



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report



Greene County VA 2018

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Introduction

The Greene Unit of Virginia Cooperative Extension conducted a situation analysis for Greene County, which included a unit profile and major statistical changes over the past five years. Extension Staff had a series of discussions with Extension Leadership Council members as well as interviews and discussions with stakeholders throughout the community. A survey instrument was sent to over 500 clients and posted on Facebook, the county website, as well as our unit website. Once this information was collected, the information was shared with our Extension Leadership council members and interpreted by our Extension Staff.

Unit Profile

Geography

Greene County is located in both the Piedmont and Blue Ridge regions of Virginia, approximately 90 miles east of Richmond and 20 miles north of downtown Charlottesville, the nearest city. Geographically, Greene ranks as the second smallest county in Virginia, with 157 square miles.

Population

Greene's population density is 117.8 per square mile, second only to Albemarle County in Planning District 10 and significantly higher than its other neighboring counties of Page, Madison, and Orange. Greene County's 2017 population estimate is **19,612**, up 6.6 % from the 2010 population estimate of 18,393. With a growth rate slightly higher than the state average, Greene's population under the age of 10 increased slightly and other groups remained relatively constant, with a slight drop in elderly over the age of 80. The largest age group in Greene remains adults 25-54 years of age, which is over 43% of the population.

Greene has a low minority population, significantly lower than the state averages. The percentage of white persons remains the highest, at 88 %, followed by the Black or African-American population at 7%, the multiracial population at 2.7%, and the Asian population at 1.7%. The number of Hispanics has increased from 2.6% to 6.1% in Greene.

Economics

Greene County remains a bedroom community for Charlottesville and other employment areas. According to VEDP.org, only 25% of Greene residents have a commute of less than 15 minutes. The average commute for the remaining residents is 30 minutes. Greene County has only one manufacturer—Luck Stone Quarry. The largest employer in the county is the local government, which employs over 800 people. Lowes, Walmart and other retail

businesses employ over 700 individuals. Food service, elder care and other services make up a smaller percent of local jobs. <https://www.vedp.org/community-profiles>

Income

Median household income in Greene has gone up 7.7% since 2011 and now is higher than the median household income for the state of Virginia. The unemployment rate in Greene is 2.7 percent, but over 1300 persons in Greene are underemployed (working part-time or at jobs inadequate with respect to their training or economic needs. Over 9% of the County's population is at or below poverty level, with over 30% of this group below the age of 18.

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL	
All families	5.4%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	8.8%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	14.8%
Married couple families	3.0%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	5.3%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	18.7%
Families with female householder, no husband present	15.0%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	22.7%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	6.1%
All people	9.4%
Under 18 years	11.5%
Related children of the householder under 18 years	11.5%
Related children of the householder under 5 years	21.2%
Related children of the householder 5 to 17 years	8.2%
18 years and over	8.7%
18 to 64 years	10.6%
65 years and over	1.1%
People in families	6.9%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	23.5%

<https://factfinder.census.gov/>

Education

Greene County has 3001 youth enrolled in public school. All schools are accredited, but the some of the school's scores were below the state level, especially with black, economically disadvantaged, disabled and English learning students scoring lower. Over 95% of Greene youth graduate from high school on time. The Greene County Technical School The opening of the Eugene Guisepppe Center Branch of Piedmont Virginia Community

College (PVCC) in 2010 gave local residents greater access to post-secondary education. Over 200 high school students take classes at the Guisepppe Center through the dual enrollment program and 95 students are in the Early College Scholars program and will earn their associates degrees at the same time they earn their high school diploma.

The number of homeschoolers in Greene has increased over 55% since 2018, with 223 students, according to the Virginia Department of Education. There are currently no homeschool cooperatives functioning out of Greene, but there are several in neighboring counties. In addition, homeschool youth have the option of qualifying to enroll early at PVCC to supplement their education or earn their associates degree early.

Greene County also has two private schools: United Christian Academy, which has 253 students (not all of these are from Greene County) and the Blue Ridge School, which is a boarding school.

Almost 85% of the county's residents have a high school diploma or higher level of education. Over 25% have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Opportunities for higher education in our area include universities such as University of Virginia, James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University, all located within 35 minutes of Greene

Health/Quality of life.

Greene County ranks 39th out of 133 localities in Virginia on health factors. Over 29% of Greene families suffer from obesity. Only 73 % of Greene residents have access to exercise opportunities and 22% are physically inactive. Greene' access to physicians and care directly in the county is limited. Many families utilize Charlottesville/Albemarle physicians and medical facilities.

Agriculture

Greene County has 216 farms with a total of 27,276 acres in farmland according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture. The average size of farms in Greene is 126 acres. 50% (n=108) of census participants listed farming as their primary operation. Greene County is primarily a county that focuses on beef cattle and forage production, with 117 farms, or 54%, having cattle and calves on their operation and a total of 6,527 cattle and calves in total. Livestock and poultry greatly outnumber the amount of crops sold in the county with a market value of \$8,311,000.

There are no certified organic farms within the county. Of the 216 farms in the county, 20% (n=44) are primarily operated by women and 4% (n=10) have black or African American operators. There was an increase in the number of farms selling crops from 2007- there were 81 farms in 2007 and 87 farms in 2012. This follows the increase in farms that are producing as part of the local foods movement

Community and Resident Perspectives

With a growth rate slightly higher than the state average, Greene's population under the age of 10 increased slightly and other groups remained relatively constant. Income levels have increased since 2013 and unemployment is now at 2.7 %. Over 1300 persons in Greene are underemployed (working part-time or at jobs inadequate with respect to their training or economic needs. Over 9% of the County's population is at or below poverty level, with over 30% of this group below the age of 18. There is an increased availability of classes and enrollment has increased at the Piedmont Virginia Community College, giving a greater number of youth educational opportunities that were not available five years ago.

Several civic groups, primarily in the Stanardville area, have received revitalization grants and will be opening up a pavilion and farmers market in 2019.

Priority Issues

Agricultural Issues

Based on our local community needs assessment and direct interviews with stakeholders, the top four agriculture issues that participants listed as "very important" are agriculture production/profitability, assisting beginning farmers, animals and livestock, and promoting local food production. These four concern issues are all somewhat related and being addressed. Programs are being held to help educate local beef producers on better ways to raise cattle, increase production, become more efficient, and in turn, increase profit. Programs are also being held locally to help encourage producers to think through direct marketing to consumers, whether it be direct marketing local meats or produce. A farmers market has been started and is continuing to grow that has increased interest in production of local foods. Beginning farmers often reach out to the local agriculture agent for help on how to start a farm. Programs could be offered in the future to increase business skills and knowledge to allow participants to become more profitable in the future.

Community Issues

Encouraging New Businesses, Entrepreneurship

With very few industries in Greene, the top employers in Greene are retail stores, restaurants and the local government and school system. Based on conversations with the Greene 4-H Leadership Council and other stakeholders, the lack of new businesses in the community, and consequently, the lack of new jobs ranked as one of the top community issues. The following quote from our needs assessment survey mirrors the sentiments of a many of our stakeholders:

“Small business... Our community needs to encourage growth. Growth will bring in more tax revenue, which is vital to our community funding. Attracting large business would be good as well to assist with county revenue. Leadership needs to reevaluate how permits are issued in order to attract more business. Otherwise they will go to Albemarle which already has numerous new business, we are losing out on opportunities. Or perhaps Madison will start attracting business and we will lose.”

ANR agent Sarah Sharpe has addressed some of these issues regarding new farmers and by offering programs such as Direct Marketing, High Tunnel Production, Beef Programs, Introduction to Whole Farm Planning Farm Finances, Vegetable Production Meetings and Beekeeping classes. 4-H agent Kathy Alstat has worked with all Greene 4-H clubs, helping them develop fundraisers and entrepreneurial projects that teach youth about marketing and production. Further Extension programs could offer more educational opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners, Extension’s efforts in developing small businesses and encouraging economic growth should not duplicate efforts made by other organizations, but should complement ones offered through other programs such as any offered by Greene’s Economic Development Council or the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center.

Family and Youth

Youth Activities

Based on results of our community survey, activities for youth remain a priority issue. The Greene Extension Unit cannot readily address some concerns, such as the lack of recreational facilities.

The Youth Development Council (YDC) is now active at both elementary schools and afterschool intervention programs are now available to elementary school age youth. While there are a number sports and extra-curricular activities available to middle school youth through the schools, the recreation department and 4-H, one concern brought up by parents of middle school students is the lack of structured activities (five days a week) for youth in grades 6-8. Parents, through various community forums, have voiced concern over the fact that this age group is still not mature enough to be left to their own devices, but that after school programs do not always accept youth over the age of 12. Recently, Greene County announced the closing of its Afterschool Daycare Programs for grades K-5, which were housed at the schools. Lack of qualified staff, insufficient funds and difficulties with certification were all factors leading to the closure. Unfortunately, with the program closing in March of 2019, many families are struggling to find reasonably priced afterschool care for their children for the remainder of the school year and for the summer months.

4-H has one afterschool club (Youth Energized for Success) which meets on a monthly basis for middle and high school students. Other 4-H afterschool programming has been limited to occasional programs, short term programs such as robotics, cooking classes and occasional workshop, most of which have filled to capacity. Part of the limitations with 4-H afterschool

programs has been the availability of adult volunteers and so many programs have relied on paid staff and teen volunteers. In addition, the availability of free space for programs is extremely limited. Some programs are offered at Greene County Schools, but there are several organizations, including YDC, Parks and Recreation and after school clubs using space as well. Usually no more than 12-15 youth can participate in hands-on afterschool programs in the Extension Office conference room. Grace Episcopal Church allows us the use of the church hall free of charge, but only on days when there is not a conflict with other organizations. Maximum capacity for programs in the hall would range between 15-and 30 youth, depending on the nature of the activities. Possible solutions may be to develop further partnerships with Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists as well as other community organizations and churches that may provide more volunteers and space for programs. Unlike many neighboring Extension Units, Greene does not have a full or part-time program assistant, who could assist more with after school programming.

Health, Nutrition and Obesity

Chronic disease, obesity and nutrition also ranked as important issues related to Families and Youth. Greene County ranks 39th out of 133 localities in Virginia on health factors. Over 29% of Green families suffer from obesity. Only 73 % of Greene residents have access to exercise opportunities and 22% are physically inactive. These results were also reflected in discussions with 4-H volunteers, teachers and other stakeholders. One concern was in the lack of physical activity among youth who are not involved in sports programs offered by the recreation department or school sports programs. As youth have become increasingly engaged in social media and computer and electronic games, many have become less physically active. In addition, over 60 % of youth surveyed in classroom and club settings admitted that they did not like vegetables and that their diets did not resemble the “My Plate” recommendations. By offering healthy options at 4-H meetings, involving youth in preparing their own meals and making healthier choices, Extension programming has the opportunity to teach youth to make healthier choices and eventually positively impact the overall health of families. Collaboration with FCS, SNAP-Ed, schools and other community groups, as well as hiring a program assistant would help implement more healthy living programs for youth as well as parents.