



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q3 JANUARY- MARCH 2026

“

This quarter demonstrated the full scope and strength of the D’Aniello IVMF mission. At the center of it, our entrepreneurship portfolio reached 100,000 veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs served. This is a milestone more than 15 years in the making, built on sustained partnership and an unwavering belief in what veterans and military families can build. But a milestone is a moment, not a singular destination. This quarter also brought significant progress across our employment programs, policy engagement, and community-based initiatives. From endorsing the National Veterans Strategy Act to completing coordinated care models in New Mexico and Mecklenburg County, IVMF is working at every level of the ecosystem. The work ahead has never been more consequential, and this institution has never been better positioned to meet it.”

— **RAYMOND TOENNIESSEN**
Deputy Executive Director

This quarter, the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) built on a defining milestone, serving 100,000 veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs, demonstrating the strength of a coordinated, research-backed ecosystem designed to drive long-term economic mobility. Through a portfolio of entrepreneurship programs, IVMF continues to equip participants with the tools, networks, and opportunities needed to start, grow, and scale their businesses, reinforcing entrepreneurship as a durable pathway to economic independence for the military-connected community.

Beyond entrepreneurship, IVMF continues to operate at the systems level, aligning research, practice, and policy to improve outcomes for veterans and military families nationwide. This quarter, the institute advanced scalable employment and service delivery models, strengthened cross-sector partnerships, and delivered data-driven insights to inform decision-making at the local, state, and federal levels. Investments in research, evaluation, and collaborative initiatives position IVMF to not only serve individuals, but to shape the systems that expand access to opportunity and improve long-term outcomes across the veteran-serving ecosystem.

CAREER SERVICES

ONWARD TO OPPORTUNITY (O2O)

2,290 ENROLLED

- 1,036 veterans and 325 military spouses
- 768 active duty and 160 National Guard/Reserve
- **Ages:** Under 29 years old (413) | 30-49 (1,571) | 50+ (306)
- **Top certifications:** PMP®, Google Cybersecurity, Information Security, Human Resources, Six Sigma

O2O CAREER FAIR OPPORTUNITY

- O2O partnered with RecruitMilitary to host a Virtual Career Fair connecting transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses with employers. The event drew 146 job seekers and 24 employers, achieving a 76% engagement rate and a cost-neutral model built to scale.



SARA BIRO, U.S. Air Force, O-3, O2O Florida, PMP

“My advice to future O2O participants is to lean into those cohort connections, share your story, soak up theirs, and harness their collective wisdom. You’ve got a whole crew behind you, and with this remarkable network at your side, seize the opportunity to chart your path forward with purpose.”

VETERANS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE (VPO)

Renamed in 2026, Veterans for Public Office (VPO) reflects a more focused pathway to public service for veterans and military spouses, paired with expanded cohorts to increase participation and impact.

74 ENROLLED in Campaign Planning & Ideation Programs

57 veterans and 3 military spouses | 7 active duty and 6 National Guard



“VPO provided a rare combination of strategic insight and practical execution—bridging the gap between a desire to serve and the realities of running for office.”

MICHAEL BENNETT, Coast Guard veteran, Campaign Planning track, active candidate for the Board of County Commissioners - District 3 in Calvert County, Maryland

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS & IMPACT

- In New Mexico, CI&I completed Phase II of a stakeholder-driven effort to design a coordinated care network for veterans and military families, producing a regional model, four-year implementation plan, and governance structure. The team also conducted in-state briefings to advance adoption of the roadmap.
- In Mecklenburg County, the team collected 1,000+ responses for a veteran and military family needs assessment, with findings and recommendations forthcoming.
- This quarter, the IVMF welcomed [Vaya Health](#), the [Veterans Integration Center](#), and [Paws and Stripes](#) to its Community of Practice.
- **SyracuseServes** coordinated 64 requests on behalf of 51 unique clients.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

6 UNIQUE PROGRAMS RUNNING 12 COHORTS

722 ENROLLED ENTREPRENEURS

Six programs include: CEOcircle, EBV, Military Founders Lab, STRIVE, V-WISE, Veteran EDGE

- 514 veterans and 90 military spouses
- 53 active duty, 21 National Guard/Reserve, 13 other
- **Ages:** Under 29 years old (15) | 30-49 (431) | 50+ (245)
- **Boots to Business** trained 550 participants in 33 workshops worldwide
- Average revenue of Veteran EDGE participants was \$6.8M.
- 96% of 2026 Veteran EDGE participants reported the Veteran EDGE conference was a valuable investment of their time and resources.

- 2026 kicked off with IVMF reaching a significant milestone: 100,000 veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs served. [Learn more about the impact and help us celebrate.](#)

If you are interested in helping us serve the next 100,000 veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs, consider donating to our [entrepreneurship programs!](#)



POLICY

- [The Skills-Based Opportunity & Digital Credentialing Roundtable](#) supported by Walmart, in Washington convened cross-sector leaders to advance skills-based hiring and digital credentialing for veterans, identifying policy opportunities and informing data-driven workforce recommendations.
- IVMF endorsed the bipartisan [National Veterans Strategy Act](#) to establish a coordinated federal strategy on veteran well-being, strengthen partnerships, and improve access to services, and will continue building support for its passage.
- IVMF submitted FY27 National Defense Authorization Act language requiring the Department of Defense to report to Congress on transition assistance program metrics, identify gaps, and recommend standardized improvements, and will work with Congress to advance inclusion.

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

- Total number of downloads from the [digital library](#) this quarter: **3,905**
- 28 [research publications](#) and 40 in-person/virtual engagements
- IVMF Awarded two Rostker Dissertation Fund grants (\$48,368) to Andrew Bettinger and Kaixiang Zhang supporting doctoral research that advances evidence-based insights for veteran and military family outcomes.
- Expanded support to the George W. Bush Institute, continuing a partnership since 2018, to evaluate the Presidential Leadership Scholars program, transition data systems, and deliver initial findings.
- Supported the South Carolina Department of Veterans’ Affairs by developing a dashboard to inform veteran population insights and executing a statewide print and digital marketing campaign.

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

TOP CONTENT & NEWS

24 AMBASSADORS REPRESENTING 16 COMMUNITIES & 5 REGIONS

- IVMF presented the Ambassador Impact Award at Veteran EDGE. The recipients exemplify leadership, mentorship, and service, strengthening local ecosystems for veteran and military family entrepreneurs. [Learn more](#) about this year's award winners.
- In February 2026, IVMF convened 100+ participants, alumni, and partners in Tampa and Jacksonville, strengthening regional connections and deepening a military-connected ecosystem built over more than a decade.
- The 2026 CEOcircle Alumni Reunion brought together alumni and the current cohort for structured networking and peer exchange, with attendees highlighting alumni-only sessions and cohort engagement as key value drivers.

- **Most read IVMF content:**
[Entrepreneurship Conference and Pitch Competitions for 2026](#)
- **Most read veteran spotlight:**
[The Gumbo Was Perfect. The Business Wasn't. The Questions that Changed Everything](#)
- **Newest blog celebrating 100K milestone featuring two alumni entrepreneurs:** [He Had an Emmy, a TEDX Talk, and Zero Confidence He Could Run a Company](#)
- **Most engaged VetNet webinar:**
[Everything You Need to Know about Veterans for Public Office](#)

NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS

- A [2026 study by VA Boston and Boston University](#) found that the quality of military-to-civilian transition is closely tied to long-term mental health outcomes, underscoring the importance of continued support beyond separation.
- A new [GAO report](#) identified persistent challenges in veteran homelessness programs, including staffing, housing access, and program evaluation, underscoring the need for stronger data and clearer performance measurement.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



IVMF alumni **Johnathon Ervin**, founder of Battle-Tested Foods, earned a "golden ticket" through Walmart Open Call after [participating in the Road to Open Call](#), positioning his Combat Corn product for national retail expansion. His veteran-owned brand is now live on Walmart's Marketplace.

FEATURED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

IVMF FUNDER SPOTLIGHT

Q3 PUBLICATIONS:

- [2025 Military Family Lifestyle Survey](#) Results: Community, Transition Needs, and Family Financial Situation, highlighting ongoing transition challenges for veteran families. Among veteran respondents, 27%, said they were either finding it difficult to get by or just getting by financially.
- [Understanding Women's Transitions from Military to Department of Veterans Affairs Care](#) highlighting the barriers some women veterans face as they move from Department of Defense care into the VA system and pointing to the need for more responsive support during that transition.
- [The Emergence and Impact of the Military Veteran Entrepreneurship Industry](#) examining how veteran-focused entrepreneurship support can shape belonging, purpose, transition, and broader ecosystem outcomes.



The Elsa and Peter Soderberg Charitable Foundation has made a \$250,000 catalytic investment to support the Veteran Employment Collective. The VEC is a new initiative that will support referrals among select VSO partners, common metrics, data sharing, and reporting tools. This project will help get more veterans and military spouses to the right resource at the right time, ultimately supporting better employment outcomes.

We can't do this work alone. If you or your organization are interested in supporting [career training](#), [entrepreneurship programs](#), or [research and policy efforts](#) that drive awareness and change for veterans and military spouses, we invite you to [connect with us](#).