



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, 2024.** 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: Chesterfield County
Program Title: Enhancing Access to Citizens
Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Dr. James D. Worsley
Title: Deputy County Administrator, Human Services
Signature: 

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Community Engagement and Resources
"Enhancing Access to Citizens"
Virginia Association of Counties – 2024 Award Submission

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Chesterfield County Community Engagement and Resources in partnership with the Social Services and Economic Development departments through the Workforce Development Committee that also consist of Human Resources, Mental Health, Chesterfield County Public Schools, and local community colleges developed the Learn and Explore with Possibilities (L.E.A.P) program. The program identified gaps in workforce development that can be addressed through programming and wrap around service needs. In 2023, the L.E.A.P program offered workshops that focused on workforce development for young adults, the childcare industry, and our Latino population.

NEED ADDRESSED BY THE PROGRAM

The program was needed due to gaps in services for targeted populations that limited their economic mobility. The program focused on areas of workforce development outside of the usual of trade school or college bound students, so it was able to provide an avenue of awareness of opportunities that was presented in a meaningful and impactful way. This program was most important for our Latino youth because it provided an outlet for them that had yet to be explored in workforce development, allowing for their full stories to be heard that will assist in directing their future workforce and college choices.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A team representing Social Services, Community Engagement, Social Services, Schools, Mental Health, Human Resources, and other non-profit partners was created in 2020 to address workforce development. Chesterfield County knew great work was being accomplished in workforce development, but it was happening in silos which created ineffectiveness for providing wrap around service needs for County residents to find a career so that they could fully live, work and play in Chesterfield. As this Committee met to provide context to key employment issues it led to the creation of the program Learn, Explore and Advance with Possibilities (L.E.A.P.). The L.E.A.P. program identifies key areas that are lacking a focus of workforce development allowing the team to create targeted workshops to address needs in the community. The first workshop targeted the young adult population aged 18-24 years old. For this workshop, utilizing social media advertising, we reached:

- 17,444 people
- Created 31,245 impressions
- 632 engagements

Our media team reported this advertisement provided one of the largest engagements that they have had on a post. Through the advertising, we hosted a L.E.A.P. workforce event in July and had approximately 27 participants that were led through several workshop sessions that included:

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- Interview with Confidence – Skills and language
- Document your strengths – Resume Writing
- Work life Balance – Resilience skills
- Know the process – Application process guide
- Making money- Financial Literacy

The event also included job recruiters as well as college representatives through our partnership with Brightpoint Community College and Bryant and Stratton College. Career coaches were on-site to assist with resume review, interview skills, and career guidance as well as awesome raffle prizes, free t-shirts, and bilingual Ambassadors. Professional headshots were also available for the young adults to promote themselves through social media like LinkedIn, and on their resume.

After this first successful event, the team reconvened on how to best support our English as a Second Language (ESL) community. We learned there is ample opportunity for ESL classes within Chesterfield at an affordable rate, however, we also learned that our Latino youth were often pushed into the hospitality or construction industry. Our team was originally planning on coordinating a resource fair in the underserved Latino community; however, our Multi Cultural Coordinator suggested an event that used L.E.A.P. but allowed our Latino youth to dream that they could be anything they wanted to be, and this could be achieved through representation. The attached [YouTube video](#) highlights the event that was created. The Latino leaders who participated in our region were excited for the opportunity to give back to the youth.

Overall, we had 60 youth registered, all ESL students, to attend the L.E.A.P. Sueños event – Sueños means dreams in Spanish. Through the planning process for the youth, simultaneously we coordinated an event for the Latino youth parents and younger siblings to learn about resources and educational opportunities which was hosted by the Chesterfield Public Library. In attendance were approximately 50 Latino parents and siblings. Resources were shared, and 11 new library cards were issued.

The third workshop for L.E.A.P. was focused on childcare education and resources. Chesterfield has over 200 licensed daycare facilities in addition to many in-home unlicensed daycares. The goal of the event was to have those interested in learning about a career in Early Childhood Development learn about career pathways, daycare licensure and options for small business financial support. This workshop had over 80 participants that were educated on how to open a daycare and many were also able to interview for employment.

ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The L.E.A.P. program has advanced Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work through serving historically underserved communities. During the young adult event, we adapted to being able to serve neurodivergent youth on ways to best interview and become comfortable with finding meaningful work. The L.E.A.P. Sueños event targeted the Latino population which highlighted and placed emphasis on representation so Latino youth could see their future as bright and

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successful through people who live and work in the community and share similar stories to them. At the closing of the Sueños workshop so many of the adult participants shared "I wish there had been a program like this for me when I was in high school." This comment illustrates how meaningful the program was to attendees. Latino leaders relished the opportunity to give back to the community in a way that will move minority groups forward.

PROGRAM COST

Outside of staff resources, each of the workshops cost approximately \$5,000 for a total of \$15,000. When we launched the program, many of our non-profit partners were excited and expressed interest of donating venue space for free which reduced program cost.

PROGRAM RESULTS/SUCCESS

The L.E.A.P. program has proven to be a great success and continues as our Workforce Development Committee assess gaps in areas of Veteran Services. When reflecting to the start of our workshops and as we continue the work, we have learned:

- Our young adults, throughout the workshops were excited to participate and enjoyed feeling like a part of the community. This was a way to engage youth in the services that local government provides and partner with businesses in the community to offer wrap around service needs such as financial literacy, transportation, and access to quality jobs.
- We learned when consultants and businesses believe in the mission presented, they will waive fees. We had many professionals that would have charged a consultant fee but due to the scope of work for this project, but instead waived their fee because they saw value in the mission and wanted to be part of the impact. We were offered complimentary space to host the workshops because of the relationships and generosity of community partners that supported and believed in the mission of the programs.
- The programs have added a level of depth to our Workforce Development network to create buy-in and promote economic development in the County due to the strong working relationships county departments and external agencies have with each other.

WORTHINESS OF AWARD

The work that was invested into the development of L.E.A.P. created a first of its kind workshop. There is now an excitement that surrounds workforce development. This program was designed to meet people where they are and provide outcomes or a representative model for what their future can be. Chesterfield County is inspiring the next generation of the workforce in an impactful way that shows engagement, inclusion and belonging.