

D'ANIELLO INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

# ANNUAL REPORT

2025





Syracuse University  
D'Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families  
PMMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

Entrepreneurship

**Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE)**  
Phoenix, AZ • May 2-4, 2025

#VWISEPHX ivmf.org @IVMF

Tera Carter

Aleka Letricio

Dr. Andrea Phillips

Michelle Williams

Michelle Williams

Michelle Williams

Michelle Williams

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiscal Year 2025 marked a year of historic growth and measurable impact for the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF). Across career services, entrepreneurship, research, policy, and community engagement, IVMF expanded its reach to 230,000 individuals impacted while deepening outcomes for veterans and military families nationwide.

A defining milestone was Onward to Opportunity surpassing 100,000 participants served. The program maintained a 68% course completion rate—more than four times the national online average—and supported 4,440 employment-related outcomes, including new employment and career advancement for those already employed. Industry-aligned certification pathways and strong employer partnerships continued to create direct connections to meaningful careers.

Entrepreneurship programs supported 3,334 founders across 11 programs, with Veteran EDGE reaching record attendance and CEOcircle companies representing \$430 million in combined annual revenue. Strategic initiatives such as the USAA Acceleration Challenge and Walmart’s Open Call expanded access to capital, mentorship, and national retail opportunities.

IVMF’s policy and research leadership further strengthened its national influence. Institute leaders testified before Congress five times in 2025, on topics of veteran transition, economic opportunity, and suicide prevention, while new research advanced understanding of veteran entrepreneurship, military spouse employment, and skills-based hiring. Community efforts connected veterans to coordinated care networks, and the Ambassador Program expanded to 60 leaders across 30 communities.

This work was made possible through \$18.9 million in funding from more than 300 donors, with \$18.3 million invested directly into programmatic efforts—demonstrating continued commitment to scalable, evidence-based solutions that expand economic opportunity for the military-connected community.

## MAJOR MILESTONES 2025



230,000

VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES IMPACTED THROUGH IVMF PROGRAMS, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES NATIONWIDE.

### ONWARD TO OPPORTUNITY REACHED

100,000

**participants** - A significant programmatic milestone achieved this fiscal year, demonstrating the scale and reach of career services.

### VETERAN EDGE

set a record with the highest attendance in the conference’s history, with

94%

of surveyed participants reporting they made 3+ new connections that helped their entrepreneurial growth.

### VETERAN PROGRAM FOR POLITICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Veteran Program for Politics and Civic Engagement received the most applications since program launched in 2019 and secured funding for an additional three years.




“ Our policy priorities are shaped not only by the data we collect, but also by the lived experiences surfaced through our programs and partnerships. Many of the challenges facing the military and veteran community—such as employment and health—require coordinated efforts across government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors, our work positions us to identify where policy can better enable collaboration and drive systemic impact. We remain committed to bridging gaps across sectors to strengthen the continuum of support for those transitioning from military to civilian life.

—Barb Carson  
Managing Director of  
Programs and Policy



# POLICY & ADVOCACY IMPACT

IVMF continued to shape national policy through direct engagement with Congress, bringing data-driven insights and practitioner expertise to critical conversations about veteran transition, economic opportunity, and well-being.



**Endorsement of the End Transcript Withholding for Veterans Act**

Introduced by [Rep. John Mannion](#) from IVMF's home district.

Following a DC roundtable “Reimagining Transition: Redefining Pathways for Lifelong Learning and Veteran Success” with 40+ cross-sector leaders, the event sparked ongoing efforts to develop actionable solutions for veterans and their families.

★ ★ ★



## Congressional testimonies were a major theme throughout the year:

- Ray Toenniessen [testified before a joint session of the Veterans Affairs Committees](#) (February) on IVMF's legislative priorities for 2025.
- Barb Carson [testified before the House VA Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity](#) (March) on strengthening the TAP Program.
- Gilly Cantor testified before the [Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee](#) (April) advocating for reauthorization of the SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.
- Ray Toenniessen participated in a closed Senate VA Committee roundtable on transition and post-service success (June).
- Barbara Carson testified before the [U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs](#) focusing on improving transition, accountability, and employment outcomes for veterans (November).
- Misty Stutsman Fox testified U.S. House Committee on Small Business highlighting the economic impact of veteran-owned businesses and calling for policies that expand access to capital (December).

# CAREER TRAINING, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS & EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENTS

Strong employer partnerships remain central to connecting Onward to Opportunity (O2O) program participants with meaningful career opportunities. This year we expanded our network while deepening existing relationships to create more direct pathways to employment.

## O2O IMPACT (2025)

100,000

**participants**—A significant programmatic milestone achieved this year, demonstrating the scale and reach of career services and lives changed.

### ONWARD TO OPPORTUNITY ACHIEVE MORE THAN

4X

the national average and maintains a 68% course completion rate, more than four times the 12.6%-15% average for online learning programs, highlighting both the quality of instruction and the commitment of our participants.

### ONWARD TO OPPORTUNITY REACHED

4,440

participants achieved meaningful career progress—either by securing new employment during or after their cohort experience, or by completing the program while employed to enhance their skills and grow within their current roles.

40+

professional certifications offered online and nationwide across 18 installations. Certification pathway growth aligned to industry and labor market trends remains an imperative element of the program. A sample of FY25 additions included CompTIA SecurityX, CompTIA PenTest+, Microsoft Azure AI Fundamentals, Cisco Certified Ethical Hacker.

OVER

500

participants have opted into the Micron Semiconductor Manufacturing Foundations Course which provides training in semiconductor manufacturing processes and connections to follow-on training opportunities aligned to an industry that experienced a 22% growth rate in 2025.

OVER

2,400

enrollments in Google Cybersecurity and Google AI Essentials certificate pathways combined.



## O2O Partner Spotlight

**VetJobs** joined as an operational partner providing resume support, interview prep, and employment connections across all IVMF programs



**Northrop Grumman** partnership delivered 14 direct hires, 12 cohort engagements, and two national spotlights, reaching 1,700+ O2O participants



**CareerCircle (Allegis Company)** hosted an employer spotlight for O2O participants on how employers evaluate candidates beyond the résumé



## TESTIMONIES OF SUCCESS & IMPACT



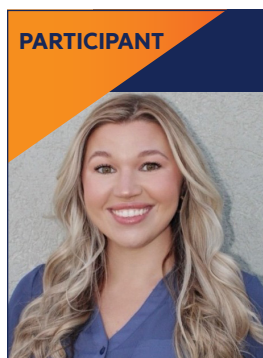
— **Travis Gale**, CompTIA Security+, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, O-4, Joint O2O/HoH Cohort 25-2, May 2025

“O2O ensured I had every tool and resource needed to succeed. I earned my certification on the first try, and just in time for a job interview where it was the only qualification I was missing! Adding that credential gave me the confidence I needed walking into the interview—and I ultimately landed the job.”



— **Megan Andros**, Director of Veterans Affairs, Heinz Endowments

“A successful transition to the workforce during the critical first three years outside the service can shape a new veteran’s well-being for life.”



— **Madison Fuciarelli**, USMC Spouse, Cherry Point April Cohort, PHR course

“The Onward to Opportunity (O2O) program has been nothing short of life-changing for me. As a military spouse navigating the job market, I struggled to find a career path that aligned with my skills, aspirations, and the unique challenges of military life. O2O not only provided me with free career training but also gave me the tools, confidence, and support needed to succeed in ways I never imagined.”



— **Thomas Osborn**, NC West Cohort #36, Sep 2024, PMP Certified

“Completing the program has been instrumental in my journey to earning my PMP certification. The comprehensive coursework and the unwavering support from the cohort were invaluable in helping me navigate the long road to achieving this milestone. I was able to walk into this last attempt relaxed and with more confidence.”

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

From early-stage ideation to scaling established businesses, our entrepreneurship programs supported military-connected founders at every stage of their journey—while building the broader ecosystem they need to thrive.

CEOcircle Fly-in Forum  
March 2025 | Plano



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2025)



### REVENUE GENERATED

NEW CEOCIRCLE COHORT WELCOMED REPRESENTING

**\$430M**

in combined annual revenue



AVERAGE REVENUE METRICS DEMONSTRATE PROGRAM IMPACT

### Veteran EDGE

PARTICIPANTS

**\$4.1M**

average revenue

### CEOcircle

COHORT

**\$20.1M**

average revenue



**3,917**

jobs supported by alumni businesses

### PROGRAM CONSOLIDATION FOR BETTER USER EXPERIENCE

Veterans in Residence, Breaking Barriers in Entrepreneurship, and Bunker Build Up consolidated into Military Founders Lab supporting startup stage entrepreneurs.

# TESTIMONIES OF SUCCESS & IMPACT



— **Beth Benike**,  
Army Veteran,  
Founder of  
Busy Baby

“ This network isn’t just about business advice; it’s about having people who understand where you’ve been and where you’re trying to go. Whether I’m facing a supply chain crisis, exploring new markets, or simply need perspective on a tough decision, I have a community I can turn to. That connection to fellow veterans who are also building businesses has been invaluable, and it’s a resource I continue to lean on as my company grows. ”



— **Shelli Brunswick**,  
EBV, V-WISE, and  
Military Founders Lab  
Participant

“ IVMF is more than a collection of programs; it is a lifelong partner in my entrepreneurial journey. I am deeply grateful for the knowledge, the mentorship, the community, and the opportunities that IVMF continues to create for veterans like me. ”

## Walmart OPEN CALL

11

veteran/military spouse-owned businesses participated

7

earned “golden tickets” for Walmart placement

1

secured an internal deal with long-term growth potential



Additionally, the “Road to Open Call” pitch event prepared 23 veteran entrepreneurs, with 7 earning Fast Passes.

## USAA ACCELERATION CHALLENGE

Held during Military Influencer Conference and was supported by Home Depot, Holland & Knight, and USAA.



AWARDED NINE ENTREPRENEURS

\$6,500

plus mentorship- through post program support

## IVMF MEMBER COUNCIL LAUNCHED

to guide research priorities and strengthen the veteran entrepreneurship ecosystem, with working groups on Ecosystem Advancement, Policy & Advocacy, and Research & Data Alignment

# RESEARCH & EVALUATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our research team continued to fill critical knowledge gaps while informing both IVMF programming and the broader field. New evaluation partnerships and needs assessments expanded our ability to measure what matters and drive evidence-based solutions.



## KEY PUBLICATIONS RELEASED



### Advancing and Strengthening the Veteran Entrepreneur Ecosystem

The brief outlines a framework for communities to enhance veteran entrepreneurship with five key components—Connectivity, Navigation, Support, Capital Readiness, and Flexibility—with actionable recommendations for each.

### Reimagining Military Spouse Employment

This report offers a comprehensive look at the employment conditions of active-duty military spouses. It examines labor force participation, income trends, occupational segmentation, employer hiring practices, and policy considerations.

Supported by



## The Skills-Based Business Case for Hiring Veterans

This report examines the latest industry insights into skills-based hiring and the future of work, connecting these hiring trends and projections to opportunities and challenges for veterans in this employment landscape.



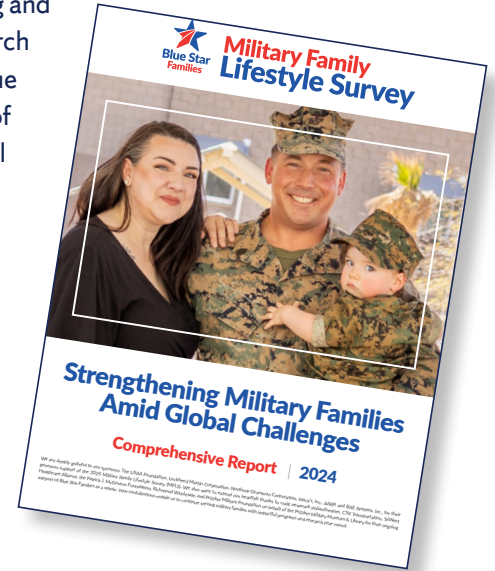
## The Ins and Outs of Procurement Contracting for Military-Affiliated Entrepreneurs

The brief details the experiences of the 47% of VOBs who have sought or participated in procurement contracting, comparing barriers to entry, return-on-investment, revenue potential, and profit margins for government versus corporate contracting.



## 2024 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report

This is a long-standing and comprehensive research collaboration with Blue Star Families. Topics of focus include financial concerns of military families, childcare and military spouse employment, mental health and suicide prevention, and community and resource needs for military to civilian transition.



## Needs Assessments Launched

- \$75,000 grant from [Rancho Santa Fe Foundation](#) for San Diego County Veterans Needs Assessment
- South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs partnership to estimate veterans' needs statewide
- Mecklenburg County, NC funding secured for [veteran needs assessment](#) and outreach strategy

## Evaluation Partnerships

- Selected to lead evaluation of the Presidential Leadership Scholars Program (bipartisan initiative from four Presidential Centers)
- Began 7th consecutive annual evaluation of the G.W. Bush Center Veteran Leadership Program
- Partnered with Medal of Honor Foundation to document their Theory of Change and create an evaluation plan

# COMMUNITY INSIGHTS & IMPACT



Through coordinated care networks and direct service delivery, we connected veterans and families to the resources they need—while strengthening the local ecosystems that serve them.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2025)

### SYRACUSE SERVES

SERVED

**700+**

Unique Individuals

TOP SERVICE TYPES

**28%**

Legal

**20%**

Benefits  
Navigation

**18%**

Housing &  
Shelter

**1000+**

Coordinated  
Requests



### 4TH ANNUAL SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION TALK AND MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

Hosted with Syracuse VA Medical Center, with 100+ attendees and One Degree of Separation Training



### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP) GATHERING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Brought together leaders from 25+ VSOs across 15 states, featuring expert-led learning on coordinated care and a Capitol Hill reception with Rep. John Mannion (NY-22)

### NEW YORK STATE SOCIAL CARE NETWORKS ENGAGEMENT

Convened veteran-serving organizations to explore engagement under the 1115 Medicaid Waiver

### FACE THE FIGHT GRANT RENEWAL

Coalition work on veteran suicide prevention continues with USAA, Reach Resilience, and Humana Foundation



# AMBASSADOR PROGRAM GROWTH



Our nationwide Ambassador network continued to expand, bringing IVMF’s mission to life in local communities through grassroots outreach, mentorship, and ecosystem-building. Expanded to 60 Ambassadors representing 30 communities

## Key Activities

- Contributed to 450+ events nationwide throughout the year
- Seven Ambassadors presented Ambassador Impact Awards at EDGE conference for achievements including VetsFest 2024 in Atlanta, launching a VBOC in Pennsylvania, developing a national ETA mastermind group, and launching a veteran pitch competition at eMerge Americas
- Second Ambassador Fly-In at the NVRC featured 28 Ecosystem Leadership Projects
- Second annual VETSfest in Atlanta drew 500+ military-connected attendees



— **Henry Banh**,  
Houston Ambassador,  
U.S. Army Veteran

“ I understand that many veterans struggle with the transition to civilian life, and entrepreneurship can be a powerful way to regain purpose, stability, and success. By supporting veteran entrepreneurs, I’m continuing to serve your community—just in a different capacity. ”

# VETERANS PROGRAM FOR POLITICS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (VPPCE)

## ALUMNI ELECTORAL SUCCESSES



Our commitment to preparing veterans for civic leadership continued to yield results, with program alumni winning elections at local, state, and federal levels.

- Chelsey Curney elected to Jonesboro City Council (Georgia)
- Alicia Barnes elected to Oakland-area school board (Maine)
- Matt Van Epps elected to represent Tennessee's 7th Congressional District in a special election

### PARTICIPANT



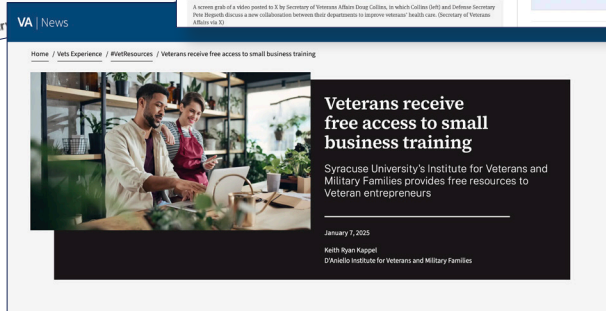
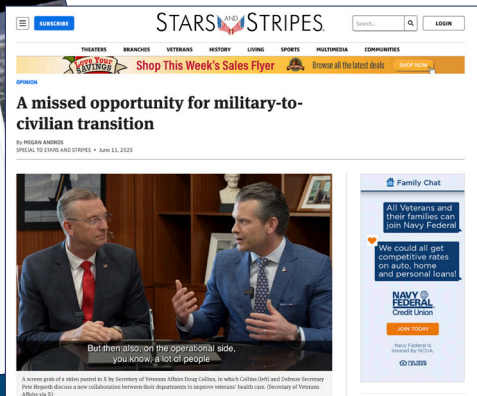
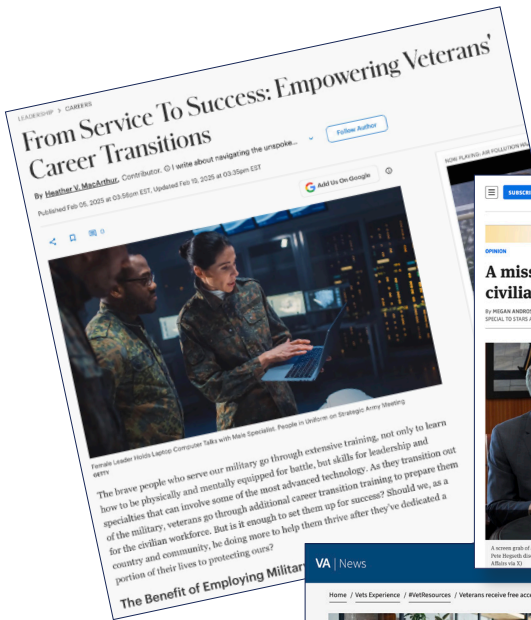
— **Matt Van Epps**,  
U.S. House of  
Representatives for  
Tennessee, 7th district

“As a West Point graduate, Army special operations aviator, public servant, and now a Member of Congress, I’ve seen how service in uniform builds leaders who can continue serving in civic life. I’m proud to have completed Syracuse University’s Veterans Program for Politics and Civic Engagement (VPPCE) in 2019 as part of the inaugural cohort—an intensive, nonpartisan program delivered through the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families and the Maxwell School that equips veterans and military-connected leaders with practical tools for public engagement and political leadership.”

# NOTABLE MEDIA & EXTERNAL RECOGNITION

IVMF's work continues to garner media attention, the marketing and communications team leverage earned media opportunities to amplify the IVMF's mission and the end-user impact of its programs and services.

- Forbes article: [“From Service To Success: Empowering Veterans’ Career Transitions”](#)
- AJC Open Letter/Op-ed: [“President Trump, our veterans make America great”](#)
- Stars and Stripes op-ed by Megan Andros (Heinz Endowments) on DoD-VA MOU: [“A missed opportunity for military-to-civilian transition”](#)
- VA News: [Veterans Receive Free Small Business Training](#)
- CBS Eye on Veterans (Podcast): [IVMF Offers Free Google Cybersecurity Certificate Program](#)



TOTAL ANNUAL MEDIA HITS

1,201

3.7M

NATIONAL BROADCAST REACH, APPEARED IN FORBES, INC., MILITARY.COM

Forbes Inc.

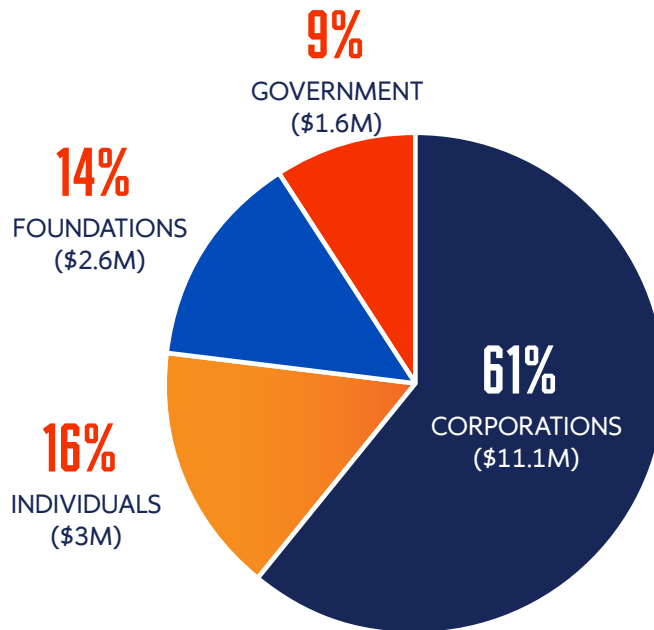
MilitaryTimes

# MAJOR FUNDER PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025, the IVMF was honored to received more than \$18.9M in philanthropic investments from more than 300 donors, including support from long-time corporate partners, new foundation donors, individual gifts, and government grants and contracts.

## DONORS BY TYPE

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



– **Meg Hendricks,**  
Vice President and  
Head of Military and  
Veteran Affairs, Fiserv

“ Supporting veteran entrepreneurs is essential not only for honoring their service but also for fostering innovation and economic growth. Fiserv’s partnership with the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) ensures that we provide the necessary resources, mentorship, and networks these heroes need to transform their entrepreneurial dreams into reality. Together, we are not just investing in their futures; we are enriching our communities and driving positive change in the economy. ”

## SELECT RENEWED SUPPORT

# \$7M

**FISERV, Inc.** renewed their decade-long partnership with the IVMF with a new 7-year investment to support the IVMF's commitment to creating national resources, training and impact for military-connected entrepreneurs.



# \$2M

**The D'Aniello Family** created an endowment to ensure that Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship continues to equip women veterans, military spouses and caregivers with the training, tools, resources and networks to start and grow successful businesses.

The D'Aniello Family

# \$1.7M

**USAA** gave for ongoing support of our career training and education portfolio and increased investment in our evaluation and data work with Face the Fight grantees.



# \$1.15M

The **U.S. Small Business Administration** continued its support of V-WISE and Boots to Business with a supporting grant.



# \$500,000

**Walmart Foundation** invested to better understand how digital credentialing and skills-based training can be leveraged to support transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses, as well as inform related policy.



# \$400,000

**Wounded Warrior Project** invested for continued support for Onward to Opportunity, V-WISE, and WWP Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans program.



# \$250,000

**Mother Cabrini Health Foundation** renewed their support of our community impact and insights work in New York State.



**George W. Bush Foundation** continued their engagement of our evaluation team for evaluation and technical assistance for their Veteran Leadership and Veteran Wellness Check-in programs.



## NEW DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

# \$50,000

**John & Tami Marick Family Foundation** made a contribution to support our career preparation and training work in Washington state.



# \$200,000

**Deloitte Touche Tomatsu** made a unrestricted gift to support our entrepreneurship portfolio.



# \$750,000

**The Pedersen Family Foundation** made their first investment in the IVMF with a grant supporting community impact, research, and career work.

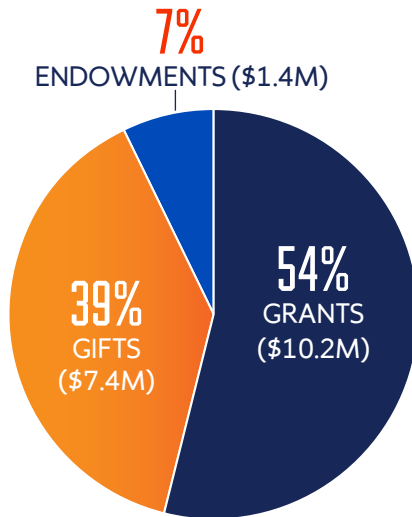


# FINANCIALS

FY'25 July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

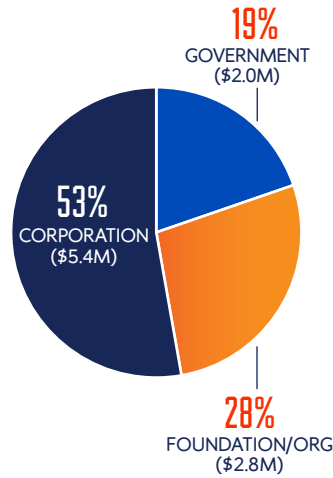
## \$18.9M

TOTAL FUNDING RECEIVED



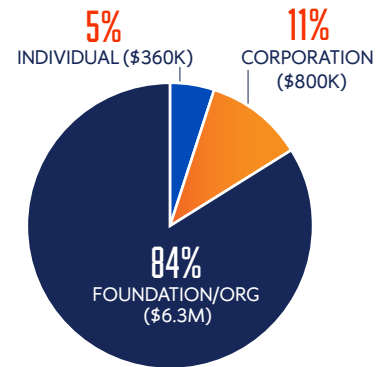
## \$10.2M

GRANTS



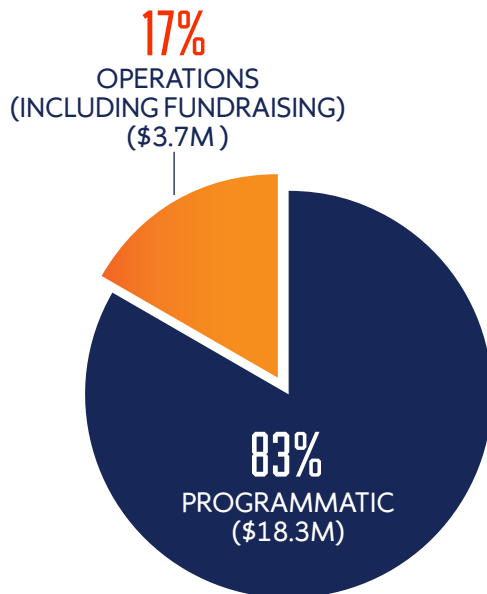
## \$7.4M

GIFTS



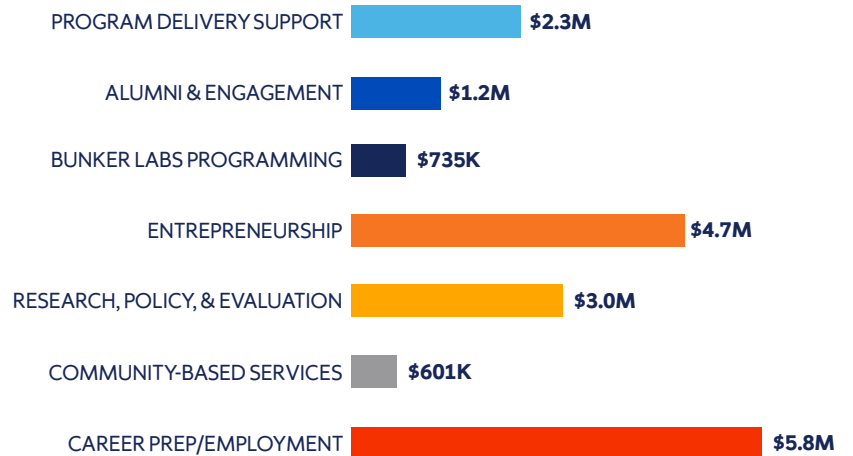
## \$22M

TOTAL EXPENSES



## \$18.3M

PROGRAMMATIC EXPENSES



## KEY PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

FOUNDING PARTNER

**JPMorganChase**



The D'Aniello Family



**fiserv.**



**Walmart**

**Google**



THE HEINZ  
ENDOWMENTS  
HOWARD HEINZ ENDOWMENT  
VIRA I. HEINZ ENDOWMENT

**Deloitte.**

**Johnson&Johnson**



**micron™**





D'Aniello Institute for  
Veterans & Military Families

JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

**The D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)** delivers class-leading programs in career, vocational, and entrepreneurship training by providing service members, veterans, and military spouses with the knowledge, connections, and experience they need to navigate the transition between military life and the civilian world and workplace. We provide and share access to programs, resources, and partnerships that help transform lives and support their goals after service.

The D'Aniello Institute also consults with and advises service organizations across the country on effective ways to coordinate care that serves the needs of veterans and the military family community.

In addition, the IVMF delivers research, evaluation, policy insights, and quality-improvement results through a data-informed approach to address evolving challenges facing veterans and their families. Action-oriented and solution-focused, the IVMF empowers partners to measure, improve, and communicate the impact of veteran and military family initiatives.

For more information, please visit [ivmf.syracuse.edu](http://ivmf.syracuse.edu)



**THEY SERVE, WE SUPPORT.**

**DONATE TODAY.**

Funded through the generosity of donors, the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families is a grant and gift funded non-profit organization supporting veterans, service members and their families during their post-service lives with low or no cost national programs.

Please consider making a gift to help fund these training programs, as well as our continued research and policy work, empowering those who have volunteered to serve our country find success when they return to the workplace, to higher education, to communities.



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