



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: County of Henrico
Program Title: Cultural Heritage Series
Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration
Signature: 

Program Overview

All Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) teachers are encouraged to provide students with cultural information about themselves and others throughout their courses. Additionally, the U.S. Office of Civil Rights notes that there are federally recognized months dedicated to celebrating groups that have not previously been recognized by the federal government. Through our Cultural Heritage Series programming, HCPS' Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity has scheduled virtual events to help honor the cultural heritages of the following groups: Hispanic, Native American, Black and Asian/Pacific. These events take place during the designated months of September, November, February and May. Students, educators, and families benefit from a cultural understanding of themselves and others in order to succeed in school and within the community and these are reflected in inclusive education methods. Inclusive education recognizes the need for empowering students, faculty and members of the larger community to participate in their learning. We believe it is also critical to promote, inform, direct and grow learning opportunities. This is accomplished through the promotion of heritage and history months, directing people to learn about other viewpoints, informing through the distribution of information in our newsletter and supporting through the provision of insightful and interesting programming.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Students now, more than ever, require the ability to see themselves reflected in their learning environment, as well as the ability to appreciate another's point of view. The ability to see the world from one's point of view while also seeing the world from another's point of view allows us to perceive the world in three dimensions. Inclusive education recognizes the need to empower students, staff and the greater community to engage in their learning, and we believe it is essential

to promote, inform, guide and grow. This is done by promoting recognitions such as the Cultural Heritage Series, offering programming that is insightful and informative.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The Cultural Heritage Series has connected the school division's stakeholders with noteworthy, authentic cultural representatives with a plethora of intriguing conversations. It is innovative in that it extends beyond the celebratory notion often associated with heritage months, which often highlight already well-known figures. We provide a platform for relatable cultural representatives from the community to share their professional experiences and expertise on topics such as health and sports, commerce and business, social studies education and film while also recognizing their cultural contributions.

How Program Was Carried Out

The following programs, created by the Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity, have been provided to the Henrico County Public Schools community as part of the yearly Cultural Heritage Series:

Black History Month: "The Homegrown Black Henrico Panel" event featured a panel discussion with notable Black professionals in health and sports who are also HCPS alumni. Student hosts — high school Black Student Union students — posed questions about college and career paths, Black professional identity and the role HCPS played in preparing the notable panelists for success or hardships.

Asian American and Pacific Islander History Month: The "Salute to Asian Cultures" event provided a virtual interview and discussion with the executive director of the Virginia

Asian Chamber of Commerce, providing information on local business contributions by the Asian community. For the HCPS teacher panel, two teachers and one librarian responded to questions relating to their experiences as educators, their identities as members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and provided messages to students.

Hispanic/Latine(x) Heritage Month: The “Sacred Heart: Support and Resources for Local Latine Families” event featured a local director of a nonprofit agency who provided information about resources for Latine(x) families available in the Richmond metropolitan area. The “Cientificxs Como Tu: La Innovación Depende de la Diversidad” (Scientists Like You: Innovation Depends on Diversity) program was open to all, but the focus audience was our Hispanic/Latine(x) students who are interested in pursuing a career in science. A local scientist and professor from Virginia Commonwealth University presented information. Two HCPS students — one middle school and one high school — discussed pending issues and concerns in the Latine(x) community.

Native American/Indigenous Heritage Month: The Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity hosted a virtual discussion event, the “Pocahontas Reframed Film Festival.” The audience watched two short films featured in the film festival provided by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. As part of the continuing efforts to support Native American/Indigenous Heritage Month, the office purchased the following books for each school in the division:

- Forty-seven elementary schools: “Native Americans in History: A History Book for Kids” (Beason, 2021).

- Twelve middle schools: “Notable Native People: 50 Indigenous Leaders, Dreamers and Changemakers from Past to Present” (Keene, 2021).
- Ten high schools: “Native Americans: A Captivating Guide to Native American History and the Trail of Tears, Including Tribes Such As the Cherokee, Muscogee Creek, Seminole, Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations” (Captivating History, 2020).

Financing and Staffing

Although the Cultural Heritage Series programming was provided on a virtual platform, the Office of Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity provided special guests with gift bags, including a culturally relevant book from our office’s professional library (built by Title-II allocated funds), as well as one departmental promotional item. By using internal and community talent and resources, there were no additional operating costs associated with the facilitation of this programming.

Program Results

The Cultural Heritage Series allows students, faculty, staff, families and members of the community to interact directly with current, real-life notable figures who provide authentic presentations of their represented heritage, thereby combating stereotypical motifs or inauthentic depictions of their cultures. The series is free and open to the public. During these interactive sessions, audience members are encouraged to ask questions and use the Microsoft Teams chat tool to leave remarks and “thank yous” for the special guests. The virtual format of the series makes it possible to record sessions. The Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube channel has recordings of the sessions, enabling students, staff and the general public to watch at their leisure.

Brief Summary

Through our Cultural Heritage Series programming, HCPS' Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity has scheduled virtual events to help honor the cultural heritages of the following groups: Hispanic, Native American, Black and Asian/Pacific. The events are virtual, free and open to students, families, staff and the community at large. These events take place during the designated months of September, November, February and May. Inclusive education recognizes the need for empowering students, faculty and members of the larger community to participate in their learning and the Cultural Heritage Series events are planned with this in mind. We provide a platform for relatable cultural representatives from the community to share their professional experiences and expertise while also recognizing their cultural contributions. Events also include participant and panel discussions, the use of film and books as a springboard for conversation and growth, and information about available community resources. The series has become a means to not only honor the unique histories and accomplishments of cultural and ethnic groups within our community but for our students and families to connect and learn together.