

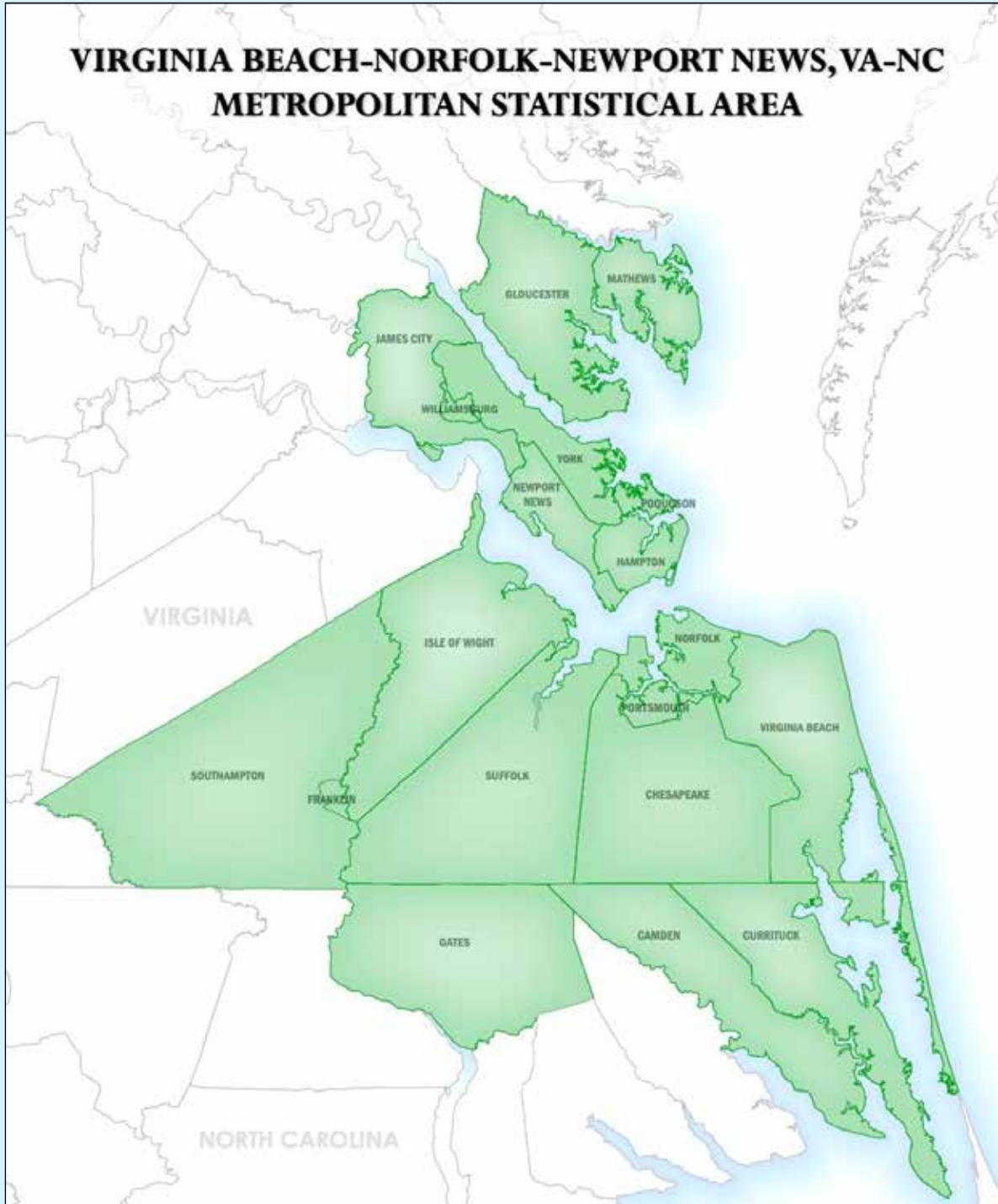
COVID-19



The State of the Region

HAMPTON ROADS 2020

**VIRGINIA BEACH-NORFOLK-NEWPORT NEWS, VA-NC
METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA**



October 2020

Dear Reader:

This is Old Dominion University's 21st annual State of the Region Report. While it represents the work of many people connected in various ways to the university, the report does not constitute an official viewpoint of Old Dominion, its president, John R. Broderick, the Board of Visitors, the Strome College of Business or the generous donors who support the activities of the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy.

Although our devotion to this work remains steadfast, our enthusiasm, admittedly, has been dampened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the toll it has taken on the region, Commonwealth and nation. In consideration of the national conversation on race and inequality, we have included additional material to shed light on how race affects economic outcomes in Hampton Roads.

Hampton Roads plays a significant role in our nation's national security, provides college education to thousands of Virginians, is working to adapt to sea level rise and is culturally diverse. There are challenges, of course, but, as the adage goes, challenge and opportunity are two sides of the same coin. To adapt, improve and overcome, we must understand where we are and where we want to go. Our work seeks to contribute to this conversation without glossing over the challenges we face.

The 2020 State of the Region Report is divided into six parts:

A Shock to the System: COVID-19 and Hampton Roads

COVID-19 changed how we view the Hampton Roads economy. In January 2020, the region was projected to grow faster than the nation, there were more unfilled jobs than unemployed workers and boosts in defense spending brightened our economic future. By April, however, businesses were closing, jobs were being lost and residents were under a stay-at-home order. We assess the economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic and examine prospects for the coming year.

The Way We Were: 2010-2019

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated social distancing measures, the challenges of the last decade seem almost trivial in comparison. Yet, those challenges hold valuable lessons for our current economic environment and how to build a better economy in this decade. We take a fresh look at the previous decennial – our economic successes and areas where we could improve – and provide insight into how these experiences can help us recover in the coming years.

Anxiety and Stress in the Workplace

Workplace stress and anxiety cost the Hampton Roads economy more than \$1 billion in lost productivity and health care expenditures in 2019. We explore the economic impact of workplace anxiety, stress and depression. We highlight how COVID-19 has increased anxiety and taken a toll on African American and Hispanic households. We ask how businesses can help alleviate anxiety and stress in a time of economic uncertainty.

Food Insecurity in Hampton Roads

One in 10 residents of Hampton Roads was unsure where their next meal was coming from in 2018. Among children, food insecurity rates were even higher in the region. Food insecurity reduces workplace productivity and learning, and negatively impacts health. We discuss how public programs and regional foodbanks are working to address these problems in Hampton Roads.

The Kids Are Not All Right: Youth Mental Health in Hampton Roads

More and more young people, particularly teenagers, report that they are anxious or depressed – a trend that has only escalated since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter looks at the state of youth mental health and the accessibility of care in Hampton Roads. The \$224 million Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters mental health hospital now under construction will address an urgent need and place the region at the forefront of behavioral and mental health care for children.

The Strome College of Business and Old Dominion University continue to provide support for the State of the Region Report. However, it would not appear without the vital backing of the private donors whose names appear below. They believe in Hampton Roads and the power of rational discussion to improve our circumstances, but are not responsible for the views expressed in the report.

Richard F. Barry III
The Aimee and Frank Batten Jr. Foundation
Jane Batten
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Chartway Federal Credit Union
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Helen Dragas
First Advantage Federal Credit Union

David and Susan Goode
Hampton Roads Chamber
Thomas Lyons
Patricia and J. Douglas Perry
Dr. Jitendra Swarup

The following individuals were instrumental in the writing, editing, design and dissemination of the report:

Vinod Agarwal	Ethan Crouson	Nikki Johnson	Feng Lian	Bailey Park
Andrew A. Bennett	Steve Daniel	Sheila Keener	Sharon Lomax	Terry Parker
Barbara Blake	Addie Gregory	James V. Koch	Janet Molinaro	Jay Walker
Emily Campion	Elizabeth Janik	Tim Komarek	Brendan O’Hallarn	Hannah White

All 21 State of the Region Reports are available at www.ceapodu.com. A limited number of printed copies of the 2020 State of the Region Report are available for purchase for \$50 each. If you have comments or suggestions, please email us at rmcnab@odu.edu.

Sincerely,



Robert M. McNab

Director, Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy
Professor of Economics, Department of Economics
Strome College of Business, Old Dominion University

Jefferson Lab Ponders Its Future

While many of Hampton Roads’ K-12 students are familiar with this federal laboratory’s support for STEM education in the region, many residents would be surprised to know the region is home to a laboratory that delves into questions about the very nature of the universe. Research conducted at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Newport News is not only being used to battle cancer but also to produce supercooled materials which, one day, may lead to breakthroughs in power generation and transmission and computing. We shed light on its impact and the potential for Jefferson Lab to increase its visibility.

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Pages 20 and 79: Steve Daniel

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Page 135: Courtesy of CHKD (2020)

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