African American (7,368) and other (2,131). The Hispanic or Latino ethnicity includes 4,157 residents. English is the main language spoken but 1,177 (2.57%) of the population reported speaking English less than well.

There are two main age brackets within the County. The younger residents (under age 5 to age 19) 28% and middle age residents (ages 35 -54) 30%. Male and females are split approximately 50-50 in the Census data.

The County has a predominantly rural setting but is located at the junction of several major highways. The County is 75 miles southwest of Washington D.C and has been added to the [Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area](#). Commuting to work outside the County is common with 14,224 residents indicating they drive primarily to Fairfax, Fauquier or Prince William Counties for employment. There is also a large group that commutes to Culpeper County to work from the surrounding counties (9,276).

Culpeper County has developed a thriving and diversified economy with jobs in manufacturing, education, health care, finance, corrections, agriculture, horticulture and retail.

Ten Largest Employers

1. Culpeper County School Board
2. Culpeper Memorial Hospital
3. County of Culpeper
4. Wal Mart
5. S.W.I.F.T
6. Coffeewood Correctional Center
7. Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board
8. Cintas Corporation
9. VDOT
10. Masco Builder Cabinet

The median household income reported in 2017 was \$69,693 which is slightly below the Virginia median income of \$71,535 and above the US number of \$60,336. It was also reported that 9.9% of the County population live in poverty.

There were 16,637 households with an average of 2.87 persons living in the household. Approximately 86.1% of the households have a computer with 76.9% indicating that they have a broadband internet subscription.

Culpeper County has been known for its rural character and small town nature, but there has been some change due to the increased population and commercial business. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms increased from 731 from 667 in 2007. This is a 10% increase with the average size of the farm increasing to 173 acres from 167 acres in 2007. This can be explained by the division of larger tracts of land into smaller ones. As a result, there are 300 farms that are 10 – 49 acres in size.

The principal operator of the farms have another occupation outside of farming (432) as compared to those who report farming as their principal occupation (299). The age of the principal operator is 60.2 years and most are male (576).

The crops produced in Culpeper County is changing. The County ranks #2 in Virginia for number of acres of sod produced. For value of sales by commodity group Culpeper ranks #6 for nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod; #6 for horses, ponies and mules; #8 for cattle and calves; #10 for other animals and #21 for grains.

Land use for the greens industry seems to be increasing. The greens industry segment of agriculture includes greenhouse production, nursery stock, cut flowers, turf and Christmas trees. These farms are intensive operations on small acreage but with big economic benefits. Emerging opportunities in our agricultural economy include a focus on high quality horse hay,

local food, agritourism associated with our rural setting as a destination that includes wineries, breweries, farm tours and on farm events such as weddings.

According to the Public School Review, Culpeper County has a graduation rate of 89% which is slightly below the 2016 Virginia average of 91%. In 2018, there were 8,204 students enrolled in the school system. Hispanics made up 18% of the school population. Of the 10 schools in the County, 4 elementary and 1 middle school report that more than 50% of their students receive free and reduced lunches based on financial need.

In 2017, the Culpeper Public School System conducted a Youth Risk Behavior Survey for 7 – 12 grade students. The results indicate that:

- 30.7% have tried cigarette smoking
- 24.1% have used electronic vaping products
- 16.3% have seriously considered suicide
- 11.7% of 12 graders had taken prescription pain medication without a doctor's prescription

In 2017, Culpeper County had 14 deaths associated with fentanyl and/or heroin and 7 opioid related deaths. Several coalitions have been formed to address the drug problems in the County and surrounding areas.

Community and Resident Perspectives

The data for our situational analysis was collected from 106 surveys. The data was ranked and the top 10 very important categories were:

1. Environment
2. Health
3. Life Skills/Decision Making for Youth
4. Community Services
5. Water Quality/Quantity
6. Finances/Financial Management
7. Land Use
8. Small Business/Entrepreneurs
9. Careers
10. Food Safety/Preservation

The issues from the key informant interviews covered a large variety of areas. They included:

- LGBTQ youth and diversity education
- School safety
- Renovations and upkeep of downtown buildings
- Community pools
- Employment for youth
- Opioid epidemic
- Loneliness for senior citizens
- Lack of vocational education
- Lack of farm labor
- Ag profitability
- Future of agriculture and farms in the area
- Local markets for farmers
- Quantity of water supply
- Need more recreation opportunities
- Economic development to include agriculture, tourism

Priority Issues

The ELC and VCE staff met to go over the data and responses collected and decided to select general categories for priority issues with similar topics included within the issue.

1. Youth Concerns

Specific issues: careers, teen leadership, vocational skills, life skills, opioid crisis, youth activities, youth violence

How is VCE responding? VCE can best address this issue by supporting interdisciplinary programming. Combining the efforts of the 4-H, Family and Consumer Sciences, Agriculture, Horticulture, Family Nutrition Program and Opioid Prevention Program staff will allow for a broad approach to this issue. Partnerships with other agencies and community leaders is necessary to fully address the issue.

The 4-H program already focuses on developing leadership skills through the community club and camping program. Working together with FCS staff to present Kids Marketplace and Reality Store teaches youth decision making and financial skills. Other life skills are learned by participating in livestock projects, food challenge, judging teams and gardening activities.

Culpeper County has a high opioid usage. Staff will network with other agencies, coalitions and the school system to present prevention education to youth and families.

2. Health Concerns

Specific issues: obesity, nutrition, chronic disease, diabetes, aging, stress, food safety, water quality

How is VCE responding? The Family Nutrition Program addresses health and nutrition education through its programming with youth and adults. FCS programming includes nutrition, cooking, food preservation and ServSafe classes. Teaching nutrient management, preventing soil erosion and gardening practices will help ensure better water quality in the area. Agents from around the region work together to offer the drinking water testing program which educates homeowners.

Much of the work to address health issues will be done by working with our community partners (health department, school system, human services, community services board, master gardeners, master food volunteers, 4-H parents and volunteers, soil and water conservation district, parks and recreation, senior centers). These partnerships are very valuable to our work and helps us expand our outreach in the community.

3. Agricultural Stability

Specific issues: profitability, land use, water quantity, nutrient management, small farmers, pesticides, lack of labor

How is VCE responding? The traditional face of agriculture is changing in Culpeper County. The Agricultural and Horticultural staff are working with the greens industry, breweries, vineyards and small farmers to find niche markets. New grazing practices are presented to help producers increase profitability and make better use of their land. Pesticide education and certification programs will continue to be offered to homeowners, gardeners and commercial businesses.

Working through partnerships with producers, farm businesses, lenders, commercial growers, nurserymen, orchards, farm markets, 4-H youth and agribusiness there will be a variety of approaches used to address audiences and assist in solving issues.

