

AGRICULTURE AND HOME EXTENSION

Description

The Henrico Extension Office is the local arm of the national Cooperative Extension system that began with the passage the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. The Cooperative Extension is a partnership between the USDA, the 106 land-grant colleges and universities across the nation, and state and local governments. In Virginia, Cooperative Extension is administered through Virginia Tech and Virginia State University.

The Cooperative Extension system employs tens of thousands of community-based educators and campus-based faculty and staff statewide. It has a remarkably broad scope of work centered on program areas that include the following: agriculture and natural resources; 4-H youth development; family and consumer sciences; leadership development; and community and economic development. Cooperative Extension provides research-based information through an informal educational process that is designed to address specific issues and needs relevant to the communities each local office serves.

Objectives

- To assess local issues and needs through a periodic situation analysis process conducted in cooperation with the Henrico Extension Leadership Council.

- To provide timely, research-based recommendations to citizens in response to their inquiries.
- To develop the subject matter expertise and leadership skills of a dedicated cadre of volunteers who in turn multiply the educational reach of the professional staff far beyond their capacity alone.
- To design educational programs by employing a variety of delivery methods that provide citizens with needed information to make life-enhancing decisions.
- To make appropriate use of technology to provide more efficient, cost-effective means of communication and service to citizens.

Budget Highlights

The Agriculture and Home Extension budget of \$369,699 for FY2014-15 increased by 4.6 percent from the FY2013-14 approved budget. This increase is driven primarily by a State mandated 3.0 percent merit raise to the five Extension Agents. This increase was partially mitigated by finding efficiency savings in other areas of the operating budget.

Annual Fiscal Plan

<u>Description</u>	<u>FY13 Actual</u>	<u>FY14 Original</u>	<u>FY15 Approved</u>	<u>Change 14 to 15</u>
Personnel	\$ 108,857	\$ 115,879	\$ 117,390	1.3%
Operation	218,181	237,702	252,309	6.1%
Capital	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	327,038	353,581	369,699	4.6%
 Personnel Complement*	 2	 2	 2	 0

*Does not include Extension Agents who are paid directly by Virginia Tech.

Agriculture & Home Extension (cont'd)

Performance Measures				
	FY13	FY14	FY15	Change 14 to 15
Workload Measures				
Citizens Assisted	26,200	26,585	27,100	515
Programs Presented	453	469	500	31
4-H Youth Enrolled	1,300	2,140	2,000	(140)
Samples Analyzed and Identified	884	800	850	50
Efficiency Measures				
Volunteer Hours Supporting Programs	17,089	16,140	16,500	360

Throughout the history of Cooperation Extension, volunteers have been a critical resource to extend knowledge to the community. While the university-provided training and expertise of professional staff is necessary for program design and implementation, it is often the volunteer staff that fulfills the service levels expected by citizens.

Volunteers within the 4-H program serve as judges and coordinators for various contests held throughout the year at the local and state levels. Others serve as counselors for camps and conferences held at either the Jamestown 4-H Center or on the campuses of Virginia Tech and Virginia State. Many volunteers serve as club leaders working throughout the year with youth groups that range in size from six to thirty-plus members between the ages of five and nineteen. Each year Henrico Master Gardener volunteers contribute in excess of 7,000 hours to the Environmental Horticulture program and make thousands of citizen contacts by phone and in person. They assist residents who call the Horticulture Helpline, visit the Extension Office, or participate in various educational programs offered throughout the County at a variety of venues. Popular programs include the Speakers' Bureau, Junior Master Gardeners, Gardens Growing Families, SMART Lawns, and Tree Smarts.

The Family and Consumer Sciences program tackles tasks most relevant to the cornerstone of a healthy community: the family unit. This program helps citizens learn to make good choices for themselves and their families in the areas of food, nutrition, and

health & family financial management. Financial education courses teach critical thinking skills related to consumer goals, needs, and wants. The workshops offered teach a range of basic financial concepts including spending plans; understanding credit and financial institutions; and recordkeeping. These classes are held in a variety of settings including churches, schools, and workplaces. Tax preparation assistance is given on an annual basis to those who meet income guidelines, with special focus on the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Nutrition education is provided through community workshops, in-school and afterschool educational programs, and interactive displays at public events. These programs are designed to help citizens make healthy lifestyle choices for nutrition and health. The Family Nutrition Program is designed to teach low income citizens how to make the best use of their food dollars and make healthy dietary choices.

The Agriculture and Home Extension budget for FY2014-15 continues to reflect only Henrico County's contribution to the Department's annual expenses. The personnel complement includes two support staff positions. A total of five Extension Agent positions whose funding is located in the operating portion of the Department's budget, are paid directly by Virginia Tech. Henrico County reimburses Virginia Tech for 100.0 percent of the salary and benefits costs of two Extension Agent positions, and 50.0 percent of the salary and benefits costs of the other three Extension Agent positions.