



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: Dinwiddie
Program Title: Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: W. Kevin Massengill
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

Situation:

Dinwiddie County is a rural community covering 507 square miles. The County is served by a five member Board of Supervisors, a five member School Board, and five Constitutional Officers (Sheriff, Clerk of Circuit Court, Commonwealth's Attorney, Commissioner of the Revenue, and Treasurer). It is difficult for elected officials and leaders to take time from their busy schedules to visit each facet of the community they serve.

The Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour, created the means and opportunity for elected officials and leaders to effectively and efficiently do just that – take a comprehensive and in-depth tour of the community they serve.

Awards Criteria:

Innovation – This was the first-ever driving tour of Dinwiddie County. Never before have elected officials and leaders come together for such a comprehensive, hands-on overview of County assets and needs. The tour created a sense of unity as County and School leaders traveled together for three days. The shared experiences and having the ability to ask questions and get answers in real-time demonstrated that we are all on the same team and working toward creating a better community for all our citizens.

Collaboration – Once it was decided that the Board would benefit from a driving tour of the County, the planning team decided it would be beneficial to other elected officials, the School

Virginia Association of Counties
2025 Achievement Award
Dinwiddie County: Dinwiddie Driving Decisions

Board, school administration, and the local Industrial Development Authority members as well. Everyone was “on board” with the idea and Dinwiddie County Public Schools provided a school bus and driver for the tour.

Model for Other Localities – The Dinwiddie Driving Decisions model could be easily replicated by other localities. It is critical that elected officials and County leaders understand first-hand what assets and challenges exist in their community. All that is needed is a mode of transportation and a driver, and a willingness of County leaders to devote adequate time for the tour.

Program Description:

When the County Administrator and his leadership team began planning for the annual, 3-day Board Advance, it was suggested that instead of sitting in a conference room for three, long days, the Board take some time to drive around and view County assets in person. As this idea gained traction, the group decided it would be beneficial to include other local elected officials, the School Board, their Administration, and the local Industrial Development Authority members; everyone was on board with the idea.

The School Board offered the use of a school bus and driver for the 3-day tour, and County Administration agreed to provide refreshments and lunch each day. County and School leaders worked together to create an agenda that included 31 stops, providing insight into infrastructure, economic development, education, public safety, and community services.

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The group met at a designated location each morning to board the bus and enjoyed a narrated tour as they were driven from one end of Dinwiddie County to the other. Even when participants were not stopping and getting off the bus (31 times), they listened to a narrator describe what they were seeing through the bus windows as they traveled through the County. At some stops, people would board the bus to share information. For example, when the bus stopped at Dominion Energy's new high-voltage lab, Dominion Energy officials boarded the bus to talk about what participants were seeing. When the bus drove through Ferndale Park, the Executive Director of Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) boarded the bus to share how FOLAR is working to ensure a safe, clean educational and recreational area for County residents and the region. As the bus drove by tourism assets, the Director of Economic Development and Tourism shared the significance of these assets and how they are marketed to the community and the region. Presentations were ongoing throughout the tour.

Financing and Staffing:

There was no significant cost to this project. Dinwiddie County Public Schools provided a school bus and driver and Dinwiddie County provided lunch and refreshments each day of the tour. The total cost was less than \$1,000.

The County Administrator and his leadership team planned the Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour just as they would have the annual Board Advance. County staff was recruited to board the bus at strategic points to highlight a particular asset or challenge specific to their field of expertise.

Results:

Following the Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour in October 2024, elected officials and government leaders were more familiar with local assets and better understood our community's needs. This increased awareness was tremendously beneficial as leaders entered the budget preparation process, which began the following month. Participants shared that having completed the Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour, they felt better equipped to prioritize needs when developing the upcoming County budget.

Another positive outcome of the Dinwiddie Driving Decisions was the relationship-building over the three days. Sitting closely on a school bus lends itself to conversation and shared experience. Members of the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and other elected officials, got to know each other on a different level. The County Administrator, Superintendent of Schools and their leadership teams also made connections and built relationships. The group learned, joked, laughed, and told stories that helped uncover common ground and similarities that before were unknown.

By helping elected officials and leaders better understand assets and challenges in the community, and building positive relationships among those individuals, the Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour resulted in a less tense, more focused, and well-strategized budget development process, which ultimately benefits the entire Dinwiddie community.

Executive Summary

The Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour was devised as a way to familiarize elected officials and County leaders with local assets and challenges ahead of the upcoming budget season. The purpose of the tour was to visit key sites across Dinwiddie County, providing insight into infrastructure, economic development, education, public safety, and community services. By the end of the 3-day tour, County leaders had a better understanding of Dinwiddie's assets, needs, and capabilities. An unintended result of the tour was the relationship building that took place over the three day experience. Leaders came to know each other on a different level and the shared experience built bridges that have been beneficial ongoing.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
October 22 – 24, 2024



The Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour kicked off each morning with coffee, juice and light refreshments for participants.



Participants enjoyed relaxed conversation each morning as they prepared to embark on the day's adventure.



County Administrator, W. Kevin Massengill and County Attorney, Tyler Southall giving an overview of what participants will see on this particular day.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
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Everyone is excited to board the bus
and get this tour moving!



Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
October 22 – 24, 2024



Our friends at Dominion Energy boarded the bus to share the exciting things happening on their site. Everyone was interested in the High Voltage Laboratory!



Fire & EMS Chief David Kissner gave a tour of Namozine Volunteer Fire Department.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
October 22 – 24, 2024



The Dinwiddie Driving Decisions tour stopped by the bay of Namozine Volunteer Fire Department.



At Ferndale Park, Wendy Austin, Executive Director of FOLAR hopped on the bus to talk about their plans for the future of the park.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
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The tour stopped for lunch at Pamplin Historical Park, one of Dinwiddie County's largest tourist attractions.



After lunch, The Executive Director of Pamplin Historical Park gave a quick tour of the museum.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
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At the Dinwiddie County Airport, the Director and Airport Authority Chairman boarded the bus to give insight into one of the County's most valuable economic development assets.



The next stop was Sutherland Elementary. The building opened in 2005 and after 20 years is beginning to show signs of age and space limitations.



County leaders stretched their legs at the Sports Complex as the Department of Parks & Recreation showed off their 2013 NACo Achievement Award-winning facility.



It was a beautiful day on the lake! Director of Economic Development and Tourism, Stacey English, showed off Lake Chesdin, one of our most beautiful assets.



At Midway Elementary School, DCPS' Chief Operating Officer discusses the history of one of the oldest schools in the County.



The tour kicked off Day 2 with coffee and a continental breakfast in new Academic Innovation Center of Richard Bland College.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
October 22 – 24, 2024



Morgan Ingram, Executive Director of Community Development gave an overview of the County's economic development assets.



Dr. Kari Weston, Superintendent of Dinwiddie County Public Schools made a friend during our stop at the Animal Shelter.



Working lunch at the Emergency Communication Center.

Dinwiddie Driving Decisions
October 22 – 24, 2024



The bus stopped at Dinwiddie County High School to see improvements made to spring sports fields. Notice the 2024 NACo Achievement Award winning Spring Sports Facility in the background.



The Board of Supervisors and two School Board members paused for a picture before getting back on the bus.



After three long days on a school bus, the tour stopped to enjoy homemade ice cream at Richland's Creamery, an agri-tourism asset.