



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** 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: Dinwiddie

Program Title: City Planning Project

Program Category: Community & Economic Development

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Marie Grant

Title: Grants & Community Information Coordinator

Department: County Administration

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: W. Kevin Massengill

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

**PROBLEM/CHALLENGE/SITUATION:**

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program at Dinwiddie Middle School was in search of a project-based, community service and inquiry-based learning opportunity for students. The ideal project would allow students to spend the academic year investigating and responding to an authentic, engaging, and complex challenge through individual investigation and cooperative learning.

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:**

Community & Economic Development

**AWARDS CRITERIA:**

The City Planning Project fulfills all three awards criteria. The project is an **innovative** way to inspire an interest in local government, specifically planning, in youth. The City Planning Project is the result of a **collaboration** between local government and public schools. Students learn about planning and community design from Government leaders working in the field and then return at the end of the school year to present their designs. This project represents minimal cost to local government or public schools; and can easily serve as a **model for other localities**.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

At the beginning of the academic year, the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator for Planning and Community Development visit the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade GATE program at Dinwiddie Middle School and provide a lesson in Planning and Community Development.

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Following the lesson, students spend several months researching and designing their ideal city, taking into consideration variables such as tax rates, population, workforce, and natural resources. Using their research, students construct a model of their city, and travel to the Government Center at the end of the school year to present their projects to the County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, and Director of Planning. The panel then assigns a grade to each project. Projects with the top three scores are displayed for public viewing in the Government Center for the remainder of the school year. The amount of work and level of detail included in the models is nothing short of amazing! This project ignites a passion in participants that they carry with them through high school and beyond.

The purpose of this project is to provide gifted students an opportunity for long-term research and investigation as they respond to a complex challenge. They must exercise critical thinking skills and creativity as they design and construct their model city.

By completing the City Planning Project, the hope is that an interest in local government and/or planning will be sparked, which can be nurtured during their high school career through summer internships and work-based learning opportunities. Since the project's inception in 2016, 115 students have participated in the City Planning Project, and there have been quite a few instances of students moving on to pursue degrees in the field of government and/or planning.

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*Pictured in the foreground above, is one of the top projects of 2023. You can see the level of detail in each of the hand-crafted items, including a church, park, and public swimming pool. In this year's top projects, students adopted a regional approach, which included a shared water source (river), which literally connects the three cities.*



## City Planning Project



*Above area photos of each component of the City Planning Project.*

## Executive Summary

The City Planning Project is the result of collaboration between Dinwiddie County Government and Dinwiddie County Public Schools. The purpose of this project is to provide eighth grade gifted students and opportunity for long-term research and investigation as they respond to a complex challenge. They must exercise critical thinking skills and creativity as they design and construct their model city. At the beginning of the academic year, the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator visit the classroom to present a lesson in local government, community planning and development. Students then spend several months researching and designing their city using the information they have learned through their research. Models are constructed and the group travels to the Government Center at the end of the academic year to present their work to a panel consisting of the County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, and Director of Planning. The projects are judged, scored, and the top three are placed on display in the Government Center for public viewing.

In addition to enhancing the critical thinking and creativity of students, this project highlights local government and planning. Several students have completed the program in the eighth grade, and gone on to pursue college degrees in the field after high school.

This project does not present a cost to the County or school system and would be easily replicated by other localities.

## **Brief Overview:**

Dinwiddie County's City Planning Project is a collaborative effort between Dinwiddie County and Dinwiddie County Public Schools' Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. The year-long project is completed by 8th-grade students enrolled in the GATE program at Dinwiddie County Middle School. The project is completed through project-based, community service learning, and inquiry-based learning. Students work for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex challenge through individual investigation and cooperative learning. The purpose of the project is for students to investigate the careers of city and regional planners as well as anticipated trends in the field. Students will apply this information when designing their own city or region for today's world or the future. Throughout the City Planning Project, students exercise critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship. Ideally, this project will spark an interest in the field of local government administration and/or planning.