



HARRISONBURG VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



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Harrisonburg Citizen Academy to begin Aug. 21, applications open

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The annual Harrisonburg Citizen Academy is gearing up for another season of bringing City of Harrisonburg staff closer to the community members they serve.

The 14-week program, held one night each week from Aug. 21 to mid-November, allows participants to visit City of Harrisonburg departments and some partner organizations to learn about the services, programs and events available to community members. Attendees will have the opportunity to go in depth with City departments, seeing up-close demonstrations of the tools, equipment and vehicles staff use in the performance of their duties while learning more about the important civil service done by each department.

“This program is a unique opportunity for people in our community to not only become more engaged with their local government, but to find new ways to give back to their community if they wish to do so,” Harrisonburg Director of Communications and Public Engagement Michael Parks, the administrator of Harrisonburg Citizen Academy, said. “Every year we have participants in Citizen Academy who go on to join a City board or commission, or even run for City Council. Others just want to get a better understanding of how we provide high-quality services to the people of Harrisonburg. There are opportunities to enjoy this program no matter how involved you wish to be in your local government.”



(Above) Harrisonburg Citizen Academy participants visit the Harrisonburg Public Utilities Water Treatment Plant during the Saturday field trip in 2024. (Left) Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney Christopher Bean talks about the criminal justice system with Citizen Academy participants.

This year’s program will include a new class from Harrisonburg’s Information Technology Department focused on cybersecurity and the Geographic Information System (GIS). Classes take place from 6 to 8 p.m. each Thursday night, with some alterations:

- The Aug. 28 class at Harrisonburg Public Works will run from 5:30 to 8 p.m. to allow for extra time.
- There also will be an optional Saturday class that will visit the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority and Harrisonburg Water Treatment Plant on Oct. 11.

Interested individuals should apply only if they expect to be able to attend a majority of classes. Those interested can learn more and find an application and schedule with times and locations for class at www.harrisonburgva.gov/citizen-academy. Applications are due by Aug. 15. Any questions may be directed to Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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