



**DEFENSE SUPPORT SERVICES CENTER  
EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE  
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 05E22  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350-4000**

**OPERATING INSTRUCTION**

**SUBJECT:** Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Operating Instruction 1250.31, "Outreach Program and Employer Recognition"

- References:
- (a) DoD Instruction 1205.12, "Civilian Employment and Reemployment Rights for Service Members, Former Service Members, and Applicants of the Uniformed Services," February 24, 2016, as amended
  - (b) DoD Instruction 1205.22, "Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)," February 6, 2017
  - (c) DoD Instruction 1235.12, "Accessing the Reserve Components (RC)," June 7, 2016, as amended
  - (d) DoD Instruction 1342.28 DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP), February 25, 2019
  - (e) DoD Manual 7730.54, volume 1, "Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (RCCPDS)," May 20, 2011
  - (f) Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Five-Year Strategic Plan, Fiscal Year 2023-2028, October 5, 2022
  - (g) ESGR Operating Instruction 1250.02, "ESGR Structure & Operating procedures," March 22, 2023
  - (h) ESGR Operating Instruction 1250.21, "Statement of Support Program," April 18, 2021, July 10, 2023
  - (i) ESGR Operating Instruction 1250.22, "Bosslift," January 20, 2022
  - (j) ESGR Operating Instruction 1250.40, "Public Affairs Policy and Procedures," April 17, 2023

1. PURPOSE

Define Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) outreach program, assign responsibilities, and define employer awards program consistent with DoD policy.

2. APPLICABILITY

This ESGR operating instruction applies to Headquarters (HQ) ESGR, ESGR volunteers, and ESGR contracted personnel.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. Civilian Employment Information (CEI): DoD Manual 7730.54, volume 1, requires the Reserve Components (RC) to submit CEI data to the Defense Manpower Data Center. ESGR is a customer of this data and uses it to focus employer outreach (EO) activities to the known employers of RC Service members.
- 3.2. Bosslift: Per ESGR Instruction 1250.22: Bosslift is an ESGR EO event where employers are permitted to observe military operations and activities. These events

normally include briefings on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) to the participating unit(s). To the maximum extent possible, Bosslift events should allow employers to observe their own employees performing their military duties.

- 3.3. Demobilization / Mobilization: Per DoDI 1235.12, demobilization and mobilization are the process necessary to bring onboard or release service members from active duty, or federal service, RC units and members who were ordered to active duty (other than for training) or called to Federal service.
- 3.4. Employer: An individual or an organization in the government, private, nonprofit, or business sector that hires and pays people for their work. and potentially employs or may employ RC service members. An individual representing an organization or business who is exposed to the ESGR message.
- 3.5. Employer Engagement: Any activity that exposes an employer to the ESGR message.
- 3.6. Employer Outreach (EO): The process of informing and educating employers of members of the Guard and Reserve regarding their employment rights and responsibilities under USERRA.
- 3.7. Headquarters (HQ) ESGR: Per DoDI 1205.22 led by the Executive Director (ED), HQ ESGR is comprised of military personnel and full-time civilian employees who administer ESGR programs and initiatives. HQ ESGR provides ombudsman services, conducts national employer and RC member outreach initiatives, and provides direction, training, and support to all ESGR SCs.
- 3.8. Member Management System (MMS): DoD's system of record for volunteer information, hours, awards, training, and contact information. The system also provides pre-built reports, bulk email capability, and a document library.
- 3.9. Military Outreach (MO): The process of informing and educating members of the Guard and Reserve regarding their employment rights and responsibilities under USERRA.
- 3.10. Reserve Components (RCs): Per DoDI 1235.12, the RCs of the armed forces are the: Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve.
- 3.11. State Committees (SCs): Per DoDI 1205.22, a SC is an organization of local volunteers who perform ESGR's mission in 54 states and territories, including the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands.
- 3.12. Statement of Support Program (SoS): Per ESGRI 1250.21, the purpose of the SoS

program is to increase employer support by encouraging employers to act as advocates for employee participation in the military. Supportive employers are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the Nation's Guard and Reserve units.

- 3.13. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA): Prohibits discrimination in employment based on an individual's prior service in the uniformed services; current service in the uniformed services; or intent to join the uniformed services. An employer is also prohibited from discriminating against a person because of such person's attempt to enforce his or her rights under USERRA.
- 3.14. Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP): A DoD-wide effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and their communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.

#### 4. ACRONYMS

BWB	Briefings with the Boss
CSC	Customer Service Center
DED	Deputy Executive Director
ESGR	Employer Support of the Guard and
Reserve EO	Employer Outreach
EOD	Employer Outreach Director
ED	Executive Director
EES	Extraordinary Employer Support
HQ ESGR	Headquarters ESGR
MOD	Military Outreach Director
MO	Military Outreach
RC	Reserve Component
SC	State Committee
SoS	Statement of Support
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
VS	Volunteer Support
VST	Volunteer Support Technician
YRRP	Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

## 5. POLICY

5.1. ESGR volunteers support ESGR's mission by informing RC Service members and their employers about USERRA and ESGR's programs and services. The goal of the ESGR outreach program is to execute balanced and integrated outreach to RC Service members and their employers. ESGR seeks to promote a culture in which employers support and value the military service of their employees. RC Service members and their employers are encouraged to make ESGR their initial contact for any USERRA or employer support issue. The SCs execute outreach programs per DoDI 1205.22, ESGR 5-Year Strategic Plan, and other guidance.

5.1.1 Per DoDI 1205.22, ESGR offers a progressive awards program for RC Service members to recognize employers for their outstanding support.

5.1.2 The SCs shall identify an ESGR employer outreach director (EOD) and a military outreach director (MOD) for the primary purpose of planning and executing SC outreach activities.

## 6. INFORMATION COLLECTION

6.1. Per DoD Administrative Instruction (AI) 15, "OSD Records and Information Management Program," "National Guard and Reserves Statement of Support Records," referred to in file number 1803-09 of Office of the Secretary of Defense Deposition Schedule Series 1800 titled USD Personnel and Readiness, are temporary. Cut off at the end of the calendar year in which activity has been completed. Destroy 15 years after cutoff.

6.2. Per DoD Administrative Instruction (AI) 15, "OSD Records and Information Management Program," "Awards issued under the authority of Heads of OSD Components, Defense Agencies and Field Activities," referred to in file 202-70 of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Disposition Schedule Series 200 titled Management and Operations, case files and awards packages created and maintained by OSD Components, Defense Agencies and Field Activities for Federal employees, contractors, non-governmental organizations, corporations, civilian personnel and groups nominated for Incentive Awards and Honorary and other honorary awards issued under the authority delegated to the Heads of OSD Components, Defense Agencies and Field Activities (Patriot Award, Seven Seals Award, Above and Beyond Award, and other awards under their purview) are temporary, cutoff annually, in the calendar year upon which the final determination (approval/disapproval) was made, and destroyed 15 years after cutoff. (<https://www.esd.whs.mil/RIM/>)

## 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1. HQ ESGR:

7.1.1. Provides overall outreach program objectives, guidance, policy, products,

resources, and oversight.

- 7.1.2. Provides electronic “how-to” and “best practices” materials for SC use.
  - 7.1.3. Develops training materials and template products for RC units to assist in the implementation of employer relations and USERRA training.
  - 7.1.4. Provides CEI data, when available, to state committees.
  - 7.1.5. Establishes reporting requirements and procedures for outreach activities and collects data as reported by the SC.
  - 7.1.6. Coordinates with the RC Service Chiefs to ensure consistent chain-of-command involvement across all RCs.
  - 7.1.7. Provides SCs military unit POC lists, normally posted in the MMS document library.
  - 7.1.8. Maintains records of Statements of Support and all awards per DoD Administrative Instruction 15 “OSD Records and Information Management Program”.
- 7.2. SC Responsibilities: State Committees must assign and active volunteer to perform the duties of the Military Outreach Director and the Employer Outreach Director.
- 7.2.1. The SC MOD serves as primary coordinator for military outreach between ESGR and Guard and Reserve units. MODs perform duties as specified in the MOD position description found in the document’s library in MMS.
  - 7.2.2. The SC military outreach coordinator:
    - 7.2.2.1. Establishes contacts and develops supportive relationships with the designated RC units.
    - 7.2.2.2. Serves as the primary link between the RCs, ESGR, and their assigned commands or units in the development and execution of the employer relations program.
    - 7.2.2.3. Reports to the MOD unless otherwise designated by the state chair. The MOD assesses and provides feedback on performance annually.
    - 7.2.2.4. Performs duties as specified in the military outreach coordinator position description found in the document library in MMS.
  - 7.2.3. The SC EOD:
    - 7.2.3.1. Oversees ESGR activities focused on informing, recognizing,

motivating, educating, and encouraging employers to actively support Guard and Reserve members.

7.2.3.2. Plans and coordinates with ESGR support staff for required event resources.

7.2.3.3. Performs duties as specified in the EOD position description found in the document library in MMS.

7.2.4. The SC Employer Outreach Coordinator:

7.2.4.1. Enhances the ESGR Employer relationship through personal contact with employers and assists the EOD.

7.2.4.2. Reports to the EOD, unless otherwise designated by the state chair. EOD assesses and provide feedback on performance at least annually.

7.2.4.3. Performs duties as specified in the employer outreach coordinator position description found in the document library in MMS.

## 8. OUTREACH PROGRAMS

8.1. Military Outreach:

8.1.1. Per DoDI 1205.12, the DoD Component heads, and the Commandant of the Coast Guard are responsible for providing USERRA information for all human resources officials, supervisors, employees, and uniformed Service members

8.1.2. . ESGR can be the primary source for this information in support of the services. ESGR volunteers receive training to qualify them to provide USERRA briefings that meet the requirements.

8.1.3. The ESGR military outreach goal is to ensure Service members understand that ESGR is a resource to support Commanders and Service members, basic USERRA rights and responsibilities, and that they know how to contact the ESGR for assistance.

8.1.4. Briefing guidance (at a minimum):

8.1.4.1. The volunteer may or may not have time for a slide presentation. Volunteers should understand that Unit Commanders set the allotted time for briefings based on their limited time and additional requirements. SC volunteers frequently participate in the various Reserve and Guard deployment activities. In addition to YRRP, individual RCs have their own deployment programs, i.e., the National Guard Soldier Readiness Program.

- 8.1.4.2. If Service members ask detailed USERRA questions, or questions related to an individual Service member's employment, volunteers should refer the specific questions to a qualified ESGR Ombudsman or to the ESGR Customer Service Center.

## 8.2. Employer Outreach:

- 8.2.1. Since ESGR's creation in 1972, the Employer Outreach Program seeks to build a strong relationship with employers and to gain their support for employee participation in the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR conducts Employer Outreach in several ways beginning with a Briefing with Boss, Statement of Support signing, Bosslifts and Employer Recognition events conducted by the local SC.
- 8.2.2. Employer Engagement is defined as any activity that exposes an employer to the ESGR message. As it relates to ESGR, we use the term engagement to describe an interaction between at least two parties (the employer and ESGR) and the engagement must communicate our message. The method to engage could be visual (in-person or virtual), telephonic, or electronic (email, webinar, video). The key word here is "exposes." It does not require feedback from the employer but must be targeted directly to an employer. This will allow committees to "count" any interaction with employers as an engagement and will be documented in EventPlus.
- 8.2.3. Measurement. Employer Engagement Measurements are key to successful use of the definitions of Employer and Employer Engagement. This will help SC in determining the correct measurement of stakeholders or employers engaged in any type of ESGR activity.
  - 8.2.3.1. In-person and virtual events (Briefing with the Boss, Bosslift, Award Presentation, Statement of Support signing, etc.) employers are counted one for one. If 50 employers attend, count all 50. Be careful to count non-employers (ESGR volunteers, spouses, service members) separately for EventPLUS After Action Reports (AAR).
  - 8.2.3.2. Tradeshows or booths count the in-person visits (or direct queries if the ESGR booth is in a chat room for a virtual trade show). If a presentation (BWB) is made in conjunction with the event, count the number at the presentation. If 25 people visit the booth and 50 are at a presentation during the event, count 75 engagements.
  - 8.2.3.3. For mass emails, assume an "open" rate of no more than 20%, so if 1000 emails are sent assume only 200 will be opened and read by an employer.
  - 8.2.3.4. For print and online advertisements, only count the number responding by phone or email.

- 8.2.3.5. For MO events count all attendees or attain a copy of the attendance verification used by the unit, if any.
- 8.2.4. The Statement of Support Program is detailed in ESGROI 1250.21. Statements of Support are the cornerstone of ESGR's effort to gain and maintain employer support for the Guard and Reserve. The intent of the program is to increase employer support by encouraging employers to act as advocates for employee participation in the military. Supportive employers are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the Nation's Guard and Reserve units. State Committees obtain Statements of Support from known employers of RC Service members, as well as employers who potentially employ National Guard and Reserve Service members. A reaffirmation SoS signing ceremony may be combined when presenting awards. A map of signed Statements of Support with company locations is part of EventPLUS located at <https://maps.esgrevents.mil/>.
- 8.2.5. Bosslift or Unit Employer Day is a civilian employer orientation program through which SC volunteers work with military units to invite employers to observe members of the National Guard and Reserve performing their military duties. Employers will see firsthand the capabilities of the Guard and Reserve mission and observe their military employees in action. Employers will be provided the opportunity to sign a Statements of Support as part of the event.
- 8.2.6. Briefings with the Boss (BWB) events are Employer Outreach, education, and training events for which ESGR invites employers to attend. SC volunteers provide employers an overview of the ESGR mission, challenges faced by members of the National Guard and Reserve, key aspects of USERRA, the availability of ombudsman services, and opportunities for employers to sign a SoS. With a "Question & Answer" session, the BWB is a candid exchange of information between ESGR volunteers, employers, and, at times, military leaders. Venues where BWBs often take place include (but are not limited to): Units of the National Guard and Reserve, Society for Human Resource Management, Chambers of Commerce and other employer centric organizations, Military Service clubs, County leadership programs, Local restaurants.
- 8.3. Conferences / Trade shows and Conventions ESGR often participates in conferences and tradeshow to perform outreach to concentrated large audience. These events enable direct communication with employers and servicemembers about USERRA. Our mission centers around USERRA and is not part of a job assistance program. Booths are an excellent high value way to conduct Employer or Military outreach depending on the audience and type of activity. Most SC participate as an exhibitor at several professional conferences annually. SCs rent space at a conference exhibit hall and the SC volunteers manage the space. Booths provide a means to gain support of employers and answer their questions about USERRA and ESGR programs. Statements of Support can also be obtained from employers.



## 9. EMPLOYER AWARDS

9.1. To recognize employers who support their Guard and Reserve employees, the following Department of Defense awards are authorized and represent a progressive approach to awarding. Recognizing supportive employers is vital to ESGR's mission. ESGR's 54 State Committees actively promote awards as a key element in furthering employer support, while strengthening relationships between Service members and employers. These Department of Defense awards honor the sacrifices made by so many employers year after year:

- 9.1.1. Patriot Award and Spouse Patriot Award: The Patriot Award is the first in ESGR's series of 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 his or her 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. Patriot Awards are awarded to individual supervisors, not to an entire staff or organization. The online nomination process is located at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil).
- 9.1.2. Seven Seals Award: The Seven Seals Award is the broadest and most inclusive award given by ESGR and is presented at the recommendation of the State Chair or by ESGR senior leadership, with approval of the HQ ESGR. The Seven Seals Award is presented in recognition of significant individual or organizational achievement, initiative, or support that promotes and supports the ESGR mission, to include the efforts of the volunteers who carry out ESGR's mission across the Nation daily. Service members wishing to have their employer or other deserving individuals considered for the Seven Seals Award should email their ESGR State Committee via our State Pages link located at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil).
- 9.1.3. Above and Beyond: 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 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. The award is given in limited numbers upon recommendation by state chairs to employers who have had at least one of their supervisors/managers recognized with a Patriot Award, and who have signed or agree to sign an ESGR Statement of Support. State chairs can recommend an Above and Beyond Award for Patriot Award nominations of smaller firms, those with no individual supervisors specified, and other similar situations. Service members wishing to have their employer or other deserving individuals considered for the Seven Seals Award should email their ESGR

State Committee via our State Pages link located at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil).

- 9.1.4. Pro Patria Award: The Pro Patria Award is presented annually by each ESGR State Committee to one small, one large, and or 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 Reserve. This is the highest-level award that may be bestowed at the ESGR State Committee level. Criteria: Employers who have been honored with the Above and Beyond Award, who have had at least one supervisor or other representative honored with a Patriot Award, and who have signed a Statement of Support are eligible for the Pro Patria Award.
- 9.1.5. Extraordinary Employer Award (EES): The Extraordinary Employer Support Award was created to recognize sustained employer support of National Guard and Reserve service. HQ ESGR can approve up to one ESS per State Committee annually. 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 may be given in three-year increments from the initial award. The state chair completes the nomination form using the ESGR EES Award Nomination form found in the document library in MMS. The state chair forwards the award recommendation to the HQ ESGR VS region chief or regional coordinator via email. The Region chief or regional coordinator verifies eligibility. Volunteer Support coordinates with the Ombudsman Services for a USERRA case review and Public Affairs for a review. Ombudsman Services and Public Affairs returns the nomination to Volunteer Support within 7 business days of receipt with a recommendation to approve or disapprove. The Chief, Volunteer Support makes the final determination of approval or disapproval. Volunteer Support returns the coordinated nomination form back to the designated SC state chair, VST and/or SC awards director. If approved, VS notifies the fulfillment contractor for processing. If disapproved, VS notifies the SC state chair, VST and/or SC awards director and provides the reason for disapproval.
- 9.2. HQ ESGR is responsible for the cost of Patriot Awards and the SC is responsible for ordering all other employer awards. The cost of the award is deducted from the SC annual allotment of fulfillment spending.
- 9.3. The fulfillment contractor requires 10 business days for processing all awards and will forward awards to the requesting ESGR SC representative after HQ ESGR approves the order request. SC will require approval from the Chief, Volunteer Support on all rush orders.
- 9.4. For all awards the SC Representative will:

- 9.4.1. Ensure that all data is correct on all awards prior to submission or presentation.
- 9.4.2. Notify HQ ESGR Chief of Employer Outreach to inquire as to whether an employer garners statewide or national stature. A representative from HQ ESGR and/or a DoD leader may participate and provide additional public affairs support.
- 9.4.3. Whenever possible, utilize media and the employer's public relations office to publicize the award. To assist the SC, HQ ESGR has created a public affairs toolkit with press release templates available in the document library in MMS.
- 9.4.4. The SC is highly encouraged to post presentation articles on their state webpages and social media sites.
- 9.4.5. SCs are not authorized to create new awards. The creation of awards adds records management requirements. Nonprofits and others are not authorized to use the ESGR logo or the Department of Defense seal without approval.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Effective immediately. This instruction will be reviewed by ESGR on an annual basis.

Jonathan R. Townsend, CAPT, USN  
Executive Director

## CHANGE AND REVIEW LOG

Review the Instructions at least annually to ensure:

- (a) References are current
- (b) Changes in procedures are documented
- (c) Necessary revisions are published

Maintain this record throughout the life of the document.

Date	Author	Version	Reason
Jan 23	Frank Huff	1-11	Review with Jeff and Bruce and CAPT Underhill
Feb 2	Frank Huff	12	Format changes and updated ED signature block
Mar 6	Frank Huff	13	Removed last sentence in paragraph 8.2.3.3
Jun 28	Frank Huff	14	Sent to Bob for review
Jun 29	Frank Huff	15	CAPT Townsend reviewed
July 6, 2023	Andy Rivera	Final	Policy Proofread and Review