



Virginia Association of Counties

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

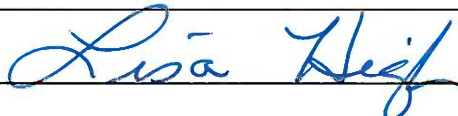
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield
Program Title: CCPS Mission Tomorrow
Program Category: Transportation

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Lisa High
Title: Chesterfield Co Public Schools Deputy Superintendent
Signature: 

Executive Summary:

Mission Tomorrow is an annual career exploration event, where 8th-grade students from across the Commonwealth, including nearly 5,000 students from Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS), are introduced to careers. The event, held in Richmond, VA, features exhibitors, offering students the opportunity to explore a variety of career paths and engage with industry professionals. The primary goal is to help students make informed decisions about their high school coursework and future career aspirations.

The program is strategically scheduled in October to coincide with course selection and specialty center applications, ensuring students can align their academic choices with their career interests. CCPS transportation plays a critical role in facilitating student participation by providing transportation, including accommodations for students. The transportation office works in close coordination with schools, special education staff, and administrators to ensure all students can attend, regardless of background or ability.

The success of the program is reflected in increased student career awareness, improved course selection, and a stronger understanding of available career pathways. The event continues to make a meaningful impact by preparing students for future success and encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion in career exploration, and it could not be accomplished without the efforts of the CCPS transportation office.

Problem or need addressed by the program:

The need for the development of this partnership arose from the logistical challenge of ensuring that all 5,000 8th-grade students could attend Mission Tomorrow in an organized and efficient manner. Given the significant distance between CCPS middle schools and the exhibit hall,

transportation logistics required extensive planning and coordination to avoid disruptions to school schedules while maximizing student participation. The county has a responsibility to provide equitable access to educational opportunities, including career exploration events that help shape students' academic and professional futures. By taking proactive measures to manage transportation, CCPS ensures that all students, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, have access to this valuable experience.

Program Description:

CCPS actively participates in the annual regional career fair, Mission Tomorrow, which introduces 8th-grade students from across the Commonwealth to high-demand careers. This event, hosted by the Chamber RVA organization, is designed to help students make informed decisions about their high school coursework and future career paths. It is held annually at a large exhibit hall in Richmond, VA, offering students exposure to numerous career opportunities and industry professionals.

For over eight years, Mission Tomorrow has provided 8th graders with a comprehensive career exploration experience. Typically featuring approximately 100 exhibitors, the event allows students to explore various career interests and align their educational paths accordingly. The event plays a crucial role in helping students select courses as they prepare for high school and in guiding them towards career pathways available in the future.

Mission Tomorrow is scheduled every October over three days, ensuring that students have sufficient time to gain career awareness before specialty center applications and course selection deadlines. Annually, nearly 5,000 CCPS 8th-grade students from all 13 middle schools attend this event. The large-scale participation requires extensive coordination and commitment

from multiple departments, especially the CCPS transportation office, which plays a pivotal role in facilitating student attendance.

The planning process for Mission Tomorrow begins each July with collaboration among key stakeholders, including the CCPS Transportation Department, CCPS Director of Middle Schools, CCPS Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director, and the Chamber RVA Coordinator. This team works together to finalize the number of students and staff attending, as well as to determine dates and time slots that accommodate CCPS students alongside those from the seven other participating school divisions.

CCPS Transportation undertakes a significant logistical effort to ensure smooth operations. The department meticulously plans bus routes to and from the exhibit hall, which is located in Richmond, VA, with travel times ranging from 35 to 55 minutes depending on the school's location. Transportation staff secure bus drivers for each route, along with backup drivers and buses to address any unforeseen issues. Their involvement extends beyond logistics; they continuously assess and refine transportation plans to enhance student experience and efficiency.

CCPS Transportation plays an essential role in implementing the program by facilitating student participation, ensuring safety and efficiency in transportation, and coordinating with educational leaders and event organizers. CCPS's contributions, particularly from the Transportation Department and school administrators, are instrumental in the successful execution of this event. Additionally, Chamber RVA serves as a key partner in organizing and hosting the career fair, bringing together exhibitors and creating an engaging environment for students.

Overall, CCPS Transportation invests significant time and resources, and also provides invaluable opportunities for CCPS students to explore potential career paths, make informed

educational decisions, and prepare for their future. The ongoing commitment from the CCPS Transportation Department and its partners ensures that this program continues to impact thousands of students each year in a meaningful way.

Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

The CCPS Transportation Department also advances diversity, equity, and inclusion by ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to career exploration opportunities. CCPS Transportation plays a vital role in supporting this initiative by providing buses, logistical assistance, and accommodations for special education students attending the event. They coordinate closely with schools, administration, and special education staff to address the unique needs of these students, ensuring an inclusive and accessible experience.

By removing transportation barriers and providing necessary accommodations, the CCPS Transportation department ensures that students from diverse socioeconomic and ability backgrounds can fully participate in this event. This commitment reflects the county's dedication to fostering an equitable educational environment where all students have the opportunity to explore career pathways and envision their futures. The collaborative efforts among all CCPS departments, Chamber RVA, and local businesses further promote inclusivity by exposing students to a variety of industries, encouraging representation, and demonstrating career possibilities for all.

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Program Cost:

CCPS Transportation incurs several operating and capital costs to facilitate the Mission Tomorrow career exploration event. These costs primarily include fuel, maintenance, driver compensation, toll charges, and the labor required for extensive coordination and planning.

Operating costs include fuel expenses for transporting nearly 5,000 students across multiple routes to the event. Given the large number of required buses, 100 to be exact, and the distances involved—ranging from 35 to 55 minutes between schools and the exhibit hall—the fuel costs are substantial. Maintenance costs also arise from the need to ensure buses are in good working condition for the event, as well as the wear and tear from transporting a large number of students for a one-time trip. This includes routine vehicle upkeep such as oil changes, tire replacements, and brake checks, all of which add to the total operating expense.

Driver compensation is another significant cost. CCPS Transportation hires both primary and backup drivers for the event to ensure smooth operations and safety. In addition to the drivers, the time spent by CCPS Transportation staff on event coordination and route planning adds to the overall expense. This includes working with the CTE Director, special education staff, and school administrators to finalize logistics, secure drivers, and resolve any unforeseen issues on the day of the event.

While the CTE Director allocates \$25,000 to help offset some of these expenses, this amount does not fully cover the costs incurred by the CCPS Transportation Department. In particular, fuel costs, toll charges, and the time spent coordinating the event far exceed the financial

CCPS Mission Tomorrow
(Transportation Category)

contribution, making the cost of implementing the program significant. These costs are absorbed by the CCPS Transportation Department without charging schools or the district, highlighting the department's commitment to providing this important opportunity for students.

Program Results/Success:

The success of the Mission Tomorrow event is measured by student engagement. However, without the logistical effectiveness of CCPS Transportation and their efforts, CCPS students would not have the opportunity to participate in this career awareness activity. Because of the partnership with CCPS Transportation and all stakeholders working collectively together throughout the planning, coordination, and implementation process, CCPS is able to achieve the specific outcomes of increased career awareness, clearer educational decisions, and inclusive participation. CCPS Transportation works tirelessly to provide this opportunity, and every year reflects on their practices to ensure they are supporting all students in having a meaningful experience. An example from this current year reflects this practice. The CCPS Transportation Director and Field Trip Coordinator were on site during the duration of the event to assist with open lines of communication between schools, buses, staff, and the Mission Tomorrow staff. CCPS Transportation also stationed extra buses on site at schools and at the Mission Tomorrow event for contingency plans if needed. This high level planning is essential, and was needed this year when a student had a medical need that required them to be transported separately back to school. This forward thinking and planning by CCPS Transportation shows how they always consider potential consequences, and work to be as prepared as possible for their students.

CCPS Mission Tomorrow
(Transportation Category)

The success of the program and partnership is reflected in increased student career awareness, improved course selection, and a stronger understanding of available career pathways. The event continues to make a meaningful impact by preparing students for future success and encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion in career exploration, and absolutely could not be accomplished without the efforts of the CCPS Transportation Department.

Worthiness of Award:

Mission Tomorrow is a model program that exemplifies the importance of career readiness and workforce development at an early stage. By exposing students to high-demand industries and providing hands-on engagement with professionals, the program equips them with the knowledge and confidence needed to pursue successful careers. Its alignment with our school division's educational goals, and its collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders, make it an outstanding candidate for a 2025 Achievement Award. The program's impact on students' career awareness, the meticulous coordination by CCPS Transportation, and the strong public-private partnership with Chamber RVA highlight its excellence in fostering student success and community engagement. Recognizing CCPS Transportation with this award for its role in supporting our students would honor its substantial contributions to shaping the future workforce and strengthening educational and career pathways for students across the region.

Supplemental Materials:

[Link](#) to Photos

[Link](#) to Mission Tomorrow Exhibitors