

Project Narrative: Hampton Roads Workforce Training System for Good Jobs

Executive Summary (Section 1a)

The Hampton Roads region is an expansive area that includes 27 independent localities in Southeastern Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina with 1.9 million residents, including the 8th largest Black population nationally and 1.2 million jobs. The region is home to the third busiest port on the east coast, the world's largest naval base, the nation's largest ship/boatbuilding and repair subsector, and soon the largest offshore wind farm in the country. This proposal is designed to meet the diverse workforce needs of the region's maritime "blue-green" economy, which includes ship/boatbuilding and repair; port logistics and distribution; advanced manufacturing; and offshore wind. With more than 11,000 maritime affiliated positions open or coming soon, it is critical to train a skilled workforce proactively and rapidly. To do this, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, as the **System Lead Entity**, seeks **\$11,006,941** dollars to lead the development and implementation of a structured regional workforce training system built upon the region's budding maritime sectoral partnership. This system will center around five pillars: 1) aligning regional workforce solutions, 2) attracting new talent to priority industries, 3) training and developing diverse talent to fill open positions, 4) retaining existing talent to upskill our regional workforce, and 5) creating new jobs through increasing the capacity of small businesses. Future system expansion once this effort is validated will include sectorial partnerships in healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology. At least **950** new maritime professionals will be enrolled in maritime training programs through this grant.

Lead Applicant Overview (Section 1b)

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC), a special purpose unit of local government, is serving as the **System Lead Entity** and **Lead Applicant**. As the regional leader of workforce development, the HRWC ensures the strategic alignment of efforts that facilitate meaningful employment and economic growth in the region. It develops and implements an equitable system that prepares the existing and emerging workforce to meet the needs of the business community, attracts high quality employment to the region and supports new, high-growth innovative enterprises. No other entity in Hampton Roads has the capacity to lead the regional workforce agenda and play a critical role in its implementation. The HRWC is the staff organization for the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board as authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The largest workforce board in Virginia, representing 25% of the state's WIOA funding, the HRWC is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of over 50 representatives from business, education, and community-based organizations.

Led by a President and CEO, the HRWC employs a team of over 65 workforce development professionals, serving over 14,800 adults and 3,000 youth per year. Of those served, 70% are individuals of color, with a majority living in poverty or distressed communities. Of those adults served, 76% of adults received intensive career services and secured employment. Of those youth served, over 75% entered post-secondary education or secured employment upon exit of services. HRWC has routinely exceeded the Department of Labor's performance measures. Additionally, the HRWC provides talent acquisition assistance to roughly 4,000 employers each year. The

proven track record of HRWC makes it the ideal partner to convene and lead the **Hampton Roads Workforce Training System**, hereafter referred to as “Workforce Training System”.

The HRWC has Uniformed Guidance and related WIOA fiscal, contract administration, internal monitoring, and administrative oversight processes in place. The HRWC has an annual compliance audit conducted by a third-party firm that has been procured through a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The fiscal and contract management processes are overseen by the Chief Administration Officer and the Chief Financial Officer who together bring over 60 years of experience in contract monitoring and fiscal administration to this project. Processes are routinely documented with reports to the Board of Directors and related subcommittees.

The HRWC has dedicated itself to the steadfast and systematic resolution of the Talent challenge in Hampton Roads. In addition to forming the region’s first Talent Coalition, our strategy to solve this growing problem began with hiring full-time, dedicated staff specifically focusing upon creating an equitable system to generate a diverse world-class talent development pipeline. This targeted talent pipeline implementation features a broad array of initiatives compiled in the HRWC Talent Toolkit, a living document that incorporates a series of programs, projects, and tasks focused on the singular goal of **attracting, developing, and retaining** top talent in the region.

The HRWC approach draws from proven methodology and tailors it to the specific needs of this region and its business community to push forward and close the talent gap across Southeastern Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina. That methodology is the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) system, as developed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. After completing the TPM Academy coursework, the HRWC Sr. Director of Talent Development implemented its curricula and principles as part of our organization’s 2021 formal launch into the maritime industry as the proof-of-concept pilot. The team is currently utilizing the TPM six-phase guide to harness the demand signal, analyze the current talent flows, and build the maritime supply chain into the future.

Employer Leadership and Commitments (Section 2a)

Industry leadership is a central component to the HRWC’s inclusive talent pipeline development efforts. Through dedicated **Employer Engagement**, we will create a series of maritime employer collaboratives focused on their hiring needs today and tomorrow, ensuring adequate talent flows, and ensure training programs and systems match job demands. Through **Business Intelligence Analysis**, we will compile the data received from the collaborative, aggregate it to protect individual companies’ privacy, and generate reports and visualizations for the group to move forward. Finally, in **Supply Chain Coordination**, we will perform a regional assessment of education and training providers as indicated by the employers themselves. Talent flows are assessed, premier supply organizations are engaged in their own collaborative, and we orchestrate the dovetailing of supply output with established demand. As a result of their leadership and input, industry partners participate in **skills-based hiring**. The robust **industry commitments to hire** skilled training graduates of this initiative are below. As evidenced by the commitments received, the demand for skilled talent is far exceeding existing training capacity. The Good Jobs Grant will strengthen the System’s ability to rapidly expand training capacity to meet the maritime talent needs. Without expanded capacity, jobs could be relocated to other maritime markets in the

country - weakening our regional economy and decreasing the family-sustaining career opportunities of our jobseekers. The 950 individuals to be trained through this program will be the first of thousands more to come.

Business Commitment to Hire: 11,000+			
AMP United, LLC	50	KBR Inc.	25
Auxiliary Systems	50	Newport News Shipbuilding	10,000
Bay Metals and Fabrication	2	Peregrine	10
Bayliss Boatworks	12+	Prisim Maritime	35
Carter Machinery	350+	QED Systems	25-40
Delphinus Engineering Inc.	100+	Regulator Marine	50
East Coast Repair and Fabrication	40	sS23 Holdings	50-100
Fairlead	100-300	SCIPP International	80
Glotech	10-15	Thermcor	10-15
Huntington Ingalls Technical Solutions	206		
Business Commitment TBD during Program Design			
Avangrid/Kitty Hawk Wind	TBD	NCDOT Ferry Division	TBD
Dominion Energy	TBD	Oceanering	TBD
General Dynamics NASSCO - Norfolk	TBD	Port of Virginia	TBD
Global Technical Systems (GTS)	TBD	Siemens Gamesa	TBD

Other Stakeholders and Partnerships (Section 2b)

The HRWC has convened and aligned through regular interactions a robust group of stakeholders to develop and implement the Workforce Training System: business and industry, community-based organizations, labor, K12 education, post-secondary training providers, and local, state and national government. See **Supplemental Attachment A** for overviews of lead project partners.

System Alignment Team: Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board, Community College Workforce Cooperative, Hampton Roads Alliance, Hampton Roads Maritime Collaborative for Growth & Innovation, Hampton Roads Maritime Industrial Base Ecosystem, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, Northeastern Workforce Development Board, North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, ReInvent Hampton Roads, Virginia Maritime Association, Virginia Tidewater Consortium for Higher Education, and the Virginia Ship Repair Association. They will provide workforce development asset mapping, industry needs assessments, labor market information, economic forecasting, and regional economic advocacy.

Talent Recruitment Team: Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Virginia, Communities in Schools of Hampton Roads, ESOP Advisors, ForKids, Hampton Roads Community Action Program, Urban Leagues of Hampton Roads and the Central Carolinas, and the following social/human services departments: Franklin, Gates, Gloucester, Hampton, James City, Newport News, Pasquotank, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk, Tyrell, Virginia Beach, Washington, and Williamsburg. They will develop a grassroots recruitment network to connect under-resourced and underrepresented populations into the maritime industry.

Talent Development Team: Community Colleges: Albemarle (COA), Eastern Shore (ESCC), Camp (CCC), Thomas Nelson (TNCC), and Tidewater (TCC); IWNL Consulting, Mid-Atlantic

Maritime Academy, Old Dominion University, Virginia Wesleyan University; New Horizons Regional Education Center, and the following school public systems: Chesapeake, Hampton, Isle of Wight, Newport News, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. They will develop and implement training programs to meet the workforce needs of the industry.

Talent Retention Team: Urban Leagues of Hampton Roads and the Central Carolinas, Hampton Roads Community Action Program, and Virginia Wesleyan University. They will develop and implement an inclusive college internship pipeline and soft skills trainings.

Job Creation Team: Virginia Workforce Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center at Hampton University, Chambers: Black BRAND, Hampton Roads Chamber, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Beach Minority Business Council, Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce; and the following Economic Development offices: Chowan, Currituck, Franklin/Southampton, Gloucester, Hampton, Isle of Wight, James City, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, and York. They will advocate for the needs of local small businesses with a focus on BIPOC/SWAM businesses and share information about capacity building and training opportunities available.

The following have provided **general support** of the project and will confirm specific commitments after grant award. Office of the Governor of Virginia, Senator Tim Kaine, Senator Mark Warner, Congressman Robert C. Scott, United States Navy, Delegate Howard Hunter III, Mayor Robert Dyer, Mayor Shannon Glover, NC Department of Commerce, Elizabeth City State University, Hampton Roads Transit, and Norfolk State University. Stakeholders representing community organizations, labor and education are anticipated to join as the System is developed.

Regional Description (Section 3)

As noted above, the Hampton Roads region includes 27 independent localities. It is home to 1.9 million residents including the 8th largest Black population in the nation and 1.2 million jobs. The residents, businesses, and workforce of Hampton Roads contribute to an interconnected ecosystem centered around maritime, defense and government, port activities, education, and tourism.

Maritime Activity: The Hampton Roads region stands out in the breadth and scale of its ongoing maritime operations. The region is the major center of ship/boat building and repair in the United States, the third busiest port on the east coast, and the world's largest naval base. Additionally, it is home to two major offshore wind development projects in the US. These assets coalesced to form a hub for advanced manufacturing, distribution and logistics, and e-commerce, which benefit from their proximity to maritime assets. Their presence also spurs innovation with an emphasis on applied research to advance maritime technology and supply chain solutions and will position the region to take advantage of emerging industries like offshore wind.

Government: Military and federal agencies have a significant presence in the region with 18 military installations housing over 350,000 active-duty, reserve and civilian military personnel, dependents, and veterans, plus 16 federal agencies including the Department of Defense, US Coast Guard, NASA, and the Department of Energy. The military presence accounts for approximately 42% of the gross regional product.

Industry and Institutional Leadership: Local leaders have recognized the need for increased collaboration among economic drivers to maximize the impacts of efforts to generate equitable economic growth, provide quality jobs, and bridge the urban-rural gap. These recent efforts began with the Envision Hampton Roads’ effort convened by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) to serve as the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). From this have come specific projects including the Regional Broadband Initiative as well as strategic partnerships with the Port of Virginia, Department of Defense, and private industry to promote inclusive business innovation among growing industries in the region, such as autonomous systems, advanced manufacturing, and cyber security.

Interconnected Ecosystem: The local coalition of business, civic, educational, and government leaders that came together for the Envision Hampton Roads process continues to work together to drive regional economic growth. Recently, with the region’s COVID Response at the onset of the pandemic, this interconnected ecosystem of partners came together to create and coordinate a variety of initiatives to support the region in these unprecedented times, including the establishment of a 757 Recovery and Resilience Action Framework. Building on all this work, in 2022, the region submitted a Build Back Better grant application to build infrastructure and talent in maritime: Workforce Development, Flood Mitigation Strategy, Broadband Ring, Autonomous Systems National Hub, Maritime Small Business Innovation Collaborative, ODU Maritime Cybersecurity and Data Analytics Center of Excellence. Though the funding was not awarded, the region is committed to moving forward with these projects. As they are brought to life, a skilled workforce will be needed to support them.

Alignment with CEDS and other Unified Economic Development Plans

CEDS/CREDS: The geographical area to be served through the Good Jobs Challenge grant spans two CEDS/CREDS regions: Hampton Roads Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina.

In **Virginia**, System Lead Entity HRWC leads CEDS-related workforce development efforts. System partner The Alliance leads CEDS-related economic development efforts. System partner the Urban League of Hampton Roads leads CEDS-related efforts to increase the capacity of BIPOC/SWAM owned businesses. Specific CEDS initiatives that align with this program includes diversifying regional industry with investments from new sectors such as offshore wind, growing existing industries such as advanced manufacturing and marine boatbuilding, retaining and upskilling the existing workforce, developing and supporting entrepreneurs, developing a distinct regional brand, promoting intra-regional collaboration, and expanding local training capacity to meet the needs of existing and emerging industries.

Hampton Roads CEDS - www.hrpdcva.gov/uploads/docs/CEDS_2022_draft_for_review.pdf

In **North Carolina**, System partner Northeastern Workforce Development Board is the lead organization to support CREDS related workforce initiatives. System partner College of the Albemarle will help lead training initiatives identified through the CREDS plan. Alignment between the CREDS plan and this proposal includes diversifying regional industry with investments from new sectors such as offshore wind, growing existing industries such as advanced manufacturing and marine boatbuilding, retaining and upskilling the existing workforce,

developing and supporting entrepreneurs, developing a distinct regional brand, promoting intra-regional collaboration, and expanding training capacity to meet the needs of industries.

Northeastern North Carolina CREDS - www.albemarlecommission.org/ac16/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CREDS-with-extension-to-2022-1.pdf

GO Virginia Region 5 Growth and Diversification Plan: GO Virginia is an initiative by Virginia’s senior business leaders to foster private-sector growth and job creation through state incentives for regional collaboration by business, education, and government. System partner ReInvent Hampton Roads serves as the support organization for our area and System Lead Entity HRWC serves as the workforce leader on the GO Virginia Region 5 Council. The 2021 plan places strong emphasis on the growth of the maritime industry with a special focus on advanced manufacturing, shipbuilding/repair, information systems, and port logistics. The proposed project design aligns directly with the workforce development needs of this plan.

GO Virginia Plan - www.reinventhr.org/?page_id=3469

Commonwealth of Virginia: Virginia’s 2020 Combined State Workforce Plan looks to improve economic opportunity for all Virginians by serving those who are not yet earning a sustainable wage and, as important, by focusing the resources and mechanisms of our workforce system to recruit people into the workforce and connecting them to businesses in high-demand industries, to include maritime. The proposed project design aligns with the Combined State Plan and leverages resources to achieve the best possible results for Virginia’s employers and job seekers.

Virginia State Workforce Plan - <https://virginiacareerworks.com/publications-initiatives/>

State of North Carolina: The 2021 State Economic Development Plan looks to improve economic opportunity for all North Carolinians through an unprecedented investment in businesses ownership, inclusive workforce development, and community engagement. Based on surveys of business leaders, the plan calls for dedicated efforts to attract, develop, and retain talent in North Carolina. These are also the core elements of this proposal.

North Carolina State Economic Development Plan - www.nccommerce.com/data-tools-reports/economic-development-reports/strategic-economic-development-plan-north-carolina

Impacts of the Regional Workforce Training System (Section 4)

System Development

For nearly 50 years, the HRWC has served as the convenor of the workforce development system in the Hampton Roads region. Throughout this time, the HRWC successfully brought both competitive and complimentary stakeholders to the table to develop successful workforce solutions; however, the system has been loosely organized, fractured along blurred regional boundaries, and not well known beyond the key partners involved. To address these issues, the HRWC merged with the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board in 2021, expanding our workforce region to include the 15 localities of the Virginia Peninsula and Southside Hampton Roads. The HRWC and Virginia’s Eastern Shore region, which includes two localities, are formalizing a more collaborative relationship to make our workforce system a One Region model.

Beyond Virginia's borders, the 10 localities of Northeastern North Carolina also feed into our regional economy. There has long been a good relationship, yet never a concentrated effort to develop a holistic workforce training system spanning all 27 localities of the full economic region. The Northeastern Workforce Development Board in North Carolina has a history of building partnerships and is well suited to work with HRWC to build this multi-state, regional system.

As the HRWC coordinates this new Workforce Training System, it will be launching a region-wide outreach campaign to inform and engage industry, jobseekers, and other stakeholders. In late 2021, the HRWC completed a survey of 224 stakeholders representing private industry, local government, community organizations, educational institutions, and regional economic development organizations. One of the chief complaints identified in this survey was the "weak" nature of the region's workforce system. Further results showed a general lack of knowledge about and uncertainty for how to even engage with the system. Respondents overwhelmingly directed the HRWC to coordinate the effort to streamline and expand access, raise awareness, and advocate for a stronger equity-focused lens for regional workforce development. Once this new workforce system is solidified, system partners will work with the HRWC and industry partners to provide equitable workforce development asset mapping, industry needs assessments, labor market information, economic forecasting, and regional economic advocacy.

Program Design/Implementation

Investment is required to grow the pipeline of diverse skilled workers in Hampton Roads needed to support critical industry sectors including boat/shipbuilding and ship repair, the emerging offshore wind industry, and road and infrastructure construction.

United States Navy

Meeting the demands of the Navy's 30-Year Shipbuilding Plan and the 15-Year Submarine Maintenance Plan will require a diverse skilled workforce prepared to deliver first-time quality, avoid schedule delays and limit the impact on National Security. According to their 2022 media advisory, the economic impact of the Navy in the region is over \$15 billion dollars and 50,000+ civilian/private contractor jobs. Currently, many people in the workforce pipeline for advanced shipbuilding, ship repair, and the skilled trades are hired with insufficient or no previous training, shifting those overhead costs to the regional public and private shipyards, suppliers, the emerging unmanned systems industry, and regional manufacturers. This impedes shipbuilding and ship repair employers' ability to meet the Navy's future force structure goals since the introduction of an inexperienced workforce increases inefficiency and rework required to correct quality mistakes.

The Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel Expansion Project

The project commenced in 2020 and is scheduled to complete in 2025. It is the largest highway construction project in Virginia's history with a total budget of over \$3.8 billion. The region is expected to benefit from this major infrastructure project by securing an additional \$4.6 billion in investments and creating 28,000 jobs over the life of the project. Coupled with the investments proposed in the Biden Administration's American Jobs Plan, the demand for skilled workers to support infrastructure projects will place significant demands on existing workforce pipelines.

Emerging Industry: Offshore Wind

Dominion Energy's Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) project positions Virginia as a leader in the offshore wind (OSW) industry. Multiple states along the eastern seaboard have plans to develop offshore wind farms, all requiring manufacturing supply chain centers. Hampton Roads is uniquely positioned to meet this need since the region possesses unparalleled port infrastructure, no overhead bridge restrictions, and a large skilled maritime workforce. Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy recently announced they were locating the nation's first offshore wind turbine blade facility in Portsmouth, VA. This project alone will create 310 new jobs, and Mangum Economics estimates 5,200 Virginia jobs will be needed by the time the East Coast OSW industry reaches anticipated capacity. The majority of those jobs will likely be in Hampton Roads.

A 2020 analysis performed by ESOP Advisors projected a regional maritime trade hiring demand of 28,631 workers between 2020-2026. When factoring in OSW and road and tunnel construction, the hiring demand for skilled workers was 34,049. The challenge to attract and prepare diverse talent for these lucrative careers is daunting with an insufficient number of training facilities operating at the scale and velocity needed to support the growing demand.

To meet the needs of the above challenges, a robust plan to attract, develop, and retain a skilled workforce is critical.

Talent Development

As illustrated in the employer commitment section, the demand from industry is significant. It is critical that our region's training capacity expand to accommodate this need. The Good Jobs Challenge Grant will be the accelerator that infuses a significant increase in regional output of maritime talent with **portable industry-recognized credentials in skilled trades and information systems**. Upon completion, participants will be matched with partnering employers for guaranteed interviews. Please see **Supplemental Attachment B** for example curriculum.

Skilled Trades: In Virginia, inclusive talent development will build upon the highly successful and proven Marine Trades Training (MTT) program delivered in partnership and close collaboration with the Virginia Ship Repair Association (VSRA), the Community College Workforce Cooperative (CCWC), Camp Community College (CCC), Tidewater Community College (TCC), Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC) and Newport News Shipbuilding. The MTT program has trained over 2,000 participants in six trades for employment in the shipbuilding and ship repair industry since 2017, with a 90% hire rate for program completers. While the results have been impressive and demonstrate how a Hampton Roads partnership can function effectively, an even more robust, nimble, and diversified program model will meet the region's increasing need for this skilled workforce. The current MTT program includes entry-level trades training in Marine Coatings, Marine Electrical, Marine Welding, Structural Fitting, and Outside Machinist, 2-3 weeks long and are available at CCC, TCC, and TNCC. Eastern Shore Community College will be joining the effort in 2022 to provide Marine Welding training to students in their service area. Laboratory facilities exist at each partner institution to support the current programs and state financial aid are leveraged whenever possible to help reduce the cost of training for low- and middle-income MTT participants. Project partners will continue to leverage student aid programs, training subsidies

available through HRWC, and the additional project funds provided in this proposal to cover the entire cost of training for all program participants.

The proposed project will develop additional content and expand the training labs needed to move beyond the currently available entry-level programs. Approximately 240 hours of additional training content will be developed for Marine Coatings, Marine Electrical, and Outside Machinist. Marine Welding and Structural Fitting curriculum expansion is already underway through a pilot effort, but equipment and supply funding will be used to support all of the targeted pathways to increase overall student capacity. Through the expanded curriculum and training facilities, participants will have an opportunity to master more advanced skills ultimately increasing their value to local employers. Target programs will support the expanded maritime industry while still relying on the system framework and partnership model established by the MTT program.

All of the targeted training pathways will better prepare participants for immediate employment in a local industry, improve employee retention after hire, meet the entry-level job requirements of a wider array of regional employers, and ultimately increase the number of high-potential candidates for employment in Hampton Roads. Critical recruitment and support and wraparound services, managed by HRWC, will help reach, better serve, and ensure the success of all program participants including those from our historically underserved communities.

In North Carolina, the College of the Albemarle will develop and implement short-term training curricula for the following areas: Electrical, Sheet Metal, Structural Fitting, Coating, Commercial Driver License, Logistics, Wind Turbine Maintenance and Repair, and Boatbuilding and Repair.

Participants in both states can take Introduction to Offshore Wind and the Skilled Trades, virtual reality immersive instruction to prepare the skilled tradesperson's transition from vessel to turbine. This course will be provided by System partner- IWNL Consulting.

Information Systems: Old Dominion University will train and certify participants in Cybersecurity Risk Management. This program is taught in coordination with Eastern Shore Community College. Primarily targeting veterans and transitioning service members, this initiative will provide a pathway for our nation's heroes to begin family sustaining careers in the maritime sector. Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU) will train and certify participants in Analytics, Logistic Management, Information Systems and Project Management. The goal of this instruction by VWU would be to help community members secure positions in the maritime industry in these key skill areas. Please see **Supplemental Attachment B** for example curriculum.

Talent Retention

A Gap Analysis conducted in 2019 by ESOP Advisors highlighted the region's labor shortage and called for greater talent retention focused efforts. The HRWC is managing two highly successful retention initiatives: NextGen and Campus757. These programs are dedicated to connecting graduating high school and college students with paid internships which immerse students in organizations where they identify mentors, launch careers, and engage in local cultural events.

In addition to general talent retention challenges, there continues to be significant diversity gaps in our region's senior / executive leadership, including within the maritime subsector. The Urban

League of Hampton Roads, in collaboration with System partners, will develop a robust internship pipeline between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and companies operating in the maritime sector. The internships will be tailored to provide intentional mentorships to guide participating students into leadership-track positions in the industry upon graduation. The Urban League is well suited to lead this effort through their internship and career readiness program: Project Ready. Through this program, teens and college students who are members of the Black, Indigenous, People of Color population (BIPOC) receive career readiness and paid internships.

Additionally, the project will work in historically under-resourced and under-represented communities to develop targeted training pathways designed to attract BIPOC individuals from the K12 system into HBCUs for advanced training and careers in maritime engineering, administration, and robotics. In doing so, we will establish an inclusive and diversified talent pipeline for executive leadership positions.

Lastly, industry leaders continue to express a need for greater soft skills training to enhance talent retention. Through the Good Jobs Challenge, System partner Virginia Wesleyan University will provide participants with a wide variety of soft skills courses ranging from effective communication and leadership to conflict resolution and project management.

Job Creation

Small businesses are powerful economic drivers. In 2019, before COVID-19 forced over 200,000 businesses to permanently close nationwide, Virginia saw 11,000 new jobs created by our small business owners (Small Business Administration). Additionally, according to the 2021 Small Business Administration's report on small businesses in Virginia, only 44% of our small businesses are owned by women. Additionally, only 25% of small businesses in Virginia were owned by individuals of color. Through the Workforce Training System, an intentional, collaborative approach led by area Chambers and Economic Development teams will develop a regional approach to increasing maritime-focused small business ownership as well as small business job creation within communities of color. They will provide guidance on developing a business, increasing staffing capacity, and tapping into the workforce system for talent. The following upskilling courses will be offered to small business owners: business management, financial planning, human resources, marketing/branding, and strategic planning.

Focusing on EDA's Investment Priorities (Section 4b)

Recovery & Resilience: In 2020, the regional leaders of Hampton Roads came together to create a first-of-its-kind plan: the 757 Recovery & Resilience Framework. A powerful example of regionalism at work, the Framework was designed to jump-start our regional economic inclusion plan following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hampton Roads Workforce Training System is a key component of this initiative and will lead the development of a skilled regional workforce. Framework - (<https://framework.hamptonroadsalliance.com/>).

Equity: Intentional, inclusive, grassroots recruitment in underserved and underrepresented communities is embedded in the very fabric of the Workforce Training System to be developed through this grant. The System partners will develop comprehensive recruitment networks based

in Opportunity Zones and other underserved communities. It will deepen the impact of that network by hiring diverse and inclusive Maritime Workforce Recruiters who live and will work in the targeted communities as industry ambassadors connecting their peers to high-paying, family sustaining careers in the maritime sector. Comprehensive wraparound services will provide fiscal security to job-seekers as they complete their training. This collective impact approach will be a strategic strike to break systemic equity barriers and begin closing our socioeconomic equity gap.

Workforce Development: The pillars described in this proposal are workforce development solutions aimed at training and retaining 950 diverse individuals to work in the maritime sector. Participants will receive skills training and job search assistance.

Environmentally Sustainable Development: Hampton Roads will soon be home to two of the largest offshore wind farms on the East Coast of the United States. The training effort in this initiative will prepare hundreds of individuals to build, repair, and maintain wind turbines. This project propels our region further into renewable energy and to combat the climate crisis.

Number and Type of Jobs (Section 4c)

The following chart contains examples of the jobs that will be supported by this project:

Position Type	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Earnings
Maritime Welder	621	\$52,484
Structural Fitters	134	\$44,525
Sheet Metal Fabricators	267	\$53,679
Electrical Technicians	224	\$78,926
Maritime Coating	257	\$50,278
Outside Machinist	384	\$53,246
Wind Turbine Technician	Emerging Industry, TBD	\$79,373
Commercial Drivers	1,038	\$41,085
Cybersecurity	5,929	\$120,359

Sources: EMSI 2021.4 Dataset, Provided by System Partner: The Alliance and DHC-NICCS System Map, Provided by System Partner: SCIPP International

Key Outcomes and Metrics

The Workforce Training System will enroll a minimum of **950 individuals** in training programs leading to the above occupational areas (See Target Demographics Section for breakdown of enrolled individuals).

The Workforce Training System will graduate and connect to guaranteed employment interviews 80% (760 individuals) of those enrolled. Demographic breakdown of that 80% include: 70% (532) will be part of the **ALICE** demographic (<http://www.VirginiaALICE.org/>); 60% (456) will be **individuals of color** and 40% (304) will be **women**; 10% (76) will be **disconnected youth**; 10% (76) will have **differing abilities**; and, 35% (266) will be **veterans or military spouses**.

Of the 760 individuals that graduate, 80% (608 individuals) will be employed. Demographic breakdown of that 80% include: 70% (425) will be part of the **ALICE** demographic; 60% (364)

will be **individuals of color** and 40% (243) will be **women**; 10% (60) will be **disconnected youth**; 10% (60) will have **differing abilities**; and 35% (212) will be **veterans or military spouses**.

Inclusion in the ALICE population (Asset-Limited-Income-Constrained-Employed) is defined as being a family of one or more that is earning only the bare minimum to meet basic survival needs. Though they technically earn above the Federal poverty line, they do not earn enough to sustain their families. According to the MIT Solve Living Wage calculator, a single individual needs to earn at least \$16.33 an hour to meet basic survival needs. The Average hourly wage at point of entry in the targeted positions in this proposal range from \$19.75/hr to \$57.86/hr. We anticipate a significant increase in earnings for our participants. Staff will monitor progress including enrollment in training programs, use of wraparound supportive services, employment, and wages earned. Data will be collected via course registrations, internal wraparound tracking forms, employer verifications, and pay stubs. A case management system will be purchased to allow a single data collection tool to be used by all System partners.

Past Partnership Success of Lead Applicant and Coalition Members (section 4d)

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC) and the Coalition Members have a long history of convening and working within the region's partner network to implement high quality workforce development programs. Examples of these regional partnerships include:

The Hampton Roads Coalition for Talent Development

In 2019, the HRWC created the Coalition for Talent Development to empower industry to drive regional workforce development. As the Coalition grows, it will form Sectorial Partnerships representing five major industry clusters in Hampton Roads: Maritime, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Hospitality/Tourism. The first sectorial effort is underway in Maritime with leaders from local maritime businesses, secondary and post-secondary education, municipal government, and economic development with the HRWC as the **Backbone Organization**. The industry-led Coalition represents 50+ partners and has resulted in commitments to hire and curriculum expansion demonstrated in this proposal.

Women in Skilled Careers Pilot (WISC)

The WISC pilot program provided women with a fast-tracked pathway to learn critical skills, obtain industry-recognized credentials, and interview with companies in the ship repair industry. The program was created in collaboration with System partners HRWC, TCC and VSRA. WISC gave priority of service to women who were: transitioning out of homelessness, domestic violence, and/or human trafficking, earning at or below the Federal poverty line; and/or are veterans or military spouses. Despite launching during the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic and related closures, 70% of participants graduated and entered employment in the ship repair industry.

The Community College Workforce Cooperative (CCWC)

The CCWC was formed in 2021 as a collaboration among three community colleges in Hampton Roads - Camp Community College, Thomas Nelson Community College, and Tidewater Community College. The CCWC creates a single point of contact to access workforce training resources of the partner colleges which together serve 14 localities through 10 locations. The

CCWC directs and coordinates these resources by leveraging facilities, labs, and the collective expertise to address the sizeable training needs in industries like shipbuilding / ship repair, infrastructure, and the emerging offshore wind industry. Through a subaward, CCWC will coordinate and support all proposed grant training activities at the Virginia community colleges.

The HRWC/CCWC partnership led to the January 2022 award of a \$1 million pilot grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia. Set to launch in March 2022, it will lay the groundwork for our goals in the Good Jobs Challenge. This pilot will train and employ at least 200 individuals in shipbuilding/repair.

Targeted Demographics (Section 4e)

This project will target individuals from all affected communities, with extended efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas. This includes communities of color and individuals who qualify as members of the ALICE community – more than 30% of households in Hampton Roads. In half of the 27 localities we serve, 44%-54% of their households are ALICE. These individuals are employed; however, they do not earn family sustaining wages, nor do they qualify for most Federal funding. Additionally, individuals of color only earn 65% of the per capita income when compared to their white counterparts.

Demographic Breakdown

Understanding the intersectional nature of inequity, we anticipate that participants will have more than one equity barrier. As such, the following categories do not stand independent of each other and will not add up to 100%. Of the **950 individuals** to be enrolled in training programs through this grant, at least 70% (665) will be part of the **ALICE** demographic, 60% (617) will be **individuals of color**, 40% (380) will be **women**, 10% (95) will be **disconnected youth**, 10% will have **differing abilities** (95), and 35% (332) will be **veterans or military spouses**.

Talent Recruitment Plan

Research has continued to show that diverse workforces typically outperform their less diverse counterparts, regardless of the industry in which they work. (McKinsey Diversity Report) To ensure success, workforce diversity and inclusion actions must: 1. Recruit talent, no matter who they are, where they live, or what barriers they may face; 2. Reflect the communities served; and 3. Create spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and open to positive change. These principles will guide not only the overall recruitment for the Good Jobs Challenge Grant, but also the development of the workforce solutions designed and implemented.

HRWC is working with regional strategic partners to develop a grassroots inclusive recruitment program that will establish paid positions for neighborhood leaders to help their residents navigate joining maritime industry. These Maritime Workforce Recruiters will serve as community navigators for their peers by conducting community outreach, career advising, service referrals and related event planning. The first two recruiters will be hired in March 2022 through a pilot grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The HRWC is seeking funds through the Goods Jobs Challenge to establish 17 additional positions to be hired directly through the HRWC, as well as through a subaward to the Northeastern North Carolina Workforce Board (NCWB).

Additionally, building upon existing relationships throughout the region, neighborhood recruitment networks based out of Opportunity Zones and other chronically underserved communities will be established. These networks will focus on connecting under-resourced and under-represented communities to the maritime “blue-green” sector. Consisting of regional and local social services agencies, K12 education, grassroots and faith-based organizations, and community meetup spaces, these networks will inform and enroll jobseekers.

Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation (section 5)

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC) is seeking a total of **\$11,006,941** to support the establishment and implementation of the Hampton Roads Workforce Training System. \$910,504 in funding will go toward system design/alignment, \$2,664,902 will go toward completing the Program Design, and \$7,431,534 will go toward program implementation. The workplan for project launch is below. The total cost per participant is \$11,709. The total training cost (tuition plus wraparound services) per participant is \$2,592. It is anticipated that there will be slight overlaps between System Design, Program Design and Program Implementation. This will allow mature programs to reach implementation capabilities by January 2023 and begin training jobseekers while also allowing newer innovations time to complete their design needs. The first job placements for this project will occur within the first 9 months of grant award using an overlapping timeline. Please see **Supplemental Attachment C** for the timeline and workplan.

Project Staffing Plan

Skilled talent is not a need unique to our industry partners. High impact initiatives such as the one described in this proposal requires a concentrated effort lead by skilled professionals. The following is our proposed staffing plan to meet the goals outlined in this proposal. A detailed staffing plan is included within the budget narrative. Please see **Optional Attachment D** to review professional biographies and responsibilities of project leadership.

Challenges Facing Hampton Roads Today (Section 5c)

Stagnant Post-Recession Recovery: Though the region boasts a highly skilled workforce and major employment drivers, Hampton Roads has endured stagnant economic growth since the Great Recession of 2008. Through 2019, GDP declined at an annualized rate of 0.3%, lagging peer communities with populations between 1 million and 4 million residents. In addition, several of communities within the region have higher unemployment than the regional rate of 3.1% (Dec 21). For example, the City of Portsmouth’s unemployment rate is 4.7% for the same period.

Systemic Inequities: Systemic inequities have long prevented vulnerable populations from achieving the prosperity of their counterparts. The unemployment rate among Black/African American workers in the region is 8.2%, compared to the regional unemployment rate of 5.3% in 2019. Growing industry sectors, which include management, business, finance, engineering, IT, science, and military sectors, also show an underrepresentation of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx workers. Female workers, especially Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), are also highly underrepresented in these sectors with a 37.1% participation rate, though women comprise of over 48.5% of the region’s workforce.

COVID-19: As with other regions throughout the nation, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has stunned the local economy. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between January and April of 2020, Hampton Roads lost over 90,000 jobs. As with many other economic shocks, COVID-19 has hit the Black/African American community at a greater rate, thus exacerbating existing inequities. Overrepresented in frontline positions in Virginia, they represented more than 35% of all COVID-19 related unemployment claims in 2020, peaking at 48% in July. Black ownership of businesses also decreased by 24% because of the pandemic.

Wraparound Supports:

The intensive, full-time nature of occupational skills training makes it difficult for under-resourced learners to complete their education without having financial support to help pay their bills and feed their families. Wraparound supportive services can provide this assistance, allowing participants to focus on their training. Through the Good Jobs Challenge grant, job-seekers will be eligible for up to \$2,500 in supportive services. Service elements include but are not limited to transportation, legal fees impacting employment, housing, employment screenings, job-related tools and uniforms, financial counseling, career coaching, and childcare. These funds will be available for up to 90 days post-employment as well. Funds will be paid directly to the service provider. In order to ensure equitable access to these services, regardless of System point of entry, wraparound funds will be held and dispersed by the HRWC, NWDB, and ULHR/ULCC.

Sustainability

HRWC manages a robust fund development effort through its 501c3 affiliate, the Hampton Roads Workforce Foundation, and approximately 51% of the HRWC's \$20 million budget is supported through non-WIOA funding. The HRWC's development team brings over 60 years of collective experience to this project and a demonstrated history of developing nearly \$13 million in non-WIOA formula funding over the last six years alone. The HRWC is committed to utilizing this robust fund development effort, in collaboration with System partners, to sustain the Hampton Roads Workforce Training System as well as the collection of talent attraction, development, retention, and job creation efforts included in this proposal. The HRWC has a strong history of financial support from private industry. Industry funders have included: Newport News Shipbuilding, Dominion Energy, Truist Bank, Capital One, Virginia Natural Gas, Ferguson.

Leverage

System partners bring a wealth of leverage to the project including approximately \$4,143,750 in FastForward and G3 funding that will help sustain the tuition costs beyond the Good Jobs Challenge Grant funding. ULCC will leverage \$193,750 in match. The HRWC will also leverage \$600,000 in current GO Virginia talent development funding to grow and sustain this effort. \$1 million has already been secured from the Commonwealth of Virginia to fund a 1-year pilot of this project known as HR STRONG. Pending asks specific to this project also include \$5 million in sustainability funding awaiting approval in the state budget and \$500,000 currently awaiting approval from a private foundation. Once approved, these funds will be leveraged for this grant.