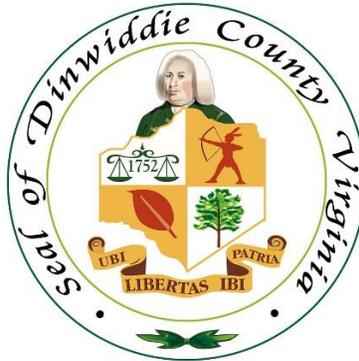


# Dinwiddie County



## 2015 Youth Prevention Needs Assessment

*Conducted by:*

**Dinwiddie Department of Comprehensive Services  
Post Office Box 193  
14101 Boydton Plank Road  
Dinwiddie, Virginia 23841  
(804) 469-5391**

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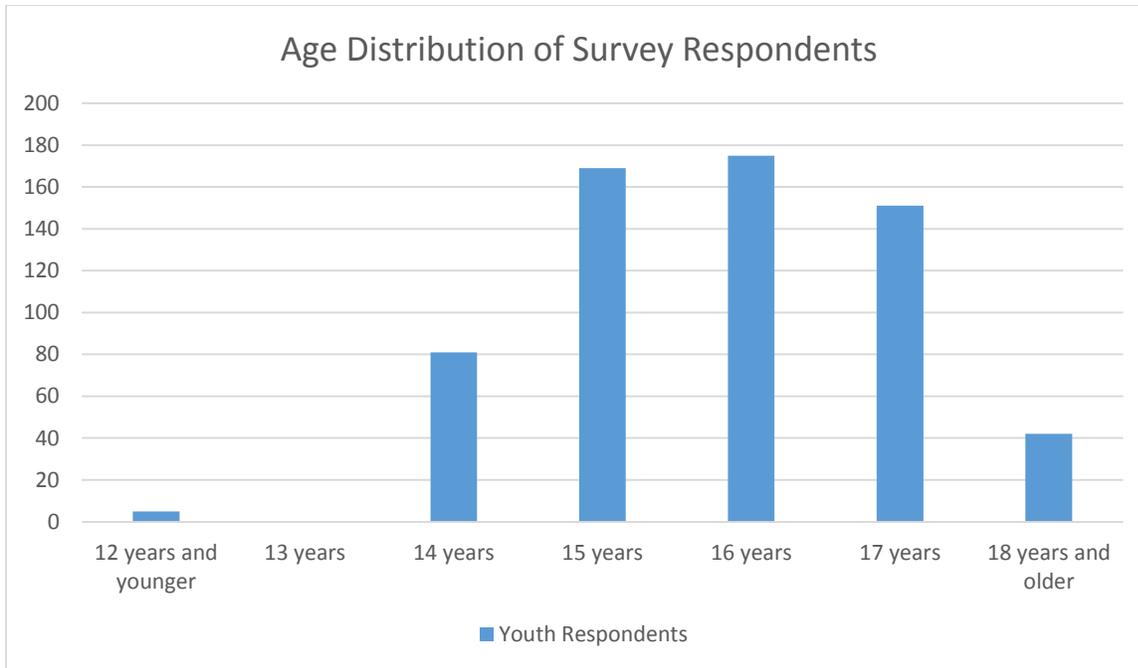
## **Executive Summary**

The 2015 Youth Prevention Needs Assessment was initiated by the Dinwiddie Department of Comprehensive Services. It is standard practice to conduct a needs assessment every five years in order to support programs provided through the Department of Social Services, Department of Comprehensive Services and Department of Juvenile Justice. Prior to 2015, the two most recent needs assessments were conducted in 2005 and 2010 and were funded by grants through the former, Governor's Office on Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP).

The 2015 Community Prevention Needs Assessment included a variety of data collection mechanisms to include, a standardized youth survey, focus groups and key informant interviews. Social indicator data was also collected for comparison purposes.

The two previous needs assessments utilized the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), developed and produced through WestEd, and included students in grades 6 through 11. Purchase of the CHKS included data analysis, trending and recommendations as well as a comparison of local and national data. In the absence of grant funding, the 2015 needs assessment included the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is available at no cost through the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC). Data analysis was conducted in-house by Department of Comprehensive Services and County Administration staff.

Due to the disparity between CHKS and YRBS categories of data collection (grades versus age), it was impossible to demonstrate true comparisons between survey data from prior to current needs assessments. While inferences can be made, true comparisons are only possible of national and local YRBS results. Comparing 2010 and 2015 survey responses is further complicated by the fact that there were so few respondents to the 2010 CHKS survey. As indicated in the 2010 report, survey results were not statistically valid and therefore, could not be used to draw conclusions regarding change in attitudes or behavior (between 2005 and 2010). Given this issue, the 2015 needs assessment cannot make comparisons or draw conclusions on improvement or decline in any surveyed area.



Overall, Dinwiddie County youth appear to be consistent with their peers across the nation in most of the surveyed areas. Dinwiddie youth reported carrying weapons at a slightly higher rate than their peers nationally but this may be attributed to the rural community in which they live. Youth in Dinwiddie are more likely to use weapons for recreational purposes such as hunting and target shooting than youth in other areas of the country.

With regard to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. It appears as though Dinwiddie youth are using at levels consistent or slightly variant to those reported by their peers nationally. Regardless of drug type, Dinwiddie youth report their first experience occurring between ages 13 and 16. This supports a recommendation that prevention programs begin at the elementary school level and messages be carried through high school.

Based on survey and focus group responses, there is a need for increased opportunities for youth to be physically active. Related to this area is the need for improved diet and nutrition among young people. While schools are taking measures to provide healthier options, youth must learn to make healthy choices.

A common need identified by all focus groups is “something for youth to do in their free time”. Parents, students and professionals agree that the absence of positive, structured activities outside of school is a contributing factor in youth’s participation

in risky behavior. The same groups also identified under-involved and/or ineffective parenting as contributing factors.

Dinwiddie County Public Schools offers an array of services and programs to address many of the issues identified through this needs assessment. In the fourth grade, students participate in Students Organized for Developing Attitudes (SODA), which encourages good decisions and goal setting. In the sixth grade, students participate in Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU), which educates youth about the dangers of tobacco use. “Life Skills” training is available to students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. This also focuses on decision making and choices. At the high school level, students are able to participate in the Safety/SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) organization. Participation is voluntary and open to all students. Bullying committees are present at each school for grades K-7. Character Education is also conducted and promoted K-12. During the 2014-2015 school year, DCPS initiated the “Another Chance” program. This program was developed by a partnership that included District 19 Community Service Board, the Department of Comprehensive Services, and Dinwiddie County Public Schools. Designed to decrease the division’s drop-out rate and positively affect the on-time graduation rate in Dinwiddie, Another Chance provides intervention to students suspended or expelled from school as a result of alcohol, drugs, weapons or other behavioral infractions on school property.

A variety of recreational activities are available to youth, year round, through the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Among these are fitness classes, youth league sports (soccer, football, baseball, and basketball), cheerleading and karate. There are also day camps provided for youth at a minimal cost during the summer months. The County is also fortunate to have a robust 4-H program offered through the local Cooperative Extension Office.

While there appears to be much being done by Dinwiddie County Public Schools to address substance use and violence, it is important to note that these messages are most effective when carried over into the community and homes. Involving parents in youth programming will serve to enhance messages received by children. In addition to spending quality time with their parent(s) through dialogue and discussion, students will learn their parents’ feelings and beliefs regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, violence, delinquency and sexual behavior. By taking time to be involved in their children’s lives, parents will increase each child’s sense of

self-worth. Through education and support, programs geared toward parents will assist them in talking with their children about sensitive and controversial topics.

While many look to the school system to provide programming that targets youth needs, including a community perspective may prove more effective in approaching and addressing youth issues. By working together, schools, communities and parents can ensure that youth are afforded every opportunity to be successful.

## **Methodology & Approach**

Dinwiddie County's most recent Community Needs Assessment was completed in 2010. It was funded by the Governor's Office on Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) through the Safe and Drug Free School and Communities Act (SDFSCA). This needs assessment will identify areas of strength and weakness with regard to youth and will aid in the development and sustainment of youth programs and services in the community.

While there is an exhaustive list of needs for any community, this particular needs assessment will focus solely on youth. Specifically, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, bullying, weapons and school safety, body image, diet, nutrition and sexual and physical activity. The majority of data for this needs assessment was obtained through a standardized survey, administered to students enrolled in Dinwiddie County High School. In addition to the survey, data was collected through focus groups with community leaders and stakeholders, as well as parents, teachers and school administrators. Data was also derived from the national level for comparison purposes.

The two previous community needs assessments incorporated the California Health Kids Survey, published by WestEd. This survey was determined to cover a comprehensive list of topics relating to youth and was administered to middle and high school students using a paper and pencil (Scantron) method. Due to budget constraints, the 2015 planning team opted to use the Youth Risk Assessment Survey (YRBS), made available at no cost through the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The YRBS was administered using Survey Monkey, a web-based surveillance tool, to which Dinwiddie County Public Schools subscribes and granted access for the purposes of administering this survey.

Prior to administering the survey, questions were made available to the Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors, Dinwiddie County School Board, parents and community members. Electronic copies of the survey were posted on both the Dinwiddie County and Dinwiddie County Public Schools' websites. Hard copies of the survey were available for review in the County Administration and School Board Offices, and the Department of Comprehensive Services. After review of the survey, the School Board agreed to allow only high school students the opportunity to participate in the survey.

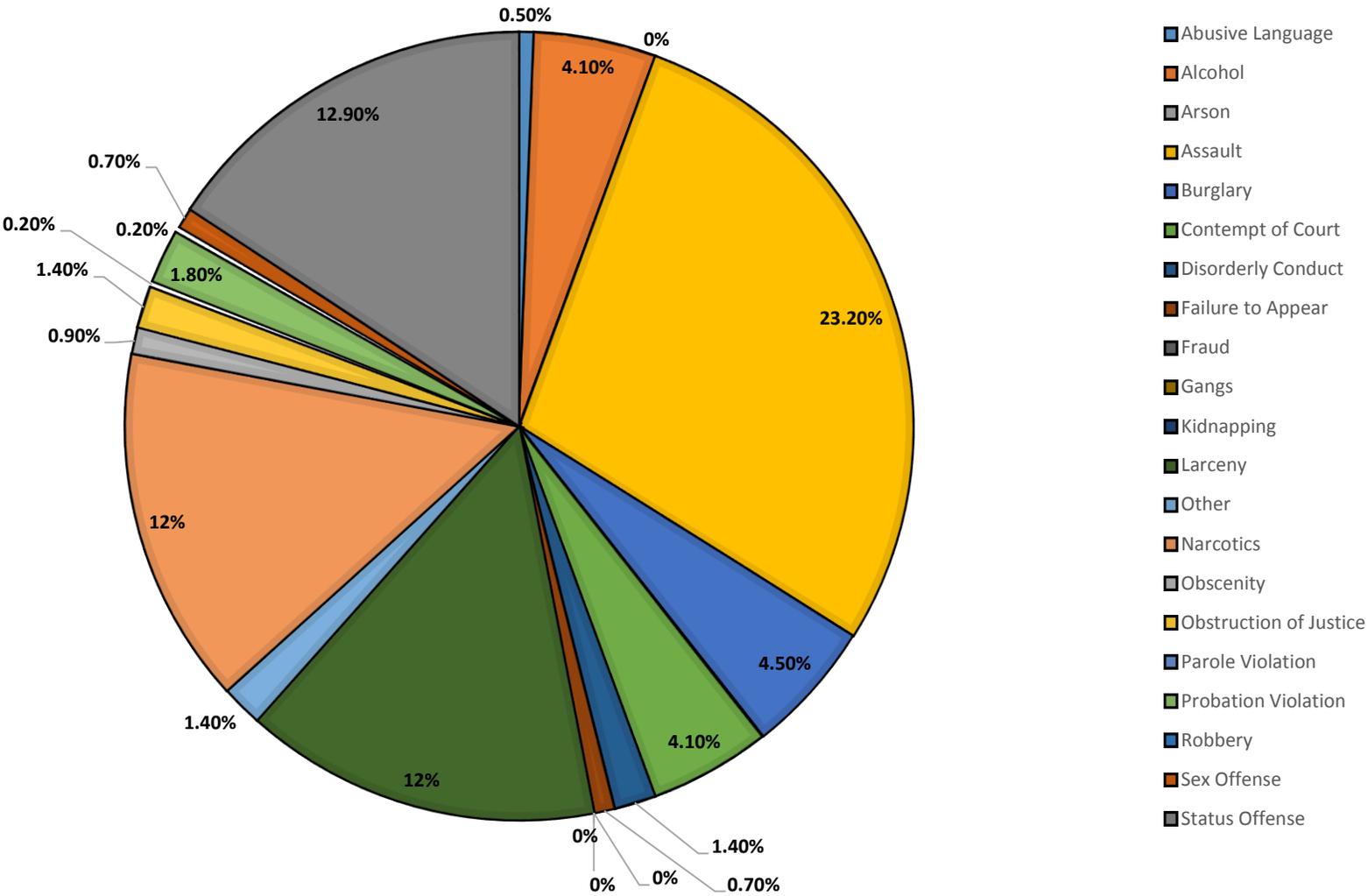
General consent for participation in the survey was secured through the Dinwiddie County Public Schools' Code of Conduct, which includes a statement regarding

standardized surveys. Parents and youth were given an additional opportunity to opt out of this survey by signing and submitting a withdrawal statement.

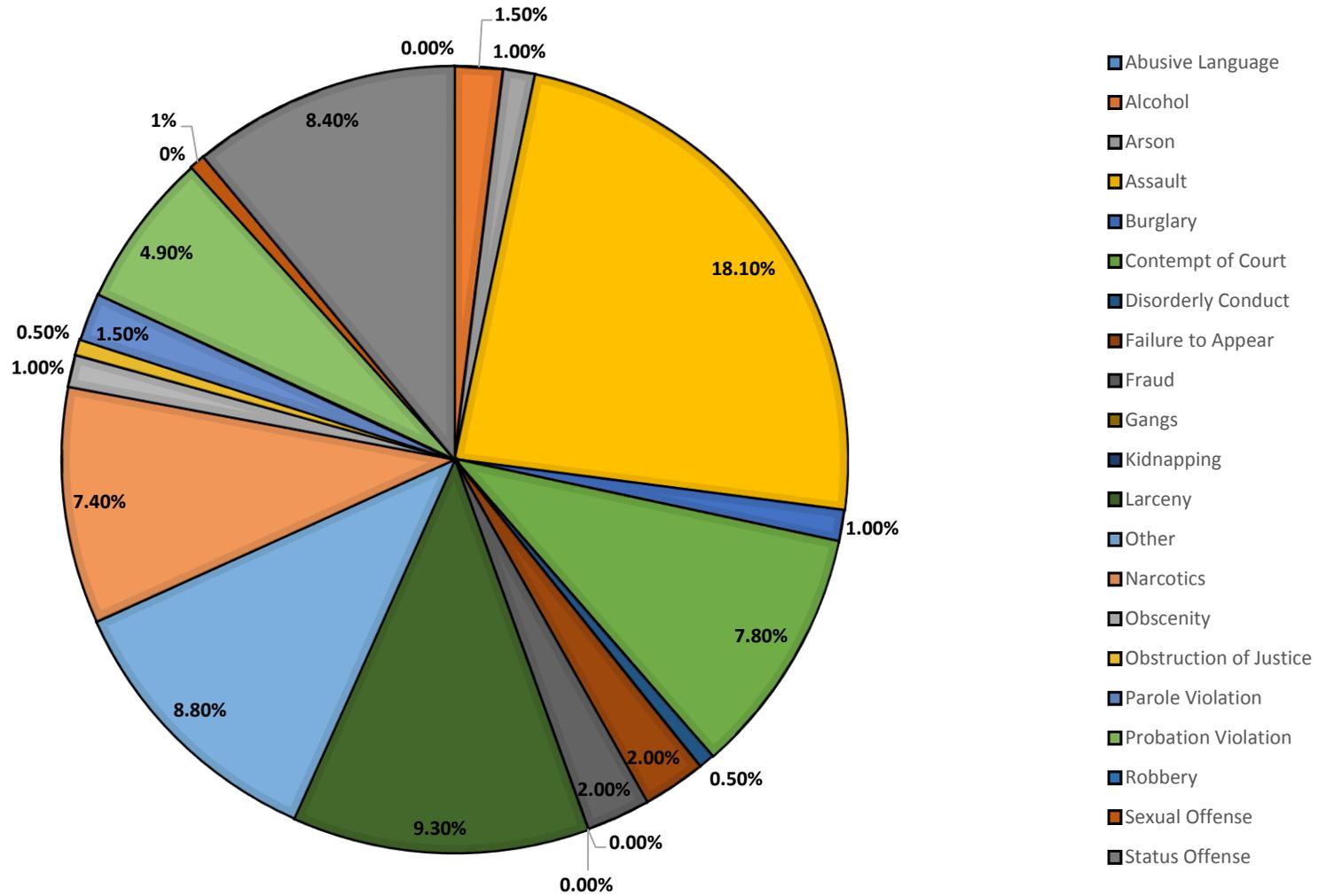
Students at Dinwiddie County High School (DCHS) were targeted for participation in the YRBS. DCHS houses students in grades 9 through 12. During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 1,320 students enrolled in DCHS. In an effort to capture information from the largest number of students possible with minimal disruption to the educational process, it was determined that English would be the best class during which to administer the survey. The YRBS was completed by a total of 623 high school students in October 2014. Two students opted out of the survey. There were a sufficient number of students surveyed to accurately represent the views of the population under study. Survey data collected is reliable at the .005 reliability level, therefore responses can be reported as representative of the student population of DCHS with 95% confidence.

Demographic	2000 U.S.Census			2010 U.S. Census			2014 U.S. Census Estimates		
	Dinwiddie	Virginia	USA	Dinwiddie	Virginia	USA	Dinwiddie	Virginia	USA
<b>Population</b>	24,533	7,078,515	298,593,212	28,001	8,001,023	308,745,538	27,859	8,326,289	318,857,289
Male	49.7%	49.0%	49.1%	49.1%	49.1%	49.2%	49.1%	49.2%	49.2%
Female	50.3%	51.0%	50.9%	50.9%	50.9%	50.8%	50.9%	50.8%	50.8%
<b>Race</b>									
One Race	99.2%	98.0%	97.6%	97.5%	94.0%	90.9%	98.5%	97.2%	97.6%
White	64.6%	72.3%	75.1%	63.9%	68.6%	72.4%	64.8%	70.8%	77.7%
Black	33.7%	19.6%	12.3%	32.9%	19.4%	12.6%	32.6%	19.7%	13.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1.0%	4.7%	12.5%	2.4%	7.9%	16.3%	2.4%	7.9%	16.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.4%	0.9%	0.4%	0.5%	1.2%
Asian	0.3%	3.7%	3.6%	0.4%	5.5%	4.8%	0.6%	6.1%	5.3%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Two or More Races	0.8%	2.0%	2.4%	1.5%	2.9%	2.9%	1.6%	2.7%	2.4%
<b>Age</b>									
Median years	38.5	35.7	35.3	40.7	37.5	37.2	40	37	36.9
Under 5 years	5.6%	6.5%	6.8%	5.7%	6.4%	6.5%	4.6%	6.2%	6.3%
5-17 years	6.2%	6.9%	6.5%	17.1%	16.8%	17.5%	15.9%	16.4%	17.0%
18+ years	76.0%	75.4%	74.3%	63.5%	64.6%	63.0%	63.7%	64.0%	62.6%
65+ years	12.2%	11.2%	12.4%	13.7%	12.2%	13.0%	15.8%	13.4%	14.1%
<b>Marital Status</b>									
Married Males (non-separated)	58.6%	58.2%	56.7%	50.9%	52.5%	50.6%	56%	52.50%	62.9%
Married Females (non-separated)	52.6%	53.4%	52.1%	43.6%	48.9%	47.0%	52%	48.90%	63.1%
<b>Education</b>									
High School graduate or higher (25 yrs +)	70.0%	81.5%	80.4%	80.2%	87.5%	86.0%	80.2%	87.5%	86.0%
Bachelor's degree to higher (25 yrs +)	11.0%	29.5%	24.4%	12.8%	35.2%	28.8%	12.8%	35.2%	28.8%
<b>Economic Status</b>									
Median Household Income	\$ 41,582.00	\$ 46,777.00	\$ 41,994.00	\$ 51,459.00	\$ 73,514.00	\$ 62,982.00	\$ 52,027.00	\$ 63,907.00	\$ 53,046.00
Family Poverty Rate	6.6%	7.0%	9.2%	7.1%	7.2%	10.1%	9.6%	8.0%	11.3%
Individual Poverty Rate	9.2%	9.6%	12.4%	11.8%	10.3%	13.8%	13.2%	11.3%	15.4%
<b>Housing</b>									
Housing - owned	79.2%	68.1%	66.2%	75.8%	68.9%	66.6%	76.6%	67.3%	64.9%
Housing - rented	20.8%	31.9%	33.8%	24.2%	31.1%	33.4%	23.4%	32.7%	35.1%
Median Value of Owned Homes	\$ 86,900.00	\$ 125,400.00	\$ 119,600.00	\$ 163,800.00	\$ 255,100.00	\$ 188,400.00	\$ 165,300.00	\$ 244,600.00	\$ 176,700.00

### DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE STATISTICS 2009



## DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE 2014



## Births to Teenagers by Locality & Age of Mother (2011)

Locality	Total Teenage Live Births				Teenage Birth Rate			
	2011				2011			
	Total	< 15	15 - 17	18 - 19	Total	< 15	15 - 17	18 - 19
Chesterfield*	222	1	69	152	9.2	0.1	9.2	31.6
Colonial Heights	28	0	9	19	25.3	0.0	25.7	102.7
<b>Dinwiddie</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>56.1</b>
Hopewell	48	1	19	28	33.9	1.4	45.0	95.2
Petersburg	82	2	23	57	46.7	2.4	44.5	138.7
Prince George	27	0	11	16	11.5	0.0	12.1	42.7
Sussex	18	1	6	11	32.8	3.7	36.6	95.7
Planning District 19*	272	4	88	180	26.2	0.8	28.3	86.0
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>6,572</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>4,807</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>42.7</b>

Source: 2011 Virginia Department of Health Vital Statistics & The Cameron Foundation Health Needs Assessment

*\*Planning District 19 excludes Chesterfield*

The Cameron Foundation's Health Needs Assessment indicates that there was a decline in the teen birth rate between 2010 and 2011 in Planning District 19. This reduction is reportedly occurring at a more advanced rate than that of the state.

Dinwiddie County's total teen birth rate from the 2010 chart is 11%. The chart above lists the 2011 teen birth rate as 17%.

The Cameron Foundation Assessment reported that the data was based on the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau for County and City areas connected to this Planning District.

**“Note that ZIP code areas do not follow city/county boundaries; therefore, the populations by locality in 2011 reflect the ZIP code areas assigned to each locality.”**

## **Focus Group Analysis**

Focus groups are a powerful tool for acquiring feedback from a group as opposed to individuals. The following focus groups provided feedback for the current needs assessment:

- Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) – Dinwiddie
  - First-Time Offender Program
  - Diversion Program
- Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)
- Family Assessment Planning Team (FAPT)
- Dinwiddie County Youth Advisory Board (DCYAB)
- Dinwiddie County Department Managers/Administration
- Dinwiddie County Public Schools Administrators and Teachers

The VJCCCA is comprised of youth who are under the supervision/order of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

CPMT and FAPT are interdisciplinary teams comprised of representatives from the Department of Social Services, D-19 Community Services Board, Health Department, County Administration, Public Schools, Juvenile Court Service Unit, Private Service Providers and Parents.

The DCYAB consists of representatives from the community who have a vested interest in Dinwiddie youth – specifically court-involved youth.

Collectively, these focus groups developed an exhaustive list of issues or problems facing Dinwiddie County youth. Many of the identified issues raised in all focus group sessions. The top five issues/problems identified are as follows:

- 1) Nothing for youth to do/limited activities available for youth in all areas of the County
- 2) Lack of/limited parental supervision/support/involvement/structure
- 3) Disrespectful attitude/behavior, lack of self-worth, defiance and lack of motivation
- 4) Lack of transportation
- 5) Drugs, alcohol, gangs

When asked to what they attribute these issues/problems, focus groups responded as follows:

- 1) Idle time/nothing to do
- 2) Unstable home and family life
- 3) Parental instability, dysfunction and lack of involvement
- 4) Lack of accountability at home and school
- 5) Generational patterns in families: limited education, substance use/abuse, mental health issues and trauma.

Overall, focus groups demonstrated a good understanding of programs, services and resources currently available to address identified needs pertaining to youth. They also formulated a list of suggestions to supplement and enhance what is currently available. Each of these lists are included in the pages that follow.

## Suggestions Offered by Focus Groups to Address Youth Needs (Grouped by topic)

<b>Education</b>	<b>Workforce Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher adult to child ratio</li> <li>• Smaller class sizes</li> <li>• Educators become more involved in community programs to educate &amp; interact with families</li> <li>• Reopen the Academy</li> <li>• After school remediation</li> <li>• Tutoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide internships</li> <li>• Increase job opportunities related to potential careers</li> <li>• Increase funding to all initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Workshops &amp; Seminars</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-establish an Office on Youth to coordinate and oversee youth programs and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community, social, educational, social awareness workshops</li> <li>• Issues related to sex: abstinence, safety and prevention of pregnancy</li> <li>• Alcohol &amp; Drug prevention</li> <li>• Parenting classes</li> <li>• Outreach events with guest speakers, positive role models, motivational/peer speakers</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Programs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports clubs, trips, activities based on youth's interest</li> <li>• Music, art, math, chess, horticulture</li> <li>• Skating rinks, bowling alley, skate boarding, video gaming, walking trails, pool</li> <li>• Youth forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase variety of programs offered through Parks, Recreation &amp; Tourism; 4H, YMCA – all ages &amp; areas</li> <li>• Teen Center</li> <li>• Big Brothers/Big Sisters program</li> <li>• Boot Camp</li> <li>• Mentors</li> <li>• Feeding programs for children throughout the County (outside of school hours)</li> <li>• Transportation to access local events and resources – preferably free</li> </ul>

*The following is a narrative comparison of local and national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results.*

## **Weapons, Violence and Bullying**

According to survey responses, 26% of youth have carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club, during the 30 days prior to taking the survey. This is higher than the national rate of 18%.

When asked how many times during the past 30 days they had taken a weapon such as a gun, knife or club, on school property a total of 9% reported that they had on at least one occasion. This is also slightly higher than the 5% of youth nationwide who reported the same.

An overwhelming majority of youth (91%) report that they were not threatened or injured with a weapon, on school property during the 12 months prior to taking the survey. However, 9% indicated that they had been threatened with a weapon on school property during that same period. Again, this percentage is slightly higher than the national average of 7%.

When asked whether or not they had been in a physical fight during the 12 months prior to taking the survey, 26% of youth indicated that they had on at least one occasion. Nationally, 25% of youth reported the same.

Nationally, 7% of youth reported that they have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse against their will. Dinwiddie youth reported at exactly the same rate.

Of the 79% of Dinwiddie youth who reported that they dated or went out with someone during the 12 months prior to taking the survey, 8% indicated that they had been forced to do sexual things that they did not want to (such as kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse). This is lower than the 10% of youth nationally who reported as such.

During the 12 months prior to taking the YRBS, 17% of youth reported that they had been bullied on school property. This is lower than the national rate of 20%. When asked whether or not they had been electronically bullied (via email, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites and texting) during the same time period, 14% of Dinwiddie youth responded affirmatively as compared to 15% nationally.

Dinwiddie County Public Schools, in conjunction with the County has placed School Resource Officers at the High School, Middle School and Sutherland Elementary School. Resources Officers have implemented policies to educate and offer prevention services in the areas of bullying (to include cyber and social media bullying), and gang awareness. School Resource Officers provide classroom instruction using the Virginia Rules Curriculum. Resource Officers talk with students about the importance of safe dating and hazards of driving under the influence (DUI). The Dinwiddie County Public Schools' Code of Student Conduct provides information on the mechanisms in place to address bullying.

Given the findings of this needs assessment, it appears as though School Resource Officers would be beneficial at the other four elementary schools in Dinwiddie County.

### **Feelings of Hopelessness and Suicide**

When asked if, during the 12 months prior to taking the survey, they have ever felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, that they stopped doing some usual activities, 27% of Dinwiddie youth indicated that they had. This is slightly lower than the 30% reported nationally.

During the 12 months prior to taking the survey, 15% of Dinwiddie youth surveyed, indicated that they had seriously considered attempting suicide and 12% reported that they had developed a plan to do so. Nationally youth reported considering suicide at a rate of 17% and 14% reported that they had a plan.

An alarming 8% of Dinwiddie youth taking the YRBS, reported that they actually attempted suicide during the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Of this number, 3% indicated that medical treatment resulted from the attempt. This is exactly the same rate of attempt and resulting medical attention, reported by youth nationally.

A Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Plan for Region IV is being developed by the Office of Mental Health Services through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. Region IV includes the following Community Service Boards: Chesterfield, Crossroads, Goochland-Powhatan, Hanover, Henrico, Planning District 19 (which includes Dinwiddie County), Richmond and Southside. The Region IV Coalition Planning Team identified the rate of suicide in our region as a significant public health problem. Collectively, the coalition gathered and

analyzed data from 2007 to 2011. According to their findings, Dinwiddie County incurred 13% of suicides in the region during this period.

Our local area District 19 Suicide Prevention Committee has been instrumental in planning, educating and implementing preventive services and programs. They have promoted training for Mental Health First Responders, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and SafeTalk trainings for the community. This is an ongoing suicide prevention process that is aimed at targeting our youth and families.

## **Tobacco Use**

According to survey responses, 61% of Dinwiddie County High School students have never smoked a cigarette. Of those that report having smoked cigarettes, the largest percentage (10.73%) smoked for the first time between 13 and 14 years of age. There were 17% who reported smoking at least one cigarette during the 30 day period immediately prior to the survey. According to the students completing the survey who reported having smoked in their lifetime, 6% reported that they bought the cigarettes themselves at a store, and 3% reported giving someone else money to buy cigarettes for them.

Nationally, 16% of students surveyed reported smoking cigarettes on at least one occasion during the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Of these students, 12% reported buying their own cigarettes in a store.

Based on this information, it appears as though Dinwiddie County High School students are smoking cigarettes at a rate just slightly higher (1 percentage point) than their peers on a national level. While overall the percentage of high school students who reported smoking during the 30 days prior to taking the survey has increased on both national and local levels, Dinwiddie students consistently report at a slightly higher percentage than their peers throughout the nation.

Given that the majority of Dinwiddie youth reported their first cigarette-smoking experience between the ages of 13 and 14, any measures aimed at prevention should be focused prior to this point.

## **Alcohol Use**

According to survey responses, 42% of Dinwiddie County High School students report having had at least one drink of alcohol during their lifetime. Of those that report having had a drink, the largest percentage report their first drink between the ages of 13 and 16 years (33%). Of those who reported having had an alcoholic drink, 31% report having a drink within the 30 day period prior to taking the survey. Also during the 30 days prior to the survey, 18% of respondents report having five or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours. When responding to the question of how they obtained the alcohol, 12% reported that someone else gave it to them and 4% reported giving someone else money to purchase alcohol for them. It should be noted, that 10% of respondents reported obtaining alcohol “some other way”.

Nationally, 66% of high school students report having had at least one drink of alcohol during their lifetime. Of this number, 35% report having had at least one alcoholic drink in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. This is slightly higher than the rate reported by Dinwiddie youth. National YRBS results also indicate that a significantly higher percentage (35%) of youth report obtaining alcohol through someone else (“someone else gave it to me”), as compared to Dinwiddie youth (12%).

Again, based on survey responses, it appears as though the largest number of youth in Dinwiddie are drinking alcohol for the first time between the ages of 13 and 16 years. Therefore, it makes sense that any campaign aimed at prevention underage drinking be initiated prior to middle school.

## **Marijuana**

Based on student responses, 35% of those surveyed reported using marijuana in their lifetime. Of that percentage, 12% report using 100 or more times. The majority of youth report using marijuana for the first time between 13 and 16 years of age (22%), however, 11% report using prior to age 13 and 3% report their first use as being 8 years or younger. In the 30 day period prior to taking the survey, 20% of youth reported having used marijuana. Of this number, 7% reported using 40 or more times.

Nationwide, 41% of students report having used marijuana during their lifetime, which is higher than the local lifetime usage rate. Further, 7% report their first use at age 13 years or younger. Nationally, 23% of respondents report using marijuana

in the 30 day period prior to taking the survey. This is slightly higher than the local rate of 20%.

As with tobacco and alcohol, it appears as though education and prevention efforts will be most effective when implemented prior to middle school as youth are reporting initial usage at this age. Based on survey responses, Dinwiddie youth do not appear to have significantly higher usage rates as compared with their peers nationwide, however there are indications that increased prevention education and activities are needed at the elementary and middle school levels.

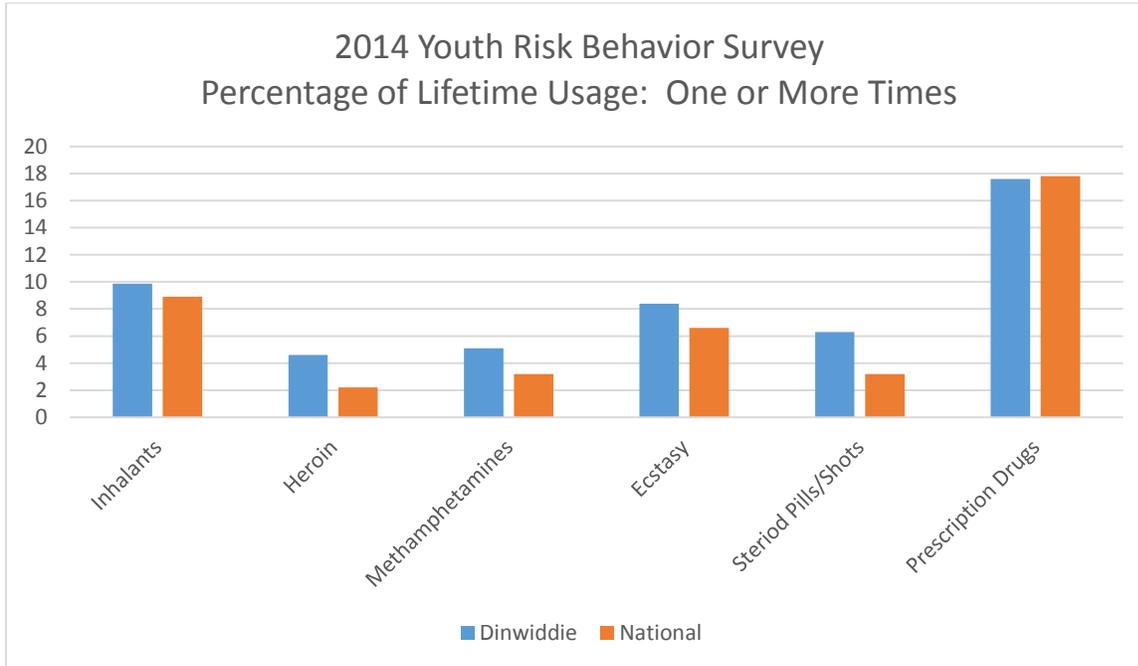
## **Cocaine**

When asked about lifetime usage of cocaine, 7% of Dinwiddie County High School youth reported having used some form of cocaine during their lifetime. Approximately 5% report having used cocaine between once and 30 times and 3% report using cocaine 40 or more times during their lifetime.

Nationally, 6% of youth respondents report using some form of cocaine one or more times during their lifetime.

While cocaine does not appear to be the drug of choice among Dinwiddie youth, and usage rates are consistent with those found nationally, the concern remains that this drug is being used locally. Increased research and effort should be focused on the age at which youth are beginning to experiment with cocaine, as well as where and how the drug is obtained. Armed with this information, leaders will be better able to develop a plan for prevention and educational activities.

## **Other Drugs**



Out of 607 Dinwiddie County High School students responding to the survey, 112 (18%) reported that they have been offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property during the 12 months prior to taking the survey. While this may be alarming to some, Dinwiddie's rate is lower than the national rate of 22%.

## **Sexual Activity**

When asked whether or not they have ever had sexual intercourse, 48% of Dinwiddie County High School students taking the survey reported that they have, and 52% that they have not. These percentages are consistent with the reports of youth nationwide (47%).

Of the Dinwiddie youth who reported having had sexual intercourse, 8% reported that their first experience occurred prior to age 13. This is slightly higher than the national average of 6%.

Dinwiddie youth also reported higher than the national average when asked to report the number of partners with whom they have had sexual intercourse. Nationally, 15% reported having four or more partners while 19% of Dinwiddie youth reported having four or more partners.

Of the students who reported having had sexual intercourse, 58% reported using a condom during their most recent experience (prior to taking the survey). This is slightly lower than the national average of 59%.

Dinwiddie County youth appear to be somewhat on par with their peers nationally in matters pertaining to sexual activity. While the majority of youth who report being sexually active, also report practicing safe sex, it is critical that youth continue to receive messages that abstinence is the best practice. Youth should also be aware that, should they choose to become sexually active, they should always take measures to protect themselves from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

### **Body Image**

Dinwiddie youth surveyed, described themselves as “slightly” or “very overweight” at a rate of 32%. This is closely aligned with national data whereby 31% of youth described themselves as such. When asked about what they are trying to do about their weight, 43% reported that they are trying to lose weight. This is lower than the national rate of 48%.

A slightly higher percentage of Dinwiddie youth (15%) reported fasting for 24 hours over the 30-day period prior to taking the survey, than youth did nationally (13%). Also, Dinwiddie’s rate (7%) of “...diet pills, powders, or liquids to use weight...” was also higher than their peers nationally (5%).

National data revealed that 4% of youth reportedly “Vomited or took laxatives to lose weight...” in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. This is lower than Dinwiddie’s rate of 6%.

Despite the fact that the majority of Dinwiddie youth surveyed consider themselves to be “about the right weight”, they appear to be trying to lose weight at rates higher than the national average.

Youth are bombarded with images of “perfection” in the media. They come to view what they see on television, in movies and music videos as the “norm”. In an effort to combat negative body images among youth, it is important that parents engrain in their children that people come in all shapes and sizes. As young women and men, their goal should not be to achieve a certain size or weight, but rather to be healthy, strong and to love the body they have been given. Once children enter school, it is important that these positive messages continue to come from teachers and administrators throughout their formative years and entire educational career.

## **Diet and Nutrition**

An extremely higher percentage of Dinwiddie youth (31%) reported that they “Did not eat fruit or drink 100% fruit juices” in the 7-day period prior to taking the survey as compared with 5% nationally.

Dinwiddie youth reported drinking soda two or more times per day at a higher rate than their peers nationally. The Dinwiddie rate was 28%, while the national rate was 19%.

While 19% of youth nationally reported not drinking milk at all during the 7 days prior to the survey, Dinwiddie youth reported at a rate of 30%.

A higher percentage of Dinwiddie youth (21%) reported not having eaten breakfast on any day during the 7 days prior to taking the survey. This is higher than the 14% that reported this nationally.

Dinwiddie County Public Schools’ Nutrition Department has worked diligently to provide students with healthy meal options. Soda has been removed from all school vending machines and replaced with water and fruit juices. Through events such as the annual Community Health Fair: On the Road to Wellness, sponsored by Dinwiddie County Public Schools, youth and community members have access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as suggestions on preparation and the adoption of healthier lifestyles. By encouraging healthy eating from an early age and providing youth healthy meal options, they will be more likely to make nutritious choices for themselves.

## **Physical Activity**

Based on survey responses, Dinwiddie youth appear to be as active (or inactive) as their peers nationally. On the YRBS, 18% of Dinwiddie youth indicated that they had not been physically active during the 7 days prior to taking the survey. This is consistent with 15% of their peers nationally that reported as such.

Dinwiddie youth were also consistent with their peers nationally with regard to watching television. In this area, 34% of Dinwiddie youth reportedly watch television for 3 or more hours on an average school day. Nationally, youth reported 33% in the same manner. The same is true when asked about the number of hours spent playing video games or on a computer that was for non-school related purposes. In Dinwiddie, 40% of youth report playing video games/computer use for

non-school related reasons, for 3 or more hours on an average school day as compared to 41% nationally.

Based on survey responses, it appears as though Dinwiddie High School youth are far less active during school hours than their peers across the nation. When asked how many days on average per week they go to physical education classes, 76% of youth responded with “0”. This is quite a bit higher than the 48% of youth nationally that reported “0”.

By the time youth reach high school, physical education (PE) classes are “electives” and not required of all students. To encourage a greater level of activity, schools and communities should work together to provide opportunities for youth to be physically active whenever possible before, after or even during the school day – regardless of whether or not they are able to work the PE elective into their course schedule.

## **Recommendations**

Dinwiddie County and Public Schools have worked diligently to develop, implement and sustain programs and services targeting areas identified through previous needs assessments. The following recommendations are provided to guide program planning and interagency collaboration over the next five years

1. Children should continue to receive prevention messages regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs at the elementary school level. Information should be shared with parents in an effort to stimulate discussion in the home and to encourage consistency in the messages presented.
2. Continued presence of School Resource Officers (SRO) at the secondary level. Having these officers present in buildings and accessible to students promotes an environment in which students feel comfortable sharing information on inappropriate activities such as bullying, weapons and drug activity. The SRO's also provide valuable classroom instruction to Middle and High School students on law-related and safety issues.
3. Expansion of the School Resource Officer program to all five elementary schools. At present, Sutherland Elementary is the only elementary school reaping the benefits of a full-time SRO. It is important that children have a strong law-related education foundation in place when entering middle school.
4. To encourage healthy dating relationships at the high school level, it is recommended that youth have exposure to educational workshops provided through organizations such as The James House and/or Madeline's House. These organizations also provide valuable training to professionals regarding how to identify and address dating/domestic violence "red flags".
5. Based on survey responses, bullying continues to be an issue in school. DCPS has a bullying policy in place and has established bullying committees at each school building. It is recommended that this continue and that students receive on-going reminders of how to report bullying in the event it occurs. It is further recommended that students and parents receive information on the different types of bullying to include cyber-

bullying. Parents should be encouraged to monitor their child's cyber activity and receive information on available tools and methods that make this possible.

6. Inclusion of DCPS on the District 19 Suicide Prevention Committee, to enhance efforts to provide training and strategies for addressing feelings of hopelessness and suicide among Dinwiddie youth.
7. Establish or convene an interagency committee to discuss and determine an appropriate strategy to address concerns related to sexual activity and teen pregnancy.
8. Continue to provide opportunities such as the Community Health Fair: On the Road to Wellness, that encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyles through education on the importance of diet and nutrition and exposure to resources that are available locally to assist with the process.
9. Establish a committee that will develop a plan to increase physical activity among high school students and youth in general. This committee should include representatives from the Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, 4-H/Cooperative Extension, DCPS as well as teen representatives.
10. The information documented in this Community Needs Assessment should be used to support the need for continued and additional programming and for inclusion in requests for alternative funding.
11. Update and distribute the Dinwiddie County Directory of Local Resources. In the absence of funding, this can be an online directory accessible to the public through County and DCPS websites.
12. It is anticipated that the next Community Needs Assessment will be conducted in 2020. It is recommended that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) be used again as the standardized survey in order to clearly identify changes in attitudes and behaviors.

# Sources of Information

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United States Census Bureau: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Virginia Department of Education: [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)

County of Dinwiddie: [www.dinwiddieva.us](http://www.dinwiddieva.us)

Virginia Department of Health: [www.vdh.state.va.us](http://www.vdh.state.va.us)

California Healthy Kids Survey: [www.wested.org](http://www.wested.org)

CDC - Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2013): [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

Center for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth)

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice: [www.djj.virginia.gov](http://www.djj.virginia.gov)

Dinwiddie County 2009-2010 Community Needs Assessment

The Cameron Foundation Service Area Health Needs Assessment (July 2013):  
[www.camfound.org](http://www.camfound.org)

Region IV Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Plan

Ryan Friedberg, RBHA- Virginia Violent Death Reporting System, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Virginia Department of Health

D19 Suicide Prevention Committee

Marketing MO, Inc. [www.testsignificance.com](http://www.testsignificance.com)

## **Dinwiddie County Focus Groups:**

- Family Assessment and Planning Team
- Community Policy and Management Team
- First Time Offender Program
- Diversion Program
- County Administration
- School Administration, Teachers and Staff
- Dinwiddie County Youth Advisory Board