

VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–2023

PREAMBLE

The Virginia Commission on Civic Education exists to (i) educate students on the importance of citizen involvement in a representative democracy, (ii) promote the study of state and local government among the Commonwealth's citizenry, and (iii) enhance communication and collaboration among organizations in the Commonwealth that conduct civic education and promote civic engagement.

Civic education—the teaching of how to be an effective citizen by imparting the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions in order to preserve and protect our democratic form of government *and* to successfully be an agent for change—is more necessary than ever. In an ever-changing and technology-driven world, civic education needs to be reimaged for the 21st century to promote an understanding of how our government works; prepare Virginians to speak publicly, interact with elected officials, exhibit political tolerance, and engage in civil discourse; and to encourage Virginians' recognition of their civic agency.

This strategic plan focuses on specific ways that the Virginia Commission on Civic Education can provide resources, facilitate conversations, and promote active citizenship, with the goal of advancing civic knowledge, developing civic skills, and promoting civic dispositions and behaviors among Virginia's teachers, students, and residents. We can achieve this by outlining comprehensive program and operations plans, strategically partnering with other civic education organizations and individuals, and creating a robust online presence that highlights our work and the work of partner groups. This plan and its corresponding action items will guide members of the Commission, and elements of the plan will be reviewed at each Commission meeting.

The Virginia Commission on Civic Education will continue to provide high quality professional development to K-12 educators, strengthen student-focused programming, and expand the scope of programming to include higher education and adult audiences in all elements of this plan. In doing so, the Commission aims to ensure that the civic space in Virginia is really for all Virginians.

VISION STATEMENT

The Virginia Commission on Civic Education envisions a “More Perfect” Commonwealth for all Virginians by inspiring civic action.

MISSION STATEMENT

To empower Virginians to come together for their common good

CORE VALUES

Members of the Virginia Commission on Civic Education will:

- Collaborate with each other and with civic education partners
- Inspire active citizenship
- Volunteer, vote, and vocalize
- Innovate and adapt to the changing needs of Virginians
- Communicate effectively with the public and each other
- Seek diverse counsel and listen to all perspectives

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2021-2023

YEAR ONE

- 1. Create a comprehensive program plan for the fiscal year, including all planned public programs, meeting dates, fundraisers, and associated budgets.**
 - *Work Plan*
 - Audit existing program activities to determine if programs are meeting the goals of the Commission (e.g., there is broad support for eliminating the essay contest and strong support for engaging in more program partnerships with other civic education organizations in the state).
 - Decide on programmatic priorities, including virtual and in-person (as safe) events.
 - Ensure a continued focus on K-12 teacher professional development.
 - Include student-focused programming that promotes civic engagement for K-12 and higher education students.
 - Determine dates for all public programs and quarterly Commission meetings.
 - Determine budget amounts for all planned programs.
 - *Staff Responsible*

- *Target Dates*

2. Create a comprehensive budget for all Commission activities.

- *Work Plan*

- Determine funds needed to achieve all planned program activities and operations.
- Identify sources of revenue.
- Identify gaps in funding and necessary fundraising amounts to carry out planned program activities.

- *Staff Responsible*

- *Target Dates*

3. Develop an online strategy.

- *Work Plan*

- Consider working with a digital marketing specialist or firm to develop a new, standalone website for the Commission.
- Identify “must-haves” for a new website, including a teacher resource section, Commission member biographies, an online calendar of events, a “request a speaker” section, a content section, a section highlighting Virginia government and politics, and a news/media section.
- Create and use social media platforms as a way to communicate and engage with teachers and the public.

- *Staff Responsible*

- *Target Dates*

4. Develop a comprehensive communications strategy.

- *Work Plan*

- Develop a speaking program, and encourage Commission members to promote civic engagement and civic-education best practices by addressing local service organizations, schools, teachers, and others.
- Identify opportunities for media exposure, including by writing op-eds.
- Ensure communications are a two-way street by actively inviting practitioners and the public to address the Commission.

- *Staff Responsible*

- *Target Dates*

5. Establish partnerships and seek collaborative relationships with organizations and individuals whose missions align with the Virginia Commission on Civic Education.

- *Work Plan*

- Audit current partnerships to assess their effectiveness and purpose.
- Develop a strategic list of organizations with whom the Commission might partner.
- Begin developing relationships with representatives from those organizations.

- Determine appropriate partnership opportunities, to include professional development programs, curricular materials, content resources, cross-promotion, and sharing best practices.
- Determine financial and administrative responsibilities required of each organization, if the partnership or partner programming requires funding or staffing.
- Invite representatives from civic organizations and other outside groups to present to the Commission to inform our work.
- *Staff Responsible*
- *Target Dates*

6. Develop a plan for growth for the Commission’s programs.

- *Work Plan*
 - Hold a “blue sky” brainstorming session to identify unique and effective civic education needs and opportunities.
 - Determine success metrics and methods of measurement for the Commission’s programs and initiatives.
 - Identify program opportunities and partnerships that deepen and broaden the Commission’s impact.
- *Staff Responsible*
- *Target Dates*

7. Become a prominent resource for state civic education and public history programs and related initiatives.

- *Work Plan*
 - Ensure that Commission members have a role in reviewing revised Virginia History & Social Sciences Standards of Learning.
 - Continue to support effective project-based learning initiatives and highlight model projects in the Commission’s (to-be-developed) online resource clearinghouse.
 - Continue to partner with the Virginia Department of Education in the creation, execution, and assessment of civic education programs and projects.
- *Staff Responsible*
- *Target Dates*

YEARS TWO AND THREE

8. Develop an ideal staffing plan in line with the Commission’s operations plans.

- *Work Plan*
 - Develop job description for an administrator and/or communications lead.
 - Determine expertise and qualifications required for the position(s).
 - Research and determine compensation.
 - Include staff position(s) in budget forecasts.

- *Staff Responsible*
- *Target Dates*

9. Create a fundraising strategy for the Commission.

- *Work Plan*
 - Based on the program plan and Commission budget (and potential staffing as identified through this plan), identify the amount needed to maintain and grow the Commission's operations and program goals.
 - Determine fundraising goals and success metrics.
 - Identify potential grant-making organizations and increase grant support.
 - Maintain and increase state support of Commission operations.
 - Focus on unrestricted giving to support potential staff positions and overhead.
- *Staff Responsible*
- *Target Dates*

10. Assess the creation of a student advisory group.

- *Work Plan*
 - Assess the purpose and structure of a student advisory group.
 - Determine necessity and value of such a group.
 - Determine expertise and qualifications required for group membership.
 - Include advisory group coordination in budget forecasts.
- *Staff Responsible*
- *Target Dates*