

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.


PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Dinwiddie County
Program Title: Dinwiddie Teen Expo
Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Marie Grant
Title: Grants & Community Information Coordinator
Department: Administration
Complete Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 70; Dinwiddie, VA 23841
Telephone # 804-469-4500 Fax # 804-469-4503
E-mail: mgrant@dinwiddieva.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: W. Kevin Massengill
Title: County Administrator
Signature:  5/11/15

**2015 VACo Achievement Awards
Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative
Application**

Problem:

Over the past several years, Dinwiddie County's Economic Development Office has heard repeatedly that Dinwiddie's workforce is less than stellar. Intelligence is not in question. Students and graduates are certainly competitive with their peers in the region with regard to intelligence. What seemed to be lacking in Dinwiddie youth was opportunities for real-life, on the job, training and experience. While Dinwiddie County Public Schools offers a robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, there are components that have been identified as being in need of enhancement. These components include hands-on experience, professional etiquette to include behavior, appearance and punctuality, professional communication skills and basic citizenship. It was noted that these items are not technical in nature and not necessarily tied to intelligence. Rather, Dinwiddie County's business and industry partners have expressed that if students are better prepared in these areas, then they (business and industry) will be better able to provide the technical aspect of employability.

Addressing Award Criteria:

- **Innovative Solution:**

In 2013, The Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors approved a request from the Department of Economic Development to fund the Youth Workforce Development Initiative (YWDI).

Through this initiative, the Youth Workforce Development Coordinator position was established and tasked with cultivating and nurturing the relationship between local government, business/industry employers, and public schools to develop programs and activities for youth that will provide them with opportunities to enhance skills identified as needed to increase competitiveness in today's workforce. Representatives from each of these partners serve on a planning committee for programs and events.

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A comprehensive framework was developed and included a variety of programs and activities designed to provide Dinwiddie County youth with opportunities to enhance skills that will lead to increased employability and a competitive edge when entering tomorrow's workforce.

The main components of the Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative are as follows:

1. **Teen Staffing Program:** An intensive, one-academic school year, program through which students will work a paid internship/job readiness placement. The program is designed to provide quality, real-world experience that will give youth a reliable foundation of experience and professional development training on which to develop, shape and build their employment and educational goals. This program is open to youth 15-19 years of age with a valid work permit. While in the program, students must complete 20 hours of community service and maintain a 2.0 or greater GPA.
2. **Camp Dinwiddie: Leaders in Training Program:** This component represents a collaborative effort between Dinwiddie County and 4-H). This is a weekend program for youth 14-19 years of age held at the 4-H Conference Center in Wakefield, Virginia. The focus of the camp is providing youth with increased leadership and entrepreneurial competencies. During the weekend, participants learn about entrepreneurship, youth development, interviewing and financial literacy. Each session is led by a professional with expertise in the topic. Additional topics are presented for consideration by the elected 4-H Youth Committee. This elected committee represents the voice of students participating in the program and ensures that content will be fresh and interesting for youth. Each Camp Dinwiddie cohort will consist of 30 youth who will be transported from Dinwiddie County to Wakefield on a Friday afternoon and then back to Dinwiddie on Sunday evening. There will be two camps held per year for a total of 60 youth.

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3. **Career Launch**: This is a job-readiness program for youth ages 12-18. The program is facilitated in collaboration with local industries, colleges and universities from Dinwiddie County and the surrounding region. This program provides opportunities for youth to explore careers and make educational decisions based on their areas of interest. This multi-faceted program is designed to prepare youth for the workforce through a variety of workshops. Topics include conducting a job search, resume development, cover letter writing, and interview skills. Youth will also receive real-world experience by participating in career panel discussions and career exposure events that allow them direct access to top-level professionals in some of the highest demand careers in the region. This program will consist of four sessions with a maximum of 30 youth per session.

4. **Career Exposure Program**: This program consists of three components designed to engage and motivate youth to explore a variety of career pathways.
 - a. **Job Shadowing** provides youth with an opportunity to spend a day “shadowing” someone working in one of their career fields of interest. Students will spend the day following the professional to whom they are assigned and will observe day to day activities. There will be ample opportunity for questions and conversation relating to the career path and the experience will allow youth to make educated decisions about whether or not this is a career they would like to pursue. Examples of placements include Public Safety (Fire and EMS providers), County Attorney, Constitutional Officers, local government officials and local business and industry leaders.

 - b. **Industry Day** is held annually in conjunction with Dinwiddie County Public Schools’ Career and Technical Education Program. Local businesses and industry are invited to set up booths inside the High School Auxiliary Gym. Booths are staffed by representatives of the

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company/organization who are able to talk with youth directly about their work and answer questions of youth pertaining to their field of expertise.

- c. Government Day is open to all students enrolled in high school government courses. Students are prepared for the event through study of local government and then travel to the Pamplin Administration Building where they have an opportunity to talk directly with County leaders and elected officials. After a working lunch, which includes a briefing of elections and regulatory board functions, students participate in mock elections and then process through an actual regulatory board matter (seated beside the official whom they are portraying). This activity not only provides real-life exposure to careers in local government, it provides a hands-on education regarding the operation of government and enhances citizenship of participating youth.

5. **Teen Expo:** A one-of-a-kind event designed to further engage youth in consideration of post-secondary education and career options as well as encourage and motivate the adoption of health lifestyles and positive decision making. The Expo is open to middle and high school students. Youth are assigned to groups based on age and rotate among a variety of workshops during the day –long event. Workshop topics include: Healthy Living and Wellness, Social Branding, Making Good Choices, Resume Writing, Financial Management, and the impact of music on youth and culture. The event is held on the campus of Richard Bland College and also provides a separate track of workshops for parents. Parental workshop topics include: Understanding Financial Aid, Navigating the college/employment application process and more! Students and parents will be invited to tour the campus during the afternoon session of the Expo. In an effort to further attract and engage students, a variety of “teen friendly” fun activities are scheduled for the afternoon. These fun activities include: a video game rover,

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basketball, rock climbing, sumo wrestling, door prizes and MORE! The initial Teen Expo was held in 2014 and boasted 70 youth. The 2015 event was held at a larger venue in order to accommodate a larger number of youth and the newly added session for parents. One hundred youth and 20 parents participated this year!

6. **Summer Internship Program**: This component grew out of the Teen Expo and provides a one-month, paid summer employment opportunity to participating youth. This program provides real-life, hands-on work experience for youth and exposure to a career field they may not otherwise have an opportunity to explore. Students must be at least 15 years of age and hold a valid work permit in order to be eligible. Given existing agreements for placements, we are able to accommodate up to 28 youth in this program. Youth successfully completing the 30-day internship experience will receive a \$250 stipend (paid for by the program). This is a win-win situation in that host sites receive the benefit of an additional summer employee (for 30 days) as well as insight into tomorrow's workforce and the student will receive a rare opportunity to experience, first-hand, a potential career path. Through this experience, they will gain a clear understanding of what the career entails and will have an opportunity to make an educated decision on whether or not this is something they'd like to pursue. Further, they gain experience for use on future job/college applications and references for years to come. The stipend is an added bonus for youth and a reward for a job well done.

- **Collaboration**:

In order to effectively implement the Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative, the County enlisted the support of a variety of government and private partners to include:

Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors

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Dinwiddie County Administration and All Departments

Dinwiddie County Public Schools

Cooperative Extension/4-H

Capital Area Partnership for Uplifting People

Richard Bland College

Dinwiddie County Chamber of Commerce

Rowanty Vocational and Technical Center

Local Business and Industry

- **Financing:**

The Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative has been supported financially by the Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors who have fully funded the program coordinator position, which falls under the Office of Economic Development on the County's organizational chart. The Board of Supervisors has also provided an allocation in the operating budget to assist with expenses related to the Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative. Financial support for each of the programs and activities within the Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative has also included donations of cash, goods and services from our partners.

- **Results:**

While measurable results of the Dinwiddie County Workforce Development Initiative will not be realized for several years, we have received positive feedback from students, parents, business/industry partners and government officials regarding the level of professionalism and eagerness to learn exhibited by program participants. Dinwiddie students are beginning to

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stand out at job fairs and among their career and technical education peers. This is just the beginning of what is yet to come.

Through investing in this program, Dinwiddie County's forward-thinking Board of Supervisors and staff have sent a clear message to youth that they are an important part of our County and that we want them to have every opportunity to be successful as they establish and navigate their career pathways.

Brief Summary and Short Overview of the Program:

The Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Initiative was born of a need to better equip youth with skills needed to be competitive in the local and regional workforce. Dinwiddie County government, working together with public schools and a variety of public and private agencies, developed a comprehensive program designed to provide participants with real-life, hands-on experience in an assortment of career fields and disciplines.

The Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Initiative is a multi-faceted umbrella covering the following programs and activities: Teen Staffing Program, Camp Dinwiddie: Leaders in Training Program, Career Launch, Career Exposure, Teen Expo, and a Summer Internship Program.

Each of these activities place youth in direct contact with employers in variety of career fields. Through real life, hands on exposure, our goal is to stimulate interest, build connections, establish a work ethic and enhance a skill set that will not only make Dinwiddie youth more competitive and employable but will remain with youth throughout their lives.

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The 2015 Dinwiddie Teen Expo was held on April 18, 2015 on the campus of Richard Bland College.



During the Expo, youth had opportunities to interact directly with local employers.



Students gathered in the gym for opening ceremonies.

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Mrs. Brenda Ebron-Bonner and Dr. Mark Moore, members of the Board of Supervisors, were part of the planning committee.



During the 2014 Expo, Deputy Administrator Tammie Collins addressed the youth during lunch.



Chick-fil-A was one of our partners for both the 2014 and 2015 Teen Expos and provided lunch for the youth and volunteers.

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Southside Electric Cooperative was a signature sponsor of the Teen Expo in 2015, and funded all of the afternoon “fun” activities!



Optima Health has been a partner for both the 2014 and 2015 Teen Expos and has provided a Kindle Fire giveaway each year.

Youth Workforce Development Initiative

Through career exposure, employment, skills development training and collaborative partnerships, the Dinwiddie Youth Workforce Development Initiative aims to provide youth with knowledge and experiences that lead to sustainable, fulfilling careers and build a healthy, prosperous community.



Goals:

- Develop leadership skills
- Develop and strengthen career competencies
- Provide networking and internship opportunities
- Provide an opportunity to extend and supplement education beyond traditional limitations
- Engage regional employers in preparing tomorrow's workforce
- Create a pipeline of students prepared for quality employment

Youth Workforce Development Advisory Committee

To improve our programs, curriculum, and delivery strategies, Dinwiddie County has developed a Youth Workforce Development Advisory Committee to meet quarterly. To be effective and relevant, we believe it is critical that representatives from business and industry, community leaders, students, and school administrators collaborate to improve the provision of service to our youth and community.

✓ Summer Work-Based Learning

Dinwiddie High School students will have an opportunity to work for 30 days within an environment that provides quality employment and exposure to professional development training. Students will gain real-world experience and skill-sets to assist in preparation for career development and resume building. Students will be required to interview to be considered for employment. Open to youth 15+, (*students 15 years old must possess a work permit*) students are required to be in good academic standing to qualify for this program. (*Stipend funded, amount may vary*)



Additional initiatives include:

- ✓ **Career and Technical Education Career Pathways Forum** - Annual focused discussion between DCPS, County officials, Industry and Community Partners aimed to ensure that the current curriculum in the Dinwiddie County Public School System prepares our students to be competitive in the regional job market.



- ✓ **Manufacturing Technology Camp** (*collaboration with HPG Chamber of Commerce*) - an experiential learning opportunity for rising 10, 11, 12 graders and it involves manufacturing a product using a modern CNC mill and the software that controls the milling operation. This is a four-day summer camp (Wednesday-Friday), daily hours are 8 AM- 4 PM followed by a ½ day Saturday competition attended by parents, industry partners and school division representatives.

- ✓ **Government Day** – Hosted by Dinwiddie County Administration in collaboration with the Board of Supervisors, Dinwiddie High School's Senior Government class will join the Board of Supervisors and County Administration staff for lunch followed by a reenactment of a typical board meeting. Through this fun and engaging forum students will experience how regulatory decisions are made on a local level.

Dinwiddie County Youth Workforce Development Initiative

"Preparing today's youth to become tomorrow's workforce"





Proposed Program Offerings:

Teen Staff Program (P.O.W.E.R partnership)

The Dinwiddie Teen Staff Program is a 1 academic school year intensive, paid, job

readiness program intended to provide quality real world experience that will give youth a reliable base of experience and professional development training to help further their employment and education goals. Open to youth 15+, (*students 15 years old must possess a work permit*) participants must complete 20 hours of community service and maintain a 2.0 GPA.

Camp Dinwiddie Leaders in Training Program (4-H partnership-Teen Weekend)

This is a weekend program for youth ages 14-19 designed for Leadership and Professional Development with an emphasis on gaining leadership and entrepreneurship competencies. Participants in the program learn about entrepreneurship, youth development, interviewing, and financial literacy. Additional topics are presented for consideration by the elected 4-H Youth Committee. This elected committee represents the voices of the students participating in the program.

Career Launch

Career Launch is a job readiness program for youth ages 12-18. The program is facilitated in collaboration with local industries, colleges and universities in Dinwiddie/Region. Career Launch provides an opportunity for youth to explore careers and make education decisions based on their professional interests. The multi-part program is designed to prepare youth for the workforce through a variety of workshops focusing

on interviewing skills, conducting a job search, resume development, and cover letter writing. Youth will also receive real-world experience by participating in career panels and career exposure events that allow them access to top level professionals, in the highest demand professions within the region.

Career Exposure Program

The Career Exposure Series is an engaging and interactive series of events to include job shadowing, which introduces teens from across the county of Dinwiddie to various companies and industries through office visits. In addition to learning about different professions, teens are expected to dress professionally for these events and are coached on professionalism. Industries span from architecture to healthcare to advanced manufacturing to social media.

Related annual program:

Industry Day

- ✓ **Capturing new talent.** In addition to the great benefit and enrichment to the youth, this will also provide the industry partner with a glimpse of the county's future workforce and an opportunity to harness fresh, new talent, as soon-to-be local graduates and rising college and vocational students begin their professional tracks. The goal is to inspire students to adopt a profession or connect to an apprenticeship or internship, thus enabling industry partners to attract interns or entry-level workers who can bring new skills that match the ever-changing, technologically charged marketplace of today's economy.
- ✓ **Giving back.** One of the main tenets of success in business is to give back in order to continue to richly receive. Participation in Industry Day allows our industry partners to make a donation of their time and experiential knowledge to our future generation. They receive the added benefit of seeing the rewards of charitable giving, in the face of today's youth and Dinwiddie's future workforce.

- ✓ **Building brand awareness.** Allows participating companies to build brand awareness about their industry sector with both the future workforce and with other business leaders who are consumers in both regional and national markets.

Annual Dinwiddie Teen Expo

Dinwiddie middle and high school students will engage with event lecturers and exhibitors on wellness and professional development topics, including talks on healthy living and making good choices, as well as on what steps to follow to prepare for college and a career of choice. Teen attendees have the opportunity to meet with employers exhibiting on site, and will have the chance to apply for an internship and summer job opportunities. The event culminates with a two-hour outdoor funfest that includes giveaways, gaming stations and other outdoor activities.

Summer Employment/ Internship Opportunities



The Dinwiddie Department of Economic Development has developed relationships with existing industries in the region that are committed to supporting the success of the Dinwiddie's youth. Through these relationships we have established summer employment and internships exclusively for Dinwiddie High School students. Staff visit teens in these positions and provide ongoing support and encouragement as teens engage in work based learning beyond the classroom.

For additional information contact: Cierra Goode
Youth Workforce Development Coordinator
804.469.4500 ext. 2154

cgoode@dinwiddieva.us | www.accessdinwiddie.com