

AGRICULTURE AND 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 nationwide. 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 2025 SUMMARY

<u>Description</u>	FY23	FY24	FY25	Change
	Actual	Original	Approved	24 to 25
Personnel	\$ 142,490	\$ 159,288	\$ 167,750	5.3%
Operation	280,941	284,076	310,076	9.2%
Capital	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	<u>\$ 423,431</u>	<u>\$ 443,364</u>	<u>\$ 477,826</u>	<u>7.8%</u>
Personnel Complement*	2	2	2	0

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

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>Change 24 to 25</u>
Workload Measures				
Citizens Assisted	168,687	112,000	104,200	(7,800)
Programs Presented	497	410	391	(19)
4-H Youth Enrolled	7,516	6,500	6,500	-
Samples Analyzed and Identified	800	1,025	600	(425)
Efficiency Measures				
Volunteer Hours Supporting Programs	15,718	15,100	12,900	(2,200)

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Agriculture and Home Extension budget of \$477,826 for FY25 increased by \$34,462, or 7.8%, from the FY24 approved budget. This increase includes an \$8,462 increase, or 5.3%, to the personnel component for rising salary, healthcare, and employee benefit costs and a \$26,000 increase, or 9.2%, to the operating budget to reflect rising Virginia Tech agent and intern salaries.

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Extension Office is known as a cooperative program because of its partnership between local, state, and federal governments. During FY24, Extension served over 160,000 citizens and volunteers contributed over 15,000 hours. Through the use of technology and dedicated volunteers, citizens were able to participate in a variety of program opportunities. Extension continues to increase its use of social media to reach citizens. While Facebook was used most often, Instagram and YouTube are also outlets used to share educational resources.

The 4-H Youth Development reached over 35,000 citizens and continued to see an increase through social media contacts. During the Fall of 2023 over 1,700 students were reached through “AgVenture Days”, an agricultural literacy program offered by Henrico 4-H and the Henrico Junior Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners taught lessons on vermicomposting, apples, and corn. All lessons are SOL-correlated with core curriculum areas and STEM concepts incorporated in the lessons. 4-H held the 2nd annual “Farm Graze” agricultural literacy event, which showcased the importance of agriculture through hands-on activities, crafts, live animals, and more. The event reached 340 people with 19 volunteers and 17 exhibitors.

Family and Consumer Sciences programming continued to focus on overall wellness. With a partnership with the Henrico County Public Schools, the Henrico Education Foundation, and the Oak Avenue Complex, nutrition and financial education programs were offered to youth and adults. Through a Children Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) grant six Henrico families participated in the 7-week intensive evidence-based Strengthening Families Program for youth ages 10-14. During weekly sessions families identified fun activities to do together, role played strategies to deal with stress and peer pressure, and learned more about each other in a fun and safe environment. Family members reported learning how to actively listen to their children and their feelings and to communicate better. Additionally, youth and families participated in a mental health summit and hands-on learning experiences at Virginia State University.

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Agriculture and Natural Resources continues to offer a variety of programming. With the help of Master Gardener volunteers, the Agriculture and Natural Resources program reached over 90,000 citizens. During National Pollinator Week, the Extension office had a targeted social media campaign that featured weekly posts on the importance of pollinators, a featured recipe, and pollinator of the week. Due to the popularity of the featured posts, there was a 240% increase in Facebook reach with a total reach of over 7,000. In-person events at the two Henrico Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens had attendance of over 65 residents.

The Agriculture and Home Extension approved budget for FY25 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 four 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% of the salary and benefit costs of two Extension Agent positions, and 50% of the salary and benefit costs of the other two Extension Agent positions.