

AGRICULTURE & HOME EXTENSION

DESCRIPTION

The Henrico Extension Office is the local arm of the national Cooperative Extension system that began with the passage of 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 situational 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.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan

Description	FY21	FY22	FY23	Change
	Actual	Original	Approved	22 to 23
Personnel	\$ 133,039	\$ 142,003	\$ 149,611	5.4%
Operation	246,009	264,544	271,176	2.5%
Capital	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	<u>\$ 379,048</u>	<u>\$ 406,547</u>	<u>\$ 420,787</u>	<u>3.5%</u>
Personnel Complement*	2	2	2	0

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

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>Change 22 to 23</u>
Workload Measures				
Citizens Assisted	47,700	142,060	90,200	(51,860)
Programs Presented	345	345	360	15
4-H Youth Enrolled	2,500	1,650	2,500	850
Samples Analyzed and Identified	925	932	925	(7)
Efficiency Measures				
Volunteer Hours Supporting Programs	6,500	11,909	13,600	1,691

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Agriculture and Home Extension proposed budget of \$420,787 for FY23 increased by \$14,240, or 3.5%, from the FY22 approved budget. The increase in the operating component of the budget is driven by a State mandated 4.0% merit raise provision and a corresponding increase in benefits.

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Extension Office is known as a cooperative program because of its partnership between local, state, and federal government. FY22 continued to be a challenge for traditional Extension programming. Through technology and dedicated volunteers, citizens were able to participate in a variety of program opportunities. The number of citizens reached and programs presented increased despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic.

Extension programs are traditionally provided in person with a hands-on demonstration method. All program areas continued to provide virtual programming variants during 2021 with some hybrid opportunities. The 4-H Youth Development program provided engaging virtual programs and additional hands-on kits that youth could do at home away from a computer. Reduced capacity “in-person” programs were held using safety protocols, such as the 4-H Camp at the Jamestown 4-H Center, and five weeks of summer day camps. Additional 4-H STEM clubs were created to meet the needs of 4-H youth. 4-H community clubs continue to meet in virtual or hybrid formats.

Family and Consumer Sciences programming offered virtual programs that focused on dealing with the pandemic and current concerns from various perspectives. The “Teen Cuisine @ Home” program expanded to include a hybrid version at Wilder Middle School in the Spring of 2021. Students in the after-school program learned how to make healthy food choices and nutritional snacks. The Henrico County Extension Office collaborated with Henrico County Libraries, the United Way of Greater Richmond, and the Petersburg Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to provide free tax preparation during the 2021 tax season. Using a remote operation, the sites prepared 153 returns with tax refunds totaling \$191,253, providing necessary relief to citizens over a period of economic turmoil.

Agriculture and Natural Resources offered virtual programs through the Extension Office’s website. Including a collaborative Master Gardener training program. Master Gardener volunteers were also able to return to assisting homeowners meet their lawn-care needs through the SMART Lawns and new Smart Scapes programs. The return of the Bug Bizarre program drew over 400 in-person attendees. The Extension continues to increase its use of social

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media to reach citizens. While Facebook was used most often, Instagram and YouTube are also outlets to share educational programming.

The Agriculture and Home Extension proposed FY23 budget reflects only Henrico County's contribution to the Department's annual expenses. The personnel complement includes two support staff positions. A total of four Extension Agent positions, whose funding resides in the operating portion of the Department's budget, are paid directly by Virginia Tech. Henrico County reimburses Virginia Tech for 100% of the salary and benefit costs of two Extension Agent positions, and 50% of the salary and benefit costs of the additional two Extension Agent positions.