



ATTN: 2010 Achievement Awards Program  
 Virginia Association of Counties  
 1207 East Main Street, Suite 300  
 Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

address service requested

Call for Entries



Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

Program Information

Locality Montgomery County, VA (Human Resources)

Program Title New River Valley Regional Training Program

Program Category Regional Collaboration (11)

Population Category (4) 50,001 to 100,000

Contact Information

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Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name F. Craig Meadows

Title County Administrator

Signature\* *F. Craig Meadows*

\*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

# New River Valley Regional Training Program

Montgomery County, VA

2010 VACo Achievement Awards



**New River Valley Regional Training Program  
Montgomery County, Virginia**

**BRIEF OVERVIEW**

The training and development of employees is very important to Montgomery County, but the cost of offering training programs is increasingly difficult to fit into local government budgets. Neighboring localities often compete for the same resources; in this case, several localities have a common need and share resources to accomplish the goal of training and developing employees. In order to reduce costs and time involved in training new employees, Montgomery County and the towns of Christiansburg and Blacksburg within the County began a collaborative effort to provide orientation training for new employees. Success with this collaboration has expanded to joint training in other areas.

The Human Resource Directors of the towns and County share responsibility for teaching and providing refreshments and materials. Building on this success, other classes have now been jointly offered through the regional cooperation of these three local government entities. The Human Resource Directors meet in the summer of each year to define their training objectives for the coming fiscal year. Plans for the classes held jointly include location, content, instructors, length and cost. Montgomery County, Christiansburg and Blacksburg then publicize classes to their own employees through flyers, catalogs and e-mail.

Many times during budget cuts, training is viewed as easily expendable. Because of the teamwork between Montgomery County, Christiansburg and Blacksburg, training is available at a fraction of the typical cost. This regional effort demonstrates creativity and effectiveness and brings value to the taxpayer through well-trained government employees.

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**PROBLEM/NEED FOR THE PROGRAM**

The Human Resources staff in each locality is small and there are no in-house trainers. Time is very limited to conduct orientation and management training as needed. Funding limitations do not allow for full-scale training at each place; however, training is needed to meet legal requirements and help employees refine and learn new skills, develop further and add increased value to the area.

The strong relationships between the County and towns has encouraged regional perspective to solve the problem. Pooling resources to meet shared needs made sense and was easily replicated with other training programs. This partnership still allows each government office the flexibility to do additional training.

**HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

This regional training program affects approximately 1,000 employees from all three localities combined and has been developed in a very fundamental and practical way. The Human Resource (HR) Directors meet each summer and set training objectives for the upcoming fiscal year. When a HR director recommends particular training, the other directors may agree to join in and offer the training as a joint effort. If there is no interest, the first locality may offer the training alone. Prior to 2005, a few joint programs - Customer Service and Diversity - were offered. Since that time, the HR Directors embarked on joint orientation to be offered quarterly. From these successes, more training was incorporated into the joint effort, including Supervisory Skills. In 2009, a Local Government Leadership Program for supervisors who aspire to become managers was started. The City of Radford has joined the regional training program.

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Orientation is a half day and includes topics on Sexual Harassment, Customer Service, Hazards Communication, Right to Know, Blood Borne Pathogens, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Workplace Violence, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and Diversity. All new employees hired in all three localities are required to attend this training. By combining employees from each area into one orientation group, Montgomery County and both towns reduced the individual cost of hosting initial training for each new worker.

Each locality has its own style of marketing classes to employees. Montgomery County has a training catalog/program developed by an employee team and named McCAP (Montgomery County Career Advancement Program). It includes online classes, computer classes, professional development, safety and financial management classes. An evaluation sheet is distributed to each employee at the end of each class. The feedback from the evaluations allows the localities to monitor effectiveness of the joint training programs. Montgomery County issues McCAP certificates of completion to all employees who attend classes.

Floyd County and Virginia Tech recently sent officers to participate in a regional training effort offering a career certificate for law enforcement employees. This program increased the confidence of deputies and officers who want to go back to school, complete their associate's degree or take a particular class to enhance skills. The camaraderie of law enforcement employees from the region made all the difference: support for each other in a challenging environment, meeting at a common place, sharing information and setting goals. To date, the officers have finished several career certificates on their way to an associate's degree. Without the joint training effort, those officers would not have reached this level in their education. Montgomery County pays 90 percent of the cost of tuition for the County law enforcement officers who participate in this effort.

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The regional training has also included training for all supervisors regarding recent employment law changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAAA) and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Personality Type Inventory, Myers-Briggs, Generations at Work and Spanish.

**COST/STAFFING:**

The total combined budgeted cost for the regional training program is approximately \$30,000. Each participating government office splits half of the cost three ways, or by the number of localities participating.

The remainder of the cost is divided based on the number of employees from each jurisdiction who attend the class. This method of cost sharing has worked well and significantly reduced each entity's overall training expenses. It has stretched training dollars further and enabled the localities to offer training with outside expert trainers that could not otherwise be afforded.

**PROGRAM RESULTS/SUCCESS**

Montgomery County, Christiansburg and Blacksburg's partnership success has not gone unnoticed by surrounding local governments and others in need of joint training efforts. The program has now expanded to the City of Radford, which participated in the 2009-10 Supervisory Development Series and the new Leadership Series. Floyd County and Virginia Tech also recently participated in a regional training effort that offered a career certificate designed just for law enforcement employees.

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Training time is saved because classes are not duplicated in all localities, thereby saving taxpayer dollars.

Employees in each locality have become aware that their counterparts in other jurisdictions share experiences and perspectives, which has increased camaraderie among the participating areas.

The combined effort allows each locality the ability to afford higher profile speakers than they could on their own. The “joint team” has also invited other counties, towns and authorities to pay a single registration fee to attend.