



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: Richmond County
Program Title: County Bucks
Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: R. Morgan Quicke
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

VACO Achievement Award Submission – County Bucks Program Richmond County, Virginia

Executive Summary:

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, localities were faced with many difficult decisions that ranged from financial to employee safety as well as concerns surrounding the local business community and what impacts they would experience among the required lockdowns and quarantines that were being experienced. For counties like Richmond, small, locally owned businesses are the lifeblood of our community as they provide the majority of goods and services to our residents in the absence of many larger chain style organizations.

Also, a concern to Richmond County was our residents and the burdens that were being placed on them in different fashions, such as job loss, remote learning, loss of loved ones and general disruption to their daily lives.

Through the CARES Act funding, the Administration and Board of Supervisors wanted to deploy portions of those funds into the community as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to provide the best benefit to the entire community, as possible. Through many hours of brainstorming and discussions, the Richmond County “**County Bucks**” program was implemented for the benefit of both the residents of Richmond County and the Businesses of Richmond County.

Through County Bucks, residents and property owners were eligible for one (1) \$50 coupon booklet per household to be spent as cash at over forty (40) participating locally owned small businesses in Richmond County. These coupon booklets contained five (5) \$10 coupons that could be spent throughout the County during a specified two-month period. Local businesses would collect these coupons, and then submit back to the County Administrator’s Office a reimbursement request, accompanied by their collected County Bucks’. To date, the County has offered this program in 2020 and 2021, and has seen over \$150,000 spent locally by County residents at locally owned County Businesses. This program has been a great

success for Richmond County and the Town of Warsaw and has received many compliments from our local residents and business owners.

Brief Overview:

Through the implementation of the Richmond County “County Bucks” program, Richmond County was able to offer an incredible program to residents and locally owned businesses of Richmond County and the Town of Warsaw, which has to date placed over \$150,000 into our local economy through spending of “County Bucks” by our local citizens.

With the forward-thinking vision of the Richmond County Board of Supervisors, and the available CARES Act funding made available to the County, the County wanted to create an impactful program that would benefit both the citizens and business owners of the County, to help our local economy through the impacts of COVID-19. This program has now been organized for two-years, and through it, the County has distributed just under 4,000 County Bucks’ booklets to our residents, that have produced over \$150,000 in local spending within our economy.

This program has been a huge success for Richmond County and the Town of Warsaw, and has received much support from our local businesses and residents. The County intends to operate this program again in 2022.

Problem – Covid-19 Economic Impact on County Residents and Locally Owned Small Businesses:

The Spring of 2020 was a strange and scary time for the country as the spread of COVID-19 overtook us all in various forms. The unknowns that were before us, the closing of businesses, the requirements to stay home, the introduction of remote work and remote education, the loss of jobs and income, the loss of loved ones and the distance created between friends and families were all immediate impacts that were felt by everyone. Local Governments were forced to be a focal point for their communities in response to the pandemic through many ways such as communications, emergency services, testing events and other programs created to help their community maintain during this intense time of unknown.

One of the main impacts that communities saw from COVID-19 was the forced closure of businesses due to the spread of COVID-19, and the requirements and guidance that people not travel away from their homes in order to limit the spread to the maximum extent possible.

Richmond County, Virginia is located on Virginia's Northern Neck, bordered by the Rappahannock River, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Through our location, we have many seasonal residents that have second homes along the Rappahannock River, but also see a great deal of vehicle travel as many people come through Richmond County to get to other destinations throughout the Northern Neck. Much of our local economy relies on these out-of-town visitors stopping and shopping at our local businesses, especially during the Spring, Summer and Fall. With the onset of COVID-19 beginning in Spring 2020, right at the beginning of our travel season, the impacts to our local economy were felt very early on in Richmond County.

Shortly after the pandemic begun, the Federal and State Governments began working on funding packages to help the Country in wide array, but most impactful to local governments like Richmond County was the introduction of CARES Act funding. Through this funding, it allowed the County to offset many additional expenses associated with COVID-19 such as cleaning, office renovations, testing events,

overtime for personnel, IT infrastructure to support remote work, funding to support non-profit organizations and funding to help our local economy.

While there were many important initiatives funded in Richmond County through the CARES Act, the most exciting program we were able to launch was our “County Bucks” program, intended with a dual benefit, that of helping our local businesses sustain from the pandemic and helping all of our local residents during this time of great uncertainty.

What is the Richmond County “County Bucks” Program?

Through the vision of the Richmond County Board of Supervisors, the County wished to create a program, using CARES Act funding, that would be mutually beneficial to both our locally owned small businesses and our residents as each were facing tremendous pain and uncertainty from the effects of COVID-19. What came out of this was the idea to launch a coupon program, in which all households in the County would be eligible for one (1) \$50 coupon booklet to be spent at participating local businesses.

Our first mission was to reach out to our local businesses to gauge their interest in such program, and see if they were willing to participate in accepting the coupons at their local establishments. Without the support of the local business community in this program, we would not be able to offer this program to our residents. Much to our excitement, the local business community very much embraced this program, was excited about the initiative and as a result, we were able to sign up over 40 participating businesses for the launch of the program. We limited participation in this program to locally owned small businesses such as restaurants, retail outlets, auto-repair shops, professional services, local convenience stores, and other like businesses, but did not open the participation to our chain type facilities that were able to seek help from other national avenues.

Once we were able to establish a core group of businesses willing to participate in the program, we needed to further refine the program to bring it all together. At the time, we did not have an official name for the program, and reached out to a local printing company to help design materials for the program, items like advertising documents and ultimately the coupon booklets that would be distributed to the community.

Through design renderings created by this company, the name “County Bucks” was established, with a deer head logo, very representative of the traditions of a rural county like Richmond.

Our program was gaining momentum over a very short period of time and we determined that we needed additional partners to help advertise and promote this within our community. We presented our idea and plan to the Town of Warsaw, Warsaw-Richmond County Chamber of Commerce and Warsaw-Richmond County Main Street, and all three agreed to partner with Richmond County to promote, organize and facilitate this program for the entire community.

Our next determination needed was eligibility for residents to obtain County Bucks’. We determined that all households of Richmond County would be eligible to receive one (1) \$50 coupon booklet to be used at any of the participating businesses. We designed these booklets so there would be five (5) \$10 coupons, that way an individual could spend their entire booklet at one business, or could spread it out to multiple businesses.

The final component to launching this program was a method in which to distribute “County Bucks” to our residents. We contemplated many different approaches on the best way to distribute, and ultimately decided on conducting pick-up events at the Courthouse and two fire-departments located in the more rural areas of the County. We advertised seven (7) of these pick-up events over a three-week period, with times ranging from 1PM – 7PM, to try and accommodate as many schedules as possible, and even conducted a pick-up event on a Saturday morning to accommodate anyone that may not be able to come during a weekday.

In order to distribute these booklets, we staffed these events with various people, including Board of Supervisors Members, County Administration, Staff of Constitutional Offices, Town of Warsaw Staff and volunteers from the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Organization. To say that we organized a well-thought-out process with multiple partners and organization would be an understatement, and we are extremely proud of how we brought partners in to help with this implementation. Our IT Department was able to establish an easy-to-use tracking program that allowed us to document household pick-ups to ensure

that it was tracked accordingly throughout. With close to 2,000 individuals picking up booklets over a three-week process, it was quite a task to undertake, but extremely worthwhile.

For our first County Bucks' event in the Fall of 2020, we began planning for this in late September, and by the first week of November, we were distributing these coupon booklets to our residents. This program organically grew over a short period of time, and could not have been accomplished without much help from many different partners. For our 2020 event, we were able to distribute nearly 1,900 County Bucks to our citizens, which meant nearly \$75,000 was spent in November and December of 2020 in local businesses of Richmond County, by local citizens of Richmond County.

Once coupons began being used at our local businesses, it was incumbent on the County to be able to reimburse these businesses as quickly as possible for cash flow purposes of these businesses. Throughout the two-month process, businesses were allowed to submit reimbursement requests to the County as often as they wished for payment. They were required to submit a 1-page submittal, accompanied by all of the County Bucks they had collected over that period of time. County Staff would confirm the submittal, and remit payment to these businesses within 3-5 business days of submittal, many times sooner.

What was the Impact to Richmond County from the County Bucks Program?

The launch and implementation of County Bucks in Richmond County has been one of our most successful endeavors we have ever had. Due to the overwhelming support that was received in 2020 for the program, the program was again implemented in Fall 2021 with similar results of approximately \$75,000 spent during the Fall/Winter Holiday Season. The County has plans to facilitate the program again in 2022 through the use of ARPA funds, and may consider annually providing this program to the County, even when Federal Funds are no longer used to support the program.

When the program was initially launched in 2020, the main purpose was to support our local businesses and citizens manage the immediate impact being caused by COVID-19 in terms of lost income from both the business side and employee side. While we do not claim that the County Bucks program alone cured this issue in Richmond County during this time, we do believe we made a substantial impact to

the community that was very much appreciated. We could not have properly planned or implemented this program without the vision of the Board of Supervisors, the help of County Staff and the key partners of the Town of Warsaw, Warsaw-Richmond County Chamber of Commerce and Warsaw-Richmond County Main Street.

RICHMOND

COUNTY BUCKS



October 25 - January 8

Hunt for deals!
SHOP LOCAL!

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR BUCKS:

Please bring proof of residency within Richmond County or the Town of Warsaw: Photo ID with current address, 2021 tax bill, utility bill within the past 60 days or other proof of residence.

Limit one \$50 book per household.

You may pick up "County Bucks" for 1 (one) additional household with proof of residency as outlined above.

Mon.	10/25	3 - 7 p.m.	Public Meeting Room
Wed.	10/27	3 - 7 p.m.	Public Meeting Room
Mon.	11/1	4 - 7 p.m.	Newland Fire House
Wed.	11/3	4 - 7 p.m.	Farnham Fire House
Tue.	11/9	3 - 7 p.m.	Public Meeting Room
Fri.	11/12	9a.m. - Noon	Public Meeting Room
Wed.	11/17	3 - 7 p.m.	Public Meeting Room

Public Meeting Room
101 Court Circle, Warsaw

Newland Fire House
587 County Bridge Rd., Warsaw

Farnham Fire House
394 N. Farnham Church Rd., Farnham

PARTICIPATING MERCHANTS:

Angie's Strength & Style Boutique	Holly's Massage
Anna's Pizza	Hunan Village
Belfield Physical Therapy	I Spy, LLC
Big L Tire Co.	Jenks This & That
Burkes Fine Jewelers of Warsaw	Kimberly A. King Photography
C & O Auto Parts	Knight Chiropractic
Chesapeake Doughnut Co.	Michelle's Sweet Treats
China Inn Restaurant	Northern Neck Popcorn Bag
Colonial Collectibles, Ltd.	Old Rapp Taphouse
Commonwealth Florist	Precision Glass & More, LLC
Crafting Ataraxia	Pure Skin
Cuddlebugs Child Development Center, LLC	Relish Restaurant & Wine Bar
David's Automotive & Truck Service	Roma's (Warsaw)
Feather Your Nest	Shophe For Haven's Sake
First Impressions Hair Salon	Studio 23 - Tara Linsley Photo
Frederick Northup, Inc.	The Daily
Gordons Pet Store	Thomas Store, LLC
Hall's Automotive	Warsaw Automotive
	Whelan's Marina, LLC
	Willow Stitch
	Your Party Box, LLC





warsaw richmond county
Main Street Program



No. 0398

COUNTY BUCKS

Hunt for deals! Shop Local!

2021 SEASON

10/25/21-1/08/22

\$10



\$10

COUNTY BUCKS



Hunt for
local deals!



\$10

No. 0398

Redeemable at participating businesses within Richmond County
A list of participating businesses may be found at www.co.richmond.va.us
Coupon expires January 8, 2022. Change will not be given if full value is not used.

\$10