

Developing a Supportive Infrastructure

Our Vision

We envision a community where our homes, neighborhoods, and business districts are safe places to live and work. Our community supports its residents by providing adequate law enforcement and affordable housing options.



How Are We Doing?

According to survey responses, approximately 98 percent of our residents feel safe in their neighborhoods and approximately 95 percent trust our law enforcement personnel. Crimes related to assault, burglary, and property damage declined by approximately 17 percent over the past five years, but drug and narcotic offenses increased by approximately 21 percent. Despite a decline in housing values, a need remains for affordable work-force housing, and an increasing number of persons are at risk for chronic homelessness, indicating a need for transitional and permanent supportive housing.

Community Safety

Community safety refers to how residents feel about their personal security. Residents should feel comfortable and safe in their homes, in their neighborhoods, and while traveling around the community. Equally important is the perception of how law enforcement personnel are involved in preventing and resolving crime.

What does this measure?

Respondents reported their perception of safety within Harrisonburg and Rockingham County neighborhoods. They also indicated their trust of law enforcement personnel.

How are we doing?

Respondents indicated strongly that they feel safe in their neighborhoods and trust law enforcement personnel. In comparison to the 2006 survey, there is considerable increase in the percentage of persons who perceive that Harrisonburg and Rockingham County are safe places to live and raise a family and that our law enforcement can be trusted to provide the safe environment that is necessary for a thriving community.

Self-Reported Perceptions of Community Safety

Survey Question	2006 Adult	2011 Adult	2006 Senior	2011 Senior	2006 Spanish	2011 Spanish
Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?	93%	99%	95%	98%	89%	91%
Do you trust law enforcement personnel?	87%	94%	91%	97%	91%	94%

Survey Question	2011 Female	2011 Male
Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?	98%	100%
Do you trust law enforcement personnel?	93%	99%

Percentages reflect persons who answered "yes" to the survey questions.

Domestic Violence

According to the *2010 Virginia Attorney General Domestic Violence Report*, there were more than 63,000 calls to domestic and sexual violence hotlines across the State in 2009, representing an 8 percent increase in calls from the year before. At least 124 men, women, and children lost their lives to domestic violence. A total of 12,823 persons in Virginia received domestic violence assistance and 5,714 adults and children received 214,427 nights of emergency or temporary shelter due to domestic violence; however, 2,227 families requesting shelter services were turned away due to lack of shelter space. A total of 36,922 emergency protective orders were issued by magistrates and judges across the Commonwealth to protect the immediate health and safety of victims and their family members.

What does this measure?

Respondents reported their experiences with each of the seven domestic violence behaviors listed in the tables below and on the following page.

How are we doing?

According to *CrimeReports.com*, the City of Harrisonburg Police Department received 243 domestic and family offense calls from October 12, 2010 to April 08, 2011. On average this is more than one call per day in the City of Harrisonburg alone. First Step provides services to survivors of domestic violence from the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. From July 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, First Step received 277 crisis calls, provided shelter to 78 adults and 45 children, and provided supportive services to 179 individuals.

Domestic Violence

In the past 12 months have you experienced the following with someone you are living with or who lives with you?

Percentages reflect persons who answered "yes" to the survey questions.

	2011 Female	2011 Male
Controlling what you do, who you see and talk to?	2%	0%
Controlling your money against your will?	0%	0%
Calling you names, or put you down, making you feel bad about yourself?	8%	2%
Making you fearful through actions, tone of voice, threats or destroying your property?	1%	1%
Hitting, slapping, kicking, beating or using a weapon on you?	1%	1%
Harming children?	0%	0%
Harming pets or animals?	0%	0%

The 2011 survey results indicate that a higher percentage of Spanish-speaking respondents have experienced behaviors symptomatic of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence

In the past 12 months have you experienced the following with someone you are living with or who lives with you?

	2006 Adult	2011 Adult	2006 Senior	2011 Senior	2006 Spanish	2011 Spanish
Controlling what you do, who you see and talk to?	5%	2%	1%	1%	23%	18%
Controlling your money against your will?	n/a	1%	n/a	0%	n/a	19%
Calling you names, or put you down, making you feel bad about yourself?	6%	4%	2%	1%	11%	8%
Making you fearful through actions, tone of voice, threats or destroying your property?	3%	1%	.5%	0%	5%	8%
Hitting, slapping, kicking, beating or using a weapon on you?	2%	1%	.5%	0%	3%	3%
Harming children?	n/a	0%	n/a	0%	n/a	1.5%
Harming pets or animals?	n/a	0%	n/a	0%	n/a	0%

Percentages reflect persons who answered "yes" to the survey questions.

Crime Incidents

According to the *Preliminary 2010 Uniform Crime Report*, reported crimes across the nation have declined by 6.2 percent. In Virginia, according to the *2009 Virginia State Police Report*, 300,119 incidents of violent, property, or drug-based crimes were reported. Healthy communities regard crime as an issue pertinent to the well-being of its residents.

What does this measure?

Secondary data indicates the number of reported incidents of violent, property, and drug-based crimes in Harrisonburg City, Rockingham County, and the State of Virginia.

How are we doing?

Overall, crimes related to assault, burglary, and property damage declined in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County by 17 percent from 2006 to 2010. Reports of sexual violence did not significantly change despite efforts to make sexual assault prevention a priority in the 2006 Virginia Assembly. Drug and narcotic offenses increased approximately 21 percent during this time period.

Number of Reported Crime Incidents

	Harrisonburg		Rockingham County		Virginia	
	2006	2010	2006	2010	2006	2009
Simple assault/ aggravated assault	435	406	59	74	106,731	108,251
Burglary/ breaking and entering	248	139	97	79	31,529	31,241
Vandalism/ property damage	880	581	102	53	96,618	83,164
Drug / narcotic offenses	328	392	47	60	44,935	44,952
Driving while intoxicated	236	193	98	103	21,422	27,732
Sexual violence	36	37	45	51	5,475	4,779
TOTAL	2163	1748	448	420	306,701	300,119

Homelessness

Low wages, a lack of available, affordable housing, and unemployment can force people out of their homes. At times, a lack of ongoing health care for physical illnesses, disabilities, or emotional and relational reasons make it difficult for persons to meet their basic needs. Safe housing for chronically homeless individuals and families facing hardship is a growing challenge for our community.

What does this measure?

The annual *Homeless Point-in-Time Survey* counts the number of persons who are homeless on a given day each year in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. At the time these persons were surveyed, they were found in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, temporary housing in motels, outdoors without shelter, or temporarily in the homes of friends or family members. This information gives us a snapshot of who is unable to obtain and maintain permanent housing in our community.

How are we doing?

According to the *Homeless Point-in-Time Survey*, the number of homeless adults in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County has generally increased since 2007. The number of homeless is trending upward, with the exception of 2011, even as the cost of rentals and home ownership has been moderated due to the downturn in the economy since 2008.

The Harrisonburg and Rockingham County Continuum of Care agencies are responding to the needs of our most vulnerable citizens by working to create additional shelter beds and transitional housing options that will help individuals and families move from homelessness to stable and permanent housing. Since 2006 the City of Harrisonburg has added emergency housing capacity during the winter months.

Number of Persons Reported Homeless

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Homeless Adults	57	36*	73	75	40**
Homeless Children	63	34	26	65	43
Homeless longer than three months	29	27	35	48	19
Previously homeless as many as three times	49	26	56	63	12
Employed full time	24	11	26	13	6
Unable to find affordable housing options	44	17	48	52	22
Unable to find transitional housing options	8	6	10	26	2

Based on the number of persons who are homeless on a given day each year.

Source: Annual Homeless Point-in-Time Survey. Because of weather and other scheduling issues, a significant number of Mercy House residents were not surveyed.

**Early in 2011, Harrisonburg and Rockingham Housing Authority completed its rehab of housing units and they became available for occupancy. The number of units increased from 50 to 60 units.

Work Force Housing

Affordable housing is essential to recruit and retain a strong work force for our community, and yet it is a growing challenge. The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and Shenandoah Valley Partnership are working together to develop strategies for more affordable housing options.

What does this measure?

This information indicates the median annual household income necessary to afford a home of median price in the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County areas.

How are we doing?

Due to the downturn in the economy since 2008, the average price of a home in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County has decreased by approximately 14 percent since 2005. The average salary has increased approximately 2 percent since 2005. Despite the decrease in housing values, the data still indicates a gap between the actual median household income earned in our area compared to the income necessary to afford a home of median price.

Annual Household Income Needed to Afford a Home

	Harrisonburg	Rockingham County
Median Home Price 2005	\$196,950	\$216,000
Median Home Price 2010	\$170,250	\$188,000
Median Annual Household Income 2005	\$33,600	\$47,675
Median Annual Household Income 2010	\$34,967	\$47,965
Annual Household Income Needed to Afford a Home 2005	\$58,506	\$62,554
Annual Household Income Needed to Afford a Home 2010	\$46,600*	\$50,800*

Source: Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority with data from the Center for Housing Policy and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

**The parameters for obtaining loans are on 97% of the total cost of the housing; 5% interest rate; 30-year pay-off.*