



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2025

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At CVTI, we have the privilege of getting to do work that matters deeply to us every single day, and we never take that privilege for granted.

Our Center was created because we believed veterans deserved more than underestimation, limited opportunities, and systems that failed to recognize everything they bring to the table. We saw the extraordinary talent, discipline, leadership, and potential of our student veterans here at Columbia – and we saw the positive impact they were having on our campus – and we felt compelled to share what we were learning with anyone who would listen.

That desire – that drive to have conversations and build collaborations here at Columbia and across the country – still fuels our work today.

We are incredibly proud of what we've been able to accomplish with our partners over the past year. We have worked alongside veterans, military-connected families, educators, employers, and community leaders who have challenged us, inspired us, lifted us up, and made us – and our work – better. To everyone who has co-conspired with us to build stronger outcomes for veterans and their families, we're humbled by your partnership, and we appreciate your trust in us.

We also recognize how much work remains. Too many transitioning service members, veterans, and their families still face barriers in education, employment, and the communities they call home. Too often, the challenge isn't whether veterans are ready to succeed – it's whether our institutions are ready to recognize their strengths, understand their experiences, and create environments where they can realize their fullest potential. We know that meaningful change doesn't happen overnight. It happens one conversation, one partnership, one campus, one workplace, and one community at a time. That's the work that motivates us, and it's the work we're proud to continue.

As we look ahead, we stand ready to keep listening, collaborating, and pushing for better systems and stronger communities so that veterans and their families are not simply welcomed and supported, but fully empowered to thrive.

- The CVTI Team

OUR MISSION

CVTI improves the lives of veterans, transitioning service members, and their families by collaborating with institutions, organizations, municipalities, and practitioners to build integrative cultures of support in higher education and the workplace.

Scaling Impact • Everything CVTI does is designed to maximize benefit for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families. That's why we prioritize structural change over individual services.

Facilitating collaboration • In a crowded field serving a large and diverse population, collaboration is essential. CVTI is proud to invest time and effort in working closely with our partners, and in helping connect individuals and institutions with each other.

Embracing complexity • Life for military-connected people often involves complex systems and multiple institutions. CVTI helps organizations understand those challenges and supports people in navigating them, recognizing that every person's background and experience is different.

At Columbia University we apply the same focus, synthesizing collaboration across schools, departments, and local NYC partners not only to provide a hub of resources and opportunities for student veterans, but also to provide best-in-class capacity building efforts for the staff and faculty that engage daily with the Columbia veteran and military-connected community.

Nationally we focus on strengthening people and systems, serving veteran and military-connected communities in higher education and workforce settings. This includes student veterans, dedicated veteran support professionals, hiring managers, staff, faculty, and leadership at all levels across the country.



CVTI STAFF

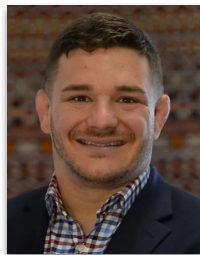
Curtis Rodgers

Vice Dean, School of
General Studies and Founder
of CVTI



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Director of Education



Michael Cennamo

Associate Director of
Educational Technology



Tiana Sloan

Associate Director of
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Senior Advisor



Beth Morgan

Director of Higher Education
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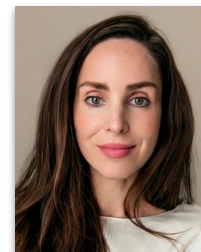
David Keefe

Director of Military and
Veteran Community
Engagement



Glen Steinmacher

Associate Director of Creative
Content



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HOW WE WORK

Our work is built upon four interconnected strategic practice areas:



Collaborative Thought & Convening

In a crowded field of people and organizations serving a massive population, we work with aspirational individuals and institutions across the country to achieve stronger outcomes together than we could alone.



Content Creation and Distribution

We equip institutions, practitioners, and communities with innovative content solutions they can use to create lasting change for military-connected people.



Community Action Research

We bring together leaders and organizations to solve challenges that no one can address alone.



Force Multiplication and Advisory

Everything CVTI does is designed to ensure the greatest benefit for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.



HOW WE WORK

The coordination of people, resources, and partnerships helps veterans and military-connected students access education, thrive in education, and achieve meaningful career outcomes.

Partnership, Advisory, and Institutional Support



CVTI provides strategic guidance and institutional support to help colleges, employers and community partners strengthen services and outcomes for veteran and military-connected students. Through initiatives such as our Flash Diagnostic, we help institutions evaluate their capacity, identifying strengths and gaps across programs and practices, and establish a clear evidence-based starting point for change. We then equip leaders with actionable insights that drive continuous improvement, resulting in stronger systems of support and better outcomes for veterans.

Education and Workshops



CVTI develops educational and professional development opportunities that strengthen institutional capacity to serve veterans and military-connected students. Our accessible educational content, including courses, workshops, trainings, guides, publications, and digital resources, equip faculty, staff, administrators, employers and community partners with the tools and knowledge needed to support educational and workforce success. Offerings range from self-paced online courses to in-person workshops and custom trainings, covering topics from veteran cultural awareness and transition support to career readiness, while highlighting the importance of growth mindset, imposter feelings, and translating the military mindset. By building this shared knowledge-base across the institution, we help create more informed and welcoming environments where veterans and military-connected students can thrive.



HOW WE WORK



Community Research & Engagement



CVTI's community engagement uses ethnographic, participatory, and interventionist methods to reach the many communities within the larger veteran community on Columbia's campus, throughout NYC, and beyond. Through initiatives such as CVTI Narrative Practice, listening sessions, surveys and other community informed research, we foster ongoing communities of practice grounded in listening and observation, attentive to narratives that are always shifting. This sustained presence permits us to identify service gaps, provide resources, strengthen policies, and encourage more thoughtful storytelling about veteran and military-connected communities. Data and lived experiences are translated into recommendations, resources, and publicly available products.

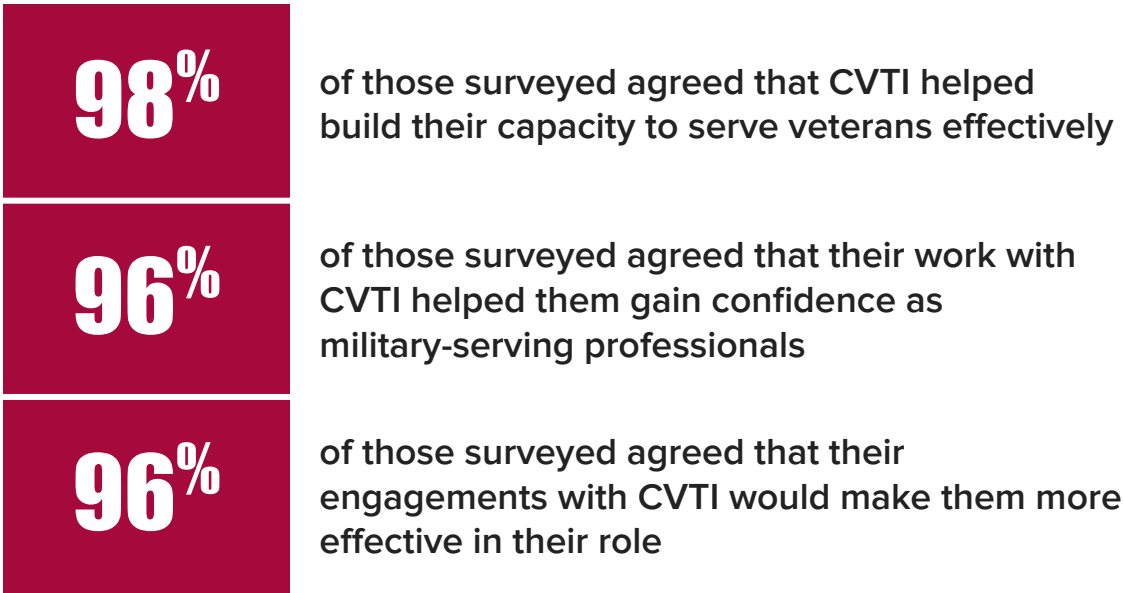
Convening & Collaborative Networks



CVTI brings together veterans, educators, employers, and community partners to exchange knowledge, examine shared challenges, and develop stronger approaches to veteran transition and integration. Through conferences, roundtables, workshops, and communities of practice, we create space for honest dialogue and shared learning.

Through initiatives like the NYC Consortium for Veteran and Military-Connected Student Support, CVTI remains grounded in a shared mission: to improve the lives of military-connected students and their families by empowering institutions across NYC to build cultures of support through collaboration, shared resources, and collective action.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS



Data is based on constituents surveyed at in-person engagements.

	2025	Lifetime
Cost Savings	\$163,500	\$651,900+
Organizations Served	543	1,153
Collaborative Engagements	195	2,392
Community Reach	67,860	317,400+

IMPACT IN ACTION

From Listening to Action: Our Flash Diagnostic Tool



CVTI's Flash Diagnostic Tool, developed through years of listening to student veterans and campus stakeholders, helps institutions move beyond "military-friendly" labels to assess the culture of support they truly provide. Piloted across national conferences and partner engagements, the tool enables schools to identify strengths and gaps in their veteran support ecosystems, emphasizing that meaningful impact comes from institutional culture, not just programs, while continuing to evolve through community feedback.

Building Capacity for Veteran Narratives

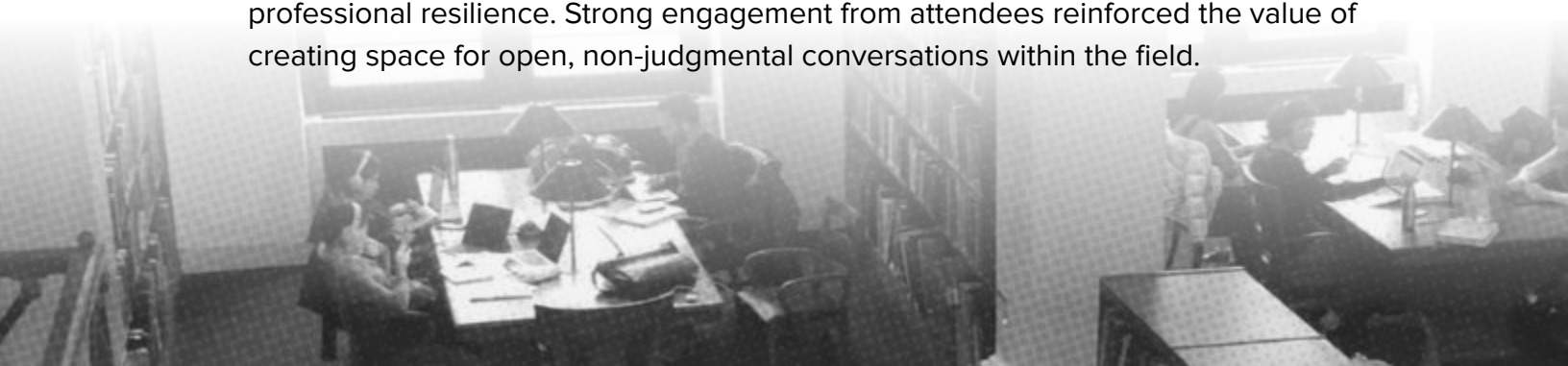


Building Capacity for Veteran Narratives is a cornerstone of our cultural awareness training, equipping staff and faculty across the institution, from academic advisors and career counselors to health professionals, executive leadership, and public safety, to better understand and support veterans. The training is grounded in a simple but important idea: a person's story is shaped not just by what happened to them, but by how, where, and to whom it is told. We approach veteran identity as complex and evolving, resistant to simple labels or categories, and work to counter institutions' tendency to default to convenient generalizations. By ensuring veterans define their own identities, rather than having those identities defined for them, this training helps every part of our community build genuinely inclusive environments of support.

NASPA 2026 Symposium for Military-Connected Students



At the NASPA Symposium for Military-Connected Students, CVTI's Director of Education, R.J. Jenkins, was invited to deliver two breakout sessions and co-present a plenary session. Originally proposed as a candid discussion on the challenges of supporting student veterans, the session evolved into a plenary titled "*When the Work Is Hard: Strengthening Ourselves in Service to Student Veterans.*" Co-presented with a team of veteran-serving professionals, the session modeled reflective dialogue about the complexities of the work, emphasizing the importance of vulnerability and professional resilience. Strong engagement from attendees reinforced the value of creating space for open, non-judgmental conversations within the field.



IMPACT IN ACTION

Veteran Success and Regional Collaboration at Minnesota State Moorhead



CVTI participated in Minnesota State Moorhead's Veterans Resources and Services Fair, convening military-connected students, campus leaders, and community partners to strengthen regional support networks. Director of Education, R.J. Jenkins, delivered the opening address, *"Beyond Veteran Friendly: Building a Campus Culture That Truly Empowers Veterans and Their Families."* The event highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration in building community-based ecosystems of support, reinforcing CVTI's commitment to partnership-driven approaches that improve outcomes for veterans and military-connected students.

Engaging the Columbia Community Through the CVTI Summer Seminar Series



CVTI's Summer Seminar Series offers the broader Columbia community and campus neighbors an opportunity to come together for thoughtful, accessible conversation about America's relationship with veterans and the military community. This summer's informal seminar, *America & the Armed Forces: 250 Years of Service, Conflict, and Transition*, explored how that relationship has evolved over 250 years through literature. The series also provided an opportunity to explore public understanding of the armed forces' role in American civic life, including the role of the National Guard in domestic response. Across four sessions of guided discussion, participants considered how the past can inform the nation's expectations of its armed forces in the future.

A Faculty Guide to Engaging Veteran and Military-Connected Students in the Classroom



In response to the diverse and often nontraditional profiles of student veterans, many of whom balance academic, professional, and family responsibilities, CVTI partnered with Columbia University's Core Curriculum faculty to develop a guide supporting inclusive teaching practices in the classroom. The resource equips instructors with insights and strategies to better engage student veterans, fostering reflective, student-centered classrooms that support their transition to higher education without prescribing rigid approaches.

JOIN US

At CVTI, we believe that empowering veterans and military-connected families is something none of us can do alone. Lasting change only happens when people choose to connect, collaborate, and invest in a shared mission.

Every program we build, every conversation we facilitate, every resource we create, and every life we have the privilege to impact is made possible by people and organizations who believe this work matters enough to support it. We cannot do what we do without their generosity.

If our work resonates with you, we would love for you to be part of it. Connect with us. Share your ideas. Partner with us. And, if you are in a position to do so, consider making a charitable gift to help ensure this work continues to grow and reach those who need it most.

Together, we can build communities where veterans and military-connected families don't just transition – they thrive.

Connect. Collaborate. Contribute.

veterans.columbia.edu



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