

# 2017 Civic Engagement Survey Responses

## **Q3. Please provide a brief summary of civic engagement programs directed at teens and children.**

- Our Police Department has a specific Citizens Academy for teens, which is extremely popular each year. The students are able to learn about the functions of the PD while becoming comfortable with police officers and gaining an understanding of how to interact with law enforcement. We celebrate Local Government Education Week, holding mock Town Council meetings with 5th graders, complete with a script and props. Our mayor attends these mock meetings, kicks off the event and sticks around to answer the students' questions about the Town's operations and goals. Additionally, we regularly host student tours at Town Hall, gathering our department heads in our Council Chambers to discuss their roles. We also have a Citizen Engagement portion of our Town Council meetings. Once a month, we recognize citizens or organizations for their outstanding accomplishments. Most of the time, this recognition involves students. This brings them and their parents to our Town Council meetings and gives them an opportunity to engage with Council members and staff.
- The Town Manager has attended a Career Day at the local high school. Each year, the elementary school 2nd grade class comes to town hall for an overview of government and tour of the town.
- Fire and Rescue has a program wherein students can be trained to be emt's through our school system's technical education center. We also do summer "Character Camps" with Police and Fire and Rescue personnel at our Camp Roanoke facility. Fire and Rescue also provides education in the school regarding fire safety and prevention. We have also done education in public schools regarding the opiate epidemic.
- None
- Each Department Head is assigned a school and they interact with the students and teachers. We have an internship program that is open to teens.
- York County Youth Commission (YCYC) - The primary mission of the YCYC is to act as a voice for York County youth in serving as a link between students and our elected county governing officials, the Board of Supervisors. The YCYC also communicates regularly with officials from the York County School Division. In an effort to gain student input, the YCYC conducts student surveys and hosts annual Town Hall Meetings in the high schools each spring where students can meet in a face to face setting with a member of the Board of Supervisors and a member of the School Board to ask questions. Finally, the YCYC performs and/or sponsors various service projects throughout the year and helps organize and/or publicize countywide high school social events to help build a sense of community among all students living here. County staff are regular speakers in high school civic classes Middle School Essay contests County staff participate in high school career day

events Library prepares Education week displays for children's area of library  
County Administrator and Library Director read to elementary school children

- The previously mentioned Service Learning Program is conducted annually in conjunction with seniors from Harrisonburg High School. The students visit and learn about the different departments and then conduct a project as a team working with individual departments with a culminating presentation to City Council. This was originally modeled after the long-time program in Frederick County, VA.
- See the explain
- Local Government 101 is geared towards Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts who are working on their Citizenship in the Community merit badge but other students and children are welcome to participate. They attend a one-hour informational session that immediately precedes a Board of Supervisors meeting. We also participate with our school system in an annual Student Government Day, whereby select high school students shadow general government and school officials.
- Youth Council Youth Services Task Force
- The government program at the local high school requires students to attend Council meetings and we host interns from the program.
- In recognition of Local Government Education Week, April 1-7, Chesterfield County government and school leaders served as guest speakers in civics and economics classrooms throughout Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of the classroom visits was to promote civic education and engagement, help students better understand local government, foster a positive sense of community, and prepare the next generation of local government managers. There were 13 schools visited and 1,900 eighth graders participated in this weekly event to learn about the level of government that touches people's lives daily and impacts our communities around the nation. We also have a Model County Government Day each year where high school students shadow county and school officials for a day and also attend County and School Board Meetings.
- We have a Law Enforcers program with teens and the Police Department. We also recently started a Culpeper Youth Advisory Committee to create interaction between the local governments and schools. We participate in job fairs in the high schools.
- Youth Workforce Academy for ages 14-16. Job fair participation at local schools. Reading in classroom. Toddler Fair. Back to School Fair. 4-H programs and summer camp are promoted. Parks and Recreation hosts a number of programs: summer camp, easter egg hunt, kite festival, harvest festival, summer science camp, sports leagues. Story time at library during weekly Farmers' Market.
- In 2016, the Town kicked off its Comprehensive Plan Update process with a visioning project involving fifth-through twelfth-grade students in public and private schools in Warrenton. The Student Postcard Project employed a new multi-disciplinary approach to allow students to explore how they would communicate what makes their community special to them. Civic, art, and English teachers provided the historical context of souvenir picture postcards where tourists purchase images of a place that denote how it is unique. Then students were asked to consider what makes the Town unique; what are the Town's special attributes

now and what would they like to see 25 years in the future. For 2016, students created postcards of their personal favorite places, landmarks or activities while providing a statement indicating why they chose the subject matter. Likewise, for 2040 students created a postcard of how they envisioned the Town in the future based on their desires for 25 years into the future. This innovative public engagement approach allowed students, from kindergarten through high school, to participate in a meaningful, thought provoking manner. The Town won the 2016 VML Innovation Award for Working With Youth for this project.

#### **Q4. Please describe practices in which your locality engages to encourage citizen participation.**

- We're very active on social media - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - where we regularly elicit citizen response and engagement. Our Citizens Academies are great for citizen participation, and we heavily advertise and promote those sessions in order to let our community know we offer these programs.
- N/A. Each Town Council meeting is interactive with citizens.
- Several departments use social media and send e-mail newsletters directly to citizens. All of our Board meetings are televised and live-streamed. We also do direct press releases in items of interest through our Public Information office.
- Monthly newsletter in the local newspaper, Facebook, Twitter, Lynchburg Alerts, Press Releases, public hearings, public meetings.
- Open house; email blasts
- Semi-Annual newsletters, newspaper articles and notices of upcoming meetings and events.
- We have Community meetings and online surveys.
- Sheriffs Citizen Academy Quarterly Homeowner Association Town hall meetings  
Numerous Citizen Volunteer opportunities -  
<http://www.yorkcounty.gov/CountyGovernment/CommunityServices/Parks,RecreationandTourism/DivisionInformation/VolunteerInformation.aspx>
- In addition to public hearings, we utilize social media, conduct open houses for public projects, encourage participation through boards, commissions and advisory committees, and provide for public comment at every City Council meeting.
- We hold periodic police, fire, and citizens' academies; the members of our Board of Supervisors host town meetings in their districts; we recently have established a community conversations series involving our Board of Supervisors, County Manager, Police Division, other County agencies, and representatives of immigrant and minority groups. Our website was recently redesigned to be more transparent. We just completed a survey on how our citizens receive information from the County.
- Citizen Academy Neighborhood Watch Council and staff attendance at neighborhood association meetings (when requested) Neighborhood Based Planning

- We host two annual community meetings that rotate around the community annually. We host an annual Town Hall meeting.
- Many public community meetings on topics such as budget, comprehensive plan etc.. Citizen Satisfaction Surveys (The National Citizen Survey - Through the National Research Center) every other year Blueprint Outreach survey as part of budget process where we went to many community events and solicited feedback on the communities budget priorities as we began the FY18 budget process. Feedback solicited and many public outreach meetings on a variety of community topics. Many meetings held by public officials and staff as requested by citizens on a variety of topics and concerns. Citizens able to apply to be considered and get involved in a wide range of Public Boards and Commissions: Agricultural and Forestry Committee Airport Advisory Board Appeals Panel Pursuant to Virginia Set-Off Debt Collection Appomattox River Water Authority Audit and Finance Committee Board of Appeals for Virginia Uniform Statewide Building and Fire Code Camp Baker Management Board Capital Region Workforce Development Board Capital Region Airport Commission Capital Region Workforce Partnership Chief Local Elected Officials Consortium Central Virginia Waste Management Authority Board of Directors Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Policy and Management Team for Comprehensive Services Chesterfield County Supplemental Retirement Plan Board Chippenham Place Community Development Authority Citizens Budget Advisory Committee Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee Committee on the Future County-Schools Liaison Committee Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Community Criminal Justice Board Community Services Board Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Crater MPO) Crater Planning District Commission Crater Regional Workforce Development Board Economic Development Authority First Tee Board of Directors Greater Richmond Partnership Board of Directors GRTC Transit System Board of Directors Health Center Commission John Tyler Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP) Policy Board John Tyler Community College Local Board Lower Magnolia Green Community Development Authority Board Maymont Foundation Board of Directors Metropolitan Richmond Air Quality Committee Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Personnel Appeals Board Petersburg Area Regional Tourism Corporation Planning Commission Preservation Committee Richmond Metropolitan Authority Board of Directors Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization Richmond Tourism Board Ridefinders Advisory Board Riverside Regional Jail Authority SAFE, Inc. Board of Directors Senior Connections Board of Directors (the Capital Area Agency on Aging) Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Social Services Board South Central Wastewater Authority Towing Advisory Board Youth Services Citizen Board Virginia's Gateway Region Board Watkins Centre Community Development Authority
- We have a very strong neighborhood watch program organized through our Police Department. We participate and partner with the NAACP, Lions Club, etc. We encourage participation/volunteering for local authorities, boards and commissions.
- Citizens Academy. Open houses at government buildings. Community Toddler Fair. Community Health Fair. Community Back to School Fair. Guns and Hoses (Police vs.

Fire) Charity Softball game. Farmers' Market with Community Day and Hometown Heroes 5K. Easter Egg hunt. Torch Run for Special Olympics, support of Fort Lee events on base, pet adoption events. Prepare a weekly calendar of events and post on social media.

- A website and Facebook page. Public notices published in the newspaper.
- We use venues other than Town Hall for public input sessions such as work shops and charettes. For example, we use the Visitor Center for our Urban Development Area Committee, Sign Ordinance Committee, and Walkability/Complete Streets Committee meetings. These are citizen bodies appointed for a specific planning purpose, and their meetings are advertised and open to the public. Last summer, as a precursor to re-booting our Main Street Program, the Town convened an Old Town Visioning event in the fellowship hall of one of our downtown churches. As part of the Virginia Accreditation process, we issue hard copy satisfaction surveys biennially to for citizens to rate the performance of our Police Department. We subscribe to a survey tool called Virtual Town Hall (Peak Democracy) which is used to gather feedback from registered and unregistered participants through our website. Registration allows us to collect demographic data on the participant. We use the non-registered data as well, but it does not have demographic data and is filtered by Peak Democracy.

## **Q5. Please describe programs that are undertaken with the objective of citizen training.**

- Our Building Department hosts sessions on the rehabilitation code, to educate and train citizens with the hopes they will invest in existing infrastructure and understand the Building Department exists to be an advocate for and a partner to them. Our Rescue Squad regularly hosts training for both EMTs and untrained citizens on a variety of topics, including CPR. Our Aquatics Department also hosts training for CPR and lifeguarding. Our Parks and Recreation Department has dozens of programs that aim at training citizens on a variety of topics, from firearm safety to cybersecurity (often in partnership with our PD). Their list of programs seems never-ending and is always being refreshed - we recently had classes in conjunction with our Planning Department on how to raise backyard chickens.
- We have citizen Police academies and are expanding them to include Fire and Rescue in order to have Public Safety academies.
- Annual Citizens Academy
- We offer Citizen, Police and Fire Academy's.
- Safety Town - Raising kindergarteners are educated on public services and safety
- I would categorize the City's Citizen Academy, Citizen's Police Academy and the Service Learning Program as endeavors attempting to train and educate the residents on local government.
- Please note the fire, police, and citizens' academies mentioned above.
- Citizen Academy

- We are hosting two Government Citizen Academies this year with approximately 30 residents per academy. This free six week program will go over a wide range of county & school programs and visit various public facilities during the program. It will conclude with a brief graduation program at a County Board Meeting. Chesterfield Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program classes have trained nearly 1,200 members of the community, many of who have become active in the delivery of our CERT Programs and other emergency management and public safety educational programs. Chesterfield County Police Department's Citizens Academy participants meet weekly for two months. The academy includes visual presentations, question-and-answer sessions, tours and a variety of practical exercises. The Citizens Academy is free and is open to all county residents and business owners, as well as members of any community or civic organization in Chesterfield County. Citizens Fire Academy - The space is limited to 30 participants. The program is offered twice a year (Spring and Fall) and is for adults aged 18 years or older. The Citizens Fire Academy in Chesterfield County gives students a unique insight into what it is like to be a firefighter. Each session provides participants with information about how their fire department operates and how they can become citizen firefighters. Sessions include: The history of the fire service and fire prevention Fire science and fire dynamics Special Operations, including dive and technical rescue Portable fire extinguisher training EMS Operations and CPR training Live demonstrations and hands on evolutions Emergency Communications Center tour
- Culpeper Youth Advisory Committee We also work with the Chamber of Commerce with citizen training events.
- Citizens Academy. Senior Citizen Academy. Business Roundtable. Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) class. Survivor Day.
- Our Police Department and Fire Department annual hold "Open Houses" to encourage citizens to interact with put public safety staff and learn about their operations.

**Q6. Please describe innovative ways your locality seeks to inform the public.**

- We love all things social media - so we do a lot of outreach on those platforms, using whatever tools are available to us (like Facebook Live)!
- We have created a Government page where we post Council agenda packets.
- Social Media, Website, Government Access TV, direct surveys through e-mails and we completed a citizen's satisfaction survey last year via phone.
- Herein is the challenge...what are innovative ways to inform the public???
- Reverse 911 for elections, filing deadlines, meetings, public hearings; Facebook and website announcements of the same
- All types of Social Media.
- Social Media, new TV segments for website,

- Harrisonburg has had a lot of success with project open houses that put City staff, consultants in direct contact with members of the public. This creates an opportunity to educate the public on a given project, but also allows the public provide input.
- Social media such as Facebook and twitter, a quarterly newspaper from the Board of Supervisors, power point presentations by the County Manager to community groups, a weekly county e-news sent out through constant contact, and booths at local and regional community events such as the annual Asian American Festival.
- River City TV: Live as well as achieved City Council and Planning District Commission meetings. Also, special live programming which features City departments and special events (ground breakings, ribbon cuttings, special ceremonies) City Face Book Page Twitter City Interactive Webpage
- Standard social media outlets, plus we have a television show once a month.
- ENews letters weekly Facebook Post/Page Twitter Post Media Releases Many Community Meetings Broadcast on Public TV Channels Broadcast audio/video of Board Meetings Print space in the local paper that was dedicated to the County weekly as part of a contract
- Social Media and Joint Neighborhood Watch meetings.
- Social media. Daily headlines. Electronic message boards. Public information line updated weekly. Calendar of events sent each Friday. Blog. Youtube video page.
- We subscribe to a survey tool called Virtual Town Hall (Peak Democracy) which is used to gather feedback from registered and unregistered participants through our website. Registration allows us to collect demographic data on the participant. We use the non-registered data as well, but it does not have demographic data and is filtered by Peak Democracy.

**Q7. Please describe successful civic education programs in your locality that have not been mentioned previously in this survey.**

- The police, fire, and citizens' academies; Local Government 101; and Student Government Day.

**Q8. Please list any resources of which you are aware that regard civic education.**

- ICMA and VLGMA
- We use general funds and County staff for this purpose.
- do not understand this question????
- None other than those produced by VLGMA/ICMA
- n/a. We created all our programs from scratch.
- We have investigated using OpenGov or other cloud-based software for budgeting, financial reporting, and performance data. While some of these products are affordable, we found that we have neither the staff nor sufficiently robust financial

software platforms to actively manage the data input. Therefore we have not pursued it.

## **Q9. How do you evaluate the success of your civic engagement initiatives?**

- We're always looking for more ways to engage with our citizens, and our work is never done. We've gotten stronger in the past year and have started to prioritize our outreach, but we still have a long way to go. Social media is a great way to evaluate how many people you're reaching, and we're still attempting to grow our following.
- Citizen surveys and attendance at planning events.
- # of persons engaged.
- Attendance and by the amount of participation of the citizens.
- Number of Applications received for various programs
- Pre and Post surveys are taken for both the Service Learning Program and Citizen's Academy. Attendance numbers are documented for the open houses conducted primarily by the City's Public Works Department.
- The County Manager and Deputy County Manager discuss these in their weekly meeting. Also, please note the citizen information survey mentioned above, which was just completed and presented to our Board of Supervisors.
- We do not have a formal evaluation mechanism
- Fair to poor.
- I think we have been successful in our outreach especially in regards to our Police/Fire and CERT academies. Participation and feedback received as part of our BLUEPRINT Chesterfield survey where we went to the people in many public meetings helped us better understand community priorities entering the budget process. Citizens Satisfaction Surveys done every other year are statistical samples and give us clear data facts and benchmarks to measure our progress as a county and where we need to improve. Citizen Academy this year is new.
- Average
- By the number of participants that are engaged in the program.
- Variety of demographic participation and perspectives. Number of participants.