Syracuse University

D'Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families

JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

Q1 JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q1 JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026

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This quarter, the D'Aniello IVMF saw its research driving change. A county in North Carolina is taking action based on a needs assessment we conducted. In Washington, we spoke up for small and emerging veteran-owned businesses on the SBA's proposed size standards. And our Digital Library downloads keep growing, with USAA and the Department of Veterans Affairs among the top downloaders. Research matters most when it informs decision-makers, and we're seeing key leaders in veteran spaces turning to IVMF's research and expertise when looking for answers.

When I hear that only 1 in 4 military spouses in our longitudinal study with Blue Star Families held full-time employment across all three years, I see a challenge no single program can solve alone. Having USAA and Navy Federal Credit Union join our panel to discuss how employers can respond tells me our research is reaching people positioned to grapple with the problems creating that number, and ultimately make real, positive change for military spouses looking to participate in the workforce.

— **RAYMOND TOENNIESSEN**
Executive Director

Last quarter, the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families launched the Career You Never See campaign, and this quarter IVMF extended that focus with new research on military spouse employment. IVMF published The Accidental Entrepreneur, the second narrative profile in the Reimagining Military Spouse Employment series, which found that while 81% of military spouse entrepreneurs consider themselves successful, only 28% say their business can fully support their family. The research team also presented findings from the Military Spouse Employment Longitudinal Study with Blue Star Families at the Military Influencer Conference in Tampa, where USAA and Navy Federal Credit Union joined the panel to discuss how employers can act on the data.

IVMF's programs marked milestones of their own. The Military Entrepreneurship Forum concluded its year in Oklahoma City with SBA Deputy Administrator Bill Briggs on the panel, Veterans for Public Office graduated 22 participants from its second Ideation cohort, and the new DE/Vet Central Career Site gave O2O participants and IVMF alumni no-cost access to federal contractor jobs. The Ambassador Program now counts 41 Ambassadors across 21 communities, and the new cohort gathered at the National Veterans Resource Center in July for its first Fly-In.

On the policy front, IVMF submitted comments on the SBA's proposed size standards in support of small and emerging veteran-owned businesses, encouraged alumni to add their voices, and hosted a webinar unpacking what the changes could mean for business owners. At the community level, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, adopted the recommendations of IVMF's Veteran Needs Assessment, and the team engaged more than 90 people in focus groups with the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs to inform a statewide roadmap for veteran services. Across programs, research, and policy, the quarter shows IVMF's work reaching beyond the people it serves directly to inform the employers, communities, and policymakers whose decisions shape their lives.

D'Aniello IVMF

Q1 JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026

CAREER SERVICES

ONWARD TO OPPORTUNITY (O2O)

2,867 ENROLLED

- 1,496 veterans and 382 military spouses
- 741 active duty and 246 National Guard/Reserve
- **Ages:** Under 30 years old (451) | 30-49 (2,053) | 50+ (363)
- **Top certifications**: PMP®, Cyber Security, Human Resources, Information Security, Six Sigma

O2O PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

- IVMF launched the **DE/Vet Central Career Site**, giving O2O participants and IVMF alumni access to federal contractor jobs at no-cost through the IVMF Community Portal Employment Hub, making job searches easier for program alumni.



BRENDAN HULHEIN, U.S. Army, O-3 | O2O Texas (JBSA), PMP®, Project Engineer, Leidos

"The instruction, practice tests, and exam opportunity provided by O2O were very helpful and I credit this program with my successful completion of the certificate. O2O also helped me focus my effort and energy on something useful as I began my military transition."

VETERANS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE (VPO)

55 ENROLLED across two cohorts

- 44 veterans and 2 military spouses
- 5 active duty and 4 National Guard/Reserve
- **Ages:** 30-49 (40) | 50+ (15)
- 22 graduated from the second Ideation cohort. 26 began Campaign Planning.
- 18 Republican, 17 Democrat, and 20 Other

"The ideation program was fantastic and exposed me to more about civic engagement and some of the pitfalls that I hadn't considered."

— **DANIEL FEEMAN,** USMC veteran

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

7 UNIQUE PROGRAMS RUNNING 19 COHORTS:

Programs include: Acceleration Challenge, CEOcircle, EBV, EBV-A, EBV-WWP, Military Founders Lab, STRIVE

405 ENROLLED ENTREPRENEURS

- 327 veterans and 32 military spouses
- 13 active duty, 19 National Guard/Reserve, and 1 dependent
- **Ages:** Under 30 years old (19) | 30-49 (227) | 50+ (146)
- **Boots to Business** supported 462 participants across 29 workshops OCONUS
- Military Entrepreneurship Forum concluded the year in Oklahoma City The Honorable Bill Briggs, Deputy Administrator of the U.S. SBA was a panelist and Kirstin Garcia, ED of The Verge OKC was a business resource. 136 registrants.
- EBV at Syracuse University concluded its 20th cohort for IVMF's flagship entrepreneurship program. Learn more about its history and evolution that's kept it going for 20 years.



DONOVAN STEWART, Founder & CEO, Ghydion Co., EBV-SU Graduate

"The IVMF and EBV-SU program is hands down the most intentional and effective program for entrepreneurs I've ever experienced."

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

- **80 products and engagements this quarter** (17 publications and reports, 63 presentations and engagements)
- Digital Library: **8,346** downloads *(up 16% from last quarter)*
  Top 5 downloaders: Menlo Security Inc., USAA, AviationAI, The Dept of Veteran Affairs, Virginia Tech
- Presented two briefings at America's Warrior Partnership's Warrior Symposium on veteran and military spouse entrepreneurship, including a spouse earnings gap of roughly $13,000 to $20,000 a year.
- Facilitated the Military Entrepreneurship Forum in Oklahoma City MEF roundtable, where 20 participants focused on veteran access to procurement.
- Contributed to the renewal of Wounded Warrior Project support, including a pilot military family cohort, and began a one-year research partnership with Operation Homefront.
- Completed an initial evaluation of PROVE, which places master of social work interns in university Veteran Resource Centers, and continued evaluating the Bush Institute's Stand To and Veteran Wellness Alliance Check In programs and Warriors and Quiet Waters' Built for More.

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS & IMPACT

- **Kentucky**: With the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, the team collected data for a statewide roadmap to strengthen veteran services, engaging 90+ people in ten-plus focus groups. Learn more
- The **Mecklenburg County Veteran Needs Assessment** is now in the Digital Library. It draws on 941 survey responses and 1,800+ NCServes client records, and the county has adopted its recommendations. Read the report
- On September 16, IVMF and the Syracuse VA Med Center co-hosted the 5th annual **SPEd Talk: Suicide Prevention Education**, with keynote speaker Sean Douglas and a resource fair of 20+ local organizations.
- **SyracuseServes** assisted 25 clients and fielded 61 interactions.

POLICY

- Strengthened bipartisan congressional relationships on veteran transition, economic mobility, and entrepreneurship.
- Submitted comments on the SBA's proposed size standards, advocating for small and emerging veteran-owned businesses, and encouraged IVMF alumni to comment too.
- Provided input on reauthorizing the Staff Sergeant Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program to support better outcome measurement and coordinated care.
- Began exploring a collaboration with the NJ State Veterans Chamber of Commerce on StandSmall.com, a portal to expand contracting for veteran- and military spouse-owned businesses.
- **Looking ahead:** Preparing for the National Veterans Strategy Act Senate roundtable and Veteran Employment Collective Summit. Tracking the FY2027 NDAA transition provision and veteran small business bills.

IVMF ALUMNI NEWS

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Ambassador program welcomed its newest cohort of **41 Ambassadors** representing 21 communities across five regions.

In July, IVMF hosted the new cohort's first Ambassador Fly-In at the National Veterans Resource Center. Ambassadors and Regional Leads learned about IVMF resources, explored their roles in the program, and connected with IVMF staff from across the Institute.

Find an Ambassador near you!



FEATURED CONTENT & PUBLICATIONS

Q1 CONTENT:

- When "Small" Gets Bigger: What SBA's Proposed Size Standards Could Mean: Webinar with Ambassador Guy Timberlake and former federal acquisition leader and president of FedSubK Shauna Weatherly. They talked through the proposed SBA small business size changes and what it could mean for small business owners.
- Voices of Service: Curating Data that Drives Decision blog post. Trusted veteran research was scattered and hard to find, so IVMF and Syracuse University Libraries built one curated home for it.
- Twenty-Five Years After 9/11: A Look Back blog. To mark the 25th anniversary of 9/11, we asked veteran and military spouse staffers across IVMF to share their thoughts and experiences from that morning.

Q1 PUBLICATIONS:

- IVMF published The Accidental Entrepreneur: How Military Spouses Take Their Careers into Their Own Hands, the second narrative profile in the Reimagining Military Spouse Employment series. It finds that 1 in 13 military spouses is self-employed. While 81% of military spouse entrepreneurs consider themselves successful, only 28% say their business can fully support their family.

FROM THE FIELD:

- RAND found that veterans' earnings grew about 10 percentage points more than those of comparable nonveterans over the eight years after entering the labor market. Examining the Evolution of Veteran Labor Market Outcomes
- RAND also found veteran-related grants make up under 1% of S&P 500 foundation giving, and protected veterans were 2.4% of new hires at S&P 500 contractor establishments, compared with a 5.1% benchmark. What the Record Shows on Corporate Veteran Support

MILITARY SPOUSE CAMPAIGN



- The research team presented findings from the Military Spouse Employment Longitudinal Study with Blue Star Families at the Military Influencer Conference in Tampa. Only 1 in 4 military spouses held full-time employment across all three years. USAA and Navy Federal Credit Union joined the panel to discuss how employers can act on the findings.
- On August 3, the White House issued an executive order establishing the Military Spouse Commission.

IVMF FUNDER SPOTLIGHT

IVMF's partnership with **The Home Depot Foundation**, which began in 2023, is helping military-connected entrepreneurs turn their skilled trade expertise into thriving businesses. Through the Skilled Trades Track of the Military Founders Lab, a 10-week virtual program, The Home Depot Foundation's investment supported entrepreneurs with live training, peer networking, small-group consulting, and microgrants. Participants have reported strong gains, with 94.5% increasing their business knowledge.

Your Partnership Matters. *Transition doesn't end when someone leaves the service, it unfolds over months and years as veterans and military families build careers, launch businesses, and find their next mission. A monthly gift helps fund the training, certification, and community support that carry them through that whole journey. Join IVMF's monthly giving community to provide long-term impact at every stage of transition.*