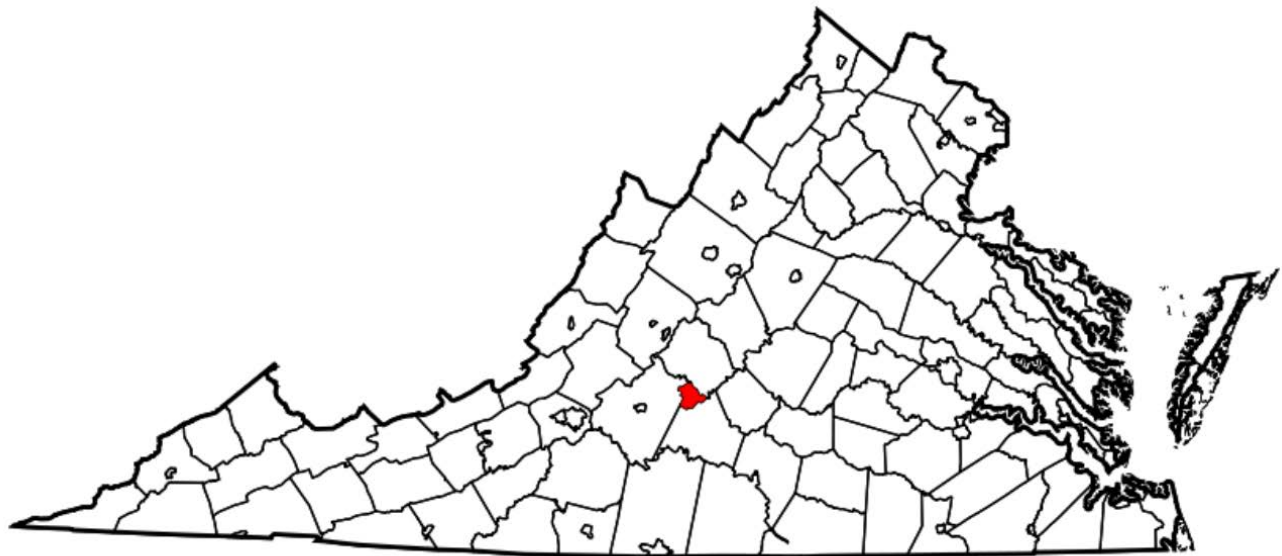




# Situation Analysis Report



## City of Lynchburg 2018

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## Introduction

The Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Lynchburg City Unit conducted a comprehensive situation analysis during the calendar year 2018. The Unit Coordinator of the City of Lynchburg Extension Unit led the situation analysis process. The staff from the Lynchburg Extension Unit, and two supporting Family Consumer Science (FCS) Agents, developed the Lynchburg City Unit Profile as well as gathered community and resident perspectives on issues and problems in the City through surveys and key informant interviews. Data and information from these two activities were analyzed and reoccurring themes were identified therefore leading to the creation of priority issues.

The Lynchburg Extension Unit staff met twice during the situation analysis process. At the first meeting, the situation analysis process was explained and a brief review of the 2013 situation analysis was discussed. Utilizing resources from the City of Lynchburg, VCE, and state/federal sites, the first task was the development of the unit profile. Using a facilitated session, the Lynchburg Extension Unit developed a list of key informants to interview and how the survey distribution would take place within the community. Tasks were assigned at the conclusion of the first meeting. At the second and final situation analysis meeting, key findings from the unit profile, survey data, and key informant interviews were presented and discussed. The top priority issues for the City of Lynchburg were identified, including those that could be addressed with current VCE resources and those that were outside the scope of current VCE resources.

## Unit Profile



[www.lynchburgva.gov/about-lynchburg](http://www.lynchburgva.gov/about-lynchburg)

The City of Lynchburg is located near the geographical center of Virginia, a.k.a. the “heart of Virginia”. Lynchburg is an independent city in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains along the banks of the James River, Lynchburg is known as the "City of Seven Hills" or "The Hill City”.

### History

In 1757, John Lynch established a ferry service on the James. For many years, the ferry service remained profitable, and by the end of the American Revolution, the village at Lynch's Ferry had itself become an important center of trade. Lynch saw the possibilities of establishing a town on the hill overlooking the ferry site and in late 1784 petitioned the General Assembly of Virginia for a town charter. The charter was granted in October 1786, thereby founding the town of Lynchburg.

### Location

Lynchburg is located on the James River and has a land area of 48 square miles with borders on the west by the Blue Ridge Mountains and Bedford County, to the south by Campbell County, and to the North by Amherst County. According to the 2017 U.S. Census, the city is a major highway and transportation hub that has contributed to its status as a broadly diversified manufacturing center. Lynchburg is 115 miles west of Richmond, the state capital; 52 miles east of Roanoke; 180 miles southwest of Washington, D. C.; and 200 miles west of the Port of Hampton Roads.

## Demographics and Data

Lynchburg is the central city of the Lynchburg Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which—according to the U.S. Census in 2016—has a total population of 260,232.

Lynchburg has a population of 80,995 people with a median age of 28.3: 26.8 years for males, and 29.7 years for females. For every 100 females, there are 88.3 males; 53% of the population are female.

According to the 2017 census data, there were 80,995 people and 28,150 households residing in the city (49 square miles). The population density was 1,618 people per square mile (510.2/km). There were 32,463 housing units at an average density of 559.6 per square mile (216.1/km). The average household size was 2.43 out of 28,150 households. A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together. Of the households in Lynchburg, VA, 83% had computers and 70.5% of them had a broadband internet subscription. The median household income of \$41,971. Compared to the last Situation Analysis conducted in 2012 the population of Lynchburg, VA grew from 77,203 to 80,995, a 4.91% increase.

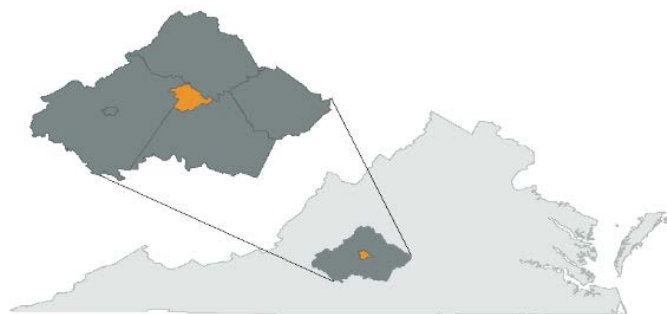
As of 2017, the federal poverty line for a family of two is \$16,020. The City of Lynchburg currently has a poverty rate of 22.3% with a median income, per household, of \$41,971. 29% of children (under 18) are in poverty whereas 9% of seniors (65 and older) live in poverty. According to data collected by Centra's *2018- 2021 Lynchburg Area Community Health Needs Assessment*, approximately half of Community Health Survey respondents reported that their neighborhoods do not support healthy eating or physical activity while also reporting that it is not easy to get affordable fresh fruits and vegetables in their neighborhoods. Although the large majority of respondents reported that they get their food from grocery stores, it is important to note that several use a Dollar Store, food banks and convenience stores for the food they eat. Additionally, the majority of respondents did not meet the minimum requirements for daily fruit and vegetable consumption.

The median age in Lynchburg, VA is 28.3 and 67% of the population fit in the range of 18 – 64 years of age. The population of Lynchburg, VA is 66% White, 28% Black, .4% Native American,

2.9% Asian, .1% Pacific Islander and 4% Hispanic. Of the people in Lynchburg, VA, 7.32% speak a non-English language, and 96.1% are U.S. citizens. Most people in Lynchburg, VA commute and the average commute time is 17.1 minutes. The average car ownership in Lynchburg, VA is two cars per household. Some characteristics of the population include 4,893 veterans and 5.8% foreign-born persons. There are 7.2% of the population, which speak a language other than English at home. Of the population who make up the workforce including ages 16 and up, a little over half (58.5%) have employment.

The largest universities in Lynchburg, VA are Liberty University, with a combined residential and online enrollment of 80,000 students, Central Virginia Community College, with 4,730 enrolled students, and the University of Lynchburg, with 2,050 undergraduate students.

The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of Lynchburg of 2,122 square miles (5,500 km<sup>2</sup>) is near the geographic center of Virginia and encompasses Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, the former City of Bedford, and the City of Lynchburg. It is



*Location of the City of Lynchburg and Lynchburg MSA in relation to the State of Virginia*

the fifth largest MSA in Virginia with a population of 246,036. Lynchburg is the home of Central Virginia Community College, Liberty University, University of Lynchburg, Randolph College, and Virginia University of Lynchburg. The Lynchburg MSA also includes Sweet Briar College.

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

Based on issue areas identified in the unit profile, a survey was developed and distributed throughout the City of Lynchburg to residents, business owners, educators, volunteers, and others. The purpose of the survey was to determine the City of Lynchburg's main priority areas. There was a large response on the survey (86 respondents) and additionally, several meaningful comments that elaborated on priorities were chosen more specifically.

Based on the identification of 16 key informants in the community, several interviews were conducted. Interviews were led with people who know what is going on in the community. These individuals were community leaders, professionals, and residents. The qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews allowed for deeper exploration through particularly informed perspectives of Lynchburg.

## Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and survey responses, there were many responses and data to go through. In regards to the programs that the Lynchburg Unit provides, the ranking of importance in the community is: 1) 4-H Youth Development (8.72/10); 2) Family Consumer Sciences (8.57/10); 3) Agriculture & Natural Resources (8.21/10); and 4) Community Viability (7.93/10). The following issues were identified as the top priority issues within the City of Lynchburg:

### **Issue 1: Urban Agriculture**

The term urban agriculture has been used for quite a while now. Urban agriculture not only represents food production in urban areas, or urban gardening, but it also the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing food in or around urban areas. Urban agriculture can also involve animal husbandry, aquaculture, agroforestry, urban beekeeping, and horticulture. In the new Farm Bill, there was language for the creation of a new urban agriculture initiative within the USDA. This not only highlights the importance of urban agriculture, but also the conceptualization of new research focused on facilitating growth of urban farming and emerging crops.

According to ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture's 2013 baseline findings from a national survey, "urban agriculture can play an important role in supporting local food systems. The potential benefits agriculture offers in urban areas have gained the interest of many residents and policy

makers, who are implementing policies, developing infrastructure, and creating markets to support the growing number of urban farms. Urban farmers are faced with a unique set of challenges that includes the high cost of land, access to capital resources, and limited availability of technical assistance” (Pressman, Oberholtzer, & Dimitri, 2016). The Lynchburg community, through a broad coalition of business, local government, school, health and citizens, has taken considerable public interest and initiated a number of local and regional activities dedicated to food access in the last few years.

Comments from the Community Needs Assessment/Key Informant Interviews:

“Community garden spaces – pairing up with [local organizations] for hands on learning and skills sets – cooking classes with Parks and Rec. – urban gardening and bee keeping”.

“I would love to see community vegetable and fruit gardens in our downtown neighborhoods...many of these families could benefit by having fresh vegetables, fruit, etc. Encouraging families to start and maintain a garden hits many of the issues identified”.

“Promotion of community gardens would help educate on issues of health and nutrition, the need for air and water quality, and would assist in issues of self-sufficiency and leadership”.

The Lynchburg Unit has continued to focus on urban agriculture for a long while, as this is a major issue (awareness and understanding) to address. This can be done through community gardens, education in the public schools, through Extension Master Gardener programs, education through the Family and Consumer Sciences Agents, and through our collaborative programming with the Food Bank in SNAP programs. While this food access and food deserts are constantly evolving, VCE can help facilitate change and hopefully positive results. Furthermore, VCE can do a better job in creating awareness for top pests for landscape, garden, and ornamentals.



Keywords associated with Urban Agriculture mentioned in the responses: *community gardens, health & nutrition, health & wellness, food preservation, food access, and food desert.*

## **Issue 2: Workforce Development**

Workforce Development was identified as an issue facing the City of Lynchburg. According to the Urban Institute, “a local workforce development system encompasses the organizations and activities that prepare people for employment, help workers advance in their careers, and ensure a skilled workforce. These systems are complex, with multiple funding sources, programs, organizational missions, target populations, and labor market demands.” While there are large employers and available jobs in Lynchburg, the poverty level sits at 20% and there are barriers that prevent many from working. Furthermore, there are limited avenues for high school students who do not have an interest in attending college to gain the appropriate skills to be employable.

### Comments from the Community Needs Assessment/Key Informant Interviews:

“Need employers that will employ adults with barriers to employment, poor credit, criminal records...”

Lynchburg needs to focus on “living wages to help with housing, food and medical costs”.

“Invest in the citizens who aren’t prepared for the workforce”.

While this issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources, there are opportunities for more. Examples of how The City of Lynchburg Extension office addresses these concerns are Poverty Simulations, Reality Stores, Pesticide recertification and certification workshops, and 4-H Entrepreneurship partnerships with Region 2000 and Liberty University. Based on the situation analysis it was evident that the Lynchburg Community would like further exploration to better focus these issues. The Mayor of Lynchburg has launched a workforce development campaign and has reached out to the Lynchburg Unit Coordinator for more exploration.

Keywords associated with Workforce Development mentioned in the responses: *mentorship, leadership development, entrepreneurship, money management, poverty, and facilitation.*

### **Issue 3: Outdoor Education**

“Outdoor education may best be defined as ‘education in, about, and for the out-of-doors’” (Ford, 1986). Both youth and adults have benefited from outdoor education. While outdoor education can be seen as very broad - including environmental education, conservation education, resident outdoor school, outdoor recreation, outdoor pursuits, adventure education, experiential education, and environmental interpretation – the experiential learning that is taking place is insurmountable. The engagement and community directed education creates a “commitment to human responsibility for stewardship of the land; belief in the importance of the interrelationship of all facets of the ecosystem; knowledge of the natural environment as a medium for leisure; and acknowledgment that outdoor education is a continual educational experience.” (Ford, 1986).

#### Comments from the Community Needs Assessment/Key Informant Interviews:

“Teach conservation in elementary schools. Teach environmental stewardship in elementary schools”.

“Teaching good stewardship of our environment; recycling to lower using our landfills”.

“Youth need to have more afterschool and summer activities that get kids away from technology and have appreciate of the outdoors”.

Currently this issue is being addressed with current unit VCE resources. Based on the situation analysis, no further action is required other than collaborating with more community organizations to help deliver cooperative programmatic efforts. Some partners and delivery modes that were identified are: Parks and Recreation, Lynchburg City Schools (Discover Lynchburg), Extension Master Gardener programs, summer and day camps, after school

enrichment programs, organizations such as Camp Kum-Ba-Yah and Amazement Square, and the Community Market. The Lynchburg Unit will be collaborating with all mentioned to address this issue.

Keywords associated with Outdoor Education mentioned in the responses: *recreation, gardening, summer activities, clean air, recycling, outdoor learning, natural resource management, conservation, environmental education, and environmental protection.*

#### **Issue 4: Water Quality**

Water Quality was identified again as a leading issue affecting the City of Lynchburg. Urban areas have the potential to pollute water in many ways. For instance, pollution can come from runoff from streets, which carries oil, rubber, heavy metals, and other contaminants from automobiles. Fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, phosphorus, chemicals, and other bacteria can derive from untreated or poorly treated sewage. Treated sewage can still be high in nitrates. Garbage dumps, toxic waste and chemical storage and use areas, leaking fuel storage tanks, and intentional dumping of hazardous substances can contaminate groundwater and surface water. In 2018, there was over 40 inches of precipitation, which can be a possible trend in the future.

The City of Lynchburg has two significant water sources, the James River and the Pedlar Reservoir in Amherst County and their health is very important. Therefore, storm water fees were implemented. The City of Lynchburg is a CSO (combined sewer overflows) community and in recent years has dedicated considerable public outreach to CSO, new storm water utility program, and general outreach programs, which may contribute to the understanding and interest in this topic locally.

#### Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

Need to focus on “environmental safety concerns such as water purity, city water as well as rivers and streams”.

“Plan for Blackwater Creek Watershed to meet Chesapeake Bay Goals that includes Resolution on College Lake”.

Lynchburg needs to have “vibrant and healthy watersheds and ecosystems.”

“Straighten up the flood damaged Blackwater Trail”.

Need “soil/water conservation program”.

This issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources. Examples of how Lynchburg Unit addresses these concerns are 4-H Youth Programs through natural resource Education, programming involving the local Extension Master Gardener volunteers, recertification programs for Commercial Pesticide Applicators, community gardens, and educational programs and awareness of Best Management Practices (BMP) such as rain barrels, compost education, and Home Water Clinics. Through the Discover Lynchburg program with Lynchburg City Schools, middle school youth are learning more about water quality and aquatic ecology. Based on the situation analysis it was evident that the Lynchburg Community would like further exploration to better address these issues.

Keywords associated with Water Quality mentioned in the responses: *flooding, erosion, storm water, drinking water, natural resources, James River health, and watersheds*

#### **Issue 5: Families**

Many households and neighborhoods in Lynchburg face serious problems from within the community: high rates of violent crime, poverty, children raised in mother only families, unemployment, poor access to health care, homelessness, drug dependency, racial tension, gang violence, drug dealing, and a sense of overall alienation (Morrison, Blumenthal, Krysan, Sugland, & Zill, 1992). It has been seen that family behaviors contribute to urban problems; the failure to form strong families contributes to difficulties. Youth living in these households are at risk for poor health outcomes such as depression, aggression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and

sleep disturbances, among other things. This instability also causes negative effects on child development.

Comments from the Community Needs Assessment:

“People need to feel heard and valued in their community. Is there a forum for their voice to be heard and for them to see results of being listened to?”

There should be “cross economic class bonding for the community”.

“How to feed your family on a budget”.

“Parenting, holding children and parents accountable”.

“Quality of parenting especially in single parent households and the re-entry problems of people leaving prison rejoining society”.

“Communication within the family”.

“Setting up a household budget and savings plan”.

While aspects of this issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources, there is ample room to do more. The Lynchburg Unit is encouraged to collaborating with more community organizations to help deliver cooperative programmatic efforts. The ELC identified Smart Beginnings Coalition, Potpourri for Providers, summer and day camps, after school enrichment programs, financial literacy, and the Conflict Resolution curricula under Innovative Leadership as methods the Lynchburg Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension are using to address this issue.

Keywords associated with Families mentioned in the responses: *parenting, crime, single parent households, resources, poverty, and financial management*

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