



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: County of Henrico
Program Title: Newcomer Event
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

As a result of stakeholder climate surveys and the regular influx of non-English speaking families and refugees to Henrico County, Virginia, Henrico County Public Schools' (HCPS) Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity planned and implemented its first Newcomer Event in the fall of 2022. Through the "Action for Equity framework," the Newcomer Event highlighted resources and employment opportunities for families who have recently moved — or fled — to Henrico County. One of the biggest challenges these families face is access: to resources, communication and employment opportunities. The immigrant population in Henrico County is facing each of these obstacles.

The HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity plans to continue supporting these families through future newcomer events. The second event will be in spring of 2023. We hope these events will positively affect these newcomers' sense of belonging, awareness of opportunities and connection to Henrico County and HCPS.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Henrico County comprises a very diverse population of communities. Over the past two decades, there is a clear increase over the past two decades in the size of our minority groups and the diversity within our minority populations. In 1990, Virginia's immigrant population was about 300,000 and constituted 5% of the population. By 2020, the commonwealth's immigrant population was more than a million, representing 12.6%. Henrico's immigrant population is 13%, or roughly 43,000 people. On a national level, the immigrant population in the U.S. has tripled in the past 30 years. This is nearly identical to the national growth of the immigrant population. Language is a major obstacle as these families enter Henrico County, especially those from non-English speaking regions. Time, resources and acceptance are others. All of these factors result in a lack of awareness, a diminished sense of belonging and reduced economic and social comfort. The Newcomer Event seeks to address those voids in a small way. There is a lack of systematic and organizational help for these families. These families and our immigrant communities should not only be accepted but celebrated.

In alignment with the division's strategic plan, "Destination 2025," the Newcomer Event provides families with resources and knowledge that many nonimmigrant families take for granted. More than 20 organizations and businesses collaborated with HCPS to create training sessions and job

fairs. We look forward to continuing, strengthening and expanding these relationships to have a greater impact on our newcomer events in the future.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The Newcomer Event deserves an award because of the required level of collaboration, driven by a shared mission. The event required shared work at multiple levels to convey that sense of mission to the attendees. Multilingual students volunteered to give up their Saturdays to be translators. The HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity, Quioccasin Middle School staff members, employers, organizational representatives and students get there early to set up and stayed late to take down everything. Documents and signs were translated into multiple languages. The Newcomer Event sought to provide a sense of belonging for all in attendance, and our community came together to make that happen. VACo recognition is a fitting acknowledgment of those efforts.

How Program Was Carried Out

All interested HCPS and Henrico County departments and groups were welcomed to participate in the inaugural Newcomer Event for the 2022-23 school year. The event was held at Quioccasin Middle School on Saturday, Sept. 24, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The event sought to provide newcomers with information, employment training, employment opportunities and resources to make a smooth transition. Our newcomer families were identified as recent immigrant and refugee families but also included multilingual families new to the HCPS community.

Virginia Career Works, the HCPS Welcome Center and the Henrico chapter of the Islamic Center of North America teamed up to provide career- and job-readiness training in the morning to 50 preregistered attendees. The event's morning session focused on assisting newcomer individuals with the employment application process, developing various types of resumes and preparing for the interview process. A job fair followed in the afternoon, with entry level positions with more than 20 businesses, organizations and HCPS departments. The afternoon session was open to all members of the newcomer community. These sessions took place in multiple classrooms on the Quioccasin campus and were delivered in multiple languages. Newcomer families with students attending HCPS schools could pick up school supplies and food and ask questions about the 2022-23 school year. Attendees could speak with representatives of HCPS departments and learn about their work and services. They could also learn about other community resources that

may not be provided by the school division. Attendees could also speak with representatives of HCPS departments and learn about their work and services.

According to the 2022 study, “Barriers to Integration of Virginia’s Immigrants,” conducted by the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia would be well advised to develop strategic, well-considered and well-designed immigrant integration programs that are market-driven, where immigrant labor can be directed and incentivized to work with industries and in vocations and regions with the most needs. The study found that immigrants are key to maintaining vibrant and thriving local businesses and an attractive environment for global corporations.

With this in mind, the Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity encouraged more than two dozen employers, HCPS and Henrico County departments to attend and participate for all or part of the day. Each department received a table and chairs for their station - interpretation available, as well as limited childcare services for families. HCPS students provided help for the event; the 2021 NACo-award-winning HCPS Equity Ambassadors helped translate and disseminate event information for the non-English speaking attendees. There were more than a dozen students helping throughout the day. The students were vital assets for translation, answering questions, building connections with the youth in attendance and setting up the event. Their excitement to help in this endeavor was contagious, and they were provided with lunch as a small way of expressing our thanks.

Immigrants need to be well-integrated to reach their full potential and contribute to Virginia’s economic success and continual growth in diversity. Among its many functions, the Newcomer Event helps immigrants participate in the formal economy as quickly as possible, and match supply with demand.

Financing and Staffing

The Newcomer Event required nominal budgetary resources. The first event cost less than \$100 in county budget funds. To save on costs, the event was held at Quioccasin Middle School. The Newcomer Event will continue to be held at schools or recreation centers that the HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity can obtain at no cost. The HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity provided music, entertainment and childcare. Music, entertainment and childcare

were provided by the HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity. The majority of the funds went toward food for the event's volunteers, employers and organizational representatives. The Office spent \$600 on the development and implementation of the Newcomer Event. The expenses for the second event will be similar.

Program Results

An important measure of the event's success is the number of organizations, volunteers, resources and families in attendance. We collaborated with more than 25 businesses, organizations and HCPS departments to implement the first Newcomer Event. Twenty-five students volunteered to help set up, translate and provide information about the school division. Thirty attendees preregistered for one of the training courses offered throughout the day. Over one hundred community members attended the event. Continued success will enable us to expand and diversify that list.

Brief Summary

Henrico County is an incredibly diverse place, and meeting the needs of a community like this necessitates bringing in different people and giving them a sense of belonging. The language barrier can be difficult when it comes to immigrants and refugees, but the Newcomer Event is designed to connect to any person in Henrico County, regardless of what language they speak or community they're a part of. The Newcomer Event successfully provides resources so that these families feel comfortable in Henrico County, and the many departments, volunteers and people involved ensured that these families' feelings and thoughts would be heard – no matter what language they spoke. The Newcomer Event is central to the idea that these families don't just live in Henrico County and attend HCPS schools, they are invaluable parts of all of it. It's a collaborative, strategic effort that benefits all parties involved and gives families a much-needed sense of community.

Newcomer Event Supplemental Material

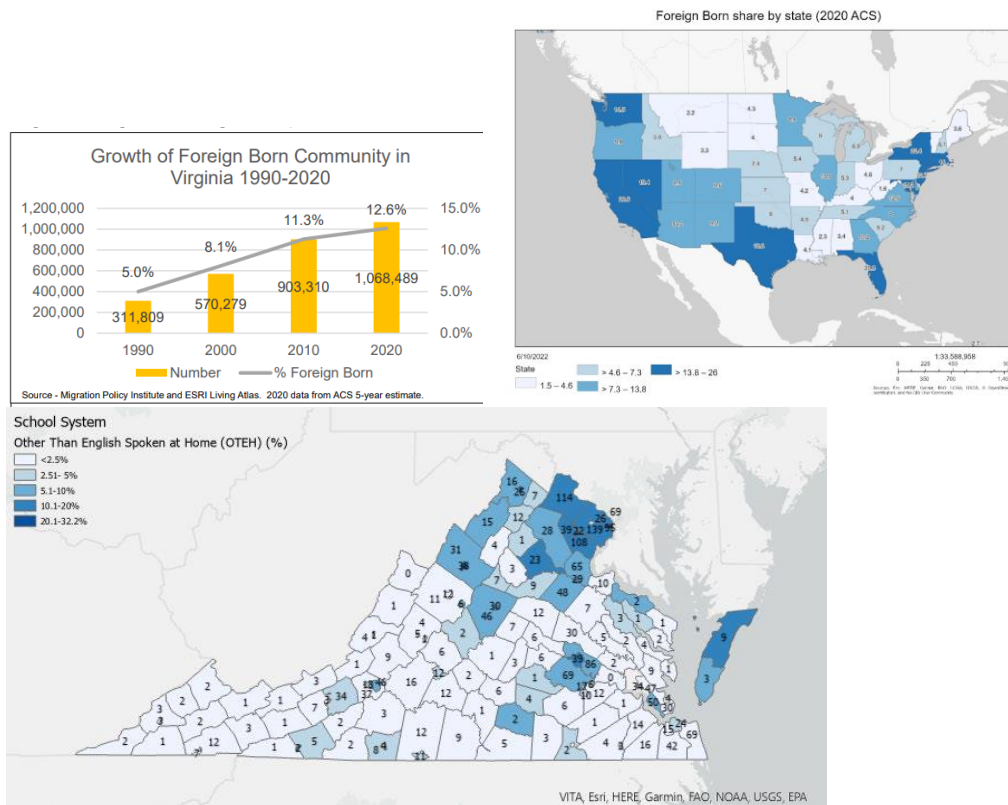
Newcomer Event Packet: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cSJe5xfy3f9E8xwdvdcKi_cf5Y-403bb/view?usp=sharing

Newcomer Event Flyer: <https://sites.google.com/henrico.k12.va.us/edo-newcomer-outreach/home/event-flyer>

The Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity's website address: <https://henricoschools.us/equity-and-diversity/>

References

Liebert, Saltanat. and Grant E. Rissler. Barriers to Integration of Virginia's Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment. Richmond (VA): L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University; July 2022.



A Newcomer Event is currently in development and will take place in the Spring of 2023. This event will continue focusing on highlighting opportunities and raising awareness. There will also be an undercurrent of celebration and unity. Those in attendance will know that they are accepted and the activities, stations, food and environment will display this sentiment.



September 24, 2022

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Quiocassin Middle School
9400 Quiocassin Road
Henrico, VA 23238**



9:00 AM to 12:00 PM



CAREER-AWARENESS & JOB-READINESS TRAINING

50 SPACES ONLY!

**Interpreters
Limited Child Care**

Registration required:
<https://tinyurl.com/NewcomerEDO>

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM



JOB FAIR & SCHOOL-READINESS EVENT

School Information

**Community Resources
School Supplies**