



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the 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: Gloucester

Program Title: Current Conversations Podcast

Program Category: Communications

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Carol E. Steele

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 



GLOUCESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC INFORMATION

2022 VACo Achievement Award Application

I. Executive Summary

In 2021, Gloucester County's Community Engagement & Public Information Department, seeking a method to reach a differing demographic, launched the first episode of its "Current Conversations" podcast. The podcast is reflective of its title, and features guests each month having a casual conversation with the host on issues pertaining to County government.

Over the past year, the podcast has reached over 600 unique listeners that may not have normally been informed about the workings of their local government. The podcast has enlightened residents on topics ranging from voting integrity to broadband expansion, homelessness, current school, and law enforcement-related issues, and more. Nearly 50-percent of our listeners are in the 23–27-year-old age range, which is one of the top age ranges we had hoped to target with the podcast. We have found that this age range typically does not engage via traditional communication methods such as press releases or visiting the County website.

II. About the Program

Being a fiscally conservative locality, the podcast was developed by Gloucester's Community Engagement & Public Information Department to reach a wider audience without the need to spend a large amount of money. In fact, the only money spent on the podcast thus far has been the purchase of two microphones to help enhance the sound quality of the recordings. The County was fortunate enough to already have access to software that provided quality sound editing.

The operating costs associated with the podcast are only associated with the staff time involved in recording and producing the podcast and a \$12 monthly fee for a website to host and distribute the podcast. As mentioned earlier, the only capital cost thus far we have incurred with this project is the purchase of two microphones, that were each approximately \$50, and the monthly subscription to the podcast host.

Gloucester County, Virginia is a rural community with approximately 35,000 residents. We have one newspaper in the community that regularly shares County issues and news. However, that publication only has a circulation of approximately 6,000. The County also has several PEG channels, but those are only accessible to community members who subscribe to cable television. The podcast was developed to ensure everyone in the community could access current news and information.

The entire premise of developing the podcast was to enhance the County's ability to reach a more diverse audience. Throughout the months we have hosted the podcast, we have

made a conscious effort to include topics that would be applicable to all. The podcast can easily be accessed by all residents by simply clicking on a link on the County's main website.

The podcast was developed to not only better distribute local news and issues to a wider audience within the community, but to also engage listeners to become more involved in community affairs. Throughout each podcast, we discuss ways in which the community can learn more about the topics being discussed and how they can act on or get involved with the various areas of interest that are featured on the podcast.

In addition, this podcast is another avenue to shine light on the intricate workings of all County departments, including those that may not otherwise receive a lot of attention.

In the past year, the podcast has exceeded expectations, and had reached well over 600 unique listeners. We count this as a major success since we are confident many of these listeners would not have otherwise engaged with the County.

This project could easily be adapted for any locality to utilize. As mentioned previously, the podcast idea is an extremely budget-friendly and timely approach to reach a wider demographic of citizenry. Once staff became acquainted with the software used to edit the podcast, producing and editing takes very little staff time.

Also, the list of potential topics are endless. Localities can use this medium for a myriad of topics ranging from fostering a more in-depth discussion regarding a current controversial topic to featuring a certain department that has completed an innovative task.

III. Brief Overview / Summary

Gloucester County, Virginia Government launched its first podcast, "Current Conversations," in March 2021. The goal of the podcast, developed by the County's Community Engagement & Public Information Department, was to help foster engagement with those in the community who may want to delve a little deeper into learning what Gloucester has to offer. The podcast currently features new episodes the first Wednesday of each month, focusing on any and all topics local government and the community in general.

The podcast can be easily found on the County's website as well as where people listen to their favorite podcasts. For more information, or to tune into the podcast, visit <https://currentconversations.buzzsprout.com/>. The County also encourages members of the public to submit ideas for topics that they would like to be explored during an upcoming episode.