



*Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement*

## **Operations and Financial Plan**

**Amended: October 2, 2007**

***The complexities of modern life, and the interconnectedness of everything to everything else, mean that in our communities, our nations, and our world, nobody can possibly know enough to be in general charge of anything important or interesting. This state of affairs is becoming more apparent with each passing year. It may be one reason why, more and more, the “followers”...seem so often to come forth with policy judgments while their established “leaders” are still making up their minds.”***

***---Harlan Cleveland***

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# *Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement*

*“Support for the region’s advancement”*

## **Description of the Center**

The Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement (HRCCE) is dedicated to developing citizen involvement as a key element in building excellence in community and regional governance. Its purpose is to provide decision-makers on regional issues, interest groups and citizen groups with reliable, state-of-the-art methods for involving citizens in public policy in ways that reduce polarization and boost regional understanding. HRCCE provides service, research and new products enabling public agencies and other organizations to actively engage citizens in the development and implementation of important decisions within the region. Its mission is to enhance deliberative democracy in Hampton Roads by infusing legitimate government decision making with the reasoned discussion and the collective judgment of the region’s citizens.

## **Case Statement for the Organization**

Political and cultural polarization has become a fact of life in America. Changing demographics, competition among media, a telecommunications world that is instant and without authority, and even limitations to natural resources are combining to disrupt governmental efforts. Civility seems lost in a world in which government is distrusted and winning is more important than building community.

The problems caused by polarization are being compounded by the increasingly interdependent nature of our world economy. Regions are becoming

the communities of the future. Critical public policy issues transcend local boundaries with no one jurisdiction responsible or capable to address them. In the face of these changes, regional governance has had difficulty keeping pace.

Hampton Roads is not immune from these problems: indeed, the region shares the same larger forces as other regions but it also has particular challenges because of its geography and Virginia's unique public policy landscape regarding regionalism. For instance, Virginia is the only state that has the independent city, independent county local government system. This structural feature makes it more difficult for local governments to work across boundary lines. Virginia's public policies regarding regionalism are generally weak, voluntary or non-existent in some dimensions, or where such policies do exist, they are very under-utilized which reinforce the tendencies for each jurisdiction to work independently and/or without state help or encouragement for solutions, which cross boundaries.

Thus, the challenges for Hampton Roads to improve and succeed at regional governance require deeper knowledge of the bigger social, economic and political factors beyond Virginia, but also special knowledge about the laws and policies that govern within Virginia. The Center will provide expertise to help discern solutions, which balance and address the external and internal forces.

Fortunately, Hampton Roads is better positioned today to deal with regional issues. For more than 30 years the Future of Hampton Roads, a voluntary body of regional leaders has promoted activities and studies that are committed to regionalism. More recently this group has been joined in the search for ideas and projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries. For instance, two organizations have emerged to form a coalition of public, private and military Chief Executive Officers: the Mayors-Chairs Caucus and the Hampton Roads Partnership. Each has provided special leadership, primarily in strategic planning areas. Meanwhile, Old Dominion University has begun the publication of its annual State of the Region Report, which focuses on basic regional economic issues. These groups have sought to coordinate planning efforts and information with the Hampton Roads Regional Planning District Commission.

The defeat of the regional transportation referendum in 2002 was a stark demonstration of how the absence of authentic and effective public involvement can negatively impact the ability of the community to effectively move on critical regional issues. The recent highly acerbic town hall meetings hastily convened by the new Hampton Roads Transportation Authority (HRTA) dramatically documents the need for new skills to prepare for and conduct such sessions

The Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement will complement these efforts. Its purpose is to provide regional decision-makers, cognizant interest groups and citizens with reliable, state-of-the-art methods to involve citizens in problem solving to reduce polarization and boost regional understanding. It will

be a source of information and research about effective and cutting-edge procedures that support fact-based dialogue on the thorniest of regional issues.

It will strengthen accountability and transparency. And finally, it will be a place to learn about civic engagement, so the principles applicable on a regional level can be used in every civic and private-public organization in Hampton Roads.

With this new support, the region stands the best chance of success for solving divisive problems and building a culture of decision-making in which citizens come to understand the difficulties and inherent trade-offs in public policy making while appreciating viewpoints different from their own. Perhaps more significantly, it would bring fresh thinking to public policy deliberations thereby increasing the possibility that surprising solutions to vexing problems will be identified.

Community leaders in Hampton Roads have expressed a willingness to expand civic engagement and there are examples of relatively successful experiments. The City of Virginia Beach employed new, large-scale dialogue in its community discussions for addressing issues associated with urban “redevelopment.” The City of Norfolk hosted a series of neighborhood forums about crime and housing, and the Norfolk Foundation has used extensive focus groups to mobilize citizens and community leaders around its three-year old Early Childhood initiatives.

The City of Hampton has a nationally recognized family program that includes citizen involvement and the region’s Healthy Families project has pioneered conversations across geographical and institutional boundaries.

There is some expertise in the region but not enough for sustained quality efforts. There have been successes but many, many failures. The capacity is too small and the cost of bad civic processes is too high. Missing in the regional equation is an organization that can advise, teach, and assist public agencies, community leaders and citizens on effective workable processes and procedures that can be used for the work of the region.

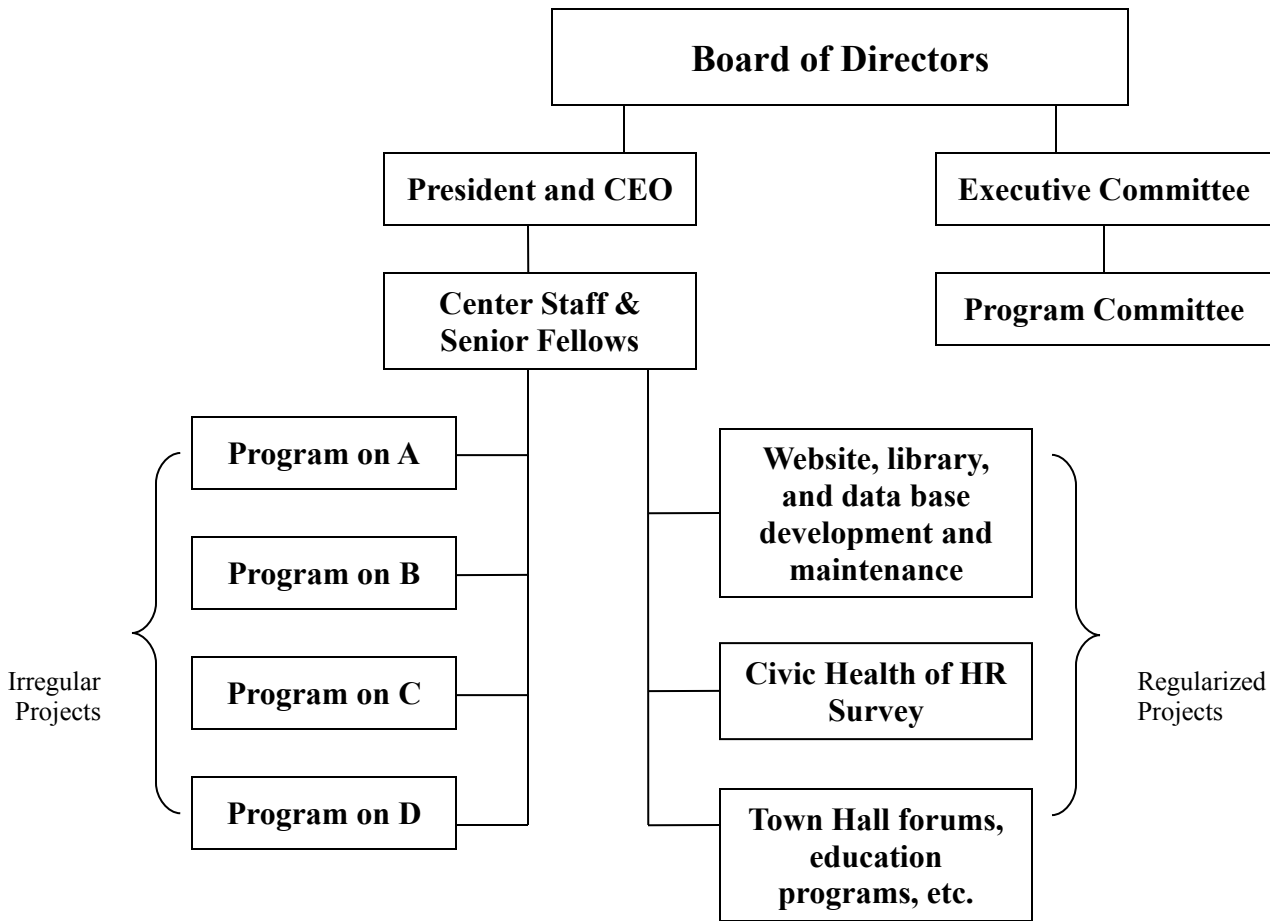
While there are many highly regarded public relations firms that might wish to be involved in these complex processes, the technical field for public involvement is substantively different than public relations. There is a unique set of core competencies, skills, and technical specialties.

Unlike forms of communication used in conventional public relations and marketing practice, which are oriented primarily to persuasion, the Center’s approach to public discourse will emphasize creation of a shared set of facts that

will elucidate a given issue as a basis for helping participants apply their values and logic to seeking shared solutions.

On the Next Page is a Visual Depiction of the Organization:

***Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement***  
**Organizational Chart**



## Services and Products for the Region

**#1 – The Center will provide civic engagement consulting services to public and private sector organizations and citizen groups within Hampton Roads.**

Civic engagement practice is the design and implementation of a set of tools, techniques and practices that enable inclusion of citizens as deliberative participants in the design and implementation of public policy. Civic engagement differs from traditional public agency public participation practices – hearings and meetings. Beyond formal consultation on policy choices it involves active

strategies facilitating the development of common ground among often competing interests held by citizens and interest groups.

Civic engagement practice includes both a design component and the direct provision of process services using both well-established and new tools and techniques. Examples of processes include study circles, roundtables, collaborative policymaking, consensus building, new forms of town meetings, citizen juries and assemblies, issue forums, focus groups, participatory budgeting, deliberative polling, choice work dialogues, cooperative management bodies, design charrettes, and other partnership arrangements. The Center will utilize original survey research, structured data analysis, interactive mapping, on-line network creation, and web based technologies in its work. Additionally, as conflict over competing values and interests is part of any process dealing with public decisions, the Center will utilize existing community resources in conflict management, mediation and dispute resolution to assist its work.

The Center's activities may be categorized as services for contract clients and as non-contracted activities supported by general-purpose grants/endowment (see #2 below for a description of non contracted services). As the Center's mission is to enhance development of deliberative democracy in Hampton Roads, the Center's direct clients will be established public and private sector organizations who directly form and implement public policy. Thus local, state and federal agencies in the region, and for profit and nonprofit organizations will contract with the Center to undertake civic engagement programs relevant to their operations.

Finally, the Center will undertake applied research in the use of new technologies and practices in civic engagement, and will serve as a regional and national clearinghouse for its clients' own research in developing their capabilities in civic engagement.

## **#2 – The Center will plan and convene public deliberation on issues of critical importance to the region and its communities.**

The Center will also work with regional and community leaders to identify important issues that could benefit receiving effective public involvement. It will maintain a neutral position with regard to all issues.

For instance, the ODU Annual State of Region Report provides data and analyses for critical subjects (affordable housing, sand replenishment, economic impact of the port). The Planning Council publishes its annual Social Indicators Report. The material is rich and ripe for regional dialogue. It would be a logical method to increase the public's awareness of their community and generated discussions that lead to the formulation of action plans.

There are a variety of techniques available to public agencies to improve their reputation, to develop constituencies of support, and to increase trust through positive and productive partnerships with citizens

The Fellowship Program will provide an opportunity for independent scholars doing research and writing on regional issues. Suitable material can be published and distributed. The objective will be to generate public discussion and awareness on regional issues.

**Center services:**

- Sponsorship of well-developed regional Town Hall meetings, online chats, study groups, community roundtables, online surveys and discussions, and other creative means of community engagement
- Visiting Fellowship program
- Systematic follow up of published “white papers” by agencies at ODU, CNU, Hampton University, William and Mary, Norfolk State, Virginia Wesleyan College or non-profit community agencies such as the Planning Council specifically designed to generate community discussion
- Library with documents related to regional “hot topics”
- Effective public distribution of information on critical topics

**#3 – The Center will identify, evaluate, collect and make accessible data and research about the current state of civic engagement in Hampton Roads, the process of public involvement, and about specific topics of interest to the region.**

Citizen engagement is evolving worldwide through emerging technologies and the development of new deliberation skills. The Center will be a core center for residents in Hampton Roads to conveniently connect with each other and with other regional, national and global agencies and associations that have demonstrated expertise in public involvement. *America Speaks* (<http://www.americaspeaks.org>) and the International Association for Public Participation (<http://www.lap2.org>) are two examples of organizations with active programs. The Center will have in-depth and comprehensive information thereby reducing the need to have multiple organizations collecting, organizing and maintaining data and research in our region.

At present we know little about how engaged our citizens are, how engaged citizens want to be, or what ways would best encourage engagement in our region. Many of the countries finest universities have robust centers working on the assessment and development of civic capital. Our Center would work with regional research institutions to provide this research for our region.

**Center services:**

- Stakeholder databases
- Library of research on civic engagement processes
- Co-sponsorship of a regional “Civic Health of Hampton Roads” survey.

**#4 – The Center will advise, assist and encourage organizations in the use of effective, cutting edge public involvement methods suitable to their needs.**

The Center will help clients to develop a capacity for local advisement on strategies and methods of public involvement for public or private entities that may not have this expertise within their organization. It will assist in the design and/or management of methods tailored for and appropriate to the scale of public involvement required for the consideration of selected policies or projects that impact the public. For example, HRCCE could help address current public information needs and immediate legislative decisions associated with the Hampton Roads Transportation Authority (HRTA) and the Southeastern Public Service Authority’s (SPSA) pursuit of a long-range strategic plan.

**Center services:**

- Public involvement design, consultation and process management
- Network of topic and process experts

**#5 – The Center will conduct classes in public involvement, civic learning and citizenship skills throughout the region.**

No one owns “public involvement” or civic engagement. The region profits when more and more individuals, civic organizations, cognizant interest groups governments and businesses understand how to engage citizens in their decision-making. Regular and ongoing involvement among citizens, stakeholders and community leaders can transform underutilized resources into problem-solvers and increase the potential for forward progress on contentious and troublesome issues.

**Center Services:**

- Short courses, materials, additional training on emerging methods from recognized “pioneers” or experts

- Develop and maintain a registry of local and national organizations or individuals who are committed to or expert in civic learning

## **Description of Organizational Resources**

### **Organizational Leadership:**

**Leadership for the Center is being provided by persons with broad experience in government, higher education, non-profit management, finance, marketing, communication and civic engagement.**

### **Board of Directors:**

The management of the organization is vested in the Board of Directors. The Board will consist of people with high levels of leadership experience in public, private and community organizations throughout the entire region.

Until the Board is selected by a nominating committee the Center will continue to be guided by an Interim Organizational Board whose members are:

Clyde Hoey, past Chief Executive Officer of Peninsula Chamber  
 Robert J. O'Neill, Executive Director, International City-County  
 Management Association (ICMA)  
 Suzanne Puryear, President, Planning Council  
 Betsy McBride, Communications Official, City of Virginia Beach  
 Lynn Gordon, V.P., League of Women Voters of Virginia  
 Minette Cooper, The Cultural Alliance of Greater Hampton Roads  
 Ray Taylor, President, Future of Hampton Roads (FHR)  
 Jim Babcock, Chairman, Regional Structures Project, FHR  
 Anita Poston, Board of Directors, WHRO, Board of Visitors, W&M  
 John Stewart, public librarian, Virginia Beach, retired  
 Ed Maroney, City Manager, Newport News, retired  
 Sallie Grant-DiVenuti, Director, Hampton Convention-Visitors Bureau  
 Louis Guy, President, Norfolk Historical Society  
 Quentin Kidd, Professor, Christopher Newport University  
 Roger Richman, Old Dominion University, professor, retired  
 Jim Oliver, City Manager, retired  
 Vivian J. Paige, CPA

**Center Fellows:**

To guide and support the various programs of the Center, Center Fellows will be invited to serve as the program and curriculum committee. This group works under the guidance of the Center's President and will be composed of professionals with technical expertise and demonstrated interest in the mission of the Center. The Visiting Fellowship program provides a venue for researchers or others working or writing on regional issues.

**Executive Staff:**

The President will serve at the direction of the Board of Directors.

**Members:**

Membership will be open to donors supporting the mission of the Center. Members will not select the Board of Directors.

**Citizen Advisory Committee:**

Open to donor members interested in additional involvement in Center activities.

**Market Analysis****The Market:**

There are eighteen separate cities and counties in Hampton Roads and numerous important regional agencies (political sub-divisions per state statute), each of which sees civic engagement as growing in importance and each of which have had modest success, at best. The list of regional agencies is long and includes, for example, SPSA, HRT, the MPO, the PDC, the new HRTA, the Regional Jail Authority, and HRSD, and as noted they will also need quality and cutting-edge public involvement programs for their ongoing operations and special programs.

Most efforts at civic engagement have been trial-by-error or awarded to private consultants who are not well known to citizens in the community and who are frequently more schooled in public relations than public participation. In general, effective civic engagement will produce better plans and increased (even solid) support. Public relations alone may not produce these merits; there are times when PR just "sells", the risk being you may be selling an Edsel.

For the public sector, sophisticated civic engagement is a growth market. HRCCE will have a significant strategic advantage.

There is also considerable need in the community, non-profit sector. In addition to the regular fund-giving choices of community foundations there are also the issues addressed annually by the institutions such as the United Way or Children's Hospital of the Kings' Daughters.

There are also regular, large and specialized community and regional issues not really "owned" by any one entity. An example is the current effort to close and re-use portions of Fort Monroe for profit or public purposes. There is a constant supply of important land use issues where better public involvement processes would likely improve both decisions and public support for them.

It is suggested that the non-profit nature of the Center offers distinctive market advantages. The non-coercive nature of the organization means it must build and work with, an untapped reservoir of good will and this feature situates it closer to the market than to government. This requirement sharply distinguishes it from government, which can levy taxes or impose regulations.

Moreover, trust in government is now low, making the effective use of state power more and more difficult as its legitimacy is challenged. Meanwhile, non-profits potentially occupy a perceived moral high ground when compared to public sector organizations.

Further, because non-profits do not seek to distribute excess revenues (profits) the very nature of non-profits creates the additional potential to demonstrate neutrality and earn legitimacy and public confidence in the Center's ability to be impartial and equitable.

Thus, the decision to establish a non-profit corporation is deliberate and deemed contributory to the nature of the Center's purpose and mission.

### **Impact on the Market:**

With its expertise in modern day procedures of civic engagement, the Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement will assist clients in their efforts to develop and to manage either a short-term or long-term civic engagement program for selected projects that is cost effective in the long run and that engenders the support of cognizant interest group and citizens, support that will be vital as the client's projects are moved forward for local or state level approval. HRCCE will be a "mediating institution" that helps the community address its problems---sometimes through private arrangements, sometimes through joint public-private partnerships and at other times through governmental associations. De Tocqueville found American mediating institutions in the mid-1800s essential to a democratic way of life. It is no less true today.

In performing its functions the Center will be building "social capital", an aura of trust and transparency, and increased public respect and admiration --- that seems to be crucial for the civil discourse and union required for a market economy to function effectively.

The Center will also provide a vehicle for emphasizing individual initiative in the public good. It will give institutional expression to two seemingly contradictory principles of the American national character---the principle of individualism, the notion that people should have the freedom to act on matters that concern them personally; and the principle of solidarity, the idea that people have responsibilities not only to themselves, but to their neighbors and to the communities and region of which they are a part.

By fusing these two principles, the Center reinforces both essential aspects of our collective nature. The effectiveness of local government and government agencies will increase and the quality of life in Hampton Roads will improve.

## **Marketing Plan**

### **Positioning:**

The Center will be a first-of-its-kind community service organization for civic learning and public involvement in the region. Gaps of quality and quantity in effective public participation have long existed in public and community affairs in Hampton Roads---whether in governmental matters, such as associated recently with regional transportation, or in the annual needs assessments processes of regional agencies, local governments, and private-public organizations. The Center's staff and Board of Directors will have credentials of well-known excellence in the public and private sectors of Hampton Roads. Their demonstrated performances in various fields will convey credibility, neutrality, and expertise.

The work of the Center will rely upon the development of productive and mutually beneficial relationships and the persistent advancement of better methods for community problem-solving.

Resources for the Center will be established in such a way as to create a critical mass of resources that can be applied without interruption to complex and long-term issues.

The Center will become the authoritative agency in this field.

### **Marketing Targets:**

***Government administrators***

***Elected Officials***

***Government Agency Administrators and Board members***

***Citizens***

***Leaders of private and public organizations***

***Potential funders***

**Marketing Tools and Means:**

*Government Agency Administrators and Board members*

*Center publications and products*

*Briefings/lectures/speeches*

*Standard outreach materials*

*Media relations*

*Electronic presence*

**Draft Calendar**

**September 2007**

Consultation with community leaders

Potential center "Founders" identified

Outreach materials drafted and reviewed

**October 2007**

**Tax status completed**

Potential center donors identified and solicited

Regional leadership consulted on key issues

Briefings soliciting organizational partnerships

Program planning begins

Web presence developed

Project for research and data gathering organized

**November 2007**

Media outreach

Citizen Advisory committee convened

### **December 2007**

Work on publications and community reports

### **January 2008**

First classes offered

Work begins with “client” agencies

### **April 2008**

First Center forum

## **Center Operations**

### **Operational Theories:**

Open deliberation processes, sometimes called social learning, when used by governments and government agencies and their leaders actually adds value and validity to community decision-making. In today’s world it is essential for regions and citizens to adapt to rapid changes in complex systems. The role of timely, broadly distributed information in making regional decisions has markedly increased and is essential. Research shows that open, adaptive learning that draws from the strengths and knowledge of active citizens creates a cost-effective and a competitive advantage for a region. The Center will combine information and a variety of good process for enhanced civic engagement in the pursuit of improved governance.

### **Operational Principles:**

**The Center does not usurp or interfere with the decision-making authority of any entity.**

The Center provides transparent, fact-based processes that support and demonstrate a code of citizen involvement, which includes:

- Respect and appreciation for democratic values
- Early, regular and timely consultation with the public
- Open and accessible information
- Disciplined deliberations that include documented responses

- Published and realistic schedules
- Clear accountability
- Increased connections between citizens and decision-making in the community and region

The Center supports research, which includes:

- Neutral, fact-based approach with full exploration
- An ongoing commitment to tap into the knowledge and information that active citizens possess coupled with rigorous benchmarking of similar cases
- Interdisciplinary approaches, which recognize that a deliberative approach involving leaders and interest groups and citizens as an effective way to address today's complex issues
- Acknowledgement that raw opinion must be followed by reliable information, inquiry for the larger context, and acceptance of the necessity to face conflicting values as issues are moved from individual to community points of view

The Center honors several key public participation principles:

- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of cognizant interest groups and those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision

The Center supports implementation practices that:

- Begin the project with an understandable description of the decision-making process, well-articulated expectations for public involvement in that process, and clearly defined goals for the outcome
- Provide the necessary resources---technical and financial---to support par Provide the necessary resources---technical and financial---to support participants in the process and create a “level playing field” for diverse stakeholders

## **Revenues and Fundraising Plan**

The flow of resources to a non-profit depends entirely on the quality and relevance of its mission and its capacity to deliver value. The Center fills a widely recognized need and will be managed in a fiscally conservative mission-driven manner.

### **Tax Status:**

The Corporation is a Virginia, non-profit, Non-stock Corporation and shall meet the requirements of the Code of Virginia (Chapter 10, Non-Stock Corporation Act). The Corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable, scientific, and education purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

### **Endowment:**

The long-term goal is to build an endowment to provide financial stability and protection of the necessary independent and neutral status of the Center.

### **Donors:**

Early large donors will be identified as “Founders” of the Center and offered on-going recognition. Others will be “Members” with entitlements associated with various levels of giving.

### **Services/Fees:**

The Center will be an economic and authoritative alternative for any agency with civic engagement needs or responsibilities. Many of the program budgets can be based on cost-plus methodologies.

### **Products:**

Materials related to the mission of the organization will be developed for sale to the public.

### **Grants:**

The Center will seek grants from foundations and government.

### **Sponsors/Underwriters:**

The Center will solicit sponsorship or underwriting for issue-specific funding needs.

**Strategic Associations:**

Regular strategic associations for regular or special projects are anticipated between the Center and other agencies such as WHRO, Christopher Newport University, Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, Tidewater Community College, Thomas Nelson Community College, Hampton University, The College of William & Mary and various community foundations and other non-profit entities.