FORGED

Forging the Revival:

Why Military-Affiliated Americans Are the Answer to America's Manufacturing Crisis

A White Paper by FORGED

2026

Executive Summary

American manufacturing faces a projected 2.1 million unfilled jobs by 2030, a generational succession crisis among small and mid-sized manufacturers, and a defense industrial base operating below the capacity the nation requires. Simultaneously, the United States has spent two decades systematically underutilizing the most operationally capable population in the country: military-affiliated Americans who leave service with leadership, logistics, precision, and mission execution experience that directly maps to manufacturing ownership and operations.

These are not separate problems. They are two expressions of the same failure — an economy that stopped building things and stopped investing in the people best equipped to build them.

FORGED is a workforce and economic development company that trains, prepares, and deploys military-affiliated Americans — veterans, military spouses, reservists, and Gold Star families — as owners and operators of American manufacturing businesses. Its model is not job placement. It is ownership development: preparing military-affiliated Americans to acquire, launch, and operate the manufacturing companies that the American economy urgently needs and that existing programs have not produced.

This white paper presents the case for FORGED across eight sections: the manufacturing crisis, the collapse of the builder economy, the veteran paradox, the natural match between veteran capability and manufacturing, the gap in existing solutions, the FORGED model, the economic case for investment, and a call to action for manufacturers, government, corporate partners, investors, and military-affiliated Americans.

Section 1: The Crisis Is Real and Urgent

American manufacturing is in trouble — and the consequences extend far beyond the factory floor.

The United States manufacturing sector faces a projected 2.1 million unfilled jobs by 2030. Not because the work doesn't exist. Not because the demand isn't there. Because the workforce pipeline that once fed America's industrial engine has been allowed to collapse for four decades. Manufacturing has fallen from approximately one-third of the American workforce at the start of World War II to just 12 percent today. The people who build things — who machine parts, weld hulls, operate CNC equipment, run quality control on components that end up in submarines and aircraft carriers — are retiring faster than they are being replaced.

The consequences are not abstract. The United States defense industrial base is operating below the capacity the nation requires to meet current and projected security demands. The Navy's shipbuilding plans — Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarines, aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates — require a scale of manufacturing capacity that does not currently exist in the American workforce. At a moment of rising global competition and accelerating military modernization among adversaries, America's ability to build the tools of its own defense is constrained not by funding or technology but by the absence of skilled people to do the work.

Beyond defense, the broader manufacturing crisis is a story of communities hollowed out, supply chains made fragile, and an economy increasingly dependent on other nations to produce what it once built itself. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed how dangerous that dependence is. The political will to reverse it exists across party lines. The funding is beginning to flow through reshoring initiatives, the CHIPS Act, and defense industrial base investment. What is missing is the human infrastructure to absorb that investment and turn it into output.

America has a manufacturing crisis. It also has an underutilized human asset perfectly positioned to solve it. The connection between the two has not yet been made at scale. That is what FORGED exists to do.

Section 2: The Collapse of the Builder Economy

The decline in American manufacturing is inseparable from a broader, decades-long collapse in business formation and entrepreneurial investment.

Since the late 1970s, the rate of new business formation in the United States has fallen by nearly half. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, startups as a share of all firms fell from 16.5 percent in 1977 to 8 percent by 2013. The share of the workforce employed by new firms fell from 5.7 percent to 2 percent over the same period. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates this decline in entrepreneurial activity has been associated with a reduction in annual productivity growth whose cumulative effect has made the economy 3 to 4 percent less productive than if entrepreneurship had remained at its 1977 rate — a loss measured in trillions of dollars of foregone output.

Capital markets have not filled this gap. They have deepened it. According to Carta's 2024 venture capital data, California alone captured 48.79 percent of all U.S. venture capital raised that year — nearly five times more than any other state. New York ranked second at 10.57 percent, Massachusetts third at 8.06 percent. The entire Midwest — Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and all surrounding states — claimed just 4 percent of venture dollars raised in 2024, down from 6.3 percent in 2023 (Carta, 2025). The South captured 11.6 percent. In practical terms, three coastal states absorbed more than two-thirds of all venture capital in the United States. The communities that once anchored American manufacturing — the industrial Midwest, the rural mid-Atlantic, Appalachia — received almost none of it.

Corporate consolidation has compounded the problem. Since the 1980s, declining antitrust enforcement has allowed dominant firms to acquire potential competitors, raise barriers to entry, and capture pricing power across key sectors. Market concentration has increased in more than 75 percent of U.S. industries since 1997. New entrants face larger, better-resourced incumbents than at any point in the post-war era.

The manufacturing sector has absorbed the full force of these dynamics. Between 1979 and 2010, the United States lost approximately 7 million manufacturing jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The communities built around those jobs did not recover. And the small manufacturers that anchored them — machine shops, fabricators, precision parts suppliers — either closed or were absorbed by private equity.

The succession crisis now underway is the direct consequence. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, in 2022 there were 239,265 firms in the manufacturing sector, with 93.1 percent having fewer than 100 employees and approximately three-quarters having fewer than 20. The majority of these firms are owned by baby boomers. The Exit Planning Institute estimates that over the next decade, $10 trillion in business assets will transfer as boomers retire — with manufacturing among the most exposed sectors due to low rates of family succession and high barriers to third-party sale.

When these owners exit without a prepared successor, the outcomes are binary: acquisition by a consolidator or closure. Both reduce competition. Both reduce employment. Both accelerate the concentration problem the market has spent four decades creating.

What is needed is a new generation of owners — people with the operational experience, leadership capability, and mission orientation to acquire these businesses, run them, and grow them. The data suggests America has exactly those people. They are simply not being deployed into this role.

Section 3: The Veteran Paradox

The standard metrics on veteran employment tell a reassuring story. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for veterans was 3.0 percent in 2024 — lower than the 3.9 percent rate for nonveterans (BLS, 2025). On its face, veterans appear to be doing fine.

They are not.

The BLS unemployment rate counts anyone who worked at least one hour in a given week as employed. It does not measure whether that work is commensurate with a person's capability, experience, or the compensation their skills warrant. When a broader measure is applied — one that counts veterans who are working part-time but want full-time work, or earning below a meaningful income threshold — the picture changes dramatically. The Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity's True Rate of Unemployment found that functional unemployment among veterans was 18.2 percent in the first quarter of 2025, more than four times the official BLS figure (LISEP, 2025).

The gap between those two numbers is where the veteran paradox lives.

Multiple studies confirm that veterans are disproportionately affected by underemployment relative to civilian counterparts (LinkedIn Veteran Opportunity Report, 2019 and 2023; Barrera & Carter, 2017). The Department of Defense transitions approximately 200,000 service members to civilian life each year (Journal of Veterans Studies, 2024). Research published in the Journal of Veterans Studies finds that veterans consistently cite challenges securing employment commensurate with their experience as one of the most significant barriers to transition. They find work. They are placed beneath their capability. And the consequences compound over time: underemployment is associated with deteriorating mental health, job turnover cycles, and links to the opioid epidemic and elevated suicide rates (Pratap et al., 2021).

The entrepreneurship data is equally stark. According to research published in the Journal of Veterans Studies, 49.7 percent of World War II veterans and 40 percent of Korean War veterans started their own businesses after service. Among post-9/11 veterans, that figure is 4.5 percent. That is not a gradual decline. It is a collapse of a previously reliable pathway to veteran economic self-determination.

The self-employment rate tells the same story. In 1998, 16 percent of veterans in the civilian labor force were self-employed, compared to 12 percent of nonveterans. By 2018, both groups had converged at 11 percent, with veterans declining at more than three times the rate of the general population (Journal of Veterans Studies, 2024).

What changed is not the capability of veterans. What changed is the infrastructure around them. The conditions that made veteran entrepreneurship viable after World War II — a manufacturing economy hungry for capable operators, affordable capital, community-level economic vitality, and a cultural narrative that celebrated the returning builder — have systematically eroded. What replaced them is a civilian labor market that lacks the translation capacity to recognize what veterans actually are, a benefits system that ties healthcare to employment and makes entrepreneurial risk existentially dangerous for a veteran with a family, and a venture capital ecosystem that directs two-thirds of its capital to three coastal states while the communities where veterans disproportionately live and settle receive almost none of it.

The result is a system that takes people forged by some of the most demanding experiences in American life and slots them into roles they are overqualified for, then measures its success by the fact that they are technically employed.

America is wasting its most prepared human capital. And the cost is paid not just by veterans — it is paid by every community, every manufacturer, and every sector of the economy that could have benefited from what those veterans were actually capable of building.

Section 4: Why Veterans and Manufacturing Are a Natural Match

The case for deploying military-affiliated Americans into manufacturing ownership and leadership is not intuitive or sentimental. It is operational and empirical.

The U.S. military is, by design, a manufacturing environment. It operates equipment at scale, maintains complex machinery under extreme conditions, runs precision quality control on life-critical systems, manages supply chains spanning multiple continents, and executes logistics operations that civilian industry benchmarks itself against. According to the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness, veterans bring direct experience with supply chain integrity, secure systems, and quality control — giving them a specific advantage in facilities operating under export controls or classified production requirements (CREC, 2025).

The leadership profile is equally well-matched. Industry leaders consistently identify the same qualities as most critical to manufacturing workforce needs: the ability to problem-solve, lead or work in a team, and understand safety culture (Alliance Industrial, 2024). The military develops all three at every rank, under conditions that civilian management training does not replicate. McKinsey research estimates that the economic opportunity of deploying veterans' work experience through skills-based hiring in industries like manufacturing could reach nearly $15 billion over a ten-year period (CBIA, citing McKinsey, 2023).

When veterans do build businesses, the performance data is consistent and significant. According to the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, veteran-owned businesses have a 5-year survival rate of 55 to 57 percent, exceeding the national average, and are 5 percent less likely to close with a 2 percent lower risk of failure compared to non-veteran-owned peers (IVMF, 2025). Ninety-eight percent of veteran entrepreneurs report that skills developed in military service directly helped them overcome business obstacles (IVMF, 2025). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 Annual Business Survey, veteran-owned employer businesses generated $922 billion in revenue — approximately 5.3 percent of total employer business revenue in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).

The barriers are not capability. The primary barriers facing veteran entrepreneurs are, consistently and across multiple data sources, access to capital and inadequate networks. A 2018 study by the Small Business Administration and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that veteran businesses have less access to capital than comparable non-veteran businesses. The 2021 National Survey of Military Affiliated Entrepreneurs confirmed access to capital as the top barrier facing new and existing veteran-owned businesses (Bush Center, 2025). Thirty-seven percent of veteran entrepreneurs report capital access as a significant challenge (IVMF, 2025).

Manufacturing specifically is underrepresented in veteran business ownership despite being the sector most aligned with veteran operational experience. The match exists. The pathway does not. FORGED exists to build that pathway — connecting the most underutilized human capital in America to the sector most in need of capable owners and operators, and removing the two barriers — capital and networks — that have prevented the match from happening at scale.

Section 5: What's Missing and Why Current Solutions Fall Short

The infrastructure supporting veteran transition is not small. According to the American Enterprise Institute, approximately 200,000 service members transition annually and have access to roughly 45,000 registered nonprofit veteran service organizations, hundreds of DoD SkillBridge programs, numerous corporate hiring initiatives, and benefits including the Post-9/11 GI Bill (AEI, 2025). The resources exist. The outcomes do not match the investment.

The fundamental problem is that the entire infrastructure is oriented toward one outcome: employment. Not ownership. Not leadership commensurate with capability. Employment — defined as a veteran in a job, any job, as quickly as possible after separation. Every major program measures success by job placement rates, not by whether the placement reflects the veteran's actual potential or produces lasting economic stability and dignity.

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP is mandatory for separating service members and serves as the primary federal transition infrastructure. It provides five days of employment preparation — resume writing, interview skills, and job search mechanics. It does not teach business ownership, manufacturing operations, or how to acquire a company. It is, by design, a job search program.

SkillBridge

SkillBridge allows service members in their final six months of active duty to complete unpaid internships with civilian employers while the DoD continues paying their salary and benefits. More than 12,000 service members enrolled in SkillBridge in the first two quarters of fiscal year 2024 (GAO, 2024). A 2023 RAND Corporation survey found that 40 percent of SkillBridge participants believed the training did not fully align with their desired civilian career path (Milken Institute, 2025). A 2023 U.S. Chamber of Commerce employer survey found that 39 percent of businesses did not understand the process to become an approved SkillBridge partner (Milken Institute, 2025). Most critically, SkillBridge points veterans toward jobs at existing companies — not toward building, acquiring, or leading companies of their own.

Boots to Business

Operated by the SBA, Boots to Business provides entrepreneurship education to transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. In fiscal year 2022, nearly 24,000 participants received training (Congressional Record, 2023). The program provides general entrepreneurship concepts and business ownership principles. It does not provide capital, sustained mentorship, industry-specific preparation, or the income support that makes business ownership viable for a veteran with a family and no civilian financial history. It is an introduction, not a launchpad.

The Capital Gap

Across all programs, the capital access problem remains unsolved. The Federal Reserve's Small Business Credit Survey found that veteran-owned firms receive full financing at a rate of 14 percent, compared to 20 percent for non-veteran-owned firms — an 18 percent relative gap — despite having similar credit risk profiles (Federal Reserve, cited in IVMF, 2024). According to the GAO, some veterans experience declining credit scores after separation due to unemployment or medical costs, and veterans who relocate after service may struggle to establish credit or business relationships in new communities (GAO, 2024).

Heroes MAKE America

Heroes MAKE America, operated by the Manufacturing Institute, is the most substantive existing program connecting veterans to manufacturing careers. Since its 2018 launch, it has issued more than 5,100 industry-recognized certifications, achieved a 90% placement rate across 500 companies in 49 states, and in 2025 its graduates earned average salaries of $77,524 — reflecting placements that include management and operations roles, not only entry-level production (Manufacturing Institute, 2025). The program is well-designed and produces meaningful outcomes.

What it does not produce is owners. Heroes MAKE America prepares veterans to work in manufacturing companies, including at senior levels. No program at scale prepares veterans to acquire, capitalize, and operate manufacturing businesses — to become the next generation of owners of the 239,000 small and mid-sized manufacturers currently facing a succession crisis with no identified heir. The distinction is not trivial. An operations manager earns a salary set by someone else. An owner builds equity, employs others, and anchors a community. The pathway from veteran to manufacturing employee — even a well-compensated one — has been built. The pathway from veteran to manufacturing owner has not.

Section 6: The FORGED Model

FORGED is a workforce and economic development company that trains, prepares, and deploys military-affiliated Americans — veterans, military spouses, reservists, and Gold Star families — as owners and operators of American manufacturing businesses.

Its founding premise is that the barriers preventing military-affiliated Americans from reaching ownership in manufacturing are not capability barriers. They are infrastructure barriers: access to capital, business and financial literacy, industry networks, and the income stability that makes risk tolerable for someone supporting a family. FORGED is designed to remove each of those barriers directly.

Who FORGED Serves

FORGED serves military-affiliated Americans within their first ten years post-separation, with particular focus on those who served between one and ten years of active duty — the population most underserved by existing programs, most likely to be underemployed relative to their capability, and most in need of the income stability and identity continuity that ownership provides. The program also serves military spouses, reservists, and Gold Star family members, recognizing that the military community's operational talent and mission orientation extends beyond those who wore a uniform.

The Three-Phase Model

Phase 1 — Foundation (Months 1–3)

Participants enter the program not knowing that manufacturing ownership is a viable or accessible option for them. Phase 1 reorients that frame. Through cohort-based facilitation, participants examine their military experience as a demonstrated record of operational leadership, resource management, and mission execution — the precise capabilities that make a manufacturing owner effective. Guest faculty include veteran manufacturing owners at meaningful scale. Financial literacy fundamentals — cash flow, unit economics, debt service, valuation basics — are introduced in the context of how manufacturing businesses actually work. Income support through program stipends begins in Phase 1. Cohorts are capped at 20 participants to maintain the accountability and peer culture that mirrors the small-unit experience veterans already know.

Phase 2 — Industry Immersion and Business Development (Months 3–9)

Participants develop manufacturing-specific knowledge and identify their acquisition or startup target. Content covers how manufacturing plants operate, how to read a manufacturing business financially, and what the ownership landscape looks like in specific subsectors. Structured site visits to manufacturing facilities provide firsthand operational exposure. Individual mentors, matched by industry and military background, provide weekly guidance. Government grant and contract literacy — SBA loan programs, WOSB and SDVOSB federal contracting set-asides, state workforce development funding — is demystified and made actionable. By the end of Phase 2, each participant has identified a specific target: an acquisition, a startup, or a senior operational role with a defined equity pathway.

Phase 3 — Build and Capitalize (Months 9–18)

Participants execute. Legal entity formation, accounting infrastructure, and operational setup are handled through FORGED's professional services network. For acquisition-track participants, FORGED provides direct connection to SBA 7(a) and 504 loan programs, seller financing structures, and veteran-specific capital sources including the Small Business Investment Company program. For startup-track participants, MVP development receives structured milestone accountability and peer review. The phase concludes with a cohort showcase — a structured presentation to a curated audience of manufacturers, investors, state economic development officials, and corporate supplier diversity partners.

What Participants Exit With

A FORGED graduate does not exit with a certificate. They exit with a tested acquisition target or launched business, a capitalized balance sheet or active loan process, a network of mentors and industry contacts, knowledge of the government contracting vehicles available to them as a WOSB or SDVOSB, and the identity of a builder — not a veteran looking for work.

The Revenue Model

FORGED operates as a for-profit company, deliberately structured to avoid nonprofit dependency on philanthropic grant cycles. Revenue comes from four primary sources: government workforce development contracts at the federal and state level, DoD and VA education and training funding, corporate partnerships with manufacturers who want veteran talent and veteran-owned suppliers in their supply chain, and fee-for-service training delivered to manufacturers seeking to develop internal veteran talent pipelines. FORGED's WOSB and SDVOSB certifications provide a competitive contracting advantage for federal workforce development vehicles including OASIS+ and relevant SBA contract programs. Maryland serves as the launch market, with national scale the medium-term objective.

What FORGED Does Not Do

FORGED does not take equity from participants. FORGED does not place veterans in jobs on behalf of manufacturers. FORGED does not provide short-term training and measure success by immediate employment. FORGED does not operate as a charity or position the veteran as a recipient of assistance. The veteran is the asset. The program is the infrastructure that deploys it.

Section 7: The Economic Case

The question of whether FORGED is worth funding is answerable with data already in the public record. The inputs are known. The multipliers are established. The gaps are quantified.

The Manufacturing Multiplier

Manufacturing generates more broad-scale economic activity per dollar of output than any other sector in the American economy. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, for every one worker in manufacturing, five additional workers are supported in the broader economy, and for every $1.00 earned in direct manufacturing labor income, $4.33 in total labor income is generated across the economy (NAM, 2024). The Information sector and manufacturing sector both carry jobs multipliers of at least 9.0, meaning the addition of one job in manufacturing supports an average of nine total jobs across the economy — the highest multiplier of any major sector (Camoin Associates, citing Emsi data).

When a FORGED participant acquires or launches a manufacturing company that employs 10 people, the economic model suggests that business is supporting approximately 90 total jobs across the broader economy. At 20 participants per cohort, with conservative assumptions about business survival and employment scale, a single FORGED cohort generating 10 successful manufacturing owners could produce 900 total supported jobs in the broader economy.

The Veteran Business Performance Premium

According to the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, veteran-owned businesses have 5-year survival rates of 55 to 57 percent, exceeding the national average, and are 5 percent less likely to close with a 2 percent lower risk of failure than non-veteran peers (IVMF, 2025). Research from IVMF further shows that veteran-led businesses demonstrate 30 percent higher resilience during market downturns compared to similar firms (IVMF, 2024). Today, more than 1.8 million veteran-owned businesses generate $1.3 trillion in receipts, employ over 4.4 million Americans, and pay $233 billion in annual payroll (IVMF, 2025).

The Succession Crisis as an Investable Opportunity

According to Owners In Honor, 70 percent of small businesses have no succession plan (Owners In Honor, 2024). The Exit Planning Institute estimates that over the next decade, $10 trillion in business assets will transfer as baby boomer owners retire. Manufacturing is among the most exposed sectors.

Private equity acquisition of small manufacturers typically results in cost reduction through workforce consolidation and eventual roll-up into larger entities — outcomes that reduce local employment and community economic stability. Closure eliminates the business entirely. Veteran acquisition preserves the business, maintains employment, and introduces an owner with the operational discipline and mission orientation to grow it. The investment in FORGED is not a cost — it is a capital deployment that redirects business succession outcomes from consolidation or closure toward veteran ownership.

The Underemployment Cost

The Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity estimates that functional unemployment among veterans was 18.2 percent in the first quarter of 2025, more than four times the official BLS figure (LISEP, 2025). McKinsey estimates that the economic opportunity of deploying veterans' work experience at its actual value through skills-based approaches could reach nearly $15 billion over a ten-year period (McKinsey, cited in CBIA, 2023). Every veteran who spends a career in a role beneath their capability represents foregone economic output. FORGED converts that foregone output into realized economic activity.

The Public Investment Return

Workforce development programs with rigorous outcome tracking have demonstrated compelling returns on public investment. An ROI analysis of a single Maryland state-sponsored workforce development program was sufficiently compelling that it convinced legislators to double the program's funding during a period when other state programs faced cuts (LTSS Center, 2025). Federal workforce development funding through WIOA, DoD education programs, and VA training benefits already flows to programs with significantly lower economic multipliers than manufacturing ownership development. Redirecting a portion of that investment toward FORGED produces superior economic returns by every measurable standard — jobs created, businesses launched, manufacturing capacity restored, and veteran economic mobility achieved.

The ask is not for charity. It is for a reallocation of existing workforce development investment toward the highest-return use case available: military-affiliated Americans acquiring and operating American manufacturing businesses.

Section 8: A Call to Action

The evidence presented in this paper points to a single conclusion: the convergence of veteran underutilization and American manufacturing decline is not a coincidence, and it is not inevitable. It is the result of an infrastructure gap — the absence of a deliberate, well-designed pathway connecting the most operationally capable population in America to the sector most in need of capable owners and operators. FORGED exists to close that gap.

The work ahead requires participation from multiple sectors. Each has a specific role.

For Manufacturers and Industry Associations

The succession crisis is not coming — it is here. Seventy percent of small manufacturers have no identified successor. FORGED produces the next generation of owners and operators your industry needs. Partner with FORGED by opening your facilities to cohort site visits, committing to mentor relationships with program participants, and prioritizing veteran-owned suppliers in your procurement pipeline.

For Federal and State Government

The workforce development infrastructure you fund is producing employment outcomes. FORGED produces ownership outcomes — a fundamentally higher return on the same investment. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding, DoD SkillBridge infrastructure, VA education benefits, SBA entrepreneurship programs, and state manufacturing workforce grants all represent existing capital that can be directed toward FORGED without new appropriations. The economic multiplier on manufacturing ownership development exceeds that of any other workforce investment category. Direct it accordingly.

For Corporate Partners and Supplier Diversity Programs

Veteran-owned businesses outperform on survival, resilience, and community reinvestment. The businesses FORGED produces will be seeking corporate customers, supply chain relationships, and procurement partnerships from day one. Committing to veteran-owned supplier development now — before the businesses exist — is how you build a pipeline rather than chase one.

For Investors and Capital Partners

Veteran-led businesses demonstrate 30 percent higher resilience during market downturns than comparable firms, 55 to 57 percent five-year survival rates exceeding national averages, and documented outperformance on revenue and employment growth. The capital gap is the primary barrier preventing veteran manufacturing owners from launching and scaling. FORGED connects you to a pre-screened, operationally trained, mission-oriented pipeline of acquisition and startup candidates in a sector with documented demand. This is not philanthropic investing. It is high-quality deal flow in an underserved segment.

For Military-Affiliated Americans

If you have served — as a veteran, a military spouse, a reservist, or a Gold Star family member — and you are working in a role beneath what you are capable of, this program was built for you. Your military experience is not a liability to be translated or apologized for. It is the foundation of what you will build. FORGED provides the education, capital access, industry connections, and sustained support to take you from where you are to ownership of something real. The pathway exists. The only question is whether you take it.

For Policymakers and Researchers

Significant gaps remain in longitudinal tracking of veteran manufacturing business outcomes, the economic impact of veteran acquisition activity on specific regional economies, and the effectiveness of income support models in enabling veteran entrepreneurship. FORGED is committed to rigorous outcome measurement and to contributing to the public research base on veteran economic mobility. We welcome partnership with academic institutions, think tanks, and policy organizations seeking to understand and amplify what works.

For partnership inquiries, investment discussions, program participation, or research collaboration:

[contact information]

The data cited in this paper is available in full with source documentation upon request.