



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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## King William 2023 Situation Analysis Report

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## Summary of community issues and Extension office response

Priority Issue	Planned Unit Response
<b>Strengthening the local food system</b> - Ensuring safe, high quality foods - Building capacity for farm to school programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue current ANR programming</li> <li>• Partner with local growers to assess needs and gaps in programming, address those needs through educational programs</li> <li>• Support King William Farmers Market</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Development</b> - Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills - Getting more adults involved in mentorship - Promoting scientific literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue current 4-H programming</li> <li>• Create a marketing program</li> <li>• Hold Positive Youth Development Workshops for Volunteers and Community members</li> <li>• Special efforts in programming for Agriculture, Natural Resources, Environmental and Scientific Literacy</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Literacy</b> -Controlling invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer Drinking Water Clinic annually</li> <li>• Work with King William Public Schools to offer an annual MWEE</li> <li>• Work with King William Public Schools to offer an annual Ag Day</li> </ul>

# Introduction

The King William Extension office conducted a situation analysis over the latter part of 2023. The purpose of conducting the analysis was to identify key issues in King William County that Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) will address through educational programming.

Using data from the VCE Situational Analysis Resource website, a unit profile for the county and community survey was developed. Key points from the unit profile were considered when creating the community survey. The survey had several issues and asked the respondents to rate each issue on a five-point scale, asking how much effort should be put into VCE programming. The scale was no effort to very high effort. Respondents selected if VCE should locally have a very high, high, moderate, low or no effort to each issue. The survey was administered using Qualtrics online platform. A link to the survey was sent directly to approximately 65 residents.

Recipients of the survey included county board of supervisors, county employees, school teachers, Soil and Water Conservation directors, and parents and guardians of 4-H members. The Mattaponi, Pamunkey River Associations were asked to distribute the survey amongst their membership as well as to any other resident that they thought would provide feedback. When the survey was closed in December of 2023, 22 participants had responded.

The findings from the unit profile and the survey were analyzed and key issues for King William County were identified. A Unit Profile was first constructed using a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, the 2018 Situation Analysis, the Virginia Employment Commission, the U.S. Census, and the USDA's Census of Agriculture. The Unit Profile sought to capture relevant geographic, demographic, and economic data.

# Unit Profile

King William is a county of 284 square miles (12 of which are water) and an estimated 15,728 residents, situated on the Middle Peninsula in the Southeast District. The county is outlined by the Mattaponi River to the north and the Pamunkey River to the south. King William is home to two Indian tribes and reservations of the same names. Population density of King William is 60 people per square mile, but this is weighted by West Point, the area's largest town. West Point's population is an estimated 3,314 residents, occupying 5.2 square miles. Disregarding West Point, King William's population density is 49 residents per square mile. West Point is located at the eastern extreme of the county, where the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers join to form the York River. The county is long and narrow—37 miles long with an average width of 9 or 10 miles. This confluence of factors has created a community without a geographic center, although the important areas of Central Garage, King William Courthouse, and West Point are all connected by the VA-30 corridor.

The King William population has more than doubled since the 1970's. The demographic composition of whites changed very little, with 77% of the current population identifying themselves as such, the same as in 2018. The Black population has dropped from 19% to 15% of respondents identifying as Black since then. In the last situation analysis 1.7% identify as Native American, this has now dropped to .9%. Mixed Races make up 2.4% and Hispanic make up 2.9% of the population.

As of 2021, a little over 16% of the population was 65 or older. A little under 19% of the population is under the age of 19. There are two school systems in the county, comprising seven schools: Cool Springs Primary School, Acquinton Elementary School, Hamilton-Holmes Middle School, King William High School, of King William Public School System; and West Point Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, of the West Point Public School System. The on-time graduation rate for the 2023 cohort was 90% for King William High School and 98% graduation rate for West Point High School.

The median household income in 2021 was \$74,592. The overall poverty rate for King William is 7.3% which is lower than the state rate of 10.6%. Westrock Corporation, King William Public Schools, and Nestle Purina Cat Care are the largest employers. There is a net trend towards out-commuting; more people leave the county for work than those that enter. A little over 1,000 individuals both live and work in King William.

Given the prominence of the industry in King William's landscape, no Unit Profile would be complete without a discussion of agriculture. As of the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 90 farms covering 47,456 acres. This is down since the 2012 census when King William had 135 farms and the acreage has gone down by 11%. Soybeans, corn, and small grains are by far the largest commodities, at 88% share of sales in the county the remainder is livestock, poultry and other products. The county has 133 producers, 86 are male and 47 are female, 40 are over the age of 64. Of these producers 34% identified as being new or beginning farmers.

## Community and Resident Perspectives

The issues ranked high or very high effort in the county can be grouped into youth development, food systems and promoting agriculture, natural resources and environmental literacy. Like the state results, King William residents thought high/very high effort should be put into getting more adults involved in mentoring youth. King William Residents ranked helping youth develop leadership citizenship and life skills as one of their highest effort issues, which was on the top ten for the state. The Northeast district respondents and the state respondents ranked strengthening the local food system as a high priority issue as did King William residents, along with ensuring safe, high-quality foods.

Table 2. High/Very High community issues based on survey results by King William County residents.

Issue	Scoring
Promoting agricultural, natural resources, and environmental literacy	75
Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills	75
Getting more adults involved in mentoring youth	73
Strengthening the local food system	72
Building capacity for farm to school programming	70
Ensuring safe, high quality foods	68
Helping communities improve their quality of life	68
Controlling invasive pests (plants, animals, insects)	68
Promoting scientific literacy among youth	68
Promoting small business entrepreneurs	68

Note: Scale for scoring survey participants rating was 0=No Effort, 1=Low Effort, 2=Moderate Effort, 3=High Effort, 4=Very High Effort.

## Community Issues

Strengthening local food systems can improve food access for consumers, increase farmer profitability, stabilize and/or grow local economies and enhance community viability. Consumer choices about food spending and diet are likely to be influenced by the accessibility and affordability of food retailers—travel time to shopping, availability of healthy foods, and food prices. Strengthening local food systems, and ensuring safe, high quality foods were identified as issues in the county. King William has a monthly Farmers Market in the summer months. One of the participants of the survey discussed the lack of high-quality foods at the two grocery stores in the county.

Youth programming and lack of adults to mentor youth were issues identified in the survey. Currently, outside of school programming, King William has a very robust 4-H shooting education club, a 4-H dairy goat club, a 4-H

teen leadership club, a 4-H/FFA Poultry Judging Club and a joint county 4-H Homeschool club and a 4-H Livestock club with King and Queen County. King William Parks and Recreation offer sports leagues and a summer day camp.

Many respondents to the survey identified youth programming as their priority issue. Limiting factors for youth programming are lack of adult volunteers and lack of meeting space that is open to the public. Currently, the 4-H Shooting education club has a double-digit waitlist. The same can be said for the Parks and Recreation summer program. Meeting spaces are also limited, the county has two libraries one in West Point and one in Central Garage, both have a room that will hold about 20 people but do not have outdoor space. These spaces are also limited to library operating hours and are used by many other groups.

When it comes to literacy of agriculture, natural resources and the environment, the key term is literacy, meaning a competence or understanding of the complex dynamics and systems that are involved in these topics. Some survey respondents wanted VCE to “support” agriculture and others were concerned about protecting the water, rivers and land. Other comments in the survey discussed how King William was growing and how that is affecting rural life.

## Future Programming to Address Community Issues

The priority community issues that the Extension office is able to address are strengthening the local food system, youth development, and educational programming to increase agricultural, natural resources, and environmental literacy. We feel that we can also address other high priority issues through these issues.

### Strengthening the local food system

The ANR Extension agent will continue current programming efforts to include annual pesticide recertification class and the Five County Agriculture Conference. Future programming will include partnering local growers to address any needs they may have. Other partners will include the King William Farmer Market, Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District and the King William Farm Bureau. The VCE office will use the Model for Community, Local, and Regional Food to address needs local food system needs in the community.



Fig. 1 VCE Model of community, local, and regional food systems.

## **Youth Development**

The 4-H Extension agent will continue all efforts currently taking place in King William county. The agent will work with the ANR agent to expand youth programming. The 4-H agent will advertise for volunteers to work with youth to address the issue of adults mentoring youth and will hold workshops in Positive Youth Development for volunteers or those interested in the topic. 4-H agent will continue the partnership with the school system as well as expand programming. Within school programming a special effort will be made to address scientific and agricultural literacy. Marketing 4-H programming will be expanded to regular social media posts, and more communication through the schools. Partnerships will include the King William County Library, King William Parks and Recreation, Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District, the King William Future Farmers of America.

## **Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Environmental Literacy**

The King William ANR and 4-H Extension agents currently focus much of their programming on agriculture, natural resources and environmental literacy. A high priority will be put on these topics in the future. Several of the joint county programs will continue with intention of increasing literacy in the community.

Drinking Water clinics which in the past have been held on a biannual basis will be held every year to increase participants. The VCE office will try to persuade school systems in King William to bring back the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) which Extension put on in partnership with other agencies. The office will also strive to hold a Three County Ag Day with King and Queen and Essex counties. VCE will partner with the Mattaponi Pamunkey River Association, Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District, King William and West Point Public Schools to provide programs.

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