

OUR MISSION:
RESEARCH & POLICY

To conduct, discover, organize, archive, interpret, and disseminate research of significant importance to veterans and families; to leverage research to empower the public, private, and independent sectors to act as informed decision-makers related to the social, policy, and economic concerns of America's veterans and their families.



RESEARCH & POLICY

The IVMF Research and Policy mission expanded greatly in 2013, including two new publications, two national research projects, two new fellows, and nearly 50 additional research briefs. In concert with SU's Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, the IVMF published a major policy document, "A National Veterans Strategy," an ambitious effort to shape the public discourse surrounding the structures and processes the nation uses to serve social, economic and security objectives in support of its veterans. As a result of the National Summit on Women Veteran Homelessness in May, the IVMF began publishing bi-monthly Veteran Homelessness Reports, featuring editorials by researchers, policy makers, program directors and formerly-homeless veterans. The IVMF also launched its National Perceptions Survey in an effort to understand the relationship between military service – and those who volunteer for military service – and the broader values, ideals, and priorities of American society. Additionally, working with the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the IVMF has launched a comprehensive effort to improve the employment outlook of military spouses, including analysis of a decade's worth of data and a national military spouse survey, aimed at assessing the employment situation and career-related challenges facing our nation's military spouses. Results from both surveys are expected in 2014.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

"HALF THE STORY"

Just after the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, in conjunction with Syracuse University's Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, released a March 2013 report titled, "A National Veterans Strategy: The Economic, Social and Security Imperative," Mike Haynie, his team of researchers, fellows and other key IVMF leaders got right back to work.

"Now," says Haynie, executive director and founder of the IVMF, "is the time to develop a lens for us to look through and identify the organizations that are delivering meaningful impacts to veterans and their families."

There are an estimated 41,000 non-profit organizations across the United States whose mission indicates that they serve veterans and military families. Many of these groups deliver measurable and meaningful outcomes in areas that include skills training, housing, and employment. However, in this sea of goodwill live resource inefficiencies, a lack of collaboration, the absence of a proven model of practice for organizations to follow, and a host of bad actors which veterans should take care to avoid.

"In other realms, there are benchmarks when it comes to care and access to services such as, say, medical research," says Haynie, "but this does not exist in the veteran non-profit space."

Haynie hopes that by researching the current programs and approaches aimed at solving the many thorny issues in our community, a clearer picture will emerge – one that highlights sustainable and enduring models. With criterion in place, existing foundations that are faltering can more effectively re-engineer their policies.

Furthermore, untold millions are available from funders who want their philanthropic efforts to provoke real change among veterans and military families. Impact investing, as it's known, is powerful, and money from these individuals and companies should not be squandered, says Haynie, on projects which are ineffective or possibly even harmful.

The March 2013 report, according to Haynie and National Strategy co-author Nicholas Armstrong in their New York Times AtWar Blog post, is a suggestion for "a historic (and long overdue) action: crafting and institutionalizing a coordinated, comprehensive, whole-of-the-nation National Veterans Strategy." Since the report's unveiling, the conversation about the need for large-scale government change is swelling. In the meantime, a second complimentary policy report is poised to make a similar call to action – this time for the private and independent sector.

