

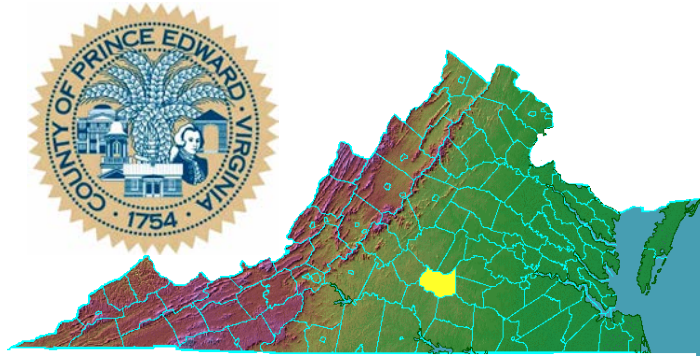


# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

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# Situation Analysis Report



# Prince Edward County

# 2018

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## Introduction

The Prince Edward Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and Extension Staff collaborated to conduct a community needs assessment during the 2018 calendar year resulting in a comprehensive situation analysis.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were 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, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 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 32 respondents for the survey, 44 respondents for the abbreviated survey, and 9 Forum attendees. 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 2018 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 66.8 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 Hamden-Sydney College.

### Population Data

Prince Edward's population grew between 2000 and 2010, but shrunk 2.8% after 2010, down to an estimated 22,703 residents in 2017. The population of individuals 65 and older increased 10% during this same time period; in 2016, they comprised 16.3% of the total population. Correspondingly, populations of working-age adults and youth under 18 years old decreased. Youth were 16.1% of the total population in 2016, down from 17.4% in 2010. However, the Virginia Employment Commission predicts that the county's population will increase to around 26,000 in 2030, with growth in both the share of youth and over 65's in the population.

While age demographics are changing, the race and gender demographics of Prince Edward have remained steady since the 2013 Situation Analysis. Fifty percent of the population is female. Sixty four percent is white and 32.5% is African American, with Hispanic (2.4%) and Asian (1.4%) populations making up the difference.

## Housing

Despite the dip in population between 2010 and 2016, the number of housing units grew by 3.3% to 9,450 units in July 2017. Of these, 64.6% are owner occupied, down from 65.7% in 2012, and 68.7% in 2000. Ownership lags only one percentage point behind the state rate, but the median value of owner occupied units is about \$100,000 less than the state median. Median value is increasing, however. It currently stands at \$151,200, compared with \$147,400 in 2011 and \$93,000 in 2000.

Eighteen percent of households are classified by County Health Rankings as having a severe housing problem, which could mean a lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities, overcrowding, housing costs that exceed 50% of income on a monthly basis, or a combination of these factors.

## Income and Poverty

In 2016, the most recent year for which data are available, median household income in Prince Edward was \$42,283 and per capita income was \$18,789. The corresponding state figures are \$66,149 and \$34,967, respectively. Per capita income has risen about \$1,250 since the 2013 Situation Analysis (which used statistics from 2011), but household income has fallen from \$50,896, a drop of 17%.

Given the drop in household income, it is unsurprising that poverty has risen. In 2013, the figure stood at 19.1%; now, it is 22.6%, over twice the state poverty rate of 10.6%. Poverty is higher among children. The Annie E. Casey Foundation found that in 2016 Prince Edward's children fell below the poverty line at a rate twice that of children state-wide—28% versus 14%. According to the Virginia Department of Education, 75.5% of students enrolled in Prince Edward County Public Schools qualified for free and reduced school lunch in the 2017-2018 school year.

## Education

Prince Edward Public Schools are comprised of an Elementary, Middle, and High School, all located on a single campus at the juncture of Routes 15 and 460. During the 2016-2017 school year, 2,134 students were enrolled in the Public School System. They represented 79% of students within the county; 424 students (15.5%) attended the Fuqua School, 14 (0.5%) attended Prospect Christian Academy, and 138 (5%) were homeschooled. Demographics for public school students do not coincide with county-wide demographics. Fifty-six percent of students are African-American, and 36% are white.

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. Thirty percent 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, Hampden-Sydney College, and Holly Manor Nursing Home. By industry, 59% of the jobs in the county are in the Government (Local, State, and Federal), Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail sectors.

Virginia Employment Commission data from 2014 indicate residents who commute out outnumber those that find work within the county by a ratio of 9 to 5. This is not likely due to a lack of jobs within Prince Edward, given the fact that numbers of out-commuters and in-commuters are almost equal.

By 2017, unemployment had fallen from the 2012 rate of 8.7%, but, at 5.0% it still stood higher than the state rate of 3.8%. Monthly rates for the first half of 2018 indicate that unemployment rates for both the county and the state were continuing their downward trends.

## **Community Health**

Out of 133 Virginia localities, County Health Rankings ranked Prince Edward 106<sup>th</sup> for Health Outcomes (length and quality of life), and 97<sup>th</sup> for Health Factors (health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment). Physical environment was the only measure on which Prince Edward scored in the top quartile of localities.

The adult obesity rate is 34%, and 17% of the population is classified as food insecure and 12% is classified as having limited access to healthy foods (i.e. low income individuals far from a grocery store). Of adults, 16% are uninsured, 19% are current smokers, and 12% of those 20 and older have been diagnosed with diabetes.

## **Agriculture**

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture—the most recent data available—there are 413 farms in Prince Edward County, with an average size of 191 acres. Altogether, Prince Edward's farms cover 78,916 acres, or 35% of the county's land area. The number of farms and total acreage have both declined since 2007—7% and 4%, respectively. The end result is a reversal of the trend towards many, smaller farms recorded in the 2013 Situation Analysis.

Of the 413 principal operators in Prince Edward, 67.5% reported a primary occupation other than farming. Additionally, 39.7% of farms had less than \$1,000 in sales, 42.9% had between

\$1,000 and \$19,999, 12.6% had between \$20,000 and \$99,999, and 4.8% had sales greater than \$100,000. Average net cash farm income was \$4,405, a \$271 increase from 2007.

Nearly half of all farmland in Prince Edward is woodland, with the remaining half evenly divided between cropland and pastureland. The top crop item in terms of acreage was forage (hay, haylage, grass silage, green chop), which occupied 11,672 acres of cropland. In distant second place was silage corn, which was grown on 1,396 acres. Corn for grain, soybeans for beans, and barley for grain were also grown.

In terms of livestock, the 2012 Census inventoried 67,615 broilers and 12,839 head of cattle. Animal agriculture was the top earner for the county, with \$6,415,000 in sales from poultry and eggs, and \$3,607,000 in sales from cattle and calves.

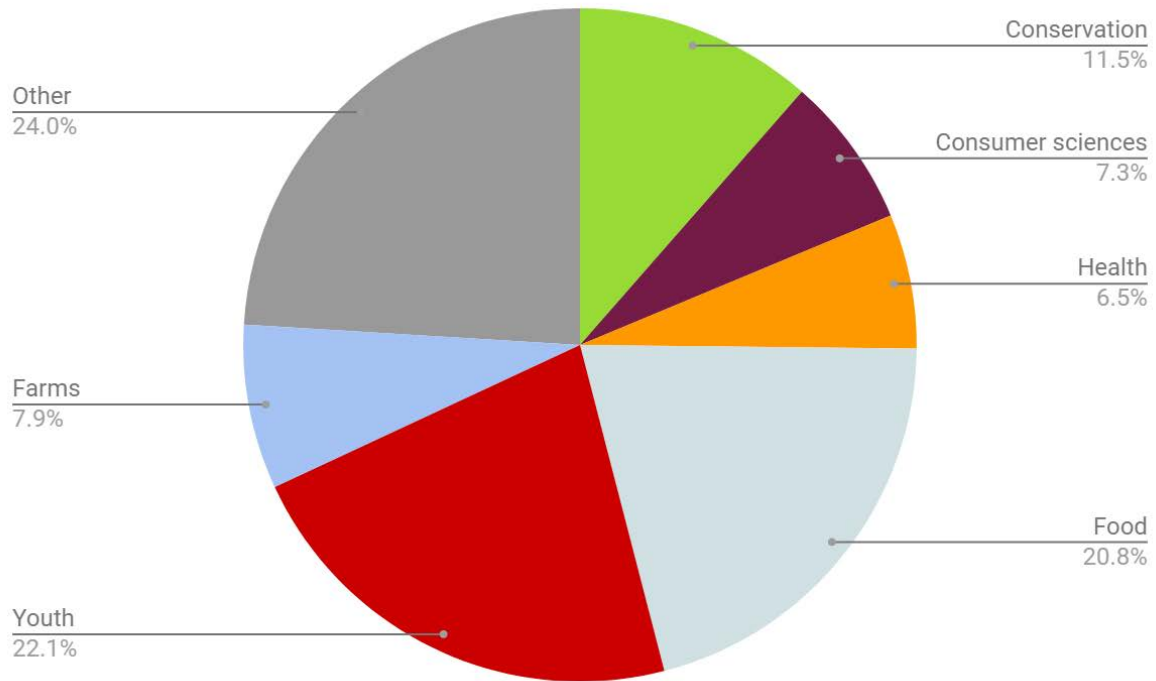
## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

Based on the information established in the Unit Profile, staff and Extension Leadership Council members worked diligently 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 different focus groups and key representatives, and held an open forum at the Train Station in Downtown Farmville. 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 90 direct respondents, not including discussions with specific groups where information was also collected and valued. These groups included the Farm Bureau board members and the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Prince Edward County. There was minimal online responses, which was a surprise; however, the abbreviated card survey seemed to be the most effective distribution method.

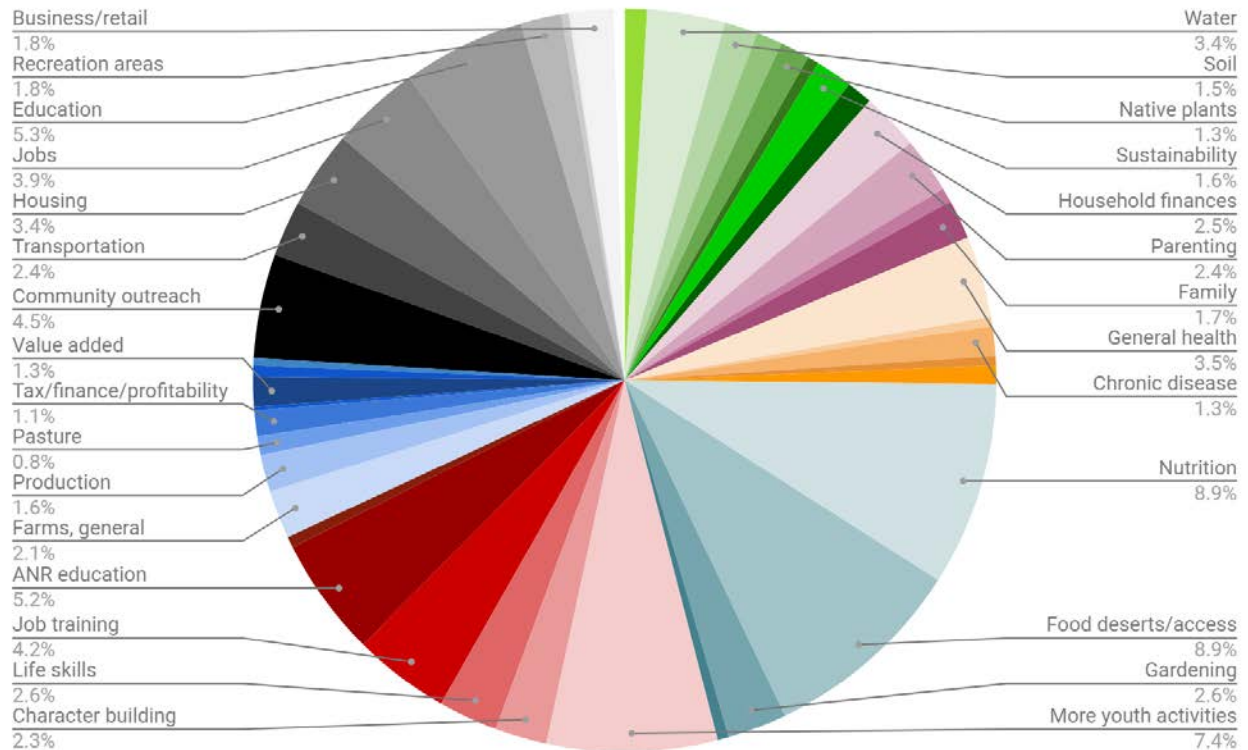
### **Analyzing the Data**

From the survey responses, data was collected and grouped into broad categories and then divided into categories that were more specific. The broad categories included youth, food, conservation, consumer sciences, health, and other (meaning issues that are outside of the scope of extension's mission). These broad classifications were divided into more specific categories, for example, youth was broken down into more youth activities, agriculture and natural resources education, job training, life skills, character building, and drug education. Below you will find the results of the data and further identification of priority issues found in Prince Edward County.

## Broad Needs Found in Prince Edward County



## Specific Needs Found In Prince Edward County



\*\*\*Percentage based on the number of responses related to each subject collected from all surveys and forum. Some sections in the bottom pie chart were too small to be recognized. These include: Youth- drug education (.5%); Farms- labor (.5%), commercialization (.3%); Conservation- general conservation (1%), waste management (1.1%); Health- healthcare (.8%), mental health (.4%), exercise (.4%); Food- food preservation (.5%); Other- town planning (.5%), childcare (.3%).

## Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile, surveys, forum, focus groups, and key informants, the following issues were identified as priorities for Prince Edward County. Even though the “Other” category had high rankings, these issues were out of the scope of extension and not considered as priority in our analysis.

### Issue 1: Food Deserts/Access to Food

Prince Edward County is considered a food desert. As defined by United States Department of Agriculture, food deserts are parts of the country void 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. In conjunction with this concept, transportation ranked high in the “Other” category. 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. However, there are produce farms located in some of the rural areas. Another contributor to the issue could be lack of knowledge and marketing of these local farms and distribution from producer to consumer.

#### Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

“More accessible organic food”

“Better healthy food options for families”

“Affordable, high quality fresh foods”

“Walmart being the only affordable grocery store”

“Natural grocery stores (like Whole Foods) [unavailable]”

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.

### Issue 2: Nutrition

Nutrition and food deserts are very relatable issues, together, totaling 18% of the responses from this community needs assessment. Nutrition is the sum of the processes by which a living organism takes in and utilizes food substances. First, they have to have access to the



food; it has to be available and they have to be able to get to it to consume it. Next, individuals need to know what is healthy versus unhealthy, and how to prepare the healthy options. Extension has the ability to help the public on many levels of nutrition.

Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

“Good eating habits”

“Adult education: nutrition, healthy eating”

“Improving health through diet and exercise”

“Nutrition of our youth”

“Healthy eating for children”

Prince Edward Virginia Cooperative Extension will continue to address the issue of nutrition by educating the public on healthy eating habits for adults and youth alike. In addition to growing their own fruits and vegetables, extension can also help educate these individuals on how to prepare and preserves these foods in a healthy way.

Nutrition is currently being addressed through programs such as Foods to FACES, Balanced Living with Diabetes, Living Healthy in the Heart of Virginia, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Healthy Retail Shop Smart, Eat Smart Program and vegetable gardening education and demonstrations in the VCE Prince Edward Demonstration Garden and Farmville Grows Community Garden.

**Issue 3: Need for More Youth Activities**

There are quite a few issues facing youth of today, from the opioid epidemic, to overuse of smartphones. From this community needs assessment, 7% of all responses were related to the lack of youth activities available in the county. In addition to youth activities, there was also a high ranking of the need for agriculture and natural resources education and job training for youth. Youth as a whole was the highest ranked as a broad category, excluding the non-extension scope issues. Youth is an extremely important sector of the community and of extension in general. The 4-H Youth Development program area of extension works hard to address the lack of activities in the community.

Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

“Something for youth to do”

“Need more afterschool programs”

“Community places for youth”

“More places for students to have to go hang out”

“Social interaction [of youth]”

“Raise expectations academically and behaviorally, taking more pride in their community”

Prince Edward Virginia Cooperative Extension will continue to provide activities for youth afterschool, during breaks and some holidays, on weekends, and during the summer. These activities strive to educate children on life skills, agriculture and STEM, and character building—all of which were mentioned in our community needs assessment. The youth of Prince Edward County need and have a place for activities with 4-H, as well as Agriculture and SNAP-Ed program areas. Prince Edward Extension strives to get students involved in hands-on, engaging, and fun learning techniques. Some of the regular 4-H programs include, Fun with Foods, Sewing, Knitting, STEM, Ecology, Livestock, and Canning. Annual Opportunities include Cloverbud Camp, Summer Camp, and Farm to Fork Day Camp.

#### **Issue 4: Agriculture and Natural Resources Education for Youth**

When sitting down with the members of Farm Bureau, a common theme was the lack of agriculture knowledge of youth specifically. There were comments about adults not understanding simple agriculture concepts, but the concern was more with the youth. Agriculture awareness was a large topic during that focus session, but also showed up in over 5% of the survey responses. Prince Edward being an agrarian community as a whole, it is very important for the citizens, especially the youth, to be aware of agriculture and natural resources happening in the county. There are farms in the county that would love to pass on agricultural practices to their youth. Making the youth more aware of these practices could improve agriculture on a larger scale.

#### Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

“Teaching children where their food comes from”

“Try to find ways to ease the process of young people looking to get into agriculture”

“General stewardship of the land and waters of our environment”

“Environmental education [for youth]”

“Teaching youth the basics of sustainability, how to garden, how to identify plants”

“Teaching youth how to grow their own food; teaching youth how to prepare food”

Prince Edward Extension is addressing this issue in many ways. Through collaboration of all program areas, agriculture and natural resources education is reaching the youth of the county. Some programs already being implemented include Agriculture Awareness Days for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, Soils classes for youth in and out of school, sustainable vegetable gardening, and Farm to Fork Camp. Increasing the number of students that Agriculture Awareness Days directly influence is being addressed and should improve in the coming years. With collaboration from Farm Bureau, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Master Gardener Volunteers, and other environmental agencies, implementation of a more agriculture and natural resources education will increase in the coming years.

### **Issue 5: Job Training for Youth**

Job training for youth was an important discussion in conjunction with agriculture education. Specifically, the need for trades related vocational training was discussed at different points throughout the community needs assessment. Producers and business owners have suggested that there are very few youth coming out of high school with simple skills needed in careers related to lawn care, farming, building, auto mechanics and plumbing, just to name a few. In addition to these specific skills, these youth are also lacking professionalism, social interaction, respect, teamwork, integrity, self-care, and work ethic.

#### Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

“Social interaction, showing respect, and self-care [of youth]”

“Not enough real world skills taught in school”

“More jobs for students”

“Farmers/tradesmen need a larger pool of workers to choose from”

“Trades and life skills need to be increase at a young age”

“Teach trades to children!”

“Interview skills”

Prince Edward Virginia Cooperative Extension could implement new programming to address this issue. Currently, gardening, sewing, knitting, and cooking are all skills that are being addressed in this county. Increasing education on interviewing, professionalism, teamwork, and work ethic would be a great addition. In addition, a series of trades-type classes would allow youth to learn skills such as using small machinery and simple hand-tools. The tradesmen are lessening each day; youth need to be available to fill those vacancies. Collaboration with local businesses would be a great way for youth to learn the trades that are needed.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Community Needs Assessment Survey



Prince Edward Cooperative Extension wants you to help us identify needs in the community. Once these needs are recognized, VCE, with the help of partnering agencies, will provide educational programming to address these needs.

What county are you a resident of? \_\_\_\_\_

How familiar are you with Virginia Cooperative Extension? (Circle one)

- Very familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not familiar

What is the best way to inform you of our services? (Circle one)

- Social Media
- Snail Mail
- Email
- Local media outlets

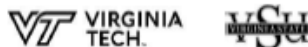
Related to Agriculture and Natural Resources, (anything dealing with plants, animals, soil, and water) what issues do you think are the most important in Prince Edward County? Rank in order of importance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Related to Family and Consumer Science, (family health and nutrition, money management and parenting, etc.) what issues do you think are the most important in Prince Edward County? Rank in order of importance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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Related to youth development what issues do you think are the most important in Prince Edward County? Rank in order of importance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your responses help us tailor our programming to meet the community needs.

If you would like to be added to our online monthly newsletter list, please provide your email address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Responses should be submitted at the Prince Edward Extension office either in person, faxed, or mailed at:

Prince Edward County Office  
P.O. Box 322  
100 Dominion Drive  
Farmville, VA 23901  
Fax: 434-392-4734

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## Appendix B: Abbreviated Survey Card

What do you think are the three most critical issues concerning the well being of residents/families, businesses, and farms in Prince Edward County? Rank these issues—1 being the most critical, 3 being not as critical. Please include any comments on the back.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Prince Edward County Virginia Cooperative Extension wants you to help us identify needs in the community. Once these needs are recognized, VCE with the help of partnering agencies will provide educational programming to address these needs.

If you prefer to take this survey online follow this link:



[https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eOGLmUSHOsXvWzr](https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eOGLmUSHOsXvWzr)

### **Questions:**

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