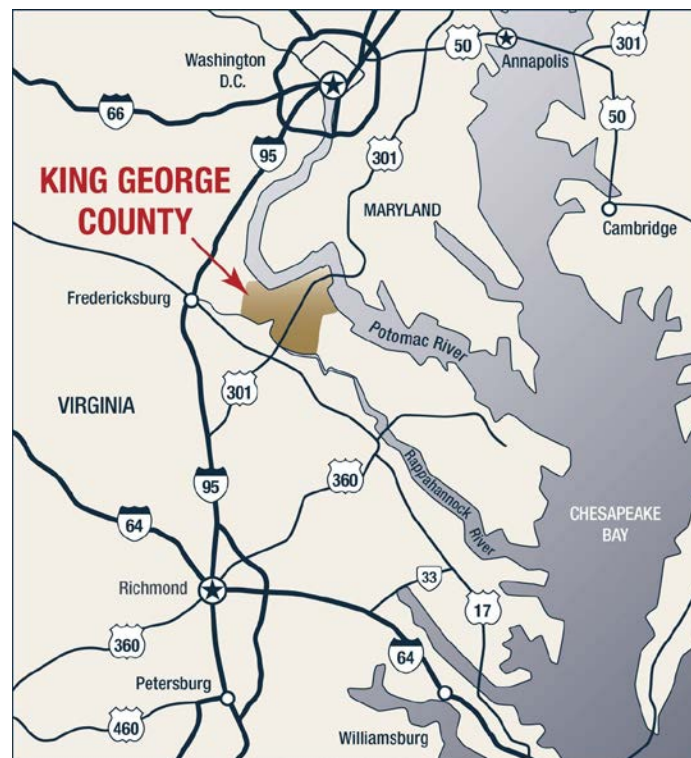




King George County 2023 Situation Analysis Report

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Summary of community issues and Extension office response

Priority Issue	Planned Unit Response
Parenting Support and Family Resilience	Just in Time Parenting Newsletter, Balancing Life A Weekly Virtual Series, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, First Five Years, Success for Teen Parents, and other parenting programs
Enhance Youth Career Opportunities	4- H Clubs, Camps, and School Enrichment Programs
Community Growth and Affordable Living	Community Viability Programs including Leadership & Planning, Community Enterprise and Resiliency, Community Food System and Enterprises, Community Planning, and Emerging Community Issues
Agriculture Sustainability	Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Farm Business Profitability, Farm Transition Planning, and Farm to School
Improving Physical and Mental Health Outcomes	Diabetes Prevention Program, Balanced Living with Diabetes, Family Nutrition Program classes for low-income individuals and families, Mental Health First Aid for Adults and Youth, Health Rocks

Introduction

The King George County Situation Analysis aims to identify specific needs within the county through local, regional, and state information. This analysis provides the foundation and rationale for Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) utilizing time, energy, and resources to deliver county programs and services, including partnerships with other local agencies and stakeholders.

Unit Profile

King George County, rich in historical, cultural, and natural resources, is located in Eastern Virginia about the midpoint between Richmond, VA, and Washington, D.C. Its rural and urban landscape is traversed by two major thoroughfares, U.S. Route 3 and 301, with Route 3 providing easy access to I-95, and both routes to major markets both north and south. Its northern boundary is the Potomac River, its southern boundary is the Rappahannock River, and it is the gateway to Virginia's historic Northern Neck peninsula.

Demographic Summary

The unit staff gathered quantitative data below primarily from the U.S. Census; however (where indicated), other data sources included County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Kids Count, King George County Government, Rappahannock Area Community Health Assessment, USDA, Virginia Department of Social Services, and VCE Data Common.

According to the U.S. Census in 2022, King George was populated with approximately 27,856 residents, a 13.2% increase from 2012. The 65 and older population increased from 11% to 14.4% during that period.

Population diversity was predominately white (71.5%), African American (15.7%), Hispanic (7.1%), other races (2.3%) and two or more races (3.4%). The Hispanic/Latino population grew the most at 2.9% from 2012-2022.

Table 1. King George Population

King George County	2012	2022
Population	27,381	27,856
By Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.4	0.5
Asian	1.2	1.8
Black or African American	17.3	15.7
Hispanic	4.2	7.1
Pacific Islander	0.1	.00
Two or More Races	2.8	3.4
White	74.0	71.5
By Age		
0-4	7.2	5.6
5-19	22.2	20.9
20-34	18.4	18.7
35-49	22.1	20.3
50-64	19.1	20.0
65+	11.0	14.4

Source: U.S. Census

Health Summary

Though poor physical health days 2.8, motor vehicle crashes (death rate per 100K) 18, excessive drinking 19%, and adult smoking 15% decreased, all were higher than the state: 2.7, 12, 17%, and 14%, respectively. The teen parent birth rate of 16 (per 1K females aged 15-19) remained the same but was higher than the state rate of 15.

The local Department of Social Services addressed 161 family assessments (2020). In 2021 and 2023, the county's adult obesity rate increased from 30% to 34% and was higher than the state 32% and national 32% rates. According to Kids Count, 430 children were food insecure, 1,193 lived in households receiving SNAP (2020), and 29% of the student population received free and reduced lunch (2016-17).

The Rappahannock Area Community Health Assessment (VDH), reported the county had the highest depressive disorder rate in the Planning District 16 at 19% (2020). Poor mental health days rose from 3.7 to 4.3 (2020-2022), overdose drug deaths (rate per 100K) increased from 11 to 25.6 (2012-21), suicide rate per 100K from 19-21 (2021-22), and the ratio of mental health providers 1,830:1.

Education Summary

The county has three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Several regional and satellite educational institutions serve King George residents, including Germanna Community College, Rappahannock Community College, University of Mary Washington-Dahlgren, Virginia Tech, George Mason University, Old Dominion University, and various others throughout the state. According to Kids Count, 13% of students received special education services (2021), the pass rate of third graders reading SOL was 51.9% for children economically disadvantaged (2021), 9.8% (408 kids) were chronically absent (2020-21), and 179 kids received short-term suspensions (2019-20). According to the Rappahannock Area Community Health Assessment (VDH), the county's 14% of disconnected youth (ages 16-19) was the highest percentage in the planning district (2019). Disconnected youths are those who are not working or attending school. In 2021, 92% of residents 25 years or older had a high school degree or higher, and those with a bachelor's degree or higher, 34.9%.

Business and Economic Summary

The county serves as an industrial and technological hub in Virginia, including the federal government and defense contractors, manufacturing facilities, and educational institutions. The highest-paying employer in the county is the federal government's Naval Support Facility in Dahlgren. The top three employment industries are public administration, professional and scientific, and retail trade. In 2022, the median household income was \$101,599, higher than the state's \$80,963 and the national \$69,717. According to the 2020 Census, the county ranked 60th of the top 100 counties with the highest median household income nationwide. The county households with higher incomes had incomes 3.6 times that of families with lower incomes, according to County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.

The county's unemployment rate was 2.60%, and 6.5% of residents lived in poverty in 2021. Residents receiving public assistance: 2,968 SNAP, 150 TANF, 5,612 Medical Assistance, and 72 Childcare subsidies, according to the Virginia Department of Social Services in 2022. According to Kids Count, 47.4% of children under 6 had all parents in the labor force, and 118 children received government childcare subsidies in 2022. According to VCE Data Commons, 2.54% of county grandparents raised their grandchildren in 2021. The median home cost was \$380,685 in 2022. Median gross rent for 2017-2021 was \$1,403—the county's housing total was 10,248, occupied 92.16%, and vacant 7.84%.

Agriculture Summary

Farms are decreasing nationwide: National: 2,109,303 (2012) to 2,042,220 (2017), state 46,030 (2012) to 43,225 (2017). In King George, the number of county farms decreased from 160 (2012) to 141 (2017), with land in farms (acres): 26,337. Average total farm production expenses per farm: \$88,223, and net operating income was \$4,122. From 2012-17, there were 46 new and beginning farm producers, 71 principal female producers, and 2,460 Hispanic-owned acreage. The typical age of U.S. farm producers increased from 56.3 to 57.5 years from 2012 to 2017.

Community and Resident Perspectives

The unit staff gathered qualitative data from interviews with nine key informants (respondents) from the following agencies and organizations that serve the county: county government, parks and recreation, school nutrition, local church, school board, youth-serving organization, local social services, parent organization, and chamber of commerce. Respondents identified several issues in the county, including the need for more parenting skills, enhanced youth career opportunities, transportation, new industries and jobs, affordable living, housing, agricultural sustainability, and improving physical and mental health. The following reflects the recurring themes expressed by the respondents:

1. Parenting support and family resilience were identified as a concern due to parental apathy, young parents being overwhelmed, and a shortage of childcare providers.
2. Youth career opportunities must be enhanced, including school and community-based apprenticeships and recreational programs, especially for economically disadvantaged children and disconnected youth.
3. The county needs healthy and diversified growth to make living affordable, given the income gap and lack of affordable housing.
4. Agriculture sustainability challenges farmers face, including aging producers, business profitability, and land use.
5. Health concerns in the community include food insecurity and the need for more mental health resources (i.e., suicide, depression, and substance abuse in the community).

Of the identified issues, two were also identified in the state's top 10 results and are listed below:

- Addressing hunger issues
- Preventing suicide

Community Issues

The Unit staff compiled and analyzed qualitative data perspectives with quantitative data to reflect the description of each priority issue below:

Priority Issue – Parenting Support and Family Resilience

Children and youth under 19 represent little over 26% of the county's population. Fourteen percent ages 16-19 were not in school or working; 16 births per 1K female population ages 15-19; 10 % of youth age 10-14; a little over 47% of children under 6 had all parents in the labor force, and 14% of all children and youth lived in single-parent households. Almost 10% of kids were chronically absent, and 179 received short-term suspensions. The King George DSS performed 161 family assessments. Nearly 3% of grandparents were raising their grandchildren. Respondents felt many parents were overwhelmed with economic concerns and work/family life balance. They were troubled about the shortage of childcare providers in the area and that many middle schoolers were taking on a lot of parental and household responsibilities for their parents who were working outside the home and for other reasons. They expressed concerns about the lack of clear expectations, little parental supervision, school fights, and escalations of behavior to severe and acute due to poor family management practices. Respondents encouraged more long-term parenting education and support through parenting coaching or mentoring, especially for young parents. Additionally, there was encouragement that many grandparents were taking on parenting responsibilities for their grandchildren versus children being placed in foster care. However, they noted support services were needed since full-time care for children can decrease caregivers' ability to address their own health and well-being needs.

Priority Issue - Enhance Youth Career Opportunities

The pass rate of third graders on SOL reading was 51.9% for economically disadvantaged children, 13% of students received special education services, and 14% disconnected youth ages 16-19, the highest percentage in the planning district (2019). Respondents were concerned with learning loss due to the pandemic (especially low

SOL math scores) and the lack of after-school programs other than sports. They expressed a need for school and community-based apprenticeship programs since college should be one of many options.

Priority Issue – Community Growth and Affordable Living

According to the 2020 Census, the county ranked 60th of the top 100 counties with the highest median income nationwide. According to County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, the county households with higher incomes had incomes 3.6 times that of families with lower incomes. County growth and preservation of its history, culture, and rural environment have always been concerns in the county. Respondents purported the county government must find that “sweet spot” where managed healthy and diversified growth can sustain and enhance the quality of life of residents without overburdening the county’s fiscal structure or threatening its historical, cultural, and natural resources. They noted the income gap is real, with many county residents underemployed and living paycheck to paycheck, thus driving up public assistance costs. They were concerned about food insecurity, as evidenced by increased car traffic patronage at a large food pantry in the middle of town. Additionally, respondents lamented the lack of affordable housing, which has long been an issue. They expressed concern that high median home prices made homeownership nearly impossible for individuals and families with limited incomes or entry-level workforce jobs, thus a barrier to the American dream and eliminating a crucial ingredient for developing financial independence and wealth.

Table 2: Median home price in PD 16

Area/Locality	2022
Caroline County	\$262,577
City of Fredericksburg	\$420,456
King George County	\$380,685
Spotsylvania County	\$384,392
Stafford County	\$481,039

Source: Community Health Assessment, Rappahannock Area Health District (2022)

Priority Issue: Agriculture Sustainability

Respondents were concerned that many farmers are retiring, have low business profitability, lack farm transition planning, face land use challenges, and other concerns. The number of county farms decreased from 160 (2012) to 141 (2017), with average total farm production expenses per farm being \$88,223 and net operating income being \$4,122.

Priority Issue: Improving Physical and Mental Health Outcomes

Respondents were concerned that the county’s high median household income overshadows the increasing patronage of local food pantries and low-income households in school districts without free and reduced school meal qualifications. Over four hundred children were food insecure; 1,193 lived in households receiving SNAP (2020), and 29% of the student population received free and reduced lunch (2016-17). Since the pandemic, respondents noted the county’s increasing need for mental health services. They stressed substance abuse is both a family and community problem. Overdose drug deaths (rate per 100K) increased from 11 to 25.6 (2012-21). The county had the highest depressive disorder rate in the PD 16 at 19% (2020). Poor mental health days rose from 3.7 to 4.3 (2020-2022), the suicide rate from 19-21 (2020-22), and the ratio of mental health providers was 1,830:1.

Table 3: Suicide rate per 100,000 population in the US, Virginia, and PD 16

Area/Locality	2020	2021	2022
United States	14	14	14
Virginia	13	13	13
Caroline County	21	17	18
City of Fredericksburg	15	16	14
King George County	23	19	21
Spotsylvania County	12	13	13
Stafford County	13	13	13

Source: Community Health Assessment, Rappahannock Area Health District

Future Programming to Address Community Issues

VCE Response - Parenting Support and Family Resilience

VCE's Family and Consumer Sciences offer four- and eight-week parenting education and long-term general parenting coaching programs in-person or virtually. First Five Years, Just in Time Parenting, and Success for Teen Parents Program programs are geared for parents of children ages 0-5. Balancing Life is a weekly 30-minute "pick me up" virtual program to support a healthy family/work life. Also, a new piloted grant-funded Grandparent-raising Grandchildren program was introduced to support grandparents who are parenting again and to address their health and well-being needs.

VCE Response - Growth and Affordable Living

Through its Community Viability programs, VCE can assist the county in managing county growth to enhance residents' quality of life while preserving county resources. Programs include Leadership & Planning, Community Enterprise and Resiliency, Community Food System and Enterprises, Community Planning, and Emerging Community Issues. Additionally, VCE offers personal financial management, workforce preparation, and homeownership programs to help families meet their financial goals.

VCE Response - Enhance Youth Career and Recreational Needs

Enhancing youth career opportunities was also a priority due to learning loss during the pandemic and the need for more after-school programs, including school and community-based apprenticeship programs, especially for economically disadvantaged children and disconnected youth. VCE, through 4-H programs, provide opportunities for youth to develop confidence, resiliency, life skills, social capacity, citizenship, and other skills. Through the learning-by-doing approach, 4-H teaches hard and soft skills via camping, club, and school enrichment delivery modes. There are 4-H clubs & military-sponsored clubs meeting regularly in the evenings, after school, on weekends, and in the daytime with home-school groups in the county. 4-H programs are not only fun but they offer opportunities for career explorations through clubs, including livestock, shooting sports, horses, dogs, robotics, school gardens, STEM, environmental, and more.

VCE Response - Agriculture Sustainability

Agriculture sustainability was identified as a priority due to challenges farmers face, including business profitability, aging, farm transition, and land use. VCE addresses the educational needs of our diverse local farming community through various Agriculture programs, individual consultations and advice, online publications, and access to university specialists. Some programs include Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Farm Business Profitability, Farm Transition Planning, and local Farm to School procurement.

VCE Response - Improving Physical and Mental Health

VCE partners with government agencies, schools, churches, food banks and pantries, non-profits groups, and local businesses to combat obesity and help feed the hungry with good nutrition and physical activity through Diabetes Prevention Program, Balanced Living with Diabetes, and other wellness programs. Additionally, the Family Nutrition Program (FNP) meets the unique needs of limited income families with nutritional programs throughout the lifespan.

VCE is able to work with local governments and community organizations to help meet the mental health crisis many families are facing in the County. VCE partners with community stakeholders to present Mental Health First Aid for Adults and Youth. VCE piloted a grant funded opioid prevention project to help tackle the commonwealth's rural opioid addiction problem. Additionally, the FCS Extension Agent, presents drug awareness through Health Rocks program to children and youth.

Out of our scope: transportation issues.

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