

## VA – VIRGINIA

### ABSTRACT

Hampton University (HU) for Virginia Board of Workforce Development will establish the **Virginia Workforce Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (VWIEC)**, a statewide small business incubator project. Centering its operations on the HU campus, located within a designated Opportunity Zone, it will expand the capability and capacity of Virginia’s current and aspiring entrepreneurs to aid with economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

VWIEC will occupy a unique niche in the small business development arena. Although headquartered in Hampton, it will serve clientele from across the state who have been unemployed, displaced, or their jobs have become obsolete by COVID-19. Adopting a “No Wrong Doors” approach, it will accept clients from anywhere in the state, and under any circumstances. It will serve as a statewide nexus of support by synthesizing the resources of two- and four-year institutions of higher education, workforce agencies, and experts in the public and private business sectors. It will provide services to clients at various stages in their small business development, either locally at the HU incubator facility or remotely through partners or VWIEC staff. It will cover direct client support costs. It will outfit the proposed incubator facilities with state-of-the-art technology and equipment to facilitate remote and in-person learning and coordination between partnering entities, including in rural areas. It will also establish an incubator staff that leverages the expertise of faculty, instructors, and graduate students.

A key partner will be Old Dominion University, a minority serving public research university in Norfolk, VA.