



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2020.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico

Program Title: LifeReady Expo

Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis

Title: Public Relations Specialist

Department: Public Relations

Telephone: 804-501-4933 Website: www.henrico.us

Email: dav127@henrico.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton

Title: Deputy County Manager for Adminsitration

Signature: 

Program Overview

In 2018, Henrico County Public Schools' Department of Workforce and Career Development hosted its first-ever "CTE Letter-of-Intent Signing Day," which raised awareness of our programs and provided a unique opportunity for our students and business partners. As a result of continuing to build partnerships and promote access, we held our first ever LifeReady Expo in October 2019.

The event was designed to build relationships between students and employers at the beginning of the school year, instead of the end. Furthermore, it enabled employers to see our students firsthand, and for our students to show off their "soft skills." One hundred and fifty-three employers attended and between 3,000 and 4,000 students and parents were there. At the event, students met with employers, learned about career pathways, interviewed with employers and developed relationships.

This program developed strong relationships among our employers and students and many stayed in touch throughout the school year. In addition, this initial contact provided a vested interest for all involved and has created more opportunities for our students, while also helping to solve the problem of a depleting workforce.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

The program was designed to jump-start students looking to be gainfully employed full-time upon graduation. This also enabled employers to begin drawing interest in their company by providing parents and students with the career pathway opportunities that they are able to offer. For many, this included being willing to pay for postsecondary education for students who signed on with their company. In addition, this also was an opportunity for middle-school-aged children and

parents to learn more about career pathways that interested them and gain information on that industry.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The LifeReady Expo satisfies the criteria based on innovation and collaboration among Henrico Schools and multiple employers and stakeholders. The program offered a unique way for students and parents to make connections with a variety of employers. Also, it satisfied a significant objective by educating students and families about career pathways and potential opportunities in various career areas.

How Program Was Carried Out

Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) strives to make sure every student who graduates from high school is “enrolled, enlisted or employed.” There are many career pathways with multiple jobs to help students understand and focus on a career that interests them. It is important for students and parents to learn about these options from professionals in the field. The school division’s LifeReady Expo was held Oct. 22, 2019, at Hermitage High School. The focus of the event was to expose students and parents to career pathways. In addition, several program objectives were accomplished during the event, including:

- Highlighting lucrative opportunities for students so that parents understand the value of possible alternatives to a four-year college.
- Encouraging employers to engage with students before graduation to help fulfill their workforce needs.
- Help students select career pathways of interest and understand their options concerning future salaries and education.

This event was a community effort attended not just by HCPS students, but students from school divisions across the commonwealth. Our primary target audience for this event was students and parents from the middle and high school levels. Middle school students and parents were encouraged to speak with employers about possible career pathways and opportunities in their fields of interest. High school students were encouraged to do the same, and many of the upperclassmen were encouraged to bring resumes and to “dress for success” to meet with potential employers. During the evening, many of these students turned in applications, and some students even had the chance to participate in onsite interviews for current or future job openings. One hundred and fifty-three employers were set up throughout the cafeteria and commons area, eager to speak with students and their parents and guardians about career pathways and opportunities.

Throughout the night, our communications team conducted interviews with parents, students and employer partners, which they would later turn into a podcast episode for the HCPS Department of Career and Technical Education. Qualitative data from these interviews showed a positive reaction to the evening and an eagerness to participate in similar future programs. Employers saw the value in the event; many who regularly attend these types of events stated that the quality and the attendance exceeded what they normally see. For the three hours the event was held (from 6-9 p.m.), the crowd was continuous. We estimate that there were 3,000-5,000 students, parents, guardians, and business partners attending.

This event was also designed as a kickoff to our annual Letter-of-Intent CTE Signing Day, which occurs in April. This event enabled the stakeholders involved to make initial contact and showcase the “soft skills” of our students to the employers. Another new development, the “CTE Career Rodeo” will be the second phase of this showcase. At this event, students will have the opportunity

to demonstrate their knowledge in their field to numerous employers. The Letter-of-Intent CTE Signing Day is the culminating event in which students and employers commit to each other upon graduation.

Financing and Staffing

The implementation of this program was cost-free. The program was held onsite at a Henrico County high school (Hermitage) and used HCPS employees. Henrico employers donated their time to attend. Students, parents, guardians and other stakeholders participated in the event free of cost and had the opportunity to make connections.

Program Results

The results of this program have been positive, and we expect more. We received many positive comments about the LifeReady Expo and had numerous stakeholders participate in the podcast that evening. Many parents commented on the depth of the career field that their child was interested in and its postsecondary educational opportunities, such as apprenticeships, community colleges, four-year universities, and other training options.

In 2018, the first year of the CTE Letter-of-Intent Signing Day, 27 students signed with employers. On the second signing day (in 2019) 120 students signed with employers, Future signing day events will provide more quantitative data that we would be able to gather about how many of our students were able to meet with their chosen employer during the LifeReady Expo, and began that relationship as a result of this program.

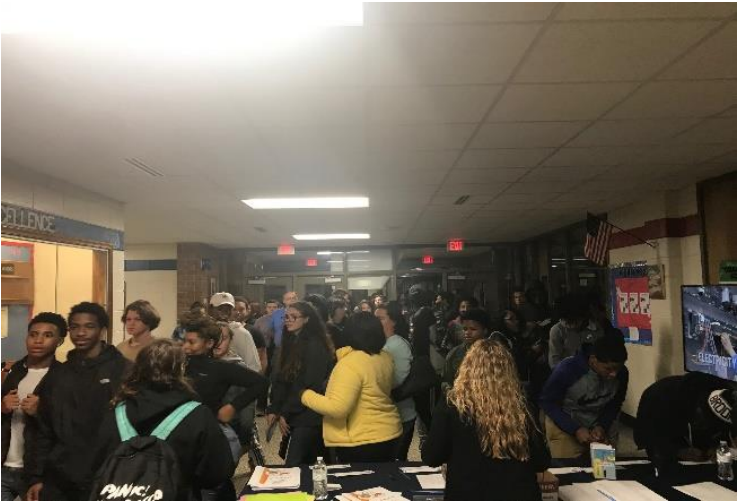
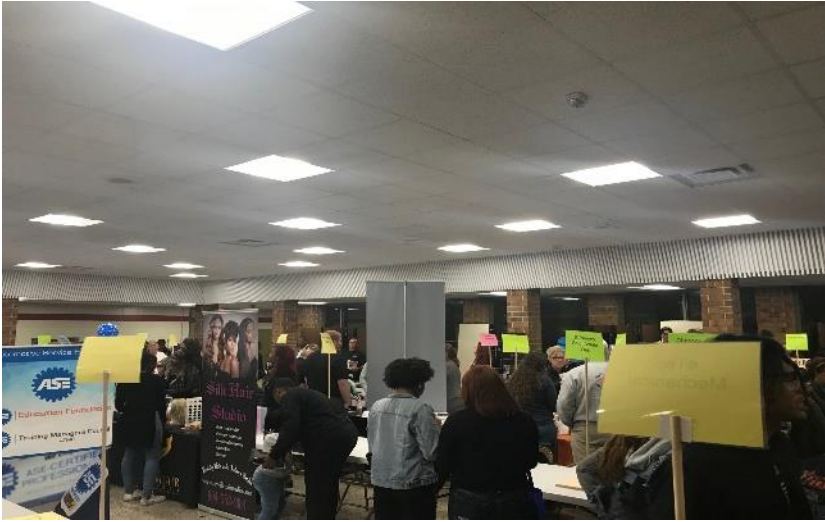
Brief Summary

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**LifeReady Expo
Supplemental Material**





Learning / Investigating / Future-interest / Expo

“Life Ready” Expo

Career and Technical Letter of Intent Signing Day 3.0

Primary Objective:

- To expose students and parents to career pathway options

Secondary Objectives:

- Highlight the many lucrative opportunities for students so that parents understand the value of the alternatives to a 4-year college
- Encourage businesses to engage with students prior to graduation to help fulfill their workforce needs
- Help students select career pathways of interest and understand what options this includes, salaries and the education needed to be successful in that pathway

Rationale:

Henrico County Public Schools strives to make sure every student who graduates from high school is enrolled, enlisted, and/or employed. There are many career pathways with multiple jobs in each. In order to help students understand and focus on a career that interests them, it is important to provide opportunities for students and parents to learn from professionals in the field.

The Event:

Students and parents will have the opportunity to talk with employers from all career clusters to learn about careers within each career cluster, the corresponding educational requirements and compensation for each career, and any future opportunities.

Date: October 22, 2019
Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Location: Hermitage ACE Center
8301 Hungary Spring Rd
Richmond, VA 23228

Overall, students and parents will:

- Have the opportunity to talk with employers about career pathways;
- Learn about what companies will provide in terms of compensation and training for the student; and
- Understand the perceived “value” of the opportunity.