



EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF
THE GUARD AND RESERVE



2015 Year in Review



www.esgr.mil



We All Serve!

Leadership Perspective:

During Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15), Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve continued its proud tradition of developing and promoting a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the Reserve Components – Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve.

The successes and initiatives demonstrated throughout this Year in Review are a direct result of the tremendous efforts of our 4,500 volunteers, staff, supportive employers, and the men and women who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

As we move into Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16), we are confident Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve will continue to provide the very best services – advocating, recognizing, informing, and mediating – to assist Reserve Component Service members and their civilian employers.



Stephanie Barna
*Principal Deputy Assistant
Secretary of Defense for
Manpower and Reserve Affairs*



Matthew P. Dubois
*Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense for Reserve Integration*



Paul E. Mock
*National Chair,
Employer Support of
the Guard and Reserve*



M. Alex Baird
*Executive Director,
Employer Support of
the Guard and Reserve*





Guiding Principles

End State:

All employers support and value the employment of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States and territories, thereby increasing the readiness of the Reserve Components.

Mission Statement:

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense (DoD) program that develops and promotes supportive work environments for Service members in the Reserve Components through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities that increase awareness of applicable laws and resolve employer conflicts between Service members and their employers.

Customers:

- All employers
- All uniformed Service members
- Families of affected Service members

Stakeholders:

- Congress
- State and territory governors
- Department of Defense
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Labor
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Small Business Administration
- Uniformed Services

Employees:

- ESGR volunteers and staff

Goals:

1. Gain and maintain support from employers for National Guard and Reserve service
2. Educate customers and stakeholders

3. Advocate within DoD for National Guard and Reserve employers
4. Continually refine the ESGR organization for relevancy, effectiveness, and efficiency
5. Enhance consistent brand awareness and visibility of ESGR nationwide
6. Enhance awareness and value of the Employment Initiative Program to both the employers and Reserve Component members

State Committees & Volunteers



ESGR was established in 1972 as part of the comprehensive effort to foster the success of the All-Volunteer Force and the Reserve Components' roles in the national security strategy. ESGR accomplishes this mission by promoting cooperation and understanding between National Guard and Reserve Service members and their civilian employers, and assisting in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment.

ESGR is supported by a network of more than 4,500 volunteers in 54 State Committees located across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam-Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Volunteers, hailing from small business, industry, government, education, and prior military service, bring a vast wealth of experience to assist in supporting employers, Service members, and their families. Together with national ESGR staff and a small cadre of contracted full-time support staff for each State Committee, volunteers work to promote and enhance employer support for military service in the National Guard and Reserve.



Advocate

In FY15, ESGR continued to advocate within DoD for National Guard and Reserve Service members and, specifically, for their supportive employers. ESGR's efforts, while working with stakeholders, have assisted in improving employment opportunities for National Guard and Reserve members, resulting in more than 5,733 direct hires through the Hero2Hired (H2H) program. H2H's nationwide network of 56 Employment Coordinators is supported by ESGR's grassroots-level relationships with communities and employers. ESGR continues to be the voice for employers who hire and retain highly qualified National Guard and Reserve members and honored 15 of the most supportive employers with the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The annual award ceremony took place at the Pentagon and was hosted by Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work.

In the coming year, ESGR will continue its active dialogue with key customers and partners to ensure programs remain relevant in support of patriotic employers who value the service of their National Guard and Reserve employees. This is especially important as the Reserve Components continue their roles as an operational force, supporting domestic requirements, humanitarian missions, and the national security strategy around the globe. Even with a decreased operations tempo, Reserve Component forces will be called upon for these missions and regularly occurring training requirements; it is incumbent upon ESGR to maintain proactive communication with employers to help them manage expectations.

Recognize

Recognition of supportive, steadfast employers is one of the most important elements of ESGR's mission to promote a cooperative culture of employer support for National Guard and Reserve Service members. ESGR State Committees actively promote awards to publicly acknowledge employers' support while strengthening relationships between Service members and employers. These awards honor the sacrifices made, and support offered, by so many employers year after year.

Employer Awards

The first in ESGR's series of awards is the ***Patriot Award***. An employee serving in the National Guard or Reserve, or the spouse of a Guardsman or Reservist, may nominate individual supervisors for support provided directly to the nominating Service member and their family. During FY15, 10,128 Patriot Awards were presented to outstanding supervisors, managers, and bosses.

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 National Guard and Reserve employees additional, non-mandated benefits, such as differential or full pay to offset lost wages. In FY15, 886 supportive employers received an Above and Beyond Award.

The Pro Patria Award may be 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 National Guard and Reserve employees through their leadership and practices, including adopting personnel policies that make it easier for employees to serve in the National Guard and Reserve. This is the highest-level award that may be bestowed by an ESGR State Committee. In FY15, 122 Pro Patria Awards were presented.

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. In FY15, 875 Seven Seals Awards were presented.

The Extraordinary Employer Support Award was created to recognize sustained employer support of 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 or more years after receiving one of those awards, are eligible for consideration at the local level. Twelve Extraordinary Employer Support Awards were presented in FY15.



Pentagon Freedom Award exhibit showcases supportive employers

The Department of Defense unveiled a prominent Pentagon exhibit showcasing its appreciation for the role that National Guard and Reserve employers play in our national defense in an Aug. 21 ceremony attended by senior military leaders and Freedom Award recipient representatives. The Freedom Award display is one of many exhibits in the Pentagon designed to educate and inform viewers of the Department of Defense's history, history makers, and achievements. Through the new exhibit, supportive employers and ESGR volunteers alike now share an honored space in the halls of the iconic Pentagon.



The 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 outstanding support of employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve. Each year, Reserve Component employees, or family members acting on their behalf, have the opportunity to nominate their employer for the Freedom Award. The ESGR State Committees review nominations and submit recommendations in three categories: small employer (500 employees or less), large employer, and public sector. Further steps in the award selection process include a National Review Board, which selects 30 finalists, and the National Selection Board, which recommends 15 recipients for consideration and approval by the Secretary of Defense. In FY15, the 15 recipients were selected from a nomination pool of 2,960 highly supportive employers who were nominated for this prestigious award. Since the award's inception in 1996, 220 highly deserving companies have been recognized.



2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award Recipients

Black Hills Corporation
Rapid City, South Dakota

Boise Fire Department
Boise, Idaho

BP America, Inc.
Houston, Texas

Cardinal Health
Dublin, Ohio

Cigna
Bloomfield, Connecticut

City of Glendale
Glendale, Arizona

City of Shawnee
Shawnee, Kansas

College of the Ozarks
Point Lookout, Missouri

CVS Health
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

Devon Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dr. Joe A. Jackson, MD
Biloxi, Mississippi

Neil, Dymott, Frank, McFall,
Trexler, McCabe & Hudson APLC
San Diego, California

Snell & Wilmer LLP
Phoenix, Arizona

Town of Hingham
Hingham, Massachusetts

Walt Disney Company
Burbank, California



JOE A. JACKSON, MD





ESGR works to support the balance between Service members' military duties and civilian employment through education and mediation.

Educate

ESGR draws on the diverse talents and backgrounds of its network of volunteers who engage daily with its core audiences to educate and inform employers and Service members. Educational and informative efforts include robust training programs for volunteers, employer outreach, military outreach, and public affairs messaging that tell the ESGR story and promote a cooperative culture between employers and their National Guard and Reserve employees. During this FY, 6,334 separate outreach events, to include hiring activities for military members and employers, were coordinated by ESGR.

Volunteer Support

ESGR's Volunteer Support directorate provides volunteer training, recruiting, retention, recognition, and operational support to the 4,500 ESGR volunteers. During FY15, the Training Branch and the Training Subcommittee developed in-house, volunteer training for 78 volunteer leaders, utilizing a mixture of headquarters staff and volunteers as course instructors. ESGR concluded the training year with eight new State Committee Chairs taking the oath of office during New Chair Orientation Training. Working with the Volunteer Support Subcommittee and through regional teams, State Committees were provided with the tools and resources needed to accomplish their mission.



Through Employer Outreach events, such as Bosslifts, ESGR builds supportive civilian work environments for Service members.

Employer Outreach

Employer Outreach achieved success on many fronts this past year through thousands of national and local employer events. ESGR facilitated Statement of Support signing ceremonies, Bosslifts, and Briefings with the Boss that helped foster local employer relationships and strategic alliances with numerous employer associations and chambers of commerce. The Statement of Support program is the cornerstone of ESGR's efforts to gain and maintain employer support. The program "opens the door" to develop employers into advocates for their employees' service in the National Guard and Reserve. In FY15, ESGR was able to "open the door" to 45,118 employers utilizing the Statement of Support program.

The Fortune 500 Statement of Support program had continued success in FY15. This proactive effort resulted in signing ceremonies with General Motors, Amtrak, Caesars Entertainment, Northrop Grumman, PNC Bank, and more than 20 additional Fortune 500 companies and large regional employers. The national trade-show program was further refined to exhibit at those employer association meetings most highly impacted by employee service in the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR volunteers staffed exhibits at the Society for Human Resource Management's Annual Conference and Exposition, the largest human resources conference in the world. In FY16, ESGR will implement innovative social media and



person-to-person outreach initiatives to seek out new opportunities to educate and engage Fortune 500 companies, large regional employers, and military-friendly higher education institutions, ensuring support for current and future National Guard and Reserve Service members.

Military Outreach

ESGR's Military Outreach volunteers and staff, serving all seven Reserve Components, enhanced readiness for National Guard and Reserve members by improving their knowledge of USERRA and the services provided by ESGR. Volunteers conducted more than 1,730 unit briefings for Service members, supported 382 mobilization events, and influenced a total of 416,157 Service members. Additional briefings were conducted during pre-deployment and demobilization functions, as well as nearly 500 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) events. These events, in addition to various meetings, hiring fairs, and training courses, remained a staple of the military outreach effort in FY 2015.

The Military Outreach effort is complemented by the ESGR Reserve Component Coordinators (RCCs). The four contracted RCC team members are: Jeff McClure (Army Reserve); James Stucker (Marine Corps Reserve); Leon Hill (Navy Reserve); Jim Strickland (Air Force Reserve). They serve as direct links between their respective Services and ESGR's State Committees, volunteers, and headquarters staff.

Public Affairs

ESGR's Public Affairs volunteers work with military and civilian media organizations to support ESGR, YRRP, and H2H information-sharing efforts. From planning and executing Bosslifts to ensuring coverage of awards and Statement of Support events, Public Affairs volunteers are a vital part of the ESGR mission. They distribute innumerable press releases, continuously update details on social media sites and their respective State Committee websites, create ads for special events, and publish countless photos of events throughout the Nation. Public Affairs volunteers are trained monthly regarding a variety of subjects related to the ever-changing media environment. They use their skills to draft and publish public service announcements, e-newsletters, and online articles, and coordinate public appearances for State Committee Chairs and other leaders.

Mediate

ESGR's mediation efforts work to resolve employment conflict between employers and Service members through neutral mediation. Mediation is a vitally important mission for ESGR, and its volunteer ombudsmen are trained to address USERRA-related issues through informal mediation



ESGR volunteers conduct events in communities throughout the Nation in support of National Guard and Reserve members and their employers.

principles and techniques. Nearly 600 volunteer ombudsmen across the country assist employers and Service members on a daily basis regarding USERRA matters, resolving civilian employment conflicts that arise as a result of military service. When conducting this mission, ESGR ombudsmen are neutral third parties and do not advocate for the Service member or the employer. These volunteers, along with ESGR headquarters staff, provide assistance, at no cost, to help Service members resolve workplace issues and improve relationships with civilian employers.

The five most common types of USERRA cases include military obligation discrimination, reinstatement, vacation, initial hiring discrimination, and promotion. A USERRA inquiry is generated when anyone has a question or needs clarification about the rights and responsibilities under the law. Inquiries sometimes turn into USERRA cases when a Service member requests assistance after receiving clarification on what the law requires.

For FY 2015, 1,802 cases were initiated. The resolution rate for all cases, which includes administrative closures, was 74 percent. For complete information on cases for each State Committee, see the map on pages 16 & 17.

Service members may request USERRA information or mediation assistance anytime online at www.esgr.mil, by telephone at 1-800-336-4590 (option 1), from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, or through direct contact with an ESGR volunteer ombudsmen.



Volunteer and Engage



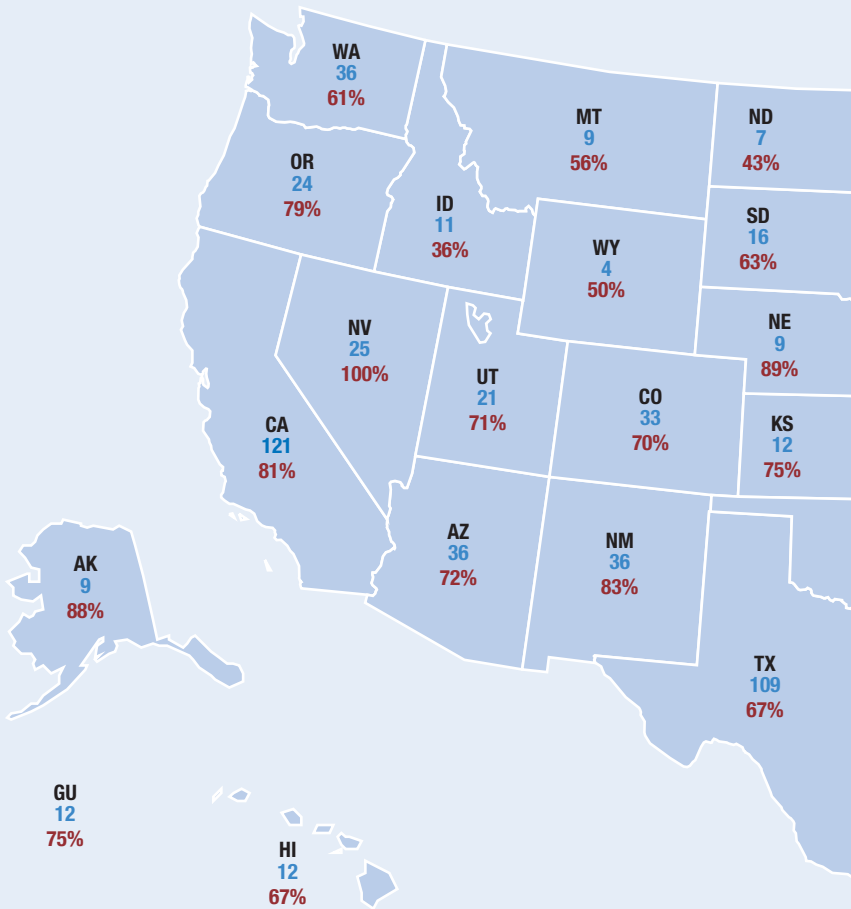


Employer Spotlight



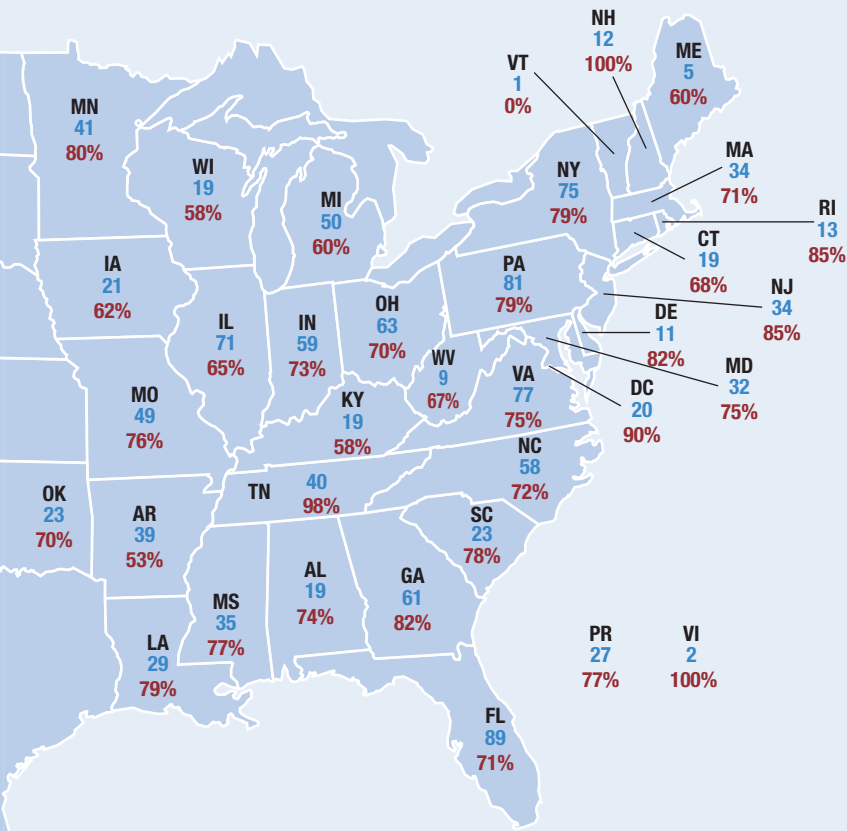
Uniformed Services and Reemployment

Case Study



Cases Employment nt Rights Act (USERRA)

Statistics

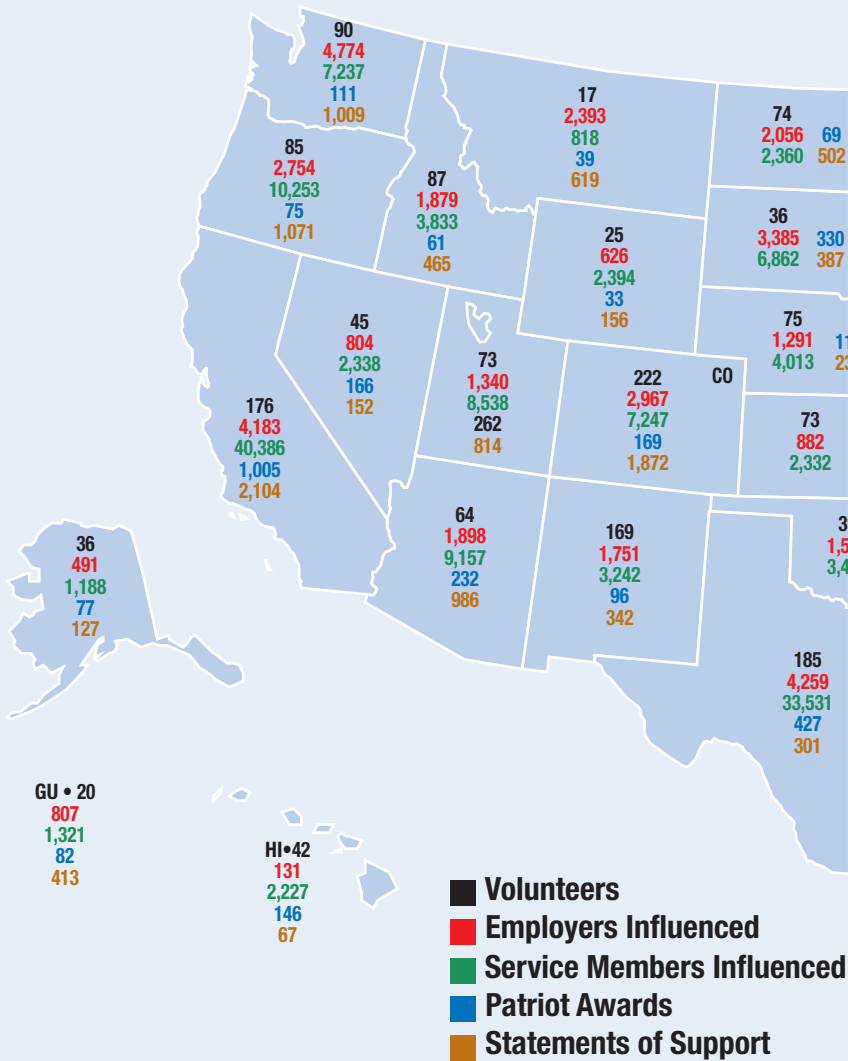


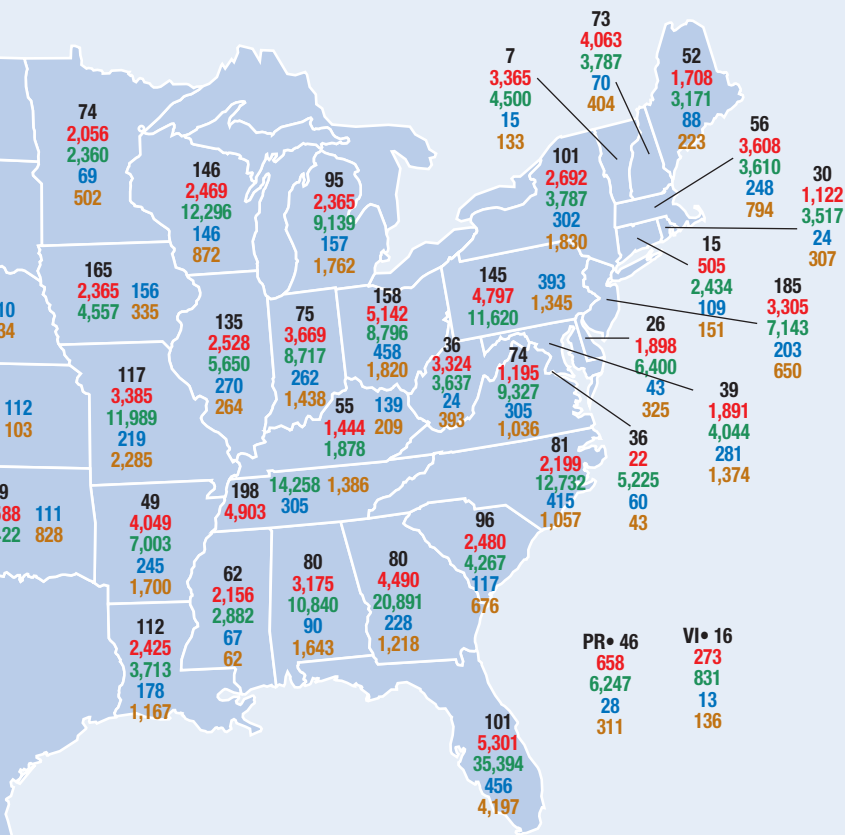
Cases Assigned 1,802

Percentage Resolved 74.06%

*Percentage Resolved represents total caseload, including those resolved by the ESGR National Call Center.

Influencing the Workforce





4,500
131,376
416,157
10,128
45,118



ESGR by the Numbers FY 2015

Outreach Mission: Employer & Service Member

Events Executed	Employers Influenced	Service Members Briefed
6,334	131,376	416,157
Statements of Support	Patriot Award Nominations	Freedom Award Nominations
45,118	10,128	2,960

Ombudsmen Mission

USERRA Related Inquiries	Cases Assigned	Cases Resolved/% resolved
18,322	1,802	1,333/74.06%

**Based on 2014 National Average (Bureau of Labor Statistics) of a volunteer hour: 1 hour @ \$23.07*

***This figure represents the potential Federal Government cost avoidance of investigations conducted. Combined, these figures equal \$10.45 million total value of services provided by ESGR to the Department of Defense.*



Direct Hires H2H

Direct Hires H2H	Indirect Hires H2H
5,733	76,320

Volunteer Hours	* Return on Investment
233,117	\$5.37 million

Average Number of Days to Mediate (resolve)

Average Number of Days to Mediate (resolve)	** Potential Federal Government Cost Avoidance
9.18	\$5.08 million

by the Office of Special Council and/or Department of Labor ranging from \$1,112 to \$3,810 per case.
 ment of Defense.



We All Serve!

PARTNERSHIP OF PROGRAMS



For Those Who Serve and Those Who SupportSM



Supporting Reserve Component Members, Families, and Employers