

**The study of successful contemporary African American and minority entrepreneurs in the Hampton Roads metropolitan area, P.I.: James Curiel, Ph.D., Department of Sociology**

Even though Virginia is ranked number 12 in population, it is ranked number 9 in number of Black owned businesses (Gladden), and the Commonwealth has the 7th largest Black owned business in the United States according to gross revenues of Thompson Hospitality Corporation (Gladden). This proposed study will use systems theory to frame case studies of minority owned businesses in the Hampton Roads metropolitan area and will employ primary data gathered from interviews and 'fly on the wall observation' which will be contextualized with archival data from newspapers, books, journal articles, and public records. I will look for patterns in both the eco-systems and the organizations to identify critical elements in the market organizations must deal with, including laws and social conventions, and more importantly strategies organizations employ to successfully thrive in these eco systems. This knowledge has the potential to inform and inspire future start-ups to succeed.