



## Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

### **W**hat is the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve?

Employers of America's National Guard and Reserve members have become inextricably linked to a strong national defense.

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. Today ESGR operates through a network of more than 4,500 volunteers throughout 56 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

In 1972, the Department of Defense chartered the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR):

- 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 4,000 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 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 (OASD/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