



Situation Analysis Report



Giles County 2018

Unit Extension Staff

Sarah Pratt, 4-H Youth Extension Agent
Jeannie Dudding, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent
Laura Reasor, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent
Gigi Robertson, FNP - Youth Nutrition
Rachel Owens, Interim Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent
Christy Mutter, Unit Administrative Assistant

Unit Extension Leadership Council

Brian Burch – Chair
Pat Hipkins
Anne Wheeler
Jean Vincel

Frank Strader
Perry Martin
Linda Johnson
Rick Stafford

Jeff Dinger
Ben Woods
Leon Law
Debby Ring

Billy Farrier

Introduction

Giles County conducted a comprehensive situation analysis throughout 2018. The situation analysis process was led by the Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and involved the development of a Giles County Unit Profile as well as gathering community 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 four times during the situation analysis process. At the first meeting, an overview of the situation analysis process was covered. An initial situation analysis plan was developed that included tasks and timelines for ELC members and VCE staff. Based on this, the first task was a review of the unit profile. At a second meeting of the ELC, the VCE staff presented a Community Survey for input from ELC members. A number of issues were identified from this compilation of topics. The group finalized the survey to be distributed via electronic means and printed copies. Surveys were distributed through a monthly mailing of the county trash bills. This was possible through a partnership between Giles County, the Giles Extension Unit, our district office, the Treasurer's office, and the county Public Service Authority. The survey was also distributed at the Newport Fair, through our agriculture mailing list, via a link on Unit website, <http://offices.ext.vt.edu/giles/> and local social media sites. The ELC also reached out to individuals in their respective communities to collect community member's surveys. At our third and fourth meetings of the ELC, the VCE staff updated group members to the progress made with collecting responses from the Community Survey. The Giles County VCE staff compiled the responses of the community survey and was able to identify top issues based on community responses. These items were presented to the Giles County ELC.

Unit Profile

Giles County is located in the southwestern part of Virginia, approximately 25 miles from Blacksburg and approximately 60 miles from Roanoke.

In Giles County, 36% of residents were between 35 and 59 years of age in 2011. Also 18% of Giles population was ages 65 years and older compared to Virginia's 12%. Also 22% of Giles population was ages 65 years and older compared to Virginia's 15%.

The racial composition of Giles County is 96% White, 2% Black or African American, and 1% being two or more races compared to 70% White, 20% Black or African American, and 3% being two or more races in Virginia.

In Giles County, the population age 25+ that have completed a bachelor's degree or higher is 17% compared to 37% in Virginia. 30% the population have an Associate's degree or have completed some college. The high school graduation rate is estimated to be 87% as of 2017 according to the US Census data.

The median household income is \$49,734 in Giles County compared to \$68,766 in Virginia in 2017, according to the US Census data.

The percentage of population from Giles County living below poverty level in 2017 was 12% compared to 11% in Virginia.

The unemployment rate in Giles County has decreased from 7.2% in January of 2017 to 4.3% in January of 2018, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This rate is higher than the state rate at 3.5% and the National Benchmark at 4.1% as of January 2018.

The top industries in Giles County in terms of employment are Manufacturing with 844 employees, Retail Trade with 689 employees, and Health Care and Social Assistance with 514 employees, according to the 2016 County Business Patterns data.

The number of uninsured people in Giles has decreased from 17% in 2013 to 11% in 2016, remaining just above the state percentage of 10%.

In Giles County for 2017-2018, 47% of children were eligible for free lunch compared to 44% overall in Virginia.

Morbidity among Giles County population in 2018 due to poor or fair health was 14% compared to 16% nationally. In addition, morbidity because of low birth weight was 10% compared to 8% nationally.

The data indicates that in Giles County adult obesity has increased from 29% in 2013 to 30% in 2018, remaining above the national percentage of 28%. Also 42% of Giles County restaurants are fast food compared to 27% nationally. Physical inactivity in Giles County was 32% compared to 22% nationally.

Data from 2015 on teen birth rate (15 to 19) indicated Giles County had 120 individuals per 1000 females in comparison with 38 per 1,000 females in Virginia.

The Virginia Department of Health reported a rate 29.7 deaths per 100,000 population for drug overdose deaths and 154.2 emergency department visits for overdosing per 100,000 population in Giles County for 2017. This is compared to Virginia's rate of 16.9 deaths per 100,000 and 120.9 emergency department visits for overdosing per 100,000 in the same year.

Death rates in Giles County (876/100K) were higher due primarily to heart disease and cancer when compared to Virginia (720/100K).

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the county has gained farms from 344 in 2007 to 378 in 2012 with the amount of land used for agriculture staying nearly the same. However, the average farm size has decreased by 9 acres.

The market value of products has increased nearly 61%. Livestock sales continue to make up the majority of the products sold in Giles County at 80%.

Community and Resident Perspectives

On December 12, 2018 the Giles County ELC reviewed issues and discussed the level of need in Giles County. The Giles Agriculture Advisory Council also provided input on top priority issues for the county. The attached Community Survey shows the range of issues identified by the ELC. The Community Survey was completed by 279 community members. Of the respondents that reported demographics, 72% of respondents were at least “Somewhat Familiar” with “Virginia Cooperative Extension”; 71% of respondents were female; 67% of respondents have an education level of Associate/Professional Certificate or higher; 90% of respondents were over the age of 40; 97% of respondents identified themselves as “White”; and 65% of respondents have a household income of less than \$70,000.

Priority Issues

Individuals ranked the issues as “Very Important,” “Somewhat Important,” “Unimportant,” or “No Opinion.” The issues that received the most “Very Important” rankings are listed below, in rank order:

- Employment Options
- HealthCare
- Water Quality/Quantity
- Substance Abuse
- Aging Population/ Long Term Care
- Educational Opportunities
- Parenting
- Life Skills/Decision-Making for Youth
- Youth Activities
- Child Development

The respondents were then asked to select, from their “Very Important” ranking, which items were top priority issues. Based on that information, the unit profile and resident perspectives data from above, the following top priority issues were identified for Giles County. The following issues listed are in alphabetical order not rank order.

After-School Care: The 4-H Agent is currently working to offer babysitting classes for teens twice per year; a week-long summer class, and a three-day class during Winter break. Teens who complete the class will earn their First-Aid/CPR certification and learn home-alone safety and child-care basics.

Aging Population/Long-Term Care: The elderly population has been identified to be one of the greatest underserved populations within Giles County. 20% of the population in Giles County is 65 years of age and older, compared to 14% in Virginia. The Family and Consumer Science Agent is working to collaborate with the Senior Center, the New River Valley Agency on Aging, and the Health Department to provide programs, education, and understanding of resources available to families, caregivers, and the relatives to address this topic.

Agriculture Production/Profitability: Agriculture Production/Profitability continues to rise to the top of the list for issues in Giles County. According to the Ag Census for Giles County, farm expenses per farm have increased from \$15,047 to \$26,066 between 2007 and 2012. Inputs like feed, fertilizer, and fuel tend to be what drives this increase in farm expenses. Although producers have very little control over these costs, they are able to control how they manage their operations to minimize the amount of inputs needed. Through extension programming we offer multiple educational opportunities like value-added marketing options (VQA Sales), Farm Management Series, Master Cattlemen's, the Multi-flora Rose Control Program, Kentland Field Day, forage and soil sampling, weed identification and control, on-site farm visits, Private Pesticide Applicator testing and recertification.

Agriculture Sustainability/Preservation: According to the VDACS website, the typical Virginia farmer is 59.5 years old with 36% of farmers being 65 years of age or older. The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service's most recent Ag Census data shows us that the number of young people entering farming continues to decline, but the number of new farmers and ranchers over the age of 35 as well as the number of smaller farms and ranches nationwide continue to rise. In order to address this issue of farm sustainability and preservation, we continue to offer links to programs such as the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition, the Farmer Veteran Coalition, and Annie's Project. All three of these programs offer educational opportunities for anyone interested in agriculture but focus on the historically underserved populations within the agriculture industry. The variety of agricultural literacy programs for youth offered by the ANR Agent helps to encourage younger generations to be more educated consumers and agriculturally aware even if they do not have plans to be directly involved in the agriculture industry.

Educational Opportunities: Educational opportunities are available across all three programs areas.

Agents and staff in Giles County work with a countywide initiative called FOCUS, Focusing on Communities Utilizing Services. This program concentrates on the areas/neighborhoods within the county that utilize the majority of responsive services creating financial burden on the county's resources. This group brings together the key agencies that can work within these neighborhoods to bring social and economic change, including Extension.

One specific program through ANR is the relationship between the Virginia Tech Leadership and Social Change Residential College and the Giles FOCUS program. Since 2018, the LSCRC and FOCUS program provide the opportunity for Giles at-risk youth to experience college through social outreach conducted by the LSCRC class that the ANR Agent serves as an instructor of.

Employment: The percentage of high school students in Giles County who enrolled in an institution of higher education within 16 months of graduation was 62% in 2015. The Family and Consumer Science Agent of VCE will support the identified need of employment readiness to participate and assist with career fairs, job fairs, and education on maintaining a job position.

The Giles County 4-H Teen Leadership Club gains experience in the application and interview process as part of their preparation for working at 4-H summer camp as teen counselors.

Life Skills/Decision – Making for Youth: Extension offers youth opportunities to practice independent decision making skills, collaboration, communication, conflict resolution, time management at Junior 4-H Summer Camp, Cloverbud and Junior Day Camps. In the Giles County 4-H Teen Leadership Club, youth are able to develop life skills such as communication, collaboration, problem solving, leadership, public speaking, and stress management.

Extension also offers public speaking opportunities to the 4th graders at Narrows Elementary and Macy McClaugherty and is currently working to expand the public speaking program to Eastern Elementary and 5th graders in the county.

Giles County Extension is currently working to offer Reality Store in conjunction with Career Day at New River Community College.

Nutrition/Obesity: The 2018 Carillion Community Health Assessment collected data showing that the medium BMI for Giles County was 28.3. This number is in the overweight range of the scaling system, but less than 2 points away from the obese range. Nutrition, physical activity, and other health factors play a large role in the cause of obesity at any age. FCS offers programs in regards to healthier choices at the grocery store, in a restaurant, and tips to increase daily physical activity to prolong onset of disease.

Extension also offers opportunities for youth to practice healthy living and an active life style with outdoor activities at 4-H Junior Summer Camp and summer day camps for youth ages 5-8 and 9-12.

Parenting: There is a reported 26% of children living in single parent households in Giles County, and 32% of children are reported to be living with their grandparents with no parent of the child present. Virginia Cooperative Extension has available resources to improve the quality of childcare services through education, community partnerships, and program collaboration. Programs relating to what can be expected as a new parent, being a single parent, and how to manage new experiences can be offered to the community and provide help and support to those situations.

Substance abuse/Opioid Crisis: In 2016, the Health Commissioner of Virginia declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency. According to the Curb the Crisis website (developed by The Governor's Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse in Virginia), "Teens and young adults are especially vulnerable to prescription drug abuse. Young adults (18-25) abuse prescription drugs at the highest rate and use them for non-prescribed reasons. One in four teens report misusing or abusing prescription drugs - a 33% increase in the past five years. Additionally, over 2/3 of people (over 12) who abuse prescription medications report that they obtained the medicine from a family member or friend for free." This epidemic is widespread but has proven to be of more concern in rural areas like Giles County and Southwest Virginia.

Through our combined programming efforts, particularly those focused on youth, the Giles Unit strives to provide educational opportunities and activities that promote healthier life decisions thus indirectly contributing to the battle against the opioid crisis.

Youth Activities: All three agents in the Giles Unit conduct youth activities.

The Giles County Extension Leadership Council and Giles County Extension Office host the "Safety Celebration" for the sixth graders in our county. During this field trip, students rotate through a series of stations that address various safety topics such as staying home alone, farm equipment safety, lawn mowers and ATVs, Internet safety, interacting with domestic animals, food preparation, and water safety. The main outcome is that students who attended will make better decisions when faced with potential safety hazards. They will consider their own health, change detrimental behaviors that put themselves and others at risk, and gain valuable life skills.

FCS provides educational programs that include teaching culinary skills, home economics, and financial management, both as after-school and summer camp programs.

The ANR Agent is involved in many youth activities to promote agricultural literacy. Some of these activities include agriculture day camps, career days at the elementary schools and New River Community College, Ag Literacy Week reading in the schools in conjunction with Farm Bureau, and visits to the schools and head start programs with various animals. The ANR Agent is involved with the high school agriculture and FFA programs including the Giles County Agriculture Land Lab. She is also active with Virginia FFA by assisting with various career and leadership development events.

Giles County 4-H offers extended learner opportunities such as in-school STEM programming, public speaking opportunities, Giles County 4-H Teen Leadership Club, Newport Lucky Clovers, outdoor adventure day camps, and Junior 4-H overnight camp. 4-H also offers short-term/one-day opportunities; art with 4-H during the summer lunch program, story-time and STEM programming at the Pearisburg Public Library, and field trips for teens.

Appendix

The following sources were used to collect data to prepare this report. All data collected from these sources were current as of December 31, 2018.

US Census Report- 2017 Estimates
County Business Patterns Data- 2016
Bureau of Labor Statistics- 2018
Virginia Department of Health- 2017
USDA's Agricultural Census- 2012