

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Henrico County

Program Title: ZippSlipping into Libraries

Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Cristol Klevinsky

Title: Management Specialist

Department: County Manager's Office

Complete Mailing Address: 4301 E. Parham Rd., Henrico, VA 23228


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

Email: kle@henrico.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John A. Vithoukas

Title: County Manager

Signature: 

Short Overview

In Henrico County, our school and public libraries work together to provide resources for our youngest citizens. In an effort to increase our students' access to materials, we embarked on a project to provide those students without public library cards a seamless way to obtain them so they could use all library resources available to them. Through the assistance of the Henrico County Public Schools' Technology Department, we took a manual "paper only" process and added an online option for our parents and students.

Henrico County Public Schools uses online software for K-12 that automates paper forms and transactions that go between parents and their students' schools. The product, ZippSlip, allows us to create electronic library applications that only require a few clicks. This year we included a public library card application in our beginning-of-the-year package of online forms, providing an easy way for parents to apply for a public library card for their children. In its first year, this program issued 4,322 public library cards through ZippSlip and 548 more cards issued through paper applications for a total of 4,870 students receiving public library cards.

The Problem/Challenge/Situation

Traditional public library card sign-up requires a parent or caregiver to accompany and sign for a minor at a branch library. Many parents take the time to accomplish this important milestone with their children. Others, due to time-constraints and other barriers, simply are not able to achieve this goal. When students lack this advantage, it negates their ability to access and borrow valuable materials from their public library system. Notably, they lack access to the growing body of electronic databases and eBooks, which are available 24/7.

How the Program was Carried Out

In spring 2015, the library services departments of Henrico County Public Schools and Henrico County Public Library met to discuss ways to collaborate to help Henrico students gain easier access to public library materials. We discussed many ideas but focused on the problem of students lacking public library cards. Public library cards require parental signatures because borrowers are liable for overdue fees. Parents had to bring their children into a library to sign them up for a card and present a utility bill to comply with residency requirements. This was a major barrier to some families, particularly some English-language learners and low-income students. We needed a way to eliminate these obstacles and get library cards into the hands of students. We completed a needs-assessment, defined and documented the requirements and listed any concerns. In collaborating, we asked whether there might be a different way to collect applicant information. From there, we discussed ZippSlip, and its success in Henrico Schools as a tool to complete electronic forms.

Schools then sent the exported ZippSlip data and paper library card applications to Henrico County Public Library to issue cards. The cards were created by the public library and sent back to HCPS' Library Services for distribution to each school. Using this tool could provide a way for busy families to submit public library applications online.

Our Objectives Included:

- Creating an online solution for parents and guardians to submit electronic applications.
- Delivering applicant information to Henrico County Public Library for processing.
- Defining residency through the school division saving parents the burden of having to provide that documentation.

3 | ZippSlipping into Libraries Henrico County, Virginia

Timeframe:

Early Spring 2015

- Mapped the workflow for parents and Library Services Departments of Henrico County Public Library and Henrico County Public Schools

Late Spring 2015

- HCPS' Technology and Library Services Departments teamed with Henrico County Public Library's Library Services Department to develop and test the public library application form

Fall 2015

- Implemented the initiative in grades K-12

Henrico County Public Schools' Technology Department took the public library's paper card application form and recreated it electronically in the ZippSlip program. The form is fed by our student information system. Verification of a family's residency became seamless. In fall 2015, the public library card application was included in families' beginning-of-the-year ZippSlip forms.

ZippSlip data from the first month of the school year was collected by Henrico County Public Schools' Library Services Department and cleaned up to ensure that it contained the information the public library needed to create accounts. The department indicated which of our 72 schools each student attended and emailed the file to Henrico County Public Library. Public Library staff would verify the student did not already have an account, enter the information and place the new library card in an envelope bearing the student's name and school. Also included with the card was a flyer detailing useful information, including the public library's homework-help sites.

The cards were then returned to Henrico County Public Schools' Library Services Department.

The cards were collated and sent to the indicated school library where each school librarian distributed them. Students' accounts became active as soon as they were created in the public library's integrated library system; thus, even before they received their physical cards, students could access database information, check out books and use other resources.

Because some of our parents have chosen not to participate in using ZippSlip, we also provided paper copies of the public library application form. Staff members in the division's Library Services Department reviewed the paper applications and compared it with our student information system to ensure that students resided in Henrico County. From there, the same process was followed as with the electronic applications. After the initial flurry of September applications, ZippSlip was checked once a month and any additional new student applications were sent to the public library.

One of the valuable lessons the recent recession provided for local governments is the need to find new ways to work smarter and more efficiently on behalf of our citizens. This program is an outgrowth of that new vision as it exemplifies an expanded effort between county departments to realize efficiencies that improve the quality of life for all citizens, in this case, our youngest and most vulnerable: school-aged children. Because of this program's initial success, we are motivated to continue to look for increased ways of using limited revenue in the wisest, most effective ways possible.

Implementation included the following products:

- Internet
- ZippSlip website
- PowerSchool website

- Email
- SirsiDynix library circulation software

Financing and Staffing Cost

Development costs were nonexistent. ZippSlip software was already being used by the school division. Henrico County Public Library incurred negligible costs involved in mailing supplies and labels. What proved priceless is the outstanding cooperation between school and public libraries and an intense desire to provide access to quality materials to our students.

Program Results

We were able to meet the planned objectives, which included:

- Creating an online solution for parents and guardians to submit electronic applications.
- Delivering applicant information to Henrico County Public Library for processing.
- Defining residency through the school division saving parents the burden of having to provide that documentation.

This program resulted in 4,322 public library cards being issued through ZippSlip and 548 cards issued through the paper applications. More important than sheer numbers, however, is the success the program demonstrated in making the public library's valuable assets available for use by a large and crucially important segment of our population: students. It is students that are most in need of such rich information and resources.

It is safe to say that most of the children affected by the program would not have acquired a library card. Thus, their access to information, whether online or at each branch library, would

have been limited. This partnership allowed us to provide access to a multitude of materials to families that may otherwise not have had access.

Brief Summary

This innovative HCPS library program illustrates interdepartmental cooperation and coordination to solve a shared need, and has filled a gap in governmental services in a proactive and seamless manner. In this case, the need was to expand access to the public library's rich resources, both print and electronic. The initiative took major strides toward ensuring that every student whose parents wanted them to have a public library card was able to get one. Because our school and public libraries cooperated and used shared data to push this opportunity out to parents, 4,870 students – almost 10 percent of the county's student body – became new public library members. These students are now entitled to use all of the resources available to them from their public library. They can complete more robust reports and assignments by using a variety of resources, many of which are available 24/7.

7 | ZippSlipping into Libraries
Henrico County, Virginia

Supplemental materials

Henrico County Public Schools division access:

The screenshot shows the 'Activities Already Sent' dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'School List', 'Parent Activities', and 'Administration'. A search bar contains the word 'library'. Below the navigation bar, there are buttons for 'Create ZippGram' and 'Create Activity'. The main content area includes filters for 'All Communications', 'Events', 'Forms Packets', and 'ZippGrams'. There are also filters for 'ZippNote', 'Unread', 'Responded', 'YES', 'NO', 'Email Open/Link Clicked', and 'Not Responded'. A table lists activities with columns for 'Activity Name', 'Staff', 'Consent Deadline', 'Response Metrics', and 'Status'. The first activity is 'Get A Public Library Card (Optional)' by 'HenricoDistrict Admin' with a deadline of 'Fri, Jun 17, 2016 6:00 PM'. The response metrics show 4157 'YES' responses and 9028 'NO' responses out of a total of 25823. The status is 'Published'. Navigation controls for the table are at the bottom right.

Options to export applications and view analytics statistics:

This screenshot shows the details for the activity 'Get a Public Library Card (Optional)'. It includes fields for 'Select School' (All), 'Status' (Published), 'School Staff' (HenricoDistrict Admin), 'Consent Deadline' (Fri, Jun 17 2016 06:00 PM), and 'Required Documents' (No Documents Required). A 'Description' section shows a form icon for 'Get a Public Library Card'. On the right side, there is a 'Response Status' section with a progress bar showing 4157 'YES' and 9028 'NO' responses out of 25823 total. Below this are buttons for 'Print Forms', 'View Print Files', 'Export Forms to Excel', 'Send Email to Parents', and 'View Statistics'. A large yellow arrow points from the 'Get a Public Library Card' form icon to the 'Export Forms to Excel' button. The 'Export Forms to Excel' and 'View Statistics' buttons are also circled in yellow.