



SELDEN MARKET



For Immediate Release

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**NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY'S INNOVATION CENTER AND SELDEN MARKET
ANNOUNCE SECOND ROUND OF ALIGN: SMALL BUSINESS SERIES**

Register now for this FREE series which kicks off February 28

NORFOLK, Va. (February 2024) – Norfolk State University's Innovation Center and Selden Market are pleased to announce the second session of the "Align: Small Business Series: Empowering Mom and Pop Retailers." The course will be held at the NSU Innovation Center (NSUIC), 520 E. Main Street in Downtown Norfolk. This comprehensive program is free and designed for new and established small business owners, current and potential Selden Market businesses and anyone in the entrepreneurial community who is interested in growing and maintaining a brick-and-mortar business.

This eight-week program is a collaboration between NSU Innovation Center, Selden Market, and the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Participants will receive guidance, resources, and mentorship to develop a robust street level and online presence, enhance their business models, and create sustainable growth strategies.

The session begins Wednesday, February 28, 2024, and runs consecutive Wednesdays from 10am-12pm. Topics range from simple business planning and marketing strategy to pitching vs. closing and raising capital. Classes include a presentation by an SBDC facilitator, expert speakers and open discussions with participants to help stimulate and strengthen Norfolk's small business community.

"We recognize the revenue-generation hurdles local retailers face in today's digital landscape," said Akosua Acheamponmaa, Director of the NSU Innovation Center. "The Align: Series is our commitment to empowering entrepreneurs with the tools they need to thrive both online and offline."

Curriculum includes:

- Week 1 & 2: Assessing Your Business Model

- Week 3 & 4: E-commerce and Alternative Revenue Essentials
- Week 5 & 6: Marketing and Branding
- Week 7 & 8: Financial Planning and Budgeting

Throughout the program, there will be opportunities for one-on-one mentoring sessions, group discussions, and interactive workshops. Regular feedback sessions and adjustments to the curriculum based on participants' needs will also be considered for continuous improvement. The deliverables include a business model canvas, e-commerce strategy, marketing plan, financial projections, a comprehensive business plan, and a pitch deck for investors.

Align: Small Business Series is completely free, but participants must apply for acceptance into the course. This round of applications closes on February 21, 2024. Participants will receive a certificate of completion if they attend all eight classes and submit key deliverable assignments. Those who successfully complete the program receive first consideration for a Selden Market storefront.

“We have thousands of incredibly creative brands and business owners in our region. We aim to help small retail, service and food and beverage entrepreneurs gain the skills they need to allow them to sustain a brick-and-mortar business in our cities for years to come,” said Careyann Weinberg, director of Selden Market. “I want to see our streets lined with concepts from small business owners who have the tools, confidence and resources they need to ensure longevity in their businesses, maybe even passing it down to their children one day. Align: can help them create a strategy and gain the roots they need to do so.”

[Selden Market](#), located at 208 E. Main St. in Downtown Norfolk, is Virginia's first retail incubator and the winner of the 2018 International Downtown Association's Pinnacle Award for economic development. The small business marketplace features local shops, food, rotating pop-ups and community events and has been named a reader's choice Best Shopping Center by Coastal Virginia Magazine since 2020. Follow [Selden Market's Instagram](#) for the most up to date information and announcements.

Selden Market is operated by [Downtown Norfolk Council \(DNC\)](#) a private, not-for-profit membership organization comprised of businesses and individuals working toward a dynamic, attractive and prosperous Downtown. DNC also manages the Downtown Norfolk Improvement District, a 50-block special services district with enhanced services that keep Downtown friendly, safe and spotless. Connect with Downtown Norfolk on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) or visit [DowntownNorfolk.org](#).