

## Introduction:

Drawing on the important role that the CNU Writing center plays in the campus community, we proposed the creation of a community writing center within the Hampton Roads area, where anyone from high school students to the retired and elderly can come talk about their writing with trained writing consultants.

Research on Newport News and Hampton shows that many citizens would benefit from having this free writing resource. The most recent census data shows that only about a quarter of each city's population has a Bachelor's degree or higher and about 15% of each city's population lives at or below the poverty line. These and other statistics suggest that having a free resource for individuals to get help on any type of writing could make a difference in their personal, educational, and professional experiences.

The Tidewater Community Writing Center (TCWC) hopes to bridge the gap between ideas and their written expression. We offer support for writers of all backgrounds and abilities, for writers working in professional, creative, or personal capacities. As a staff, we are passionate about writing and building connections with other writers to help support each others' confidence in writing practice. We believe that by talking through ideas, writers can gain confidence and strength in their writing. TCWC provides the space where those conversations might materialize and—more importantly— continue.

## Community Partnership:

The Tidewater Community Writing Center is partnered with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. They provided a facility for the headquarters of the community writing center. The room has been converted into a community outreach center where consultations, workshops, and events will take place.

## Methods / Project Plan:

The beginning of the project included creating a brand for the Tidewater Community Writing Center. A logo, vision and mission statement, and types of services offered were outlined. Once these details were solidified, flyers, social media accounts, and an email account were created to help spread the news of this new service. The writing center planned to offer in-person appointments and created pre-appointment and post-appointment surveys. Additionally, all of this information would be available on the Tidewater Community Writing Center website.

Once the partnership with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was solidified, we could start renovating the physical space for the writing center. The room had not been used in years, so it needed to be repainted and refurnished with donated computers, chairs, and desks. On December 5th, the Tidewater Community Writing Center held their grand opening and invited community members.

After receiving minimal individual appointments, the Tidewater Community Writing Center decided to diversify its approach and offer a wider range of services. The writing center added virtual appointments, hosted workshops and events, and reached out to different businesses within the area to create partnerships with. The center has hosted a Recipes & Memories Workshop, as well as a monthly Book Club. The center has been working with the Hampton Road Library and hosts a monthly resume workshop at their location. Additionally, they have been reaching out to small businesses and offering workshops to their employees.

## Project Goals:

### Online Presence

One of our first goals in creating TCWC was to establish an online presence, so community members could easily find us and learn more about who we are and the services we provide. To do so, we focused on building a website using Weebly and creating a Facebook and Instagram account. Along with an online presence, we also needed to market throughout the community in physical locations to attract community members who might not have the access to online resources that others have. We created flyers using Canva and posted them throughout Hampton Roads in churches, coffee shops, libraries, and other community hubs.

### Opening the Center

Our overarching goal was to open the center as soon as possible. We already had the physical space, graciously offered by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Now, we just had to prepare it for our needs. This required deep cleaning, painting, and furnishing the space. We finally opened on December 5th, 2021.

### Outreach and Events

Another major goal that fell in line with marketing, was to reach out to other community organizations and form partnerships or offer our services. By doing so, we would be able to attract community members and make our name more well-known throughout the area. Additionally, we hosted events such as workshops and book clubs as more marketing and outreach tactics.



## Results:

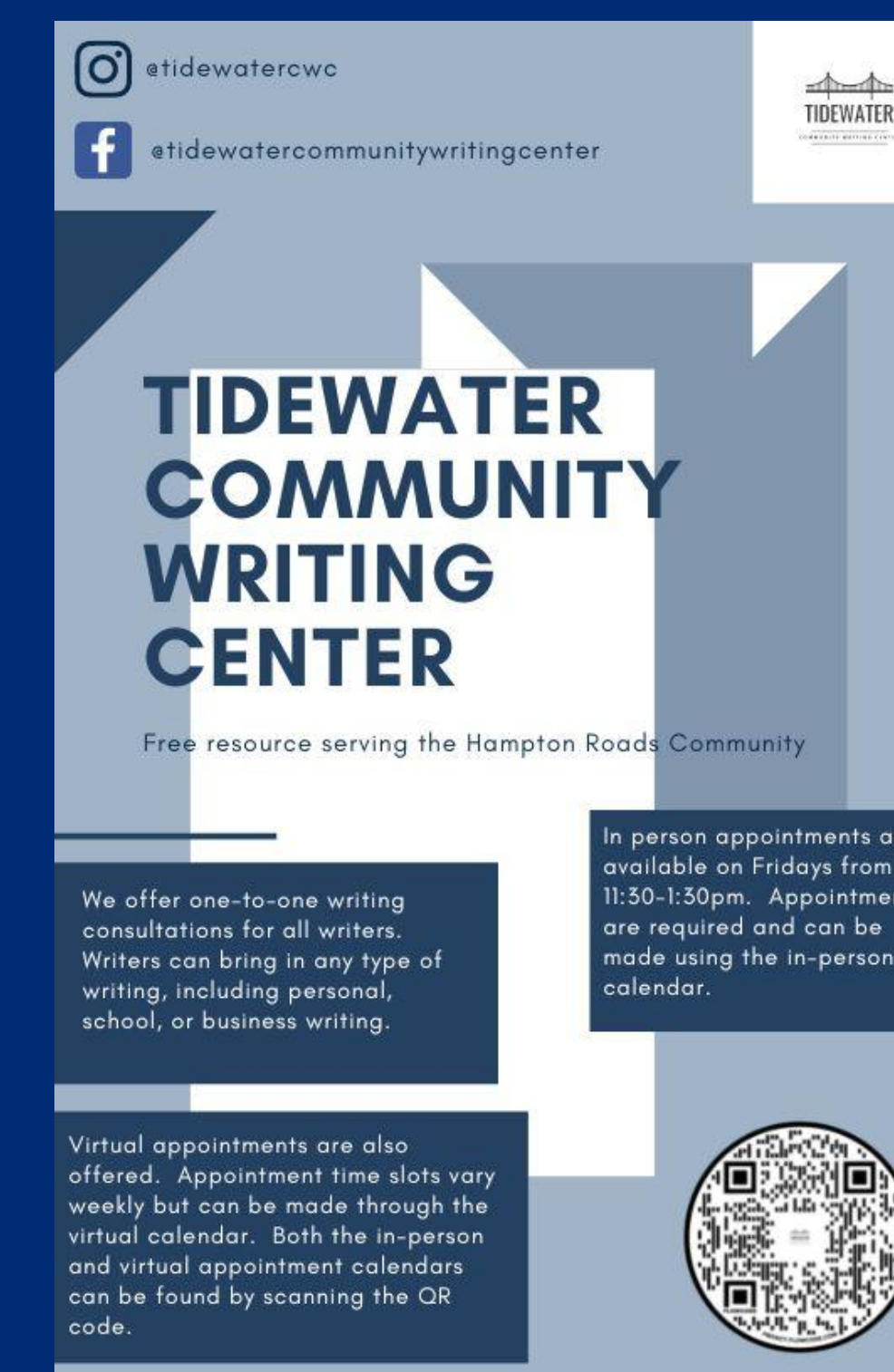
Currently, the Tidewater Community Writing Center has experienced a lack of engagement with consumers. The writing center is learning from each event and trying to generate a larger presence within the community. The biggest challenge has been spreading the news about this service and trying to encourage engagement. We have learned about the optimal times to schedule events and what events would be the most desirable to the community.

Measurably, we have been able to put on and schedule several events and workshops for the community and within the community through formed relationships with organizations such as the Hampton Library and the City of Newport News.

Overall, we have learned to be open-minded and flexible to adapting our events, scheduling appointments, and marketing approaches to fit the needs of the community. With starting something brand new like this, the biggest challenge is getting your name out there, which is why marketing and outreach are so important.

## Project Significance:

The Tidewater Community Writing Center's main objective is to provide a source of growth and connection for the community. While we are starting off small, the writing center's end-goal is to become a community hub with educational and networking opportunities. It is an inclusive place for community members of all backgrounds to come and improve their writing skills, speech skills, and understanding of the English language.



## Future Steps:

Future steps include further outreach, maintaining connections, consistent marking and social media, and stable appointments. Regarding further outreach, schools specifically should be targeted as a population that can be helped. In the fall, many high school seniors will be applying for college and will need help with their scholarship and application essays. Additionally, other libraries (i.e Newport News) should be reached out to as possible connections to develop. Our connection with the Hampton Public Library should be maintained, as they have helped us with forming steady workshops and getting our name out in the community.

A consistent social media presence should be sustained. The key to social media is consistency, as it creates and maintains a steady following base. A consistent social media presence will allow TCWC to grow within the Hampton Roads community.

Along that line, a consistent schedule for in-person and virtual consultation appointments should be kept up. This will allow community members to become familiar with what services we offer and when we offer them.

Overall, growth remains the biggest goal for TCWC. We want to build our name and reputation within the community in order to better serve its members. Once we maintain a constant stream of people, we can then look towards developing a training program or curriculum for new volunteer writing consultants.

## Contact Information:

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