



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report



Stafford 2018

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Introduction

Stafford County conducted a comprehensive situation analysis during the calendar year 2018. The situation analysis process was led by Stafford VCE staff with support from the Extension Leadership Council (ELC). The analysis involved the development of a Stafford County Unit Profile as well as gathering community and resident perspectives on issues and problems in the county. Data and information from these two activities were analyzed by Stafford VCE staff and the ELC and priority issues were identified.

At the September ELC meeting the situation analysis process was discussed with the members and a strategy was developed. The ELC determined that utilizing an issue-based survey would reach a wider range of stakeholders in Stafford. Forty-two key issues were chosen from the VCE Situation Analysis Resource website for relevance to Stafford County demographics. About 300 surveys were sent to Stafford residents via email. Email addresses were gathered from contacts made through the three program areas as well as ELC member's contact lists. Approximately 15% of residents who received surveys responded.

Unit Profile

Stafford County is located just across the Rappahannock River from the City of Fredericksburg. Stafford County today is considered part of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Many residents commute to work in Washington and its environs north on Interstate Highway 95, U.S. Route 1, and Virginia Railway Express.

The total population of Stafford County in 2017 is estimated at 146,649. This shows an increase of about 13.7% from 2010. Stafford County is the 7th most populated county in the state of Virginia out of 93 counties.

Approximately 1/3 (about 32.6%) of the total population of Stafford County was between 0-18 years of age in 2017. This compares to 28.1% of the total population of Virginia and 28.7% nationally that is between the ages of 0-18. Programming needs in child development, life

skills/decision making for youth, teen leadership, and youth activities are an important goal in a community with such a high percentage of youth.

The data indicated that the Hispanic population of Stafford County is 12.8% compared to 9.4% for the state of Virginia.

The median household income of Stafford County residents is \$103,005, which is \$57,652 higher when compared to the median household income for the state of Virginia. Persons below poverty level are only 5.7% in Stafford County compared to 11% for the state of Virginia.

The population of Stafford County is fairly affluent with only 4.6% living in poverty compared to the national average of 12.3 %.

Farm acreage has decreased 24% in Stafford County from 2007 through 2011.

About 93.7% of persons 25 years or older are high school graduates compared to 89% for the state of Virginia.

Community and Resident Perspectives

According to the survey results, there were 3 issues from each program area that were consistently rated as “Very Important” by residents. The top three youth issues were Science and Technology, Life skills/Decision Making for Youth, and Careers. The top three family and consumer science issues were ranked as Community Services, Health, and Nutrition. The top three agriculture and natural resources issues were identified as Water Quality/Quantity, Land Use, and Environment.

Survey participant comments:

Youth Issues

- Socially - encourage programs where children solve change through professionalism and presentation.
- Youth violence needs to be addressed and dealt with. There is way too much violence between youth such as bullying and also violence in communities.
- Youth activities help keep the youth off of the streets and involve them in activities that are positive and have a positive impact on their lives.
- Involve children and teens in the sciences, help them design future areas, and shape the programs offered.
- Teens need to know the importance of community involvement and be a part of their community and have a positive impact on where they live and be proud of where they live.

Family and Consumer Science Issues

- We need to get outdoor spaces where people can go and move to combat obesity.
- Obesity - have children help solve the problems through encouraging action
- Kids need to learn more about being healthy and the pitfalls of drugs/drinking/drugs and peer pressure

Agriculture and Natural Resources Issues:

- I live in the Hartwood area and am seeing lots of farmland developed into housing. This creates traffic problems and ground water problems. I already have neighbors who are experiencing critical well issues and drying up of farm ponds due to an increasing lack of ground water (presumably because of all the new houses.)
- The Cooperative Extension Service responsibilities are going to have to grow to support farmers adapting to climate change. They will need your services with plant selection,

invasive species management, and agricultural techniques dealing with changing weather conditions.

- We need people to know how not to pollute the water and stop watering lawns/wasting water.

Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and resident perspectives from above, the following top priority issues were identified for Stafford County.

Issue 1: Youth – Science and Technology

This issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources, with the potential to expand rapidly with additional resources.

- Currently have STEM in-school programs at several schools with large potential for growth
- Currently have 3 community/special interest clubs for after-school/evening activities that involve STEM
- 4-H Junior Camp offered every summer with STEM class options
- Exploring starting a new STEM focused club. Two leaders have already been recruited and will begin training in 2019.

Issue 2: Youth – Life Skills/Decision Making for Youth

This issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources.

- All 4-H programs are modeled using the “Targeting Life Skills” model in program design and include activities that teach both hard and soft skills.
- 4-H Clubs encourage youth to take leadership roles and make decisions for the good of the order.
- 4-H Junior Camp allows youth the opportunity to make decisions for themselves while away from home.

- Teen Leadership programs encourage youth to plan and implement programs for younger youth.
- 4-H Day at the Capital exposes youth to real life decision making and provides them a glimpse into how our government works.

Issue 3: Youth - Careers

This issue is currently being addressed with current VCE unit resources.

- Currently have program at the Chaplin Youth Center for court-involved youth and horticultural career skills training.
- Partner with Stafford County Sheriff's Office for DARE Day.
- New 4-H Career/College Preparedness Club for youth was founded in 2018.

Issue 4: Family and Consumer Science – Community Services

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Master Food Volunteer Program available to county residence to volunteer to lead nutrition education and health promotion in the community.
- Serve Safe Program offered for food and beverage safety training and certificate program.
- Kids Market Place financial simulation for elementary and middle school-aged children.

Issue 5: Family and Consumer Science - Nutrition

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Nutrition Education curriculum for youth in school includes:
 - LEAP (Literacy, Eating, Activity, for Preschoolers) in Stafford Head Start.
 - OrganWise Guys (Pre K-2nd Grade) in Stafford Head Start as well as Stafford Junction.
 - Choose Health – Food Fun Fitness in Stafford Junction and Garrison Woods.
- Nutrition lectures in Del Webb community.

- Nutrition Education classes on Eat Smart Be Active curriculum for Stafford Head Start Parents, Stafford Senior Center, Garrison Woods residence.

Issue 6: Family and Consumer Science - Health

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Grafton Village Elementary, Winding Creek Elementary, Conway Elementary, Hampton Oaks Elementary Schools are participating in Smarter Lunchroom Movement.
- Currently have a program Yoga for Kids program in participating Elementary Schools.
- LIFT (Lifelong Improvements through Fitness Together) for Stafford Senior Center.

Issue 7: Agriculture and Natural Resources - Environment

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Integrated Pest Management is taught in class to all new Master Gardeners.
- Smart Greens Lawns program began in 2012 gives a detailed individualized report to home-owners for Best Lawn Practices to reduce fertilizer and pesticide application.
- A re-certification program is given for commercial pesticide applicators as well as private pesticide applicators every year.
- A 3 week training course is given every year to prepare workers in the green industry to become certified pesticide applicators.

Issue 8: Agriculture and Natural Resources – Land Use

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- Several programs by specialists in the Northern District are offered to land owners on various ways to use their land for financial gain as well as in an environmentally responsible manner.

Issue 9: Agriculture and Natural Resources – Water Quality/Quantity

This issue is currently being addressed by VCE unit resources.

- A well water testing program is offered every year to local homeowners that have a well as their primary source of drinking water
- A three hour class is taught each year in the Master Gardener course to educate participants on responsible water use and other issues pertaining to water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.