



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico

Program Title: Local Government 101: Youth Educational Program

Program Category: Communications (Public Relations)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Holly Zinn

Title: Management Specialist

Department: County Manager's Office

Complete Mailing Address: 4301 E. Parham Road, Third Floor, Henrico, VA 23228

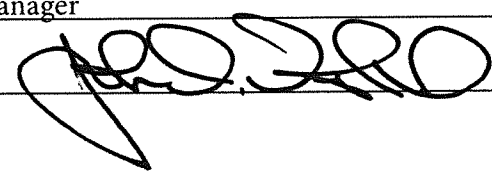
Telephone: 804-501-4370 **Website:** henrico.us

Email: zin01@henrico.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John A. Vithoukaskas

Title: County Manager

Signature: 

1. Program Overview

Having an informed and educated citizenry is essential to having a strong community and relationship between public and government. The best time to start engaging a person is early in life. However, a child or teenager may only hear about local government once throughout their public-school career. Thus, Henrico County created an educational program, Local Government 101, for the youth in the region to encourage early public involvement and to inform participants of the scope of municipalities. Furthermore, Local Government 101 helps scouts earn credit towards a merit badge, and students can earn extra credit for a course.

In 2016, the county hosted six one-hour programs for students and scouts from Henrico and surrounding localities to learn about Henrico's government structure, stakeholders, and broad range of services and programs. The first portion of the program consisted of an interactive presentation, which led into hands-on activities. The activities ranged from providing a public service or participating in a civic duty. Based on whether the child or teenager was attending as a Boy or Girl Scout or student, the participant was given a packet that included necessary resources to help earn credit for a badge or class at the conclusion of the program. Local Government 101 was held one hour before a regularly occurring public meeting, so attendees could stay for the public meeting to gain first-hand experience in county business.

2. Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

In Virginia's public school system, a student could attend kindergarten through twelfth grade with only hearing about local government once in fifth grade. Furthermore, what little is included in the curriculum is limited to what the standardized test will ask and not the actual impact or importance of local government. Though there is a lack of attention to the local level of government in schools, the scouting organizations – Girl and Boy Scouts – have badges designed to get the scouts and their parents or adult chaperones involved in their respective local governments and communities.

Occasionally, children and students would attend our Board of Supervisors' regular meetings. Some would attend for extra credit for class, and other youth were trying to satisfy a requirement for a scouting badge. After observing the children, students, and the chaperones, it was clear the meeting structure and county business being conducted was almost foreign to most of these attendees. Subsequently, the adults would have difficulty explaining the meeting and finding resources to satisfy the badge requirements or school assignment. Thus, the youth could not fully comprehend and make the real-life applications, even if they were old enough to be unaccompanied.

3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

Local government is the actual service provider of governmental operations, yet it is the least known of the three levels of government. By educating students and scouts about the county government structure and services, Henrico is instilling a sense of empowerment and pride within our youth. Using the power of knowledge, these students

and scouts are achieving individual, personal goals, all while learning how to be productive and engaged citizens in local government.

More than 120 youth and adults who attended the program and the following Board of Supervisors' regular meeting have been exposed to the inner workings of Henrico County. Furthermore, they have been given the tools to continue their engagement and connect with community. This is a program local governments do not have to sponsor, but it is one that provides immeasurable dividends for the government, elected officials, and community.

4. How Program Was Carried Out

Henrico's Local Government 101 program proactively informs, engages, and empowers youth and their chaperones through interactive education about local government. Participants can easily comprehend the structure and services of Henrico by applying the knowledge to accomplish an individual goal. It also provides resources on how to become involved in the community and execute basic civic duties, such as voting. Furthermore, the program develops relationships with numerous active groups throughout the county and central Virginia region.

In early 2015, until the fall, observances were taken during various Board of Supervisors' regular meetings about the attendees and their reasons for coming to the meeting just as a matter of curiosity. A trend was noticed that students, scouts, and their adult companions attended these meetings during the school year to either satisfy the

requirements for a badge or assignment for class. However, it was clear most of the adults were not familiar with Henrico's County Manager Form of Government, nonetheless the meeting structure.

Additionally, pilot PowerPoint presentations outlining Henrico's government structure and operations were created and given to youth groups – such as scouting troops or public school classes - who requested a county official to come speak. As the presentation became more refined, activities and handouts were included. The interactive addition created a much more engaged audience. Then in the fall, the idea for a youth educational program to occur one hour before the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors was drafted, and the proposal was accepted by the County Manager and Board of Supervisors. Once approved, the County Manager's Office began conducting research on the separate Girl and Boy Scout badges involving local government and community outreach.

The timeframe and dates were set for the Local Government 101 program to occur one hour prior to the public meeting because the students and scouts all had one same requirement – attend a public meeting. The location of the program was the same as the meeting location to avoid any confusion. A presentation, activities, and scout-specific informational packets were then developed based on the requirements needed to earn each badge. Additionally, the fifth-grade school curriculum that covered local government and Henrico County was reviewed to better understand the level of information taught in Henrico's school system.

The County Manager's Office reached out to the Girl and Boy Scout organizations in Virginia to ask for opinions on the materials and assistance in marketing. Henrico County Public Schools was also contacted to help with review and advertising the program to the appropriate classes. The materials were approved, and the Heart of Virginia Boy Scout Council agreed to advertise the program throughout the central Virginia region to every troop on a weekly and monthly basis. The school system made several social media posts and disseminated the program flyer to certain teachers.

The 30-minute presentation portion of the program covered the three levels and branches of government and how they apply on the local level. To provide some context about the local community, the location, geography, and basic demographics of Henrico were included. Of course, services and financial aspects, such as budget and taxes, were also covered. After the presentation, participants engaged in civic duty activities for approximately 15 minutes. These involved the scouts and students identifying facilities or services near their home, forming issue-specific committees, and voting using sample ballots from a recent election. Finally, packets for the participant's specific reason for attending were given. The packets included county resources and information needed to complete the requirements for badges that might not have been met during the program. Students received a copy of the presentation and a proof-of-attendance form.

At the conclusion of the program, the youth and their respective adults were encouraged to stay for the Board of Supervisors' regular meeting. During the beginning portion of the public meeting, the chairman of the Board recognized the participants. After the meeting

was adjourned, the Supervisors invited any scouts and students who stayed until the end up to their chambers to discuss their roles and the meeting's business.

5. Financing and Staffing

The cost of the program is minimal. The only two expenses involve printing the packets and presentation and one staff member working after normal business hours six times a year to host the seminar. The printing cost approximately \$25, and the staff member is classified as exempt.

6. Program Results

Only six sessions of Henrico's Local Government 101 program have occurred, and a total of 122 Boy and Girl Scouts and students of all ages have attended a session. One session had approximately 50 children and teenagers. Furthermore, the youth participants are not limited to Henrico. Scouts from Chesterfield County, Charles City County, Hanover County, and City of Richmond City have participated. Subsequently, the Heart of Virginia Boy Scout Council has praised the program and asked for its continuation. This relationship with the Boy Scouts has led to discussions about other engagement opportunities, such as promoting Eagle Scout programs.

A Henrico County Public School teacher has begun offering extra credit to students who participate, and the Local Government 101 presentation has become the standing PowerPoint to use for youth community engagements by the County Manager and Board

of Supervisors. An unanticipated result was the knowledge gained by the adult chaperones and parents. Numerous testimonials from the adult participants state they were ignorant to the breadth of local government.

7. Brief Summary

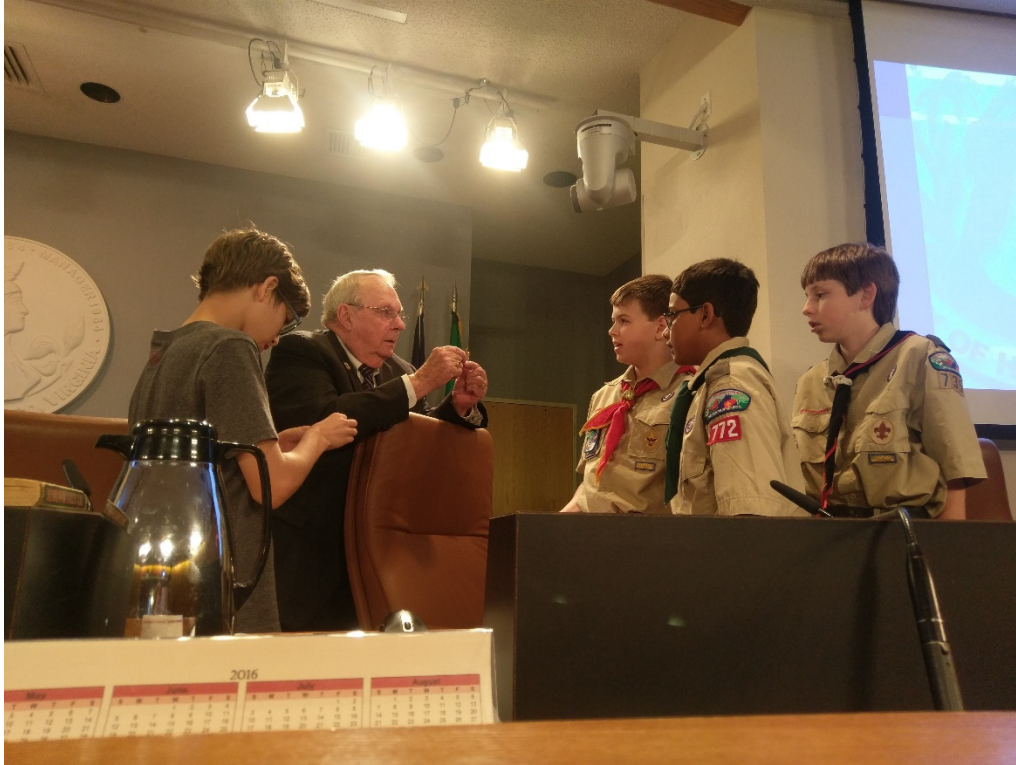
To expose and educate the youth in the central Virginia region about the impact of local government, the County Manager's Office hosts a brief seminar to explain the structure and functions of Henrico County. The seminar includes an interactive presentation, hands-on experience in civil responsibilities, and a public meeting. The children and teenagers engage in outlining the County Manager Form of Government during a brief presentation and participate in activities demonstrating the wide array of services provided by Henrico County. At the conclusion of the seminar, they are encouraged to stay for a regularly occurring public meeting convening immediately afterwards.

The first Local Government 101 program was held in the spring of 2016. A total of six sessions have been held with an aggregate attendance total of 122. Youth attend to satisfy requirements for a scouting badge, obtain extra credit for class, or for general interest. The age spectrum ranges from five years old to 18 years old. Additionally, the program is not limited to Henrico residents. Thus, we have hosted participants from almost every surrounding locality. This program has led to a closer relationship with the Heart of Virginia Council Boy Scouts, the adult chaperones, and it has created another opportunity for government and elected officials to proactively interact with the public, as well.

VACO Application

Local Government 101: Youth Educational Program Supplemental Information

Pictures



Earn credit for
badge or class!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT 101



Henrico's Youth Educational Program

Interactive, informative
presentation

Meet & greet with county
officials

Educational activities

Fall 2016 Sessions

Tuesday, September 27

Tuesday, October 25

Tuesday, November 22

6 p.m. in the Board Room,
4301 E. Parham Rd.

Registration required.

henrico.us/services/local-government-101/



To register for a session of Local
Government 101, complete an
online registration form.

Questions or comments?

(804) 501-4276
tre08@henrico.us