

INTRODUCTION

The Anschutz family recognizes the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, and realizes that if it were not for their service, there would be no private enterprise, no personal freedom, and no opportunity to pass along the many blessings of living in a free and prosperous nation! Because of that desire to recognize those who have risked their lives in the service of our country, The Anschutz Foundation helped launch The Philanthropy Roundtable's philanthropic effort in support of our veterans. When doing so, we began with several key assumptions. These insights were missing from many charitable supports for veterans at that time—which is why we supported the advisory effort to help donors improve their giving. Here are examples of some of the central premises we began with:

- **Veterans are assets to be built up, not liabilities to be fixed.** The vast majority of veterans adjust smoothly to civilian life—often because of the responsibilities and even stresses they had to cope with during their military service. Young veterans who are struggling often just need an intelligently targeted boost, and then they are able to contribute to the nation's economic and civic strength the rest of their lives.
- **Incentives matter.** Veterans, as you will see in the statistical section of this book, are well above average in most measures of character, education, skill, and human potential. But every person responds to the incentives society offers them. If donors and nonprofits simply give things to veterans instead of challenging them and helping them become their best selves, these young men and women are at risk of becoming dependents, or languishing well below their potential—just like anyone else who is told he is entitled, or broken, or not responsible for his life. Donors who want veterans to thrive should help them become self-reliant.
- **Veterans are not a separate species.** Very often, the charitable organizations that will be most helpful to veterans are those that are excellent in ministering to other populations. Whether it is health care, job placement, or education, it may be most effective for a philanthropist to

help an existing champion in that category extend itself a bit to fold veterans into its mission, instead of always creating a veteran-specific organization.

- **Focus your attention and your spending.** The best donors and organizations are generally those that pick one or two specialties and focus intently on them. It can be tempting for donors to try to fund every potential need a veteran may face. Usually it will make more of a difference if you master just a few offerings and do them well.

You are about to read a collection of real experiences by savvy, leading donors, laboring across a wide range of issues and places. Their work is some of the most excellent being done for veterans today. Once you have absorbed the practical lessons they've learned, and glimpsed the strategies they apply to make sure they hit their targets, you will be well equipped to excel in this important philanthropic work too.

This is a young field in private giving. It's one where you can leave your own proud philanthropic legacy. In the process, you will bolster your nation, your community, and some of the most worthy men and women in America.

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