

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Benefit Fact Sheet Job Aid



Unit Retention NCO Course 805B-F24

**NATIONAL GUARD PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION CENTER
Strength Maintenance Training Center
CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON
P.O. Box 797
North Little Rock, AR 72115-0797**

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

Army National Guard: Drilling

Benefit Fact Sheet

Summary

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense organization established to promote cooperation and understanding between Service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from the employee's military commitment. The ESGR Ombudsman Services Program provides neutral counseling and mediation of issues relating to compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Eligibility

USERRA covers weekend drills, annual training, military schooling, calls to active duty and other voluntary and involuntary military service. Any National Guard Soldier may seek ESGR assistance to promote understanding regarding their rights and responsibilities reference their public or private civilian employer.

USERRA creates the following exceptions to the five-year limit on service in the uniformed services:

- Service that is required beyond five years to complete an initial period of obligated service. Some military specialties require an individual to serve more than five years because of the amount of time or expense involved in training. If the employee works in one of those specialties, the Service member has reemployment rights when the initial period of obligated service is completed.
- If the employee was unable to obtain orders releasing them from service in the uniformed services before the expiration of the five-year period, and the inability was not the employee's fault.
- Service performed to fulfill periodic Guard and Reserve training requirements and includes service performed to fulfill additional training requirements determined and certified by a proper military authority as necessary for the employee's professional development, or to complete skill training or retraining. This includes weekend drills and annual training.

- Service performed in a uniformed service if the Service member was ordered to or retained on active duty under the following circumstances:
 - Involuntary active duty of a military retiree
 - Involuntary active duty in wartime
 - Retention on active duty while in captive status;
 - Involuntary active duty during a national emergency
 - Involuntary active duty for an operational mission, involuntary retention on active duty of a critical person during time of crisis or other specific conditions
 - Involuntary active duty by the Coast Guard Reserve for natural or man-made disasters.

Service performed in a uniformed service if the employee was ordered to or retained on active duty (other than for training) under any provision of law because of a war or national emergency declared by the President or the Congress, as determined by the Secretary concerned.

Benefit Highlights

ESGR Directive

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is an agency closely affiliated with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. Established in 1972 by the Department of Defense, ESGR currently operates through a network of more than 3,680 volunteers in 54 committees located across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

ESGR Programs and Activities

ESGR promotes cooperation and understanding between Service members and their civilian employers and assists in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR conducts both proactive and reactive services to gain support from all identified Reserve Component employers; to advocate for Reserve Component employers within the DoD; to ensure viability of the All-Volunteer force; and to educate customers and stakeholders.

Local ESGR committees conduct employer support programs, including Employer Outreach, Military Outreach, Bosslifts, Ombudsman Services, and recognition of employers whose policies support or encourage participation in the Reserve. These committees explain the missions of the Reserve, increase public awareness of the role of the employer, and develop a dialogue among employers, ESGR volunteers, and local units of Reserve Service members.

ESGR Ombudsman Program

The Ombudsmen Service Program provides information and informal mediation to employers and members of the Reserve. ESGR trained volunteers offer assistance to resolve employer conflicts resulting from military membership, training, or other service requirements protected under Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

You can contact ESGR Ombudsmen Services through the toll-free number (1-800-336-4590, option #1), by the website at <https://www.esgr.mil/> or by email at osd.USERRA@mail.mil ESGR Ombudsmen are qualified to help, sympathetic to the needs of both employers and employees, and committed to remaining impartial in their mediation.

Bosslifts

Bosslifts transport employers and supervisors to military training sites where they observe Reserve members on duty as part of the Total Force. This provides the employer a better understanding of what their Reservists do when they are away from their civilian occupation for duty with their military units. If you are interested in learning more about the Bosslift program or to nominate your employer contact your local ESGR Committee or the National ESGR Headquarters or use their toll-free number (1-800-336-4590).

Employer Awards : To recognize employers who support their Guard and Reserve employees, ESGR grants a series of Department of Defense (DoD) awards:

- [Patriot Award](#)
- [Spouse Patriot Award](#)
- [Seven Seals Award](#)
- [Above and Beyond Award](#)
- [Pro Patria Award](#)
- [Extraordinary Employer Support Award](#)
- [Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award](#)

Patriot Awards: An employee serving in the National Guard or Reserve, or the Spouse of a Guard or Reserve member, may nominate individual supervisors and bosses for support provided directly to the nominating Service member and their Family. The Patriot Award reflects the efforts made to support Citizen Warriors through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for Families and granting leaves of absence if needed. Visit <https://www.esgr.mil/Employer-Awards/Patriot-Award/Form> to nominate your supportive employer.

Seven Seals Award : The Seven Seals Award is the broadest and most inclusive award given by ESGR, as it may be awarded to employers, ESGR staff members and volunteers, or any person or entity that significantly advances the ESGR mission. It is presented at both the state and national levels to honor significant individual or organizational achievement, initiative, or support that promotes and supports the ESGR mission, to include the efforts of the more than 3,680 volunteers who carry out ESGR's mission across the Nation on a daily basis.

Above and Beyond Award : The Above and Beyond Award is presented by ESGR State Committees to recognize employers at the local level who have gone above and beyond the legal requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) by providing their Guard and Reserve employees additional, non-mandated benefits such as differential or full pay to offset lost wages, extended health benefits, and other similar benefits.

Pro Patria Award : ESGR's Pro Patria Award is presented annually by each ESGR State Committee to one small, one large and one public sector employer in their state or territory. Recipients have demonstrated the greatest support to Guard and Reserve employees through their leadership and practices, including adopting personnel policies that make it easier for employees to participate in the National Guard and Reserves. This is the highest level award that may be bestowed by a state ESGR committee.

Extraordinary Employer Support Award : ESGR's Extraordinary Employer Support Award was created to recognize sustained employer support of the National Guard and Reserve Service. Only prior recipients of the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award or the Pro-Patria Award, who have demonstrated sustained support for three years after receiving one of those awards, are eligible for consideration at the committee level. Subsequent awards can be given in three-year increments from the initial award.

Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award: The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their support of their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. Nominations must come from a Guard or Reserve member who is employed by the organization they are nominating, or from a Family member. The award was created to publicly recognize employers who provide exceptional support to their National Guard and Reserve employees. It is the highest in a series of employer recognition awards given by the Department of Defense.

The Freedom Award is presented annually to the nation's 15 most supportive employers in three categories, large business, small business and the public sector.

For more information about the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award and recipients, and to nominate your employer for supporting your Guard or Reserve service, please visit:

<https://freedomaward.csd.disa.mil/>

Additional Information

For more information, please see the ESGR webpage maintained by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve:

<https://www.esgr.mil/>

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