



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

# Implementation Assessment of Executive Order 13518— The Veterans Employment Initiative

In partnership with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University recently completed a year-long study to assess the implementation of Executive Order (EO) 13518, Veterans Employment in the Federal Government. Signed on November, 9, 2009, EO 13518 created the Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI), one of the most comprehensive efforts in U.S. history to increase veterans' employment in U.S. federal agencies. Through interviews with key insiders involved in the VEI's implementation and surveys of human resources professionals, hiring managers, and employees across the federal workforce, the IVMF research produced several key findings and recommendations:

### KEY FINDINGS:

- **Since the start of the VEI, the number of veterans working in the Federal Government has increased significantly.** Veterans now represent nearly one-third (30.9 percent) of the total U.S. federal workforce, marking a five-percentage point rise (from 25.8 percent) since 2009.
- **Larger, better-resourced agencies have had more success implementing the VEI than smaller, more specialized agencies.** Large agencies with more resources and a strong cultural affinity for hiring veterans (e.g., DOD and VA) had the most success implementing different parts of the VEI program, such as centralized Veteran Employment Program Offices to coordinate veteran employment efforts across their organizations. Smaller agencies with more specialized missions and hiring needs had greater difficulties.
- **There is widespread dissatisfaction with existing rules governing veterans' employment.** In interviews and surveys conducted for the study, everyone from senior agency leaders to human resources professionals, hiring managers, and line employees reported that the Veterans Preference and veteran hiring rules currently governing veterans' employment in the Federal Government are overly complex, confusing, and difficult to implement.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Reinvigorate the VEI's Veterans Employment Council—ensure it convenes regularly and has the right leadership.** The VEI is led by a council that includes the Federal Government's 24 largest agencies. While the Council co-chairs—the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs—provided strong initial leadership, leader engagement decreased over time. This Council needs sustained political leadership—it should preferably be chaired by the Vice President, convene quarterly, and be attended by agency leaders with the authority needed to commit their organizations to specific courses of action in veterans' employment.
- **Provide more resources and training to support agency veteran employment efforts.** Agencies should receive enough resources to commit full-time staff to run their Veteran Employment Program Offices, rather than assigning these responsibilities to individuals already tasked with other diversity hiring efforts. Agencies should also deliver additional training and education on Veterans Preference and veteran hiring rules to their workforces.
- **Promote collaboration within and across agencies to identify mission critical hiring needs and recruit veteran candidates who can fill the ranks.** Harnessing veteran talent requires agency human resources and hiring managers work together more to define their human capital needs, craft clearer job announcements, conduct effective outreach to veterans, and help veterans navigate the application and hiring processes.

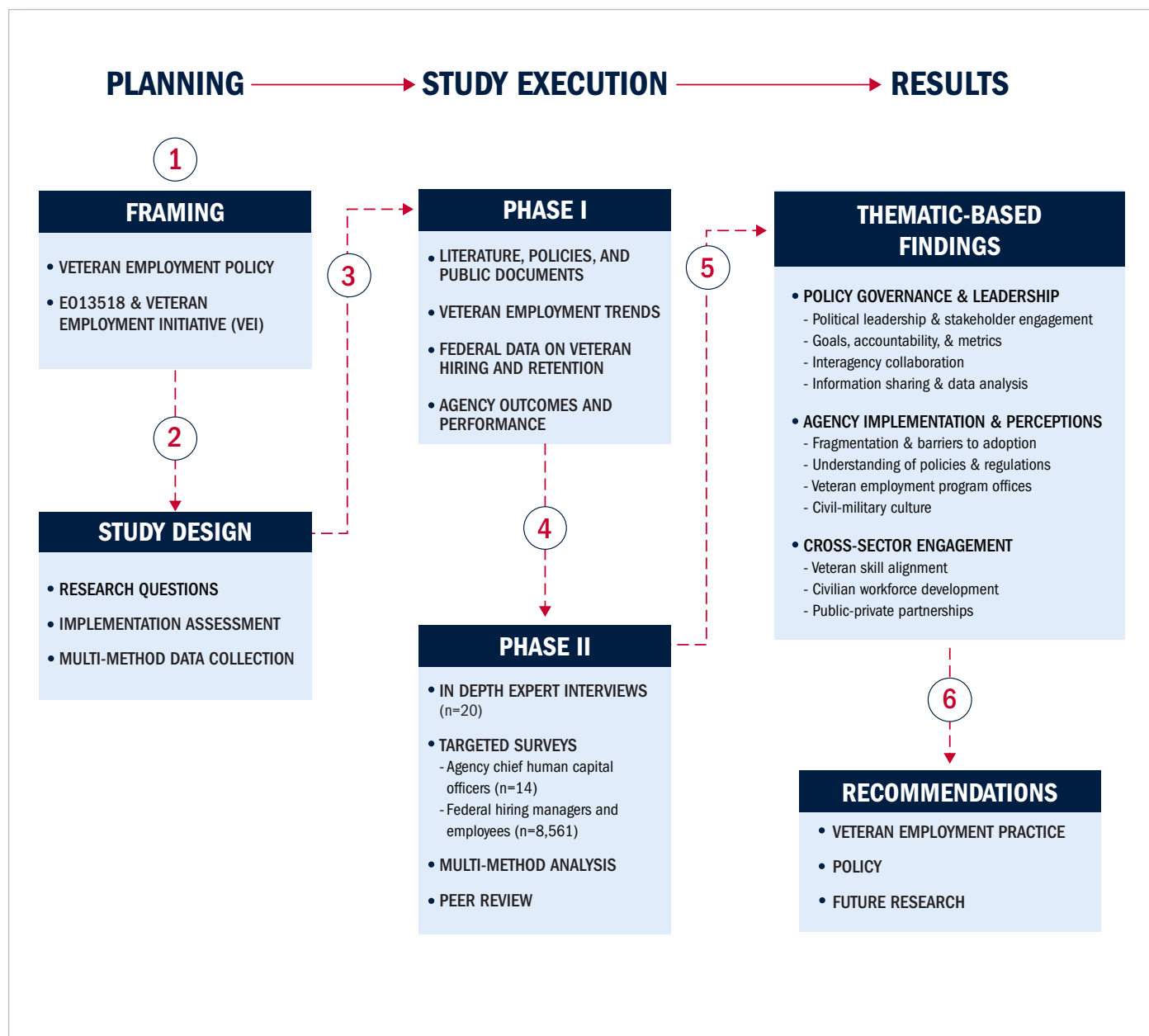
## PREPARED FOR THE U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

KEY HIGHLIGHTS | DECEMBER 2017

**SUGGESTED CITATION:** Armstrong, N.J., Huitink, Z.S., Hidek, M., Maury, R.V., Uveges, R.L., Birnbaum, N., Hyseni, F. (2017). Implementation Assessment of Executive Order 13518—The Veterans Employment Initiative (Final Technical Report), Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University.



# PROJECT PLAN



## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES (IVMF)

The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) is the first interdisciplinary national institute in higher education focused on the social, economic, education, and policy issues impacting veterans and their families. Through its professional staff and experts, the IVMF delivers leading programs in career, vocational, and entrepreneurship education and training, while also conducting actionable research, policy analysis, and program evaluations. The IVMF also supports communities through collective impact efforts that enhance delivery and access to services and care. The Institute, supported by a distinguished advisory board, along with public and private partners, is committed to advancing the lives of those who have served in America's armed forces and their families. For more information, visit [ivmf.syracuse.edu](http://ivmf.syracuse.edu).