



## 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: County of Henrico  
Program Title: Canoeing with the Community  
Program Category: Parks & Recreation

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis  
Title: Public Relations Specialist  
Department: Public Relations  
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Email: dav127@henrico.gov

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

Name: Monica Smith-Callahan  
Title: Deputy County Manager for Community Affairs  
Signature: *M. Smith-Callahan*

## **Program Overview**

Henrico Recreation and Parks Canoeing with the Community program was created to give citizens an entry-level paddling experience within parks they visit regularly to provide easier access and accessibility.

American Canoe Association-trained staff provide on-site safety, instruction, and training, while also providing on-water instruction and demonstrations. Registration is not required ahead of time, all equipment is provided on-site, and multiple barriers are removed for patrons to participate by utilizing parks in the east and west ends of the county.

By adopting this model, the division has been able to offer more paddling programs annually and increase attendance, as opposed to historically using one park and pre-registering a limited number of people.

## **Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

Traditional paddling programs required advanced registration, had limited spots available, and were held in a location inconvenient for most residents. Those barriers brought about the need to create more canoeing opportunities for our patrons in locations they already regularly visit.

The cost of surrounding canoeing programs was also a barrier for individuals seeking outdoor recreation opportunities. By offering free canoeing experiences, we have been able to provide an economical option to those who seek to get introductory canoeing experience.

### **How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

This program is an innovative solution and provides a model for other localities. Our staff took advantage of an under-utilized resource and created a cost-effective program. This program not only uses the equipment on a regular basis, but also recreated a way to increase participation in an activity for patrons who may not have the opportunity to experience canoeing. This program helps show our division's commitment to inclusive programming and community engagement to help meet our goal of improving the quality of life for all patrons.

### **How Program Was Carried Out**

Recreation staff work over a few months to coordinate everything needed for these programs to be successful. Logistical planning takes place related to moving around paddles and PFD's (Personal Flotation Devices/lifejackets), while coordination with our Park Services team is needed to schedule drop off and delivery of the canoes. Leading up to each program, we utilize different marketing mediums such as flyers, social media, the division's seasonal program guide, and word of mouth to inform our patrons where we will be holding the programs. In addition to marketed programs, we have also utilized a non-marketed pop-up method of programming where we schedule times when we know our parks will be busy, like days when kids are out of school or evenings when people are off work. Patrons are pleasantly surprised when they visit their local park, and our team is present offering an opportunity to try out canoeing.

### **Financing and Staffing**

Developing this program for the residents of Henrico was very inexpensive due to already owning all the necessary equipment and having a certified paddling instructor on staff and other staff with paddling experience. If the equipment is properly maintained and staff recertify when needed, this

program can be held multiple times a year for many years before additional expenditures are needed for equipment replacement. If another locality wanted to replicate, upfront costs entail:

- 6 Canoes = \$7,500.00
- 12 Paddles = \$400
- 30 PFDs of varying sizes = \$1,000
- ACA Canoeing Certification = \$380
- Approximate Total = \$9,000.00

### **Program Results**

Since the programs implementation in 2021, our department has been able to offer Canoeing with the Community multiple times. Patrons of varying demographics have come out to take part in these programs. Individuals and families of varying ages have all had positive boating experiences. Offerings and attendance since creation include:

In 2021, we offered three chances to participants and averaged 20 participants each session totaling 57 participants.

- In 2022, we offered three chances to participate and saw a substantial attendance increase average of 61 people per session, totaling 185 participants.
- In 2023, we offered three chances for the public to participate, serving approximately 145 participants, and additionally we brought this program to our summer camp where we introduced canoeing to approximately 75 middle schoolers who had very little boating exposure.
- In 2023, we also offered our first instance of Canoeing with the Community with our Therapeutic Recreation section and were able to provide 10 participants with special needs the opportunity to take part in this experience.

Through these offerings, we have been able to provide over 500 patrons with the opportunity to learn the basics of canoeing and learn about what our division offers in terms of programming and parks.

### **Brief Summary**

Henrico Recreation and Parks Canoeing with the Community program was created to give citizens an entry-level paddling experience within parks they visit regularly to provide easier access and accessibility. Registration is not required ahead of time, all equipment is provided on-site, and multiple barriers are removed for patrons to participate by utilizing parks in the east and west ends of the county. The division has been able to offer more paddling programs annually and increase attendance, as opposed to historically using one park and pre-registering a limited number of people.

Since the program's implementation in 2021, our department has been able to offer Canoeing with the Community multiple times. Patrons of varying demographics have come out to take part in these programs. Individuals and families of varying ages have all had positive boating experiences. Through these offerings, we have been able to provide over 500 patrons with the opportunity to learn the basics of canoeing and learn about what our division offers in terms of programming and parks.

# Canoeing with the Community

## Supplemental Material



2:48



Susana McAviney



through September 04



September 04 at 7:16 PM

Thank you so much! I am quite certain they will be much appreciated this week!!

Liked a message

2:46 PM

My kids had never been canoeing, so this morning we drove 45 minutes to participate in "Canoeing With the Community." It was completely worth it. My kids loved it and didn't want to stop. The rangers were kind and encouraging, and we would absolutely go again. Thank you!



That is awesome!!! I'm so glad y'all came out and thank you for sending this! We hope to see you around soon!



Liked a message

Reply on Instagram...

