

# MY DURHAM

A Guide to Durham County Government for Kids





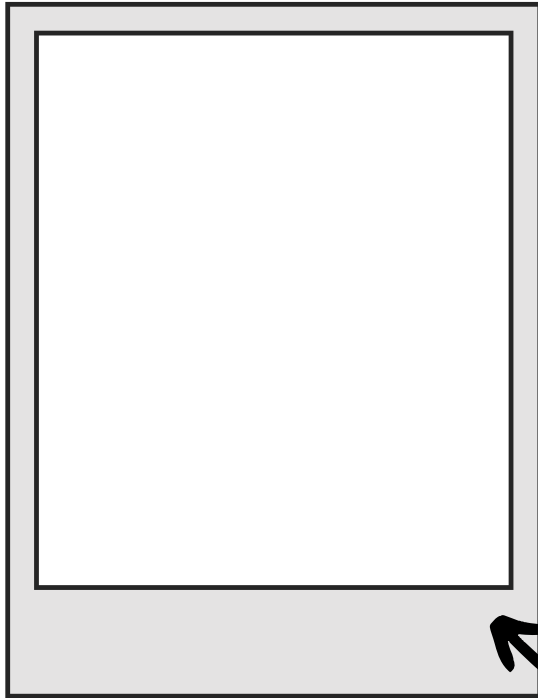
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Comments and suggestions are welcome and should be sent to  
the Durham County Public Information Office, 200 East Main Street, 2nd Floor,  
Durham, NC 27701 or [publicinformationoffice@dconc.gov](mailto:publicinformationoffice@dconc.gov).

# Dear Kids

We hope you will read and enjoy *My Durham: A Guide to Durham County Government for Kids!* This activity book will teach you how Durham County Government works and about the important services it provides to Durham County residents.

Congratulations, you are on your way to becoming a County Government Scholar!

# All About Me



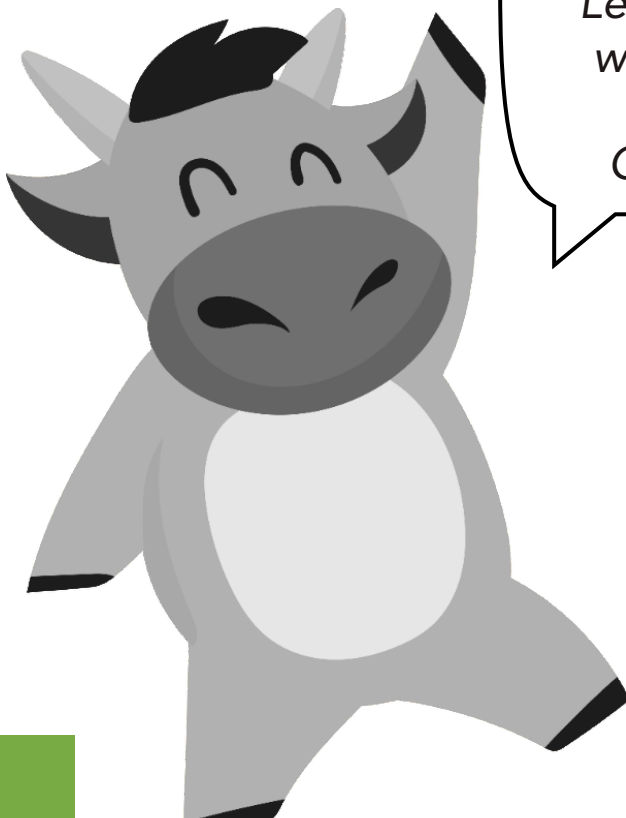
My name is \_\_\_\_\_ .

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ .

I am in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade.

My Self Portrait!



*Hello! I am Billy Bull, your guide to Durham County Government!  
A county is a unit of government, and it works to serve you. Do you know how?  
Learning about the county you live in will help make you a good resident.  
Follow me to learn what Durham County Government does for you!*

# Who Runs the County?

## Residents

A resident is a person who lives in a particular city, town, state, or county. If you live in Durham County, North Carolina, you are a resident of Durham County.

The people who lead the county government are called elected officials. Residents choose five elected officials they want to run the County in a contest called an election. Officials listen to the needs and concerns of the residents they represent and work with them to make the County a better place.



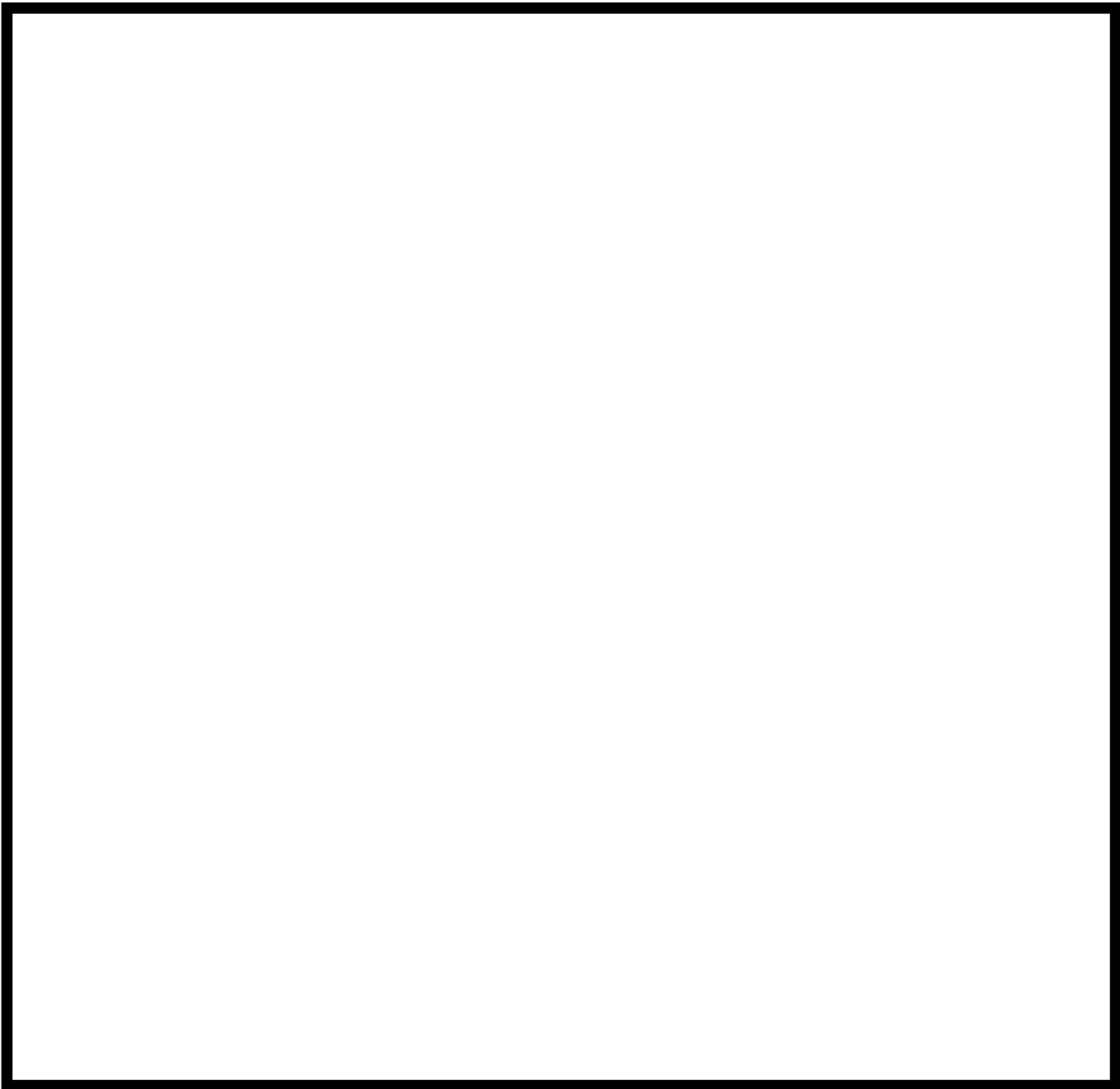
## Board of County Commissioners

The elected officials that represent Durham County are the Board of County Commissioners. Durham County has five commissioners on its board. The Board of Commissioners makes very important decisions for the County. They make decisions about how the County will spend money and the kind of services they will provide for residents.



## County Manager

The County Manager is hired by the Board of Commissioners to make sure the decisions the Commissioners make are carried out. To help you understand, let's think about a school. The County Manager is like the principal of the school. Does the principal teach all the classes at a school? Of course not. The principal, just like the County Manager, hires people to help them. The County Manager's helpers are not called teachers, they are called Department Heads or Directors. Department Heads lead a team of people who work together in a department or specific area to provide and deliver services to residents.



*Write about or draw a picture of  
what you like most about  
Durham County!*

*Let's learn more about the  
County's departments and  
the services they provide!*



# General Government

## Board of Elections



The Board of Elections makes sure that elections are fair and that everyone's vote counts. The Board of Elections organizes elections by registering people to vote, making sure there are enough polling places for people to vote, and that the votes are counted correctly. To vote in an election, you must be at least 18 years old. An election is a contest where people get to choose a candidate to represent them in government. A candidate is someone who wants to be chosen by the people to represent them. Candidates tell people what they think is important, and what they would do if they were elected. A polling place is where people go to vote. The Board of Elections also helps to educate residents about the election process and the candidates.

## Budget and Management Services



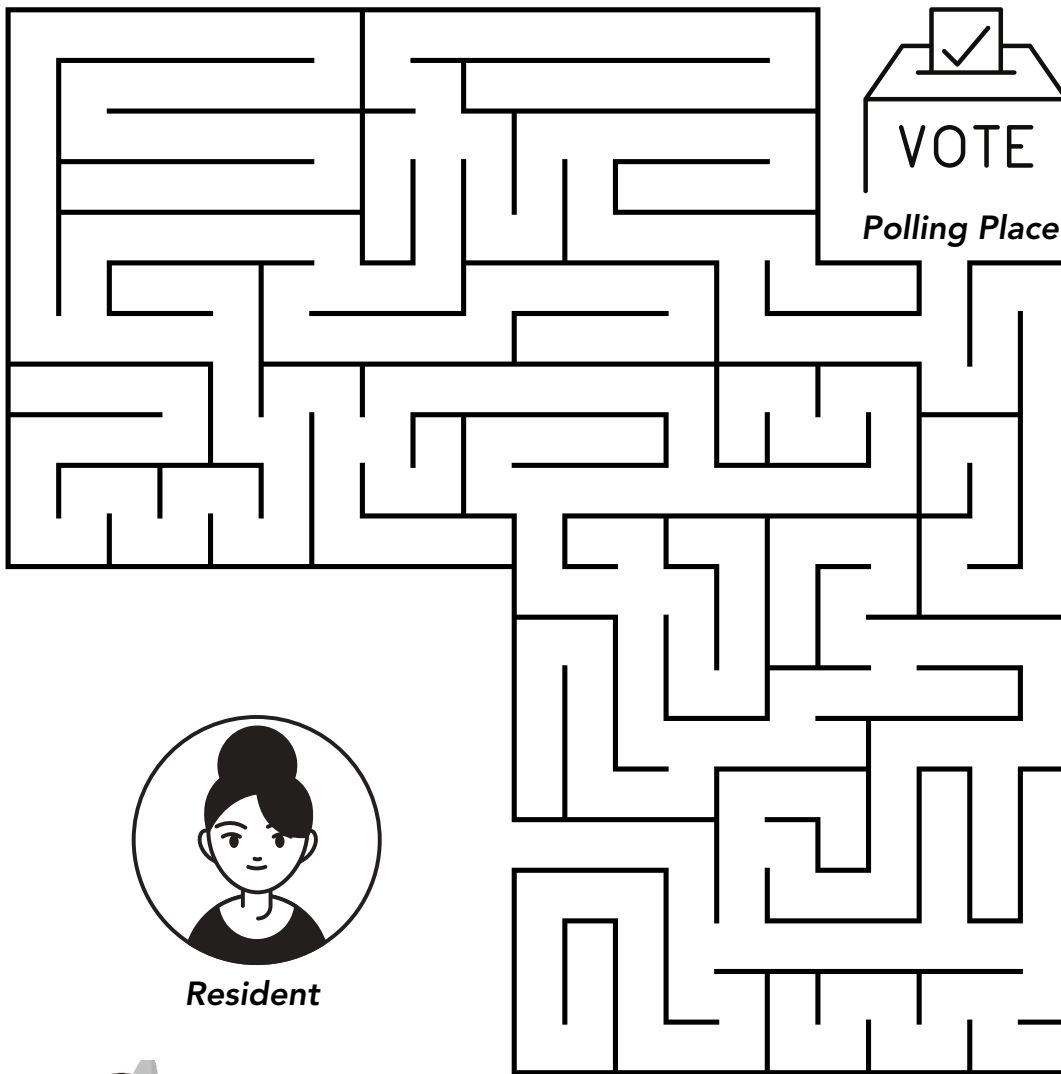
A budget is all the money the County collects and spends for the services provided to residents. Budget and Management Services helps plan how the County will use its money. Just like how you might plan how to spend your allowance, Budget and Management Services plans how the County will spend its money on important services like schools and libraries. Every year the department helps the County Manager put together the proposed budget. To do this, they work with the County Manager and other departments to decide what needs the County has and how much money is needed to meet those needs. The County Manager then shares the budget with the Board of Commissioners, who reviews it and votes to adopt it or approve it.

## Tax Administration



The Tax Administration collects taxes from residents. Taxes are the money residents pay to the County for the services provided. Taxes make up the County's budget. The Tax Administration ensures that every resident pays their fair share to support their community. Residents pay taxes to the County for their property or things they own, such as houses and vehicles. Every year, the Tax Administration assesses every resident's property or determines how much it is worth in order to calculate the amount of taxes each resident must pay to the County. After the Tax Administration assesses a resident's property, they mail every resident a tax bill that tells them how much money they must pay to the County. The department also helps residents understand how to pay their taxes and answers any questions they have about taxes.





*Resident*



*Can you help the resident find their polling place? With your pencil, draw a line through the maze.*

**If you were campaigning to be a County Commissioner, what services would you like to see in your neighborhood or community?:**

Empty rectangular box for writing answers.

# Public Safety

## Sheriff



The Sheriff's job is to make sure everyone is following the law of the County. The Sheriff works to make the County a safe place to live. The Sheriff is an elected official. The Sheriff has helpers called Deputy Sheriffs. Deputies help the Sheriff by patrolling the County, responding to emergency calls, and investigating crimes. They provide security for visitors and employees of the County's courthouse. Deputies work in public schools as school resource officers, where they mentor students and promote school safety. Deputies also respond to residents' concerns about stray animals and aggressive animals.

## Emergency Medical Services

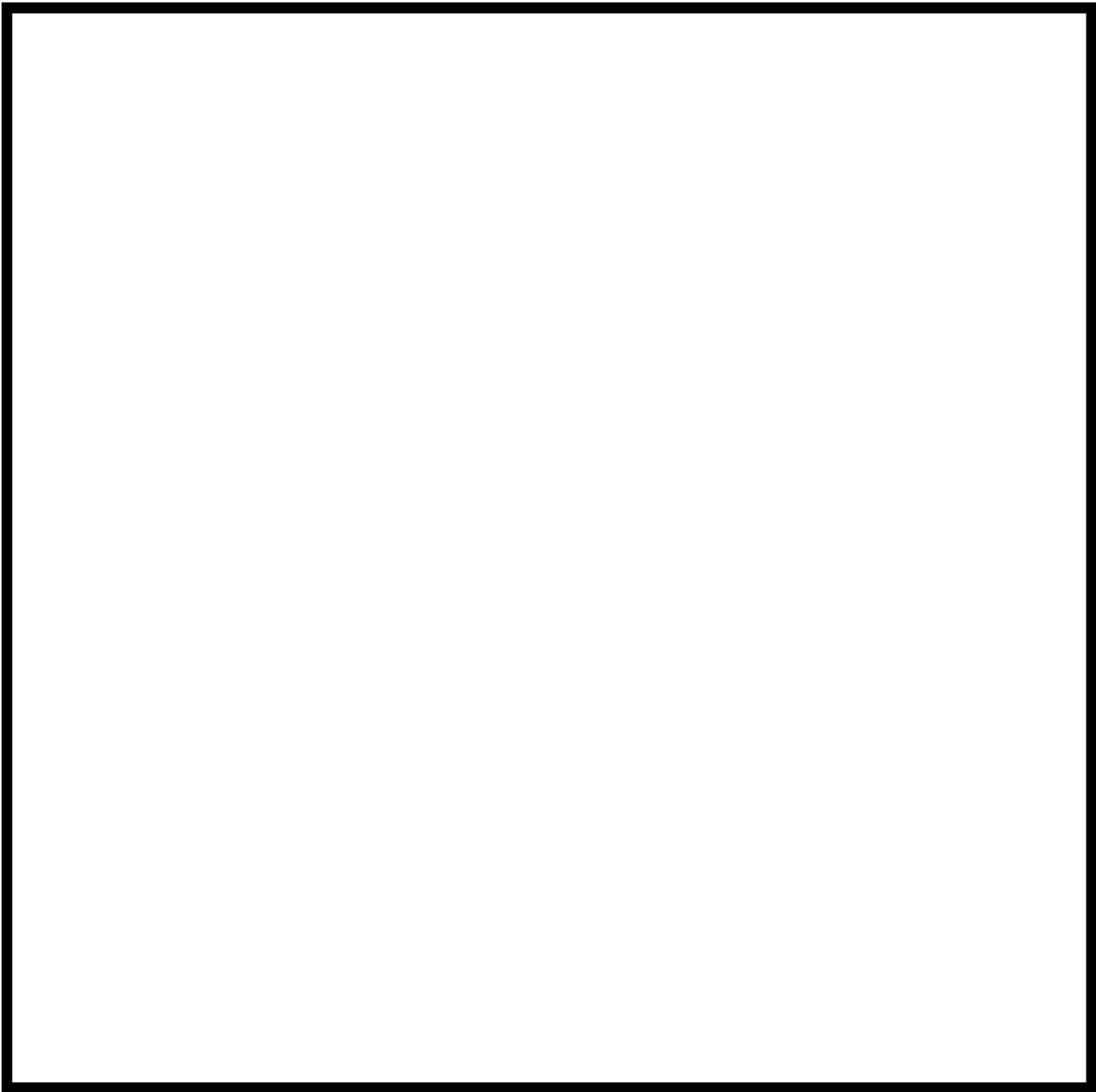


Emergency Medical Services (EMS) helps people when they have a medical emergency. If someone is hurt and needs medical help right away, they can call 911, and EMS will come to help them. An EMS team is made up of paramedics, advanced emergency medical technicians, and emergency medical technicians who are all trained medical professionals. EMS provides medical care to people at the scene of an emergency. They may bandage cuts or perform CPR on someone not breathing. The EMS team transports people to hospitals in ambulances. They make sure people get to hospitals quickly and safely, where they can receive a higher level of medical care.

## Fire Marshal



The Fire Marshal is a firefighter. The Fire Marshal helps prevent fires with fire inspections of buildings within the County. During a fire inspection of a building, the Fire Marshal makes sure there are no potential fire hazards and that there are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. The Fire Marshal also teaches residents about fire safety to help them, and their families be fire safe at work and at home. They teach residents the importance of having an escape plan in the event of a home fire. The Fire Marshal also investigates fires. During an investigation, the Fire Marshal determines how the fire started to prevent it from happening again.



*Write a letter or draw a picture  
for the County's Sheriff, EMS, or  
Fire Marshal.  
Thank them for the services they  
provide for you!*

# Human Services

## Public Health



The Public Health Department works to keep residents healthy and safe. Public Health has doctors and nurses who treat people who are sick. Public Health has a pharmacy where you can get medicine if you are sick. The department also has dentists that provide dental care to help keep your teeth strong. Public Health also helps to keep residents from getting sick. They give out vaccines and educate people on how to stay healthy. Public Health has nutritionists who teach residents about eating healthy and exercising. The department also has environmental health specialists who make sure that our food and water are clean. They inspect restaurants to make sure they are clean and sanitary.

## Social Services



The Social Services Department works to make sure that all residents have access to the resources they need to live a healthy and happy life. Social Services provide services to residents who need extra support to meet their essential needs. The department provides services that help with things like food, shelter, employment, and medical care. If someone cannot afford groceries, Social Services can help them get the food they need for a nutritious diet. Social Services has social workers who help residents when they have problems. If someone lives in an unsafe place, a social worker can help them find a safe place to live.

## Veteran Services



The Veteran Services Department helps veterans and their families get the resources needed to thrive. A veteran is someone who has served in our Country's military. For their service in the military, veterans are eligible for benefits from the federal government. The Veteran Services Department helps veterans get the benefits they deserve for their service. Veteran Services helps veterans get a pension or disability benefits. They also help veterans get healthcare benefits. The department helps veterans find jobs. Veteran Services provides information and support on educational opportunities. They also help veterans who are homeless find homes.

Public Health

Social Services

Veteran Services



1. It would be fun to have a nutritionist come to my school and give me and my classmates information on how to eat healthy! What department can help me?

2. I volunteer at a homeless shelter with my dad on the weekends. Next time I volunteer, I want to give my friends information about services that can help them. Where can I go for help?



3. My grandma has trouble grocery shopping and getting to her doctor's appointments. My mom and dad are too busy to take her. Where can I find information about services that can help her?

4. I was sick with the flu last year. This year I do not want to get sick. Where can I go for help?



5. My mom just left the Navy. She wants to start a new career. She needs help finding a job. What department can help her?



Help these residents get to the correct department. Draw a line between each resident and the department that can help them.

1. Public Health 2. Social Services 3. Social Services 4. Public Health 5. Veteran Services

# Environmental Protection

## Solid Waste Management Division



The Solid Waste Management Division collects and disposes of residents' solid waste or trash in a way that is safe for our environment. The County has four local convenience sites where residents can dump their waste. The department makes sure that residents follow the Durham County Solid Waste Ordinance, the County's rules about how to dispose of trash. Some trash can be recycled or used again to make new things. Soda cans, plastic bottles, glass jars, and newspapers can all be recycled. Solid Waste Management collects recycling from residents' homes. The department also teaches residents how to reduce waste and recycle.

## Engineering and Environmental Services



Engineering and Environmental Services works to protect the County's water quality. New buildings are being built all around the County. When it rains, soil erosion or dirt from these construction sites can wash away into our waterways, polluting them. The department prevents this by regularly inspecting construction sites and making sure builders are doing things to stop soil erosion. Engineering and Environmental Services maintains over 100 miles of sewers that collect wastewater or dirty water from homes and businesses in the County. The wastewater flows to the County's wastewater treatment plant, where it's cleaned and recycled for use again.

## Soil and Water Conservation



The Soil and Water Conservation District works to protect and care for the natural resources in the County. The department teaches residents about environmental stewardship, or how to care for our environment and use our natural resources wisely. To grow their gardens, people often apply fertilizer to the soil to help their plants grow, but it can wash away into our water sources, polluting them. The department helps prevent this by encouraging residents to reduce their fertilizer use. The Soil and Water Conservation District also helps preserve the County's farmland. They support farmers in the County by offering them the information and resources they need to start or grow their farms.



Can you find the words hidden in the puzzle?

W	S	A	Y	F	R	E	D	U	C	E	D
B	A	I	R	M	H	L	A	D	O	C	S
I	A	T	U	S	S	U	A	T	A	L	U
T	W	R	E	A	S	O	K	N	T	I	S
D	F	C	O	R	M	E	I	I	D	C	T
E	R	R	C	B	F	P	N	L	T	K	A
R	E	U	S	E	A	L	T	G	E	E	I
F	C	C	I	U	Z	A	A	S	A	D	N
L	I	K	V	C	O	N	S	E	R	V	A
A	C	A	K	F	L	T	C	O	T	I	B
D	L	T	E	N	F	O	V	I	H	K	L
R	E	N	E	W	A	B	L	E	L	A	E

EARTH REUSE LAND RESOURCES  
WATER REDUCE SOIL CLEAN  
PLANT RECYCLE AIR SUSTAINABLE

Think of 3 ways you can do your part to help protect our environment:

# Education

## Cooperative Extension



Cooperative Extension helps residents learn new skills that they can use to make their lives better. Cooperative Extension manages Briggs Avenue Community Garden, a 45-acre garden in East Durham, where they teach residents how to grow fruits and vegetables. They also have programs that teach residents how to cook healthy food. The department offers classes to parents that teach them how to take care of children. Cooperative Extension also has a civic engagement program for young people that teaches them how to be well-informed citizens and about voting. They also manage the County's 4-H clubs.

## Library



The Library helps residents discover and learn new things. There are seven libraries in the County. There is a big library located Downtown called the Main Library. The other libraries are smaller and located in neighborhoods so that residents won't have far to go to get books. The Library has books, magazines, and movies you can borrow, all you need is a library card that you can get for free at any library. The Library hosts free events for residents of all ages such as book clubs, storytimes, and scavenger hunts. The Library also has computers that you can use to do your homework. They also have study rooms if you need a quiet place to study for a test.

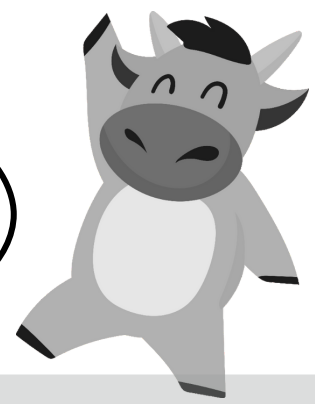
## Public Schools



Did you know that Durham County Government helps to pay for schools and education? Each year the Board of Commissioners gives Durham Public Schools money to help pay for things like teachers, books, computers, and other resources students need to learn. The County also gives money to Durham Public Schools if a new school needs to be built. The County provides public schools with school resource officers that keep schools safe. The County also provides public schools with public health nurses that make sure students are as healthy as possible while at school.

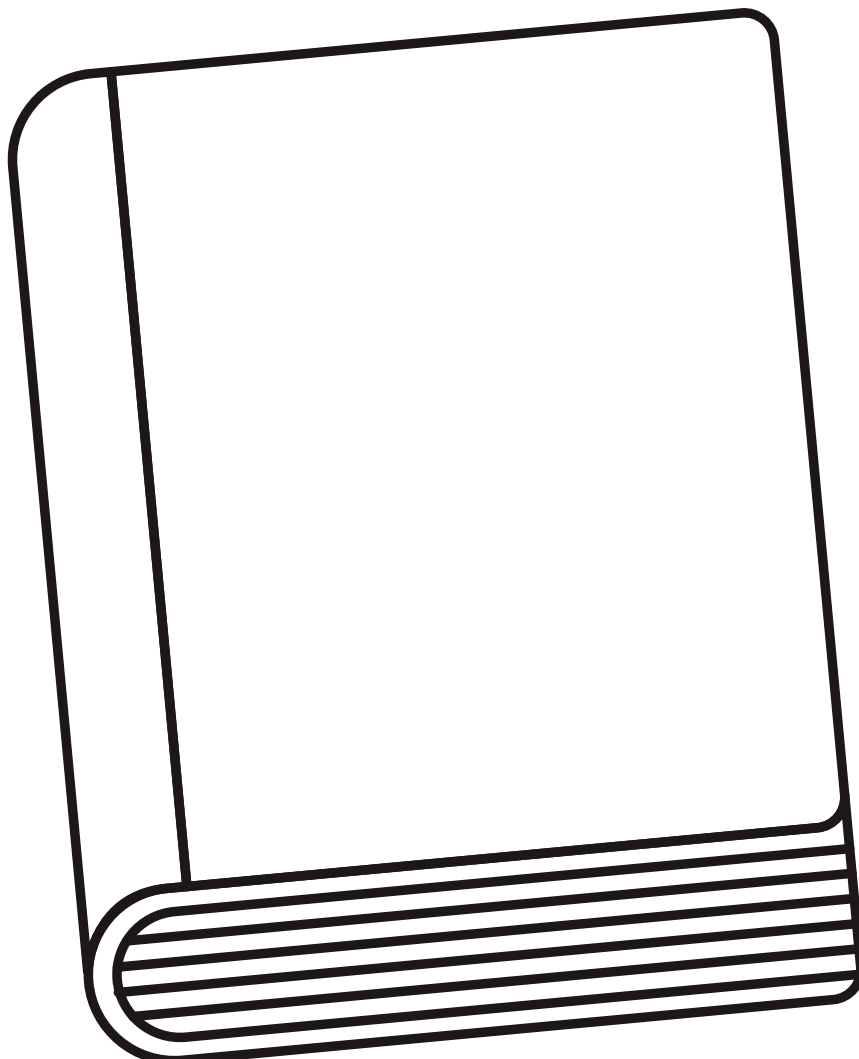


Write about your favorite book then draw your own cover for it!



My favorite book is:

I like this book because:



# Community and Economic Development

## Planning



The Planning Department plans for the future of the City of Durham and Durham County. The department enforces rules for land use in the City and County of Durham. Planning is responsible for zoning. Zoning creates zones or areas where only certain types of buildings can be built. Some streets in the County are zoned for houses only. Other areas are zoned for businesses only. Zoning keeps order in the community. If there were no rules for zoning, someone could put a skunk farm next to your house! The department works to preserve our parks, greenways, and historical sites. So residents can continue to enjoy them for years to come.

## Economic Development

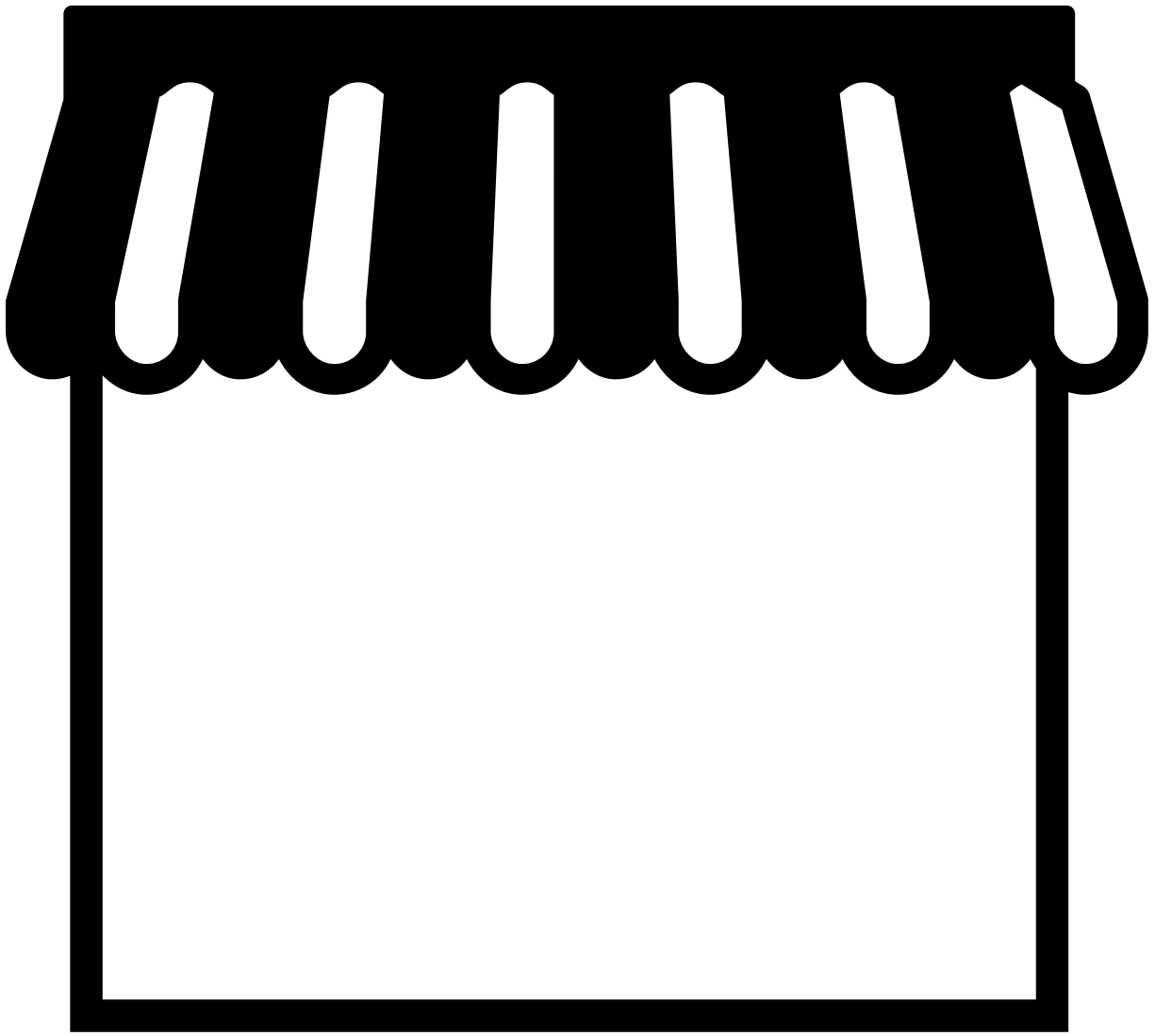


The Economic Development Department works to make the County a better place to live. They bring new businesses to the County. Like residents, businesses located in the County must pay taxes. People also pay sales tax on things they buy at businesses. So, by bringing businesses to the County, the department helps increase the County's tax base or all the taxes the County collects for the budget. The department helps existing businesses by giving them resources they can use to grow. Economic Development also offers information and resources to residents who want to start a business. The department works with companies to bring jobs to the County for residents. They also work with organizations to help prepare residents for future job opportunities.

## Register of Deeds



The Register of Deeds keeps important documents. When someone buys a house or land, they get a document called a deed that shows that they own that property. The department keeps a record of all deeds so that everyone knows who owns what property in the County. They keep birth certificates for everyone born in the County. Your birth certificate has your birth date on it and tells where you were born. They also keep marriage certificates for everyone married in Durham County. A marriage certificate proves that a couple is married. All couples that want to get married in Durham County must first get a marriage license or permission to marry from the Register of Deeds.



How will your business help your neighborhood or community?:

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing an answer to the question above.



*Think of a business idea,  
then draw it!*



*These residents need your help; they don't know which department to call for help. Test your knowledge of Durham County Government by helping them to the department that can assist them.*

1. A stray dog is roaming my neighborhood. Who can I call to help?

2. There is a sewer system backup in my neighborhood. Who can I call to help?

3. I need a copy of my birth certificate. Who can I call to help?

4. I'm interested in opening a restaurant. I need some information about starting a business. Who can I call to help?

5. I started recycling. However, I don't know where I can dispose of my recycling  
Who can I call to help?

6. I want to grow a garden at home. Who can I call to help?

7. I just turned 18 years old. I want to vote in the next presidential election.  
Who can I call to help?

8. I want to know how much money the County gave to schools last year.  
Who can I call to help?

9. I need training so I can find a new job. Who can I call to help?

10. I want to build houses in Downtown Durham. I am unsure if the street I want to build houses on is zoned for it. Who can I call to help?

1. Sheriff 2. Engineering & Environmental Services 3. Register of Deeds 4. Economic Development  
5. Solid Waste Management 6. Cooperative Extension 7. Board of Elections 8. Budget & Management Services  
9. Social Services 10. Planning



# ***Congratulations!***

*You are now a well-informed  
resident that knows a lot about  
Durham County Government!*

# My Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

