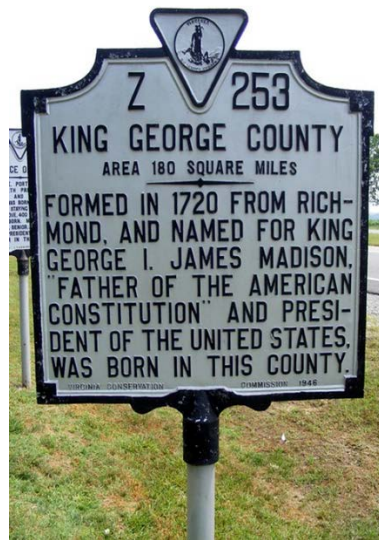




## Situation Analysis Report



## King George County 2018

### King George Office Staff:

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## Introduction

The King George County Staff and the Extension Leadership Council (ELC) began discussion of the Situation Analysis in February 2018. ELC Members included Barry Hamilton (Chair), Mary Ellen Green, James Bell, Darlene Wernesman, and Carolyn Bell. As some of the ELC members were new, the Extension staff took great care to explain the guidelines and procedures for conducting the situation analysis. After spending some time creating a survey and a list of important government and non-government organizations and businesses in King George county, informal interviews (face-to-face and telephone) were conducted throughout the summer and early fall with key informants.

## Unit Profile

King George County is located in Eastern Virginia at about midpoint between Richmond, VA, and Washington, D.C. Its rural and urban landscape traversed by two major thoroughfares, US Routes 3 and 301, with Route 3 providing easy access to I-95. Its northern boundary is the Potomac River and the southern boundary is the Rappahannock River. King George has many historic and scenic resources including Belle Grove Plantation (the birth home of President James Madison) and Caledon State Park.

**Population:** King George is one of the smallest counties in Virginia yet the 69th most populated with approximately 26,337 people in 2017. Age distribution data: 25.3% persons under 18 and 12.8% persons 65 years and over. Female person: 49.3 and Veterans from 2013-2017 were 3,386. Population diversity is predominately white (77.6%), African American (16.4 %), Hispanic (5.1 %), other races (2.4%), and persons speaking language other than English 4.1%. Census data from 2010 -2017 revealed the population increased by 11.7% for that time period. According to the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Science, King George is expected to undergo a significant population growth 30,494 by 2030 and 34, 955 by 2040.

**Child Well Being:** According to Kids Count, 51.3% children under 6 had all parents in the labor force with 106 children receiving childcare subsidies in 2017. There were 559 children living in poverty. Children who were food insecure 11.1% and 47% lived in households receiving SNAP. Thirty-five percent of the student population were approved for free and reduced lunch. Children living in single parent households 27%. Teen parents: 33 births per 1,000 female population ages 15-19.

Physical abuse and neglect are the two primary reasons children are removed from the home. There were 184 reports accepted by VDSS for physical neglect in King George. Physical neglect due to opioids and other drug abuse has become a key factor in the increase number of grandparents raising grandchildren. In 2015, approximately 66, 722 grandparents in Virginia had primary responsibility for their grandchildren.

**Health:** The county's adult obesity rate was 28% and 21% were physically inactive in 2017. The state was 27% and 19% respectively. The obesity rate for low income preschoolers was also 28%. Research reveals overweight preschoolers are likely to become overweight adults.

Excessive drinking was 19% and insufficient sleep was 34%. Motor vehicle death crashes: 19% and alcohol impaired driving deaths: 10%. From 2012-14, there were 11 overdose drug deaths.

Adults uninsured 11% and children 5%. Babies born by Medicaid: 26.8%. Patient/primary physician ratio: 6340:1.

**Education:** From 2013-2017, 93.8% of the population 25 years of age or older had high school diploma or higher and 34.2% had a bachelor's degree or higher. According to Virginia Department of Education, 94% of the students graduated on time with 4.32% drop out rate in 2017. The county has three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. A host of regional and satellite higher education institutions educate King George residents including Rappahannock Community College at King George High School (Career and Technical Center) and University of Mary Washington-Dahlgren.

**Employment:** The county serves as an industrial and technological hub in Virginia including the federal government and tenant contractors, manufacturing facilities, and educational institutions. According to data from the county's Economic and Development Office, the highest paying industries in the county were utilities (\$98,138), Professional, Scientific, Tech Services (\$81,700), and Educational Services (\$45,972). Industries providing employment: Public administration, Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services, educational, health and social services, and retail trade. The largest employer in the county is the federal government's Naval Support Facility in Dahlgren (over 7500 jobs); however, 49% of population made long commutes out of the county to their employment in 2017. The Virginia Employment Commission reported the unemployment rate in King George was 3.9. Census data estimated median household income in 2013-2017 as \$84,770 with 1,753 people living in poverty.

**Housing:** Homeownership rate (2017) was 75.6% with median home cost at \$294,300. Median gross rent for 2013-2017 was \$1,178. The county's housing cost of living: 137.6. More expensive than the national cost of 100.

**Agriculture:** Farms are decreasing nationwide: National: 2,205,607 (2007) to 2,109,303 (2012) and state 47,383 (2007) to 46,030 (2012). In King George, the number of county farms decreased from 180 (2007) to 160 (2012) with average size of farms at 152 acres. Average total farm production expenses per farm: \$36,630 and the net operating income was -\$7,357. The average age of the principal farm operator is 59 years.

Nationally, the number of harvested acres of vegetables decreased from 4.68 million acres in 2007/to 4.37 million in 2017. The opposite is true of the number of vegetable operations. According to AG Census, the US has 5,104 vegetable farms in 2017 compared to 2007. In 2010, a USDA's national study revealed people preferred local food versus imports because of the 1) freshness (85%), 2) supported the local economy (75%), and 3) know the farmer or source of food (58%).

According to Virginia's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, agriculture has an economic impact of \$52 billion annually and creates hundreds of thousands of jobs.

*The above quantitative data was compiled from local, state, and national online databases including the US Census Bureau, USDA, Kids Count, Child Welfare League of America, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Employment Commission, King George Economic Strategic Plan, and King George County Schools.*

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

After initially reviewing the King George Unit profile, the ELC members had some discussion regarding:

Net operating income per farm: Decreased from \$8,852 (2007) to -\$7,357 (2012)

Educational attainment: 9th to 12th grade with no diploma increased from 917 (2007) to 984 (2011)

African American population: Decreased from 17.9% to 16.4%.

Children living in poverty: Increased from 8% (2010) to 10% (2013).

Children population 4H age - Increased for Cloverbuds (5-9) from 6.88% (2007) to 7.20% (2011). Slight decreased with ages 10-14 from 8.2% (2007) to 8.02% (2011) and ages 15-18: Decreased from 7.50% (2007) to 7.32% (2011).

The qualitative data was gathered from interviews with 11 key informants (five females and six males) and prioritized from their similar responses. Respondents represented the following agencies and organizations: economic and development office, parks and recreation department, church deacon association, community food pantry, residential housing association, county school system, county administration, chamber of commerce, and two civic associations. After the Unit Staff and ELC compiled the quantitative and qualitative data, the following priority issues emerged.

## **Priority Issues**

**Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) - Water quality, farming, local foods, tourism, affordable housing**

In 2007 the county had 180 farmers by 2013 there were only 160. Many factors could have attributed to the loss including lucrative development opportunities, losses in traditional wholesale production, farmers retiring, or unreported profits with small ruminants or value-added production. According to USDA, 75% of Americans favored food grown in the US versus imported and specifically obtain food through local sources. As consumers request for more local foods, small farm operations including commercial supported agriculture (CSA) and farmers' market enterprises present new outlets.

Water concerns included protecting water quality, water access for recreation, high water hook-up fees, and problems with the water service authority.

The county has a myriad of tourist opportunities awaiting to be fully developed including historic resources (i.e. Belle Grove, Ralph Bunche High School, Cleydel), access to two rivers, outdoor sports and arts events, and local parks (i.e. Caledon Park). Many teachers, first-responders, service members, young professionals, and others have difficulty obtain affordable housing in the county.

**VCE Response:** As one respondent said, "Our livelihood and recreation are important however we should be mindful of the environment and our rural nature". Extension offers a host of educational programs to resolve economic and stewardship conflicts that would help citizens protect the environment while allowing economic benefits and enjoyment of the county's natural resources.

VCE promotes agricultural and home horticultural BMPs to farmers and landowners and regionally educates about land conservation and preservation options through field days, home visits, newspaper articles, and workshops/seminars (including Pesticide Certification Training and Well Water Clinic).

VCE collaborates with community partners to foster a strong local food presence through diverse community-based outlets (farmers markets, CSAs, Farm to School sourcing, food banks and pantries, WIC, "Buy Fresh Buy Local" and "SNAP Fresh Food Free \$\$ Incentives", agritourism, and local foods in retail markets.

VCE offers educational programming to increase agricultural and environmental awareness to the public (Green Talks Series, Farm to School, AG in the Classroom, Helping Hands and Envirothon 4-H clubs, Vegucation Station at the Farmers Market, 50-Mile Meal, Home Show, Native Plants Project at Cedell Brooks Jr. Park, etc.)

Further, VCE's Community Vitality (CV) and Virginia Beginning Ranchers and Farmers Extension specialists can help the boost the local economy through local foods while protecting its rural landscapes and natural resources. Specifically, specialists with local Extension Agents work together with elected officials and community leaders to create a fully developed local food systems in the community that integrates food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management to maximize the environment, social, and economic health in the County. Extension CV specialists

also provide “Main Street” educational resources that include Agri-tourism and multi-use opportunities to enhance tourism and possibly affordable housing potential.

VCE partners with organizations like Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, VA Farm Bureau, and others to insure that agricultural, natural resources and conservation programs are provided to area farmers and landowners to help improve production and water quality, reduce soil run off and pesticide uses, and increase the number of landowners participating in cost share conservation programs.

### **Youth Development – Leadership, Career, Role Models**

Respondents wanted more positive youth development, recreation, and career activities. Some felt many young people lacked basic life skills, spent too much time in front of screens, and were exposed to many negative influences (i.e. drugs). As some of the highest paying employers (Professional, Scientific, Tech Services) are nestled in King George, many respondents wondered if our kids were being equipped to take those jobs in the future and stay in the county.

**VCE Response:** VCE’s 4-H Programs empower children and youth ages in self-efficacy, teamwork, leadership, and life skills.

VCE’s 4-H Clubs elect officers each year and club members get valuable leadership experience serving in these positions. Club members participate in various activities and special events that support their club’s area of interest. Each of the 4-H clubs is required to perform at least one service project during the year. These projects teach the members the importance of giving something back to the community by volunteering their time, energy and resources. 4-H Clubs include Archery, Cloverbud, Ecology, Fancy’s Friend Dog, Garden, Helping Hand Community, Envirothon, Heritage, Horse and Pony, Horsin’ Around, Livestock, Quilts, Shooting, Lego Robotics, and Teen Leadership. Club members have the opportunity to participate in several county 4-H activities such as Achievement Night, Fall Festival Parade and Presentation Night.

VCE’s 4- H Camping program is one of the most beneficial leadership and youth development vehicles available to the 4-H age youth. Children, ages 9-13, have an opportunity for personal growth through group bonding and teamwork experiences. They can develop self-esteem, self-worth, and communication and leadership skills through a variety of activities. Teen counselors ages 14-18 learn about the concepts of responsibility, self-discipline, and motivational techniques while serving as staff during this annual 4-H summer residential camp. This experience provides the teens with a variety of real-world leadership development challenges.

VCE’s 4-H Congress provides high school youth with the opportunity to learn about leadership development through workshops and competitions. Congress delegates also

have the opportunity to participate in numerous service projects in and around Virginia Tech and learn about career opportunities through activities provided by the university.

VCE's 4-H STEM programs foster interest in STEM-related careers, equip young with skills they need to succeed in life, and are available through local clubs, schools, and camping. Research show 4-H STEM programs are proven to get young people excited about science through fun, hands-on activities. 4-H STEM partners include King George County Public Schools, King George Parks and Recreation, Virginia Department of Forestry, Caledon State Park and others.

## **Family and Consumer Sciences- Parenting, Obesity, Food Security, Aging, Drug Use**

Almost 50% of county citizens made long commutes out of the county to work in 2017. Twenty-seven percent of children under 5 had both parents in work force. The working poor households live paycheck to paycheck and struggle through food security with free and reduced lunch programs and SNAP benefits.

Many commuting families are eating quick fast food meals and barely eating together. Most fast food diets consist of highly processed foods that can lead to obesity and chronic diseases. Research show eating together produces not only better eating habits and healthy menus but better family communication and good grades in school as well.

Chronic disease and life struggles have challenged many families to opioid dependency. There were 11 drug overdose deaths in King George from 2012-2014.

Many aging citizens are finding themselves raising their grandchildren because of physical neglect due to drug abuse and other negative behaviors by their adult children.

Other aging citizens, in the county, are also finding themselves targeted for fraud and scams related to health, finances, and even recreation.

**VCE Response:** As families are the cornerstone of society, Family and Consumer Sciences programs are designed to support families with information and resources that respect and build on family strengths to afford stronger communities.

VCE provides evidence-based parenting education programs that holistically address the social-emotional, nutrition, and financial needs of families. Parenting education programs include "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren", "Success for Teen Parents Program", "Project Lift", "First Five Years", and "Active Parenting Teens".

VCE equips childcare providers with early learning training that focuses on the first five-years of life, school readiness, and building a strong parent/ provider partnership. Programs include "Family Fair "(a regional all-day parent/ provider event),

“Project Trip” (senior and preschool playgroup), and “Just in Time Parenting” age-paced newsletter for parents and childcare providers).

VCE partners with government agencies, schools, churches, food banks and pantries, non-profits groups, and local businesses to help feed the hungry, combat obesity with good nutrition and physical activity, educate the next generation about where food comes from, and support local foods consumption. From “Vegucation Station at the Farmers Market” and “Summer Youth Meals” to “Community Supported Agriculture” and “Farm to School Month”, these programs help families and communities understand and respect a healthy and sustainable local food system. Other programs like “Cook Smart, Eat Smart” and “Small Steps to Health and Wealth” show families how to eat healthier foods at home and when eating out plus how to save money too. To reinforce good eating habits for the whole family, “Teen Cuisine”, “Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids”, and “Nutrition on the Bookshelf” are for high school students, preschoolers, and those in between. Additionally, the Family Nutrition Program (FNP) meet the unique needs of limited income families with nutritional programs throughout the lifespan.

VCE offers many programs for senior citizens like Active Aging and LIFT. The programs not only provide nutrition and physical activity education but help seniors evaluate nutritional trends and avoid scams.

VCE piloted a grant funded opioid prevention project to help tackle the commonwealth’s rural opioid addiction problem. Extension Specialists with local Extension Agents are able to work with local governments and community organizations to help meet this crisis many families are facing in the County. The local FCS Extension Agent, also, presents drug awareness through “Health Rocks” to children and youth.

**Out of our scope:** Broadband internet access, public transportation, and service authority management.