



Supporting Employers *Serving the Nation*



National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve | 1555 Wilson Blvd, Suite 200, Arlington, VA 22209 | 1-800-336-4590

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The Department of Labor Secretary, Elaine L. Chao, speaks during the model employer announcement June 28 at the department's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

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About ESGR

What is Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve?

Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense organization. It is a staff group within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (OASD/RA), which is in itself a part of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The nation's Reserve components (referring to the total of all National Guard members and Reserve forces from all branches of the military) comprise approximately 46 percent of our total available military manpower. The current National Defense Strategy indicates that the National Guard and Reserve will be full partners in the fully integrated Total Force. Our Reserve forces will spend more time away from the workplace defending the nation, supporting a demanding operations tempo and training to maintain their mission readiness.

In this environment, civilian employers play a critical role in the defense of the nation by complying with existing employment laws protecting the rights of workers who serve in the Reserve component.

ESGR was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. It is the lead DoD organization for this mission under DoD Directive 1250.1.

Today, ESGR operates through a network of hundreds of volunteers throughout the nation and Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Europe.

ESGR Mission

Gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve.

Customers

- | Employers
- | National Guard and Reserve members

Stakeholders

- | Office of the Secretary of Defense
- | Uniformed Services
- | Volunteers

Strategic Goals

1. Gain support from all identified Reserve component employers
2. Advocate for Reserve component employers within DoD
3. Ensure viability of All-volunteer force
4. Educate customers and stakeholders
5. Transform ESGR organizational structure to be relevant and effective

Programs and Activities

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has a national and local organizational structure to support the following functions:

- | Operate a proactive program directed at U.S. employers, employees, and communities that ensures understanding and appreciation of the role of the National Guard and Reserve in the context of the DoD Total Force Policy.
- | Encourage and assist employee participation in National Guard and Reserve training programs and on military duty without civilian job impediments of any kind, to include encouraging voluntary compliance with federal and state statutes governing employment and reemployment rights of Reserve component members.
- | Encourage interaction between National Guard and Reserve units and their communities to promote public understanding of the National Guard and Reserve and encourage partnerships between civilian organizations and military units in the community.
- | Assist in preventing, resolving, or reducing employer and/or employee problems and misunderstandings that result from National Guard or Reserve membership, training, or duty requirements through information services and informal mediation.
- | Assist in educating National Guard and Reserve members regarding their obligations and responsibilities to employers.
- | Use the military chain of command to promote better understanding of the importance of maintaining positive working relations between employers and their Reserve component employees, in order to sustain National Guard and Reserve participation.
- | Solicit the assistance of military agencies, military training schools, and military and civilian associations in educating the Reserve forces about their rights and responsibilities regarding terms and conditions of civilian employment, as stipulated in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- | Recruit and develop volunteer leaders at the national and local levels to promote the development of employer personnel policies and practices that accommodate and facilitate employee participation in

National Guard and Reserve activities.

ESGR conducts both proactive and reactive services in support of the organization's strategic goals.

The primary emphasis for a comprehensive employer outreach program is directed towards known employers of the Guard and Reserve, as identified by the Civilian Employment Information (CEI) initiative through the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness. To that end, ESGR conducts the "[5-Star Employer Program](#)."

Five-Star employers are those who have completed the following steps:

1. Sign [Statement of Support](#) – demonstrable compliance with the law
2. Review HR policy
3. Train supervisors and managers on USERRA
4. Provide "Above and Beyond" HR policy
5. Advocate for Guard/Reserve

The primary means of assistance in preventing, resolving, or reducing employer and/or employee problems and misunderstandings that result from National Guard or Reserve membership is done through a nationwide [Ombudsman Program](#).

ESGR has a national network of over 900 volunteer ombudsmen who help resolve issues between employers and their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. These volunteers, each of whom receives extensive training on USERRA and dispute resolution techniques, serve as informal mediators between the employer and employee and inform and educate the employer and employee on what the law requires and assist in finding a mutually agreeable solution. ESGR Ombudsmen have successfully mediated over 95 percent of cases in the past year.

ESGR Ombudsmen are a resource for employers and members of the National Guard and Reserve, and can be reached via e-mail at ESGRMailbox@navy.mil or by phone at (800) 336-4590.

ESGR Organization

When the end of the draft was initially anticipated in the early 1970's, defense planners foresaw a potential problem with the nation's Reserve servicemembers and their civilian employers. Long accustomed to National Guard and Reserve membership as an alternative to compulsory Active duty service, it was believed that employers might question the necessity of service in a purely voluntary military system. The planners concluded that some employers might not be supportive of their workers serving voluntarily in uniform.

The Department of Defense chartered the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) over 28 years ago to:

- | Inform employers of the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserve.
- | Explain the necessity for and role of these forces in national defense.

Originally consisting of a small, select, volunteer panel of distinguished Americans representing business, government, labor, and military, they directed most of their efforts at their peers. It soon became apparent that this purely top-level effort was insufficient.

Throughout the years, studies showed that nearly a third of the men and women surveyed about why they were leaving the National Guard and Reserve still indicated "employment conflict" as the source of their problems.

Identifying the need to expand its outreach, the national ESGR leadership established a nationwide network of [local employer support volunteers](#), organized in ESGR Committees within each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In this way, ESGR could bring the message to all employers, large and small, in cities, towns, and rural areas.

Today, nearly 2,500 volunteer executives, senior government representatives, educators, and military personnel serve on local Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committees. With help and resources from the National ESGR Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, the 56 ESGR Committees conduct employer support programs, including [Ombudsmen Services](#), and [recognition of employers](#) whose policies support or encourage participation in the National Guard and Reserve. By explaining the missions of the National Guard and Reserve and by increasing public awareness of the role of the employer, they develop a dialogue among employers, the ESGR Committees, and local National Guard and Reserve unit commanders and members. ESGR Committee members also provide information to the National Chair on specific problems. This information helps point out regional or national trends that affect recruiting, retention and training of the National Guard and Reserve.



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Information about ESGR

What is the National Committee of Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve?

Employers of America's National Guard and Reserve members have become inextricably linked to a strong national Defense. Thus establishing the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an agency within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.

It was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. Today ESGR operates through a network of more than 4,500 volunteers throughout 55 committees located in each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Europe.

The nation's Ready Reserve components comprise approximately 46 percent of our total available military manpower, excluding retirees. The current National Defense Strategy indicates that the National Guard and Reserve, while decreasing in size, will be full partners in the fully integrated Total Force. Our Reserve forces will spend more time away from the workplace defending the nation, supporting a demanding operations tempo and training to maintain their mission readiness.

The Department of Defense tasks ESGR to "...promote both public and private understanding of the National Guard and Reserve in order to gain U.S. employer and community support through programs and personnel policies and practices that shall encourage employee and citizen participation in National Guard and Reserve programs." (DoD Directive 1250.1) To focus this task, the following mission statement was developed.

Gain and Maintain active employers

The success of the nation's defense is dependent on the availability of highly trained members of the "Total Force." Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's mission is to obtain employer and community support to ensure the availability and readiness of Reserve forces.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has a national and local organizational structure to support the following functions:

- | Operate a proactive program directed at U.S. employers, employees, and communities that ensures understanding and appreciation of the role of the National Guard and Reserve in the context of the DoD Total Force Policy.
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- | Encourage interaction between National Guard and Reserve units and their communities to promote public understanding of the National Guard and Reserve and encourage partnerships between civilian organizations and military units in the community.
- | Assist in preventing, resolving, or reducing employer and/or employee problems and misunderstandings that result from National Guard or Reserve membership, training, or duty requirements through information services and informal mediation.
- | Assist in educating National Guard and Reserve members regarding their obligations and responsibilities to employers.
- | Use the military chain of command to promote better understanding of the importance of maintaining positive working relations between employers and their Reserve component employees, in order to sustain National Guard and Reserve participation.
- | Solicit the assistance of military agencies, military training schools, and military and civilian associations in educating the Reserve forces about their rights and responsibilities regarding terms and conditions of civilian employment, as stipulated in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.
- | Promote civilian and military personnel management practices that encourage membership in the National Guard or the Reserve. (DoD Directive 1250.1)

ESGR Background

When the end of the draft was initially anticipated, Defense planners foresaw a potential problem with the nation's Reserve service members and their civilian employers. Long accustomed to National Guard and Reserve membership as an alternative to compulsory active-duty service, it was believed that employers might question the necessity of service in a purely voluntary military system. The planners concluded that some employers might not be supportive of their workers serving voluntarily in uniform.

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1. Inform employers of the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserve.
2. Explain the necessity for and role of these forces in national defense.

ESGR seeks to gain and reinforce the support of America's employers for a strong National Guard and Reserve system.

Originally consisting of a small, select, volunteer panel of distinguished Americans representing business, government, labor,

and military, they directed most of their efforts at their peers. It soon became apparent that this purely top-level effort was insufficient. Throughout the years, studies showed that nearly a third of the men and women surveyed about why they were leaving the National Guard and Reserve still indicated "employment conflict" as the source of their problems.

Identifying the need to expand its outreach, the national ESGR leadership established a nationwide network of local employer support volunteers, organized in ESGR Committees within each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In this way, ESGR could bring the message to all employers, large and small, in cities, towns, and rural areas.

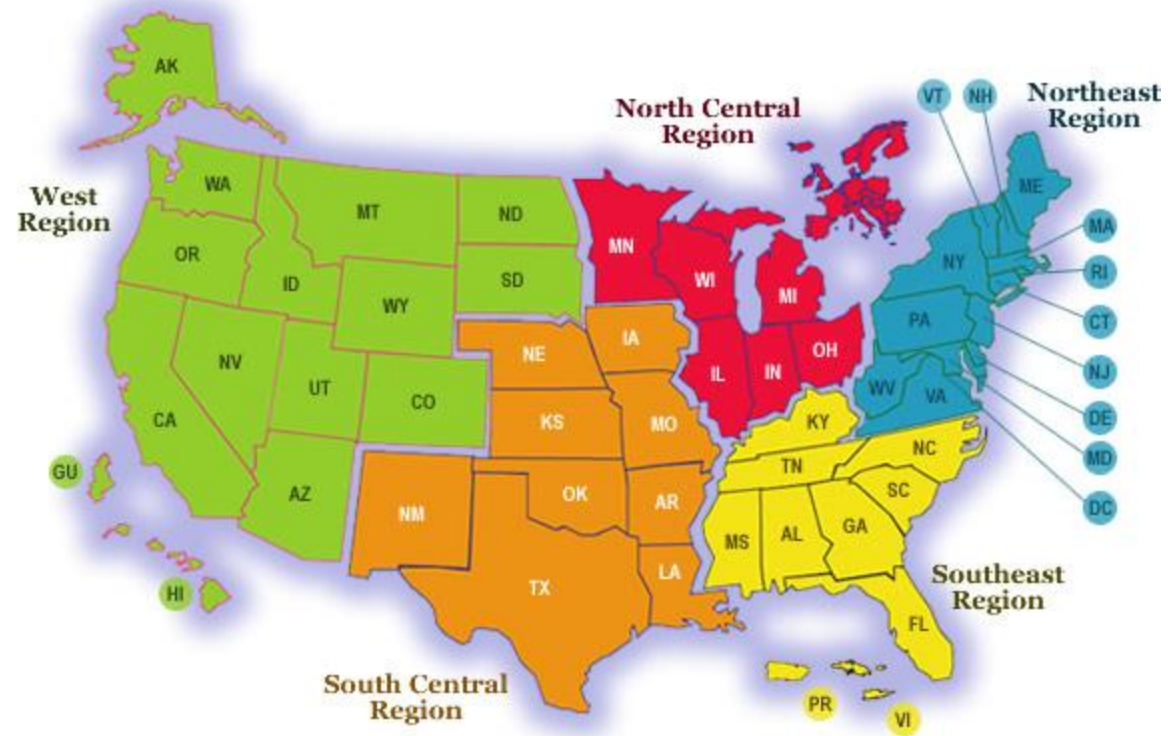
Today, nearly 4,500 volunteer executives, senior government representatives, educators, and military personnel serve on local Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committees. With help and resources from the National ESGR Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, the 55 ESGR Committees conduct employer support programs, including Bosslifts, Briefings with the Boss, Ombudsmen Services, and recognition of employers whose policies support or encourage participation in the National Guard and Reserve. By explaining the missions of the National Guard and Reserve and by increasing public awareness of the role of the employer, they develop a dialogue among employers, the ESGR Committees, and local National Guard and Reserve unit commanders and members. ESGR Committee members also provide information to the National Chair on specific problems. This information helps point out regional or national trends that affect recruiting, retention and training of the National Guard and Reserve.

National Committee ESGR (NCESGR)

The National Chair of NCESGR serves as a volunteer appointed by the President and reporting to the Secretary of Defense. The Executive Director NCESGR, also a Presidential appointee, is a fulltime Senior Executive Service position holding a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense rank. The Executive Director reports through the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (ASD/RA) to the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness. The National Headquarters of ESGR is staffed by fulltime members from the Reserve components, representatives from two Active service components, and from the Civil Service.

Regional Deputy Directors

Regional Deputy Directors provide a single point of contact ("one stop shopping") to support ESGR Committee operations. The NCESGR Committee Support Operations (CSO) Directorate assigns a Deputy Director for each of the five ESGR regions, displayed as follows:



Regional Deputy Directors serve Committees by:

- | Facilitating training, communications and sharing best practices within the region
- | Coordinating support from other headquarters' staff Directorates
- | Assisting with developing and executing annual budgets
- | Supporting Committee and National Awards programs
- | Coordinating mobilization and demobilization information and activities
- | Helping with Planning and Logistical support for Committee programs and activities
- | Providing ongoing feedback and follow-up

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Contacting National ESGR Headquarters

Employers, Members of the National Guard or Reserve, or Human Resources Professionals

If you are a member of the National Guard or Reserve, an Employer, or a Human Resources professional and have a question about USERRA or your rights and responsibilities we recommend you call us at 800-336-4590, opt 1 so we can fully discuss your question/situation and quickly answer the question or provide resolution assistance. Our agents are available from 8 am to 5 pm (central), M-F. This is the most efficient way to get assistance. However, if you are unable to use our toll-free service, you may email us at ESGR.OMB@osd.mil

You may also write or call us at:

National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
 1555 Wilson Blvd, Suite 200
 Arlington, VA 22209-2405
1-800-336-4590

Statement of Support Signing Program

If you want information as to how your organization can participate in the **ESGR Statement of Support Signing program** or information related to public affairs/public relations, please email us at NCESGR-PA@osd.mil

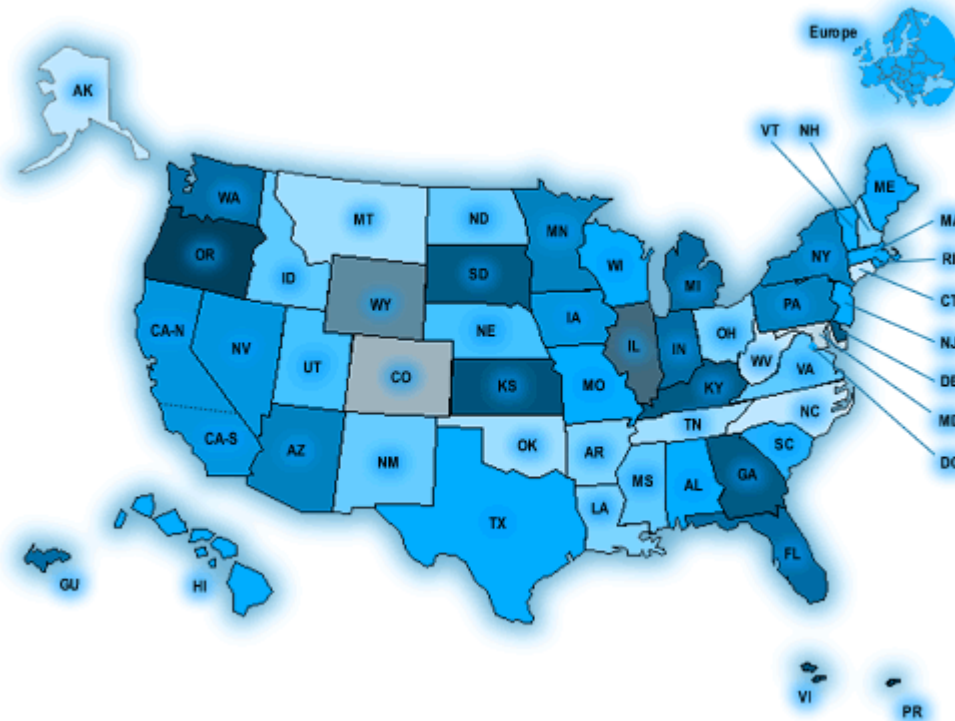
ESGR Committee Members

ESGR Committee Members should be able to address any questions or need with the local committee leadership. To find your local committee contact, [click here](#).

If you are unable to contact your local committee leadership, you may contact your **National Volunteer Coordinator** at NCESGR-RegionalSupport@osd.mil

Contacting Local ESGR Committees

Local ESGR leaders are available to assist you in ESGR-related matters that do not require intervention with an employer. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR EMPLOYMENT SITUATION, PLEASE CALL OUR TOLL FREE NUMBER, 1-800-336-4590. If you have other ESGR related matters, contact the appropriate local committee. Their phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses are provided for ESGR-related issues only. We request that companies do not use this information for solicitation purposes out of consideration for our volunteers.



Select a local ESGR committee and click Show to view contact information.

Colorado [dropdown arrow] Show

Fred Fletemeyer

Chair
Bus: (719) 473-1216
Fax: (719) 632-4768
firstflete@mcleodusa.net

Edward B. St.Clair

Executive Director
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Stephanie Masura

Program Support Specialist
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What to do if you-the Employer or the Reserve component member-have an employment problem or concern related to military service in the National Guard or Reserve

Even with the best of communication and partnership between employers and their employees that are members of the National Guard or Reserve, questions and concerns do arise related to the adverse consequences of military service. How should you handle them?

Statement of Support

For members of the National Guard or Reserve, your first approach should be to go to your employer. Most often, a calm, objective discussion can lead to an acceptable solution if it is conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

If you can't come up with a workable solution, go to your unit commander for advice and support. Even with their focus on mission accomplishment, commanders have a vested, long-range interest in their people. It's best for the unit to resolve your problem. They may be able to better explain the situation to you and your employer. A lot of times, they can suggest compromises or alternatives that will satisfy everyone's needs.

If these attempts don't succeed, you have other options. Through the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), the Department of Defense (DoD) works hard to obtain and sustain employer and community support for National Guard and Reserve members who periodically are absent from their civilian jobs to perform military duty. If you have a question about employment rights, the experts, the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DoL/VETS), and ESGR-suggest you start by contacting ESGR. This is not only your best option for speedy resolution; it protects all your levels of appeal if they are needed.

You can contact ESGR Ombudsmen Services through our toll-free number, (800) 336-4590, opt 1. ESGR Ombudsmen are qualified to help, sympathetic to the needs of both the employers and employees, and committed to remaining impartial in their counsel.

The Ombudsmen Services Program was established in 1974 to provide information, counseling, and informal mediation of issues relating to compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The Ombudsmen Services Program provides information, informal mediation, and referral service to resolve employer conflicts. ESGR is not an enforcement agency and does not offer legal counsel or advice. More than 96 percent of all such requests for

assistance are resolved in this informal process, without requiring referral to the Department of Labor for formal investigation.

Each of the 56 [ESGR Committees](#) (one in each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) has trained volunteer Ombudsmen, ready to assist you. Many of them are local business leaders. Their stature in the community contributes to their effectiveness in mediation. Service members and trained volunteers are paired via our Customer Service Center, (800) 336-4590, opt 1.

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