



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: My County Academy: One County One Community

Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton

Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration

Signature: 

Program Overview

We all live in a county or city where our tax dollars, services, safety and laws are the priority of the people who govern us. Henrico County created an innovative program to help residents discover how county government works with a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the many ways local government functions. Henrico County, in partnership with the Asian & Latino Solidarity Alliance of Central Virginia (ALSACV), offered a program designed to help residents — particularly those from immigrant backgrounds — learn about their local government and how they can access and navigate its services and resources. The way the county is evolving challenges us to be creative in sharing information and to be efficient in providing customer service. My County Academy was designed to bring a new light to Henrico with residents from various nationalities and multilingual communities coming together to learn how to be effective in their local government.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Henrico County developed this program to serve the growing populations of Asian, Hispanic, Latino and other immigrant communities. This demographic was rarely being targeted with county resources and programs. In 2016, the county's immigrant heritage population was 15.6% according to the U.S. Census Bureau, with expectations for continued growth in the next decade. While our county's overall population is projected to be minority-majority by 2030, our school system already has passed that mark with student population of 62%. Hispanic students represent 10% of our student population, which is a dramatic increase from just 4% of the student population in 2008. Henrico is becoming more diverse than ever, and this diversity requires us to approach future planning of facilities and services with flexibility and requires us to have a mindset of inclusion.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

My County Academy was created to provide an opportunity for Asian, Latino and other immigrant community leaders and residents a chance to learn more about their local government and the ways in which an engaged and educated community can work to enhance their local government.

My Henrico Academy has been developed in response to the growing Asian, Latino and immigrant communities in Henrico. The county's immigrant population was 15.6% in 2016, with 5.3% being Hispanic/Latino, 8.2% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 2.1% other immigrants. We knew the county needed to focus on this rapid growth. In November 2018, ALSACV presented this academy proposal to the county with the intent to collaborate on planning and program goals.

How Program Was Carried Out

Participants interested in the My County Academy had to complete an online registration which included demographic information, supplemental questionnaire, and resume submission. The registration portal was open March 1- April 12, 2019. Having a registration process gave the organizing team a way to ensure the academy class was diverse in race, gender, and employment status. We strived to ensure that the academy could encompass individuals who live, work, or do business in Henrico County. The team vetted applicants for their level of commitment to the academy and those individuals received acceptance letters.

The academy met once a month from June to December, exploring a variety of county facilities and learning the operations of 24 county agencies. Sessions included: Overview of Henrico, Prosperity and Vibrancy, Community Enrichment and Well-Being, Public Safety, Quality Education, Henrico's Infrastructure, and Civic Engagement. The Henrico Board of Supervisors and County Manager participated in each session by sharing remarks and answering questions.

This gave participants one-on-one time with local officials. Each session had continental breakfast and lunch provided by ALSACV. Facility tours, interactive activities, breaks and equipment demonstrations were included in each session. Each participant was required to attend at least five sessions in order to graduate.

Graduation from this program allowed participants to gain an understanding of Henrico County's multitude of programs and services, and also allowed the participant to get to know Henrico community leaders and develop positive relationships. The academy participants will meet after graduation to host a tabletop discussion on topics their communities believe are of high importance for local government. Graduates will share end goals and next steps with county officials. Henrico County's goal is to provide the best service to the individuals who live, work and do business here.

Financing and Staffing

Other than staff time, there were few operational costs associated with this program. ALSACV provided participants with tote bags, binders, and name tags, along with breakfast and lunch for each session. The academy was held in various county facilities which eliminated building rental fees. Copies of the presentations were emailed to participate to save the cost of printing. This program would be easy to replicate if you have a dedicated team and collaboration with multiple agencies to provide items already essential in their everyday work assignments.

Program Results

The inaugural class consisted of 20 total participants, representing 14 countries, with employment backgrounds including nonprofit organizations; education; the culinary industry; and business. The My County Academy was a success in its first year because of increased awareness of

county resources and services it has brought to participants. Participants have learned and seen the behind-the-scene operations of how Henrico County operates on a daily basis. They are now educated and equipped to share resources and processes with others in their community.

Henrico County is making strides to address the lack of community resources and engagement available for our growing immigrant population. Henrico County has created a Community Engagement Coordinator position to ensure county programs and services are accessible to non-native and limited-English proficient residents. The County Manager has also engaged with local multicultural leaders in a discussion of ways the county could be more inclusive by partnering on global, regional, and local efforts which impact all communities.

My County Academy was a great example of community and inclusiveness. County government is here to serve the people. Sometimes, our presence is noticeable. Other times, it's in the background. At all times, Henrico's government stands as a partner and we move forward together.

Brief Summary

Immigrants and immigrants' families are an essential part of the Henrico community. They are active participants in the life of our community— in our schools and businesses, our civic and social organizations, our religious and cultural institutions. They contribute each day to the vitality of this county. Our goal was to enable diverse communities in Henrico County, particularly those from other countries, to learn more about the county, and to become engaged and involved so that they can play leadership roles in their communities. Another goal was, for everyone to learn more about each other's cultures and communities and cultivate community members who feel more included and appreciated. My County Academy brings more attention to the many ways

local government intersects with residents' lives on a daily basis. In Henrico, we focus on putting our residents first and providing the best service possible. We are excited about the possibilities of continued growth in our immigrant population and its effect on our county.

**My County Academy
Supplemental Material**

<https://youtu.be/--VN7vBZsMA>





