



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Category: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Library Partnerships to Reduce Gun Violence and Drug Misuse

2024 VACo Achievement Award Submission – Chesterfield Public Library

## Executive Summary

Gun violence and prescription drug abuse have risen drastically across the United States over the past 10 years, even more rapidly since the COVID pandemic began in 2020. Chesterfield County has not been immune to these increases. By partnering with Chesterfield County Mental Health Support Services (MHSS) and Virginia Department of Health, Chesterfield Public Library offers take-home COVID tests, medication lock bags, medication deactivation kits, cable gun locks and naloxone nasal spray to county residents at all 10 library locations for free. Deactivation kits render medications inert and safe for disposal in household trash, thus preventing medication theft or misuse and accidental poisonings. A cable gun lock, when properly installed, prevents a firearm from being accidentally fired. A key is required to unlock the cable. Naloxone, also referred to by one of its brand names, Narcan, is an FDA-approved medication to reverse opioid overdose. The library provides instructional videos on how to use the kits, locks and naloxone.

## Problem/Challenge

Substance use has risen considerably in the United States since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among adolescents. Unintentional injury (including drug overdose) is the leading cause of death in the United States for those under age 45 and opioids are involved in the majority of overdose deaths. Misuse of prescription drugs is growing so quickly in the United States that it has been classified as an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most people who use prescription drugs do not abuse them; however, the main way people aged 12 and older obtain prescription drugs

for non-medical use is through a relative or friend. Sometimes this exchange is consensual; other times, the drug may be taken without the prescription holder being aware. More Americans died of gun-related injuries (suicide, murder and accident) in 2021 than in any year on record, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These national statistics magnify the need for all citizens, including those of Chesterfield County, to be careful with their guns and prescription medications.

## Description of the Program

In 2017, MHSS reached out to the library to discuss ways in which they could partner to combat the rising problem of prescription drug abuse. The main objective for the partnership was to provide Chesterfield County residents with increased, easy access to medication deactivation kits. CCPL has 10 locations across the county and is open Monday through Saturday. MHSS is centrally located within the county, which is helpful to those who have transportation or live nearby, but not for those who do not. MHSS is open Monday through Friday during business hours only; therefore, collaborating with Chesterfield Public Library to make all ten libraries access points for deactivation kits opened up accessibility both geographically and with regards to additional hours of operation.

A few years later, the COVID pandemic hit and, once at-home COVID tests were developed, the library partnered with Virginia Department of Health to supply county residents with free COVID tests. The at-home tests remain a free offering at all 10 library locations and are available through curbside pick-up.

The COVID pandemic brought with it an increase in prescription drug abuse and, subsequently, opioid overdoses. Gun violence also rose during this time. In fall 2021, library staff attended a Chesterfield County Substance Abuse Workgroup meeting where members talked about distribution of free medication lock bags and cable gun locks in response to these increases. The library was identified as a distribution point for both, adding to the list of community resources provided free to all Chesterfield

County citizens. Naloxone nasal spray was added in 2023 as an additional free resource to help combat the opioid crisis.

The partnerships Chesterfield Public Library maintains to provide free community resources at all 10 libraries have been seven years in the making; however, they are also dynamic and ongoing. County and state agencies keep up with trends locally and nationally and are ready to work together again, if needed, to give county residents easier access to free resources.

Implementation of the library's partnership with MHSS took little time to happen initially in 2017. Once MHSS had the medication deactivation kits in stock, they delivered the kits to library administration, who then parceled them out to each of the libraries in the county. Promotional materials, both print and digital, were created several weeks ahead of the launch of the program and delivered to customers via fliers, posters, rack cards, social media and both library and MHSS websites. After implementation began, library staff would contact library administration to request more kits. Administration sent supplies through a library courier within 24-48 hours after the request was made. Each additional resource has been implemented in similar fashion.

The community resources programs continue to operate smoothly in the same fashion as they did at their inceptions. Citizens request medication lock bags, deactivation kits, COVID tests, gun locks and naloxone by contacting the library. Library staff prepare the resource(s) for distribution and alerts library administration when supplies get low. Administration reaches out to the Virginia Department of Health for COVID tests and naloxone, and contacts MHSS for medication lock bags, deactivation kits and cable gun locks. Within 2-3 days, supplies are delivered to library administration, which disperses the supplies to libraries.

In addition to providing medication lock bags, deactivation kits, COVID, gun locks and Narcan to the library, MHSS notes Chesterfield Public Library on their department website as a partner and location

where customers can receive these items. MHSS and the library regularly collaborate on various marketing campaigns to further promote the availability of these community resources.

Medication lock bags, deactivation kits, COVID tests, gun locks and naloxone are all provided free of charge to the library by the Virginia Department of Health and MHSS. In order to raise awareness and promote usage of these free resources, the library creates and prints materials in-house and delivers them to library locations via library courier. Chesterfield Public Library also uses the library courier system for delivery of the community resources themselves. All of this incurs minimal cost to the library's operating budget.

The partnership between the library and MHSS to provide county residents with free, easy access to medication lock bags, deactivation kits, COVID tests, gun locks and naloxone has achieved its objective. From October 2022 through September 2023, 364 medication lock bags have been distributed while 1,400 deactivation kits have been given to citizens through the library. From June 2023, when naloxone was added to the free community resources at Chesterfield Public Library, through February 2024, the library has given 356 naloxone nasal spray kits to citizens.

Overdose deaths in Chesterfield have dropped in the last year, partly due to the widespread distribution of naloxone through the library and Chesterfield County's substance use coordinator, Fire and EMS distribution, the parole office and other agencies. Partnerships throughout Chesterfield County are developed and maintained in order to better serve its citizens by breaking down barriers to access.

## Collaboration for Access

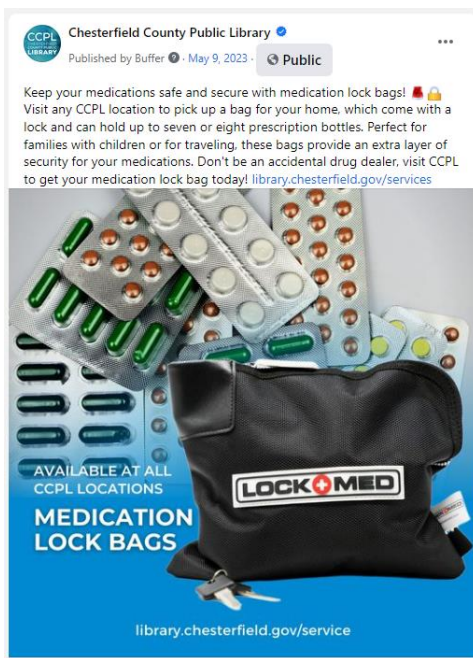
Chesterfield County has a population of more than 385,000 across 424 square miles. The population is as diverse as the county is wide, with acres of rural farmland and miles of urban development that is often considered an extension of the city of Richmond. Chesterfield County is the largest locality in the

Richmond, Virginia MSA, accounting for over a quarter of the MSA population, and is the fourth largest county in Virginia. Chesterfield Public Library has 10 locations across the county and ensures that medication lock bags, deactivation kits, gun locks, COVID tests and naloxone are provided at all library locations.

The library's community resources program promotes intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing the shared problems of rising gun violence and prescription drug abuse. Opioid overdose numbers increasing to the point of opioid overdose being named an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The library's mission statement includes an emphasis on fostering a vibrant and thriving community; therefore, working with local and state partners to increase citizen access to free resources that can help prevent opioid abuse and gun violence is a partnership the library values greatly.

## Supplemental Materials


### Social Media Posts/Graphics





CCPL Chesterfield County Public Library  
Published by Buffer · October 30, 2023 · Public

Don't be an accidental drug dealer. Dispose of unused medications safely with CCPL's medication disposal kits!  
Medication disposal kits, brought to you in partnership with Chesterfield County Mental Health Support Services, render medications inert and safe for disposal. Keep your loved ones and the environment safe by properly disposing of unused medications.  
Learn more and request your free kit today at <https://library.chesterfield.gov/service>



**MEDICATION DEACTIVATION KITS**  
AVAILABLE AT ALL CCPL LOCATIONS

[library.chesterfield.gov/service](https://library.chesterfield.gov/service)

CCPL Chesterfield County Public Library  
Published by Buffer · December 17, 2023 · Public

🚫 No risks this holiday season! 🌟 Safeguard your home by securing your firearms. If you own a gun, visit any CCPL location today for a free Gun Cable Lock. Because a safe holiday is a happy holiday! 🌟🌟  
<https://bit.ly/3YWj3i0>  
#SafeAndSecure #HolidayPrep #FirearmSafety



**KEEP THEM SAFE BY LOCKING IT UP.**

Keep guns out of the hands of kids. Get free gun cable locks at any CCPL location.

[library.chesterfield.gov/service](https://library.chesterfield.gov/service)

Printed flyer (8.5x11) Promoting Gun Locks (in Spanish)

**MANTENLOS A SALVO BLOQUEA TUS ARMAS**




Mantén tus armas fuera del alcance de los niños. Obtén cables de bloqueo para armas en cualquiera de las locaciones de las Bibliotecas Públicas del Condado de Chesterfield. Pregunta a los trabajadores de las bibliotecas para más información.

**CCPL** CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Screenshot of a section of the library website for gun locks, including an embedded video produced by Chesterfield County Police demonstrating proper installation and use.

### Cable Gun Locks



Firearm safety doesn't just apply to how the firearm is handled. Secure storage is also a critical part of the safety checklist. A cable lock, when properly installed, prevents a firearm from being accidentally fired. A key is required to unlock the cable. Cable gun locks are available for free at all CCPL locations and are provided in partnership with [Chesterfield County Mental Health Support Services](#). Watch CPD Rangemaster Cpl. Brian Dewar conduct a quick class on applying a cable gun lock to your personal firearm(s):

