ESGR®

EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

2014 YEAR IN REVIEW

EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

Leadership Perspective

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, ESGR effectively carried out its mission, as it has for more than 40 years, developing and promoting a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States.

The overwhelming successes shown throughout this Year in Review are a direct result of the tremendous efforts from our team of more than 4,600 volunteers, whose combined total of 242,848 hours equates to a $5.47 million return on investment. This, coupled with the positive resolution of 1,824 USERRA cases, resulted in a $6.1 million cost avoidance to the federal government, for a total savings of $11.6 million. These results are a testimony to our supportive employers, ESGR staff, and the men and women who proudly serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

As we move into FY15, we are confident that ESGR will continue to provide the very best services; ADVOCATE, RECOGNIZE, EDUCATE, and MEDIATE, to assist members of the National Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers.

Jessica L. Wright
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Richard O. Wightman, Jr.
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs

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

Guiding Principles

ESGR 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) office 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 resolves employer conflicts between the 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
- Uniformed Services

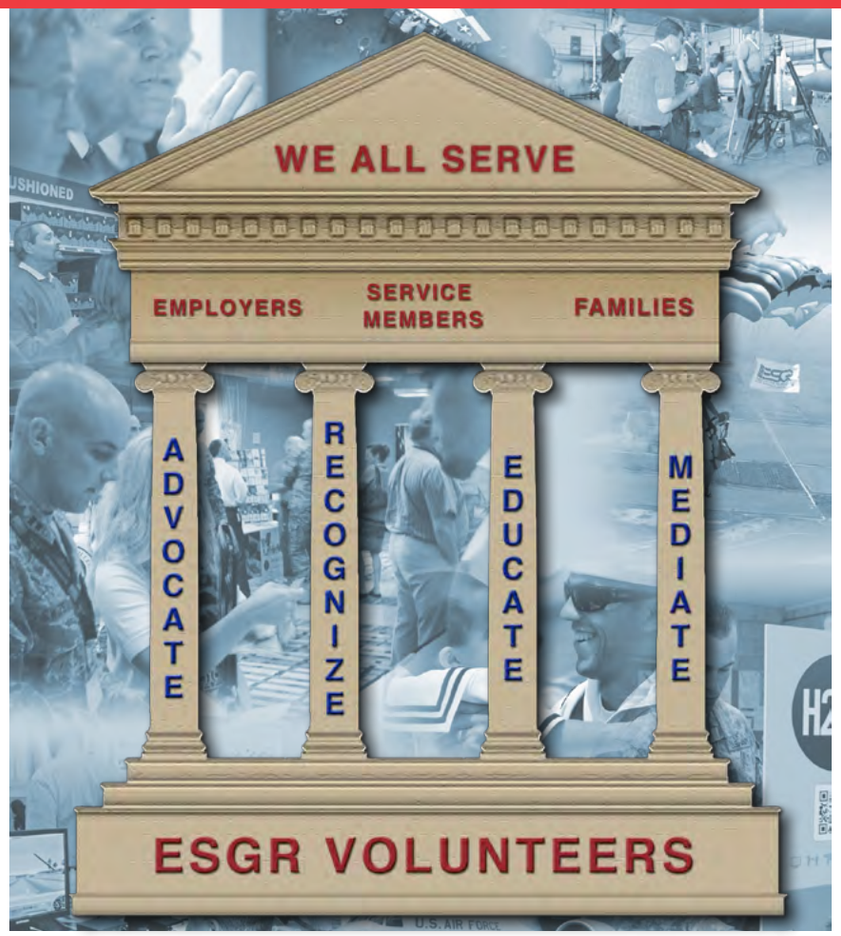
Employees

- 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 Department of Defense for National Guard and Reserve employers
4. Continually refine the ESGR organization for relevancy, effectiveness, and efficiency
5. Enhance consistent general population brand awareness and visibility of ESGR nationwide
6. Enhance awareness and value of the Employment Initiative Program to both the employers and members of the Guard and Reserve

ESGR National Chair Paul Mock and Association of the U.S. Army President Gordon R. Sullivan sign a Statement of Support.



ESGR, a Department of Defense office, was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve Component Service members and their civilian employers, and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR is supported by a network of more than 4,600 volunteers in 54 committees located across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam - Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), 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 serving employers, Service members, and their families. Together with national ESGR staff and a small cadre of support staff for each State Committee, volunteers work to promote and enhance employer support for military service in the Guard and Reserve.

Advocate

In FY14, ESGR undertook numerous efforts to improve support for employers, Service members, and their families. State Committees obtained many Governors' proclamations touting Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve week and the enduring importance of the ESGR mission. The annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony was conducted in the Pentagon with Secretary of Defense Hagel providing the keynote address and recognizing 15 of the most supportive employers in the nation. The ESGR Strategic Plan was updated, incorporating significant improvements recommended by the State Committees. And very significantly, the Hero2Hired (H2H) program successfully transitioned the H2H.jobs webpage to the Veterans Employment Center eBenefits website as part of the Administration's directive to consolidate the federal government's web-based veteran hiring tools in order to provide a one-stop shop for veterans seeking employment. In the coming year, ESGR will continue to modify programs to ensure the organization remains relevant and effective.

Maine's governor, Paul LePage, signs a Statement of Support during a military job fair.

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 as a key element in publicly acknowledging employers' support, while strengthening relationships between Service members and employers. These awards honor the sacrifices made by so many employers year after year.

ESGR 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 Reservist or Guardsman, may nominate individual supervisors for support provided directly to the nominating Service member, the spouse, and his or her family. During this fiscal year, 10,489 Patriot Awards were presented to outstanding supervisors, managers, and bosses.

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 FY14, 1,090 Seven Seals Awards were presented.

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 FY14, 1,562 supportive employers received an Above and Beyond Award.

The 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. In FY14, 115 Pro Patria 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. Eleven Extraordinary Employer Support Awards were presented in FY14.

Jeremy Young, ArgenTech Solutions, receives a Patriot Award from Washington ESGR volunteer Joel Scott.

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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD 2014

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, National Guard and Reserve 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 to advance in each of the three categories: small employer, large employer, and public sector. Further steps in the process include the National Review Board, which selects 30 finalists, and the National Selection Board which recommends the 15 recipients for consideration and approval by the Secretary of Defense. In FY14, 2,864 employers were nominated for this prestigious award.

www.freedomaward.mil

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2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award Recipients

Arizona Public Service
Phoenix, Arizona

AT&T
Dallas, Texas

Capital One
McLean, Virginia

CH2M-WG Idaho
Idaho Falls, Idaho

General Mills
Golden Valley, Minnesota

J.G. Management Systems, Inc.
Grand Junction, Colorado

Los Angeles Fire Department
Los Angeles, California

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
Concord, New Hampshire

PNC Bank
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Shofner Vision Center
Nashville, Tennessee

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
Memphis, Tennessee

Triumph Pharmaceuticals
St. Louis, Missouri

UNC Health Care
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Washoe County School Board
Reno, Nevada

Zions National Bank
Salt Lake City, Utah

A Navy Reservist demonstrates the operation of a weapon to supportive employers.

An Airman explains the mechanics of an Air Force F-16 Falcon to supportive employers.

Educate

ESGR draws on the diverse talents and backgrounds of its network of volunteers who engage daily with 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 to tell the ESGR story. During this fiscal year 6,408 outreach events, to include hiring activities for military and employers, were coordinated.

Program Integration and Training offers a varied and high-visibility set of training and program integration operations. Its two fundamental components are training and information technology (IT) teams. The training team helped ensure ESGR volunteers were highly trained and refreshed regularly to carry out the mission through online resources and face-to-face training given at both the local and headquarters levels. During FY14, the Training Division and the Training Subcommittee developed and executed in-house, volunteer training for 138 volunteer leaders, utilizing a mixture of headquarters staff and volunteers as course instructors.

ESGR concluded the training year with 12 new State Committee Chairs receiving training and taking the oath of office during the annual National Leadership Meeting. The IT team worked closely with the headquarters staff and volunteers across the nation this fiscal year to maintain a robust public presence via www.esgr.mil and www.freedomaward.mil websites. In FY14 there were more than 266,600 visits to the ESGR.mil website. This enhanced the integration of outreach, operations, and ombudsman activities throughout the ESGR enterprise.

Employer Outreach achieved success on many fronts this past year through many types of national and local employer events. ESGR facilitated thousands of Statements of Support, numerous Bosslifts, Briefings with the Boss, and hundreds of employers' awards recognition events, which helped foster local employer relationships and strategic alliances with employer associations.

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 as advocates for their employees' participation in the National Guard and Reserve.

The Fortune 500 Statement of Support program continued in FY14, and this proactive effort resulted in signing ceremonies with Google, Phillips 66, Eaton, Lowe's Corporation, Deloitte, Johnson Controls, Ross Stores, BP Americas, J.B. Hunt Transport and twenty additional Fortune 500 companies and large regional employers. The national trade show program was further refined to exhibit at employer associations' meetings that are highly impacted by employee service in the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR volunteers staffed exhibits at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Talent Management Conference, National League of Cities, and the SHRM Annual Conference. In FY15, ESGR will implement innovative social media and person-to-person outreach initiatives to seek out new opportunities to educate and engage employers, ensuring support for future National Guard and Reserve Service members.

Military Outreach ESGR's Military Outreach State Committee volunteers and staff, serving all seven Reserve Components, enhanced readiness for Guard and Reserve members by improving their knowledge of USERRA and the services provided by ESGR. More than 1,250 unit briefs were conducted, 510 mobilization events were supported, and 414,490 military Service members were influenced by ESGR volunteers and staff. Briefings by volunteers to Service members during mobilization, pre-deployment, and demobilization functions, as well as 539 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events, meetings, hiring fairs, and training courses, remained a staple of the military outreach effort in FY14.

Patriot Awards continued to be a substantial portion of the military outreach effort. Vast improvements implemented in FY14 were evident with streamlined processes and quality control measures. Patriot Award nominations from both Service members and their family members recognized 10,489 supervisors for patriotic support of Guard and Reserve members. To capitalize on this deserving recognition, ESGR representatives usually are present, along with occasional media coverage.

The Military Outreach effort is complemented by its Reserve Component Liaisons (RCL). The four RCL team members are: Jeff McClure - U.S. Army Reserve; Jim Strickland - U.S. Air Force Reserve; Chris Cox - U.S. Marine Corps Reserve; and Leon Hill

After returning from deployment, a Navy officer is greeted by family members.

- U.S. Navy Reserve. They serve as direct links between their respective commands or services and ESGR's State Committees, volunteers, and national staff.

Public Affairs ESGR State Committee Public Affairs (PA) volunteers work with military and civilian media organizations to support ESGR, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) and Hero2Hired (H2H) information-sharing efforts. From planning and executing Bosslifts to ensuring remarkable coverage of awards and Statement of Support events, the PA volunteers are a vital part of the ESGR mission. They distribute innumerable press releases, continuously update details on social media sites and their respective committee websites, create ads for special events and publish countless photos of events throughout the nation. In FY14, ESGR continued targeted outreach with the highly successful "On-the-Road" marketing campaign. This ongoing strategic initiative will reach out to more State Committees throughout FY15.

Mediate

Resolving employment conflict between employers and Service members is a vital and important mission for ESGR. Volunteer ombudsmen are trained to address the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) through informal mediation principles and techniques. More than 650 volunteer ombudsmen across the country assist employers and Service members on a daily basis in USERRA matters resolving conflicts that arise as a result of military service involving civilian employment. 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 staff provide informal, neutral mediation, at no cost, to help Service members resolve workplace issues and improve relationships with civilian employers.

The five most common 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.

ESGR ombudsmen managed 16,089 USERRA-related inquiries, and 2,374 assigned cases in FY14. Of these, 1,824 were resolved successfully, for a cost avoidance of $6.1 million to the federal government.

Service members may request USERRA information or mediation assistance anytime via the Internet at www.esgr.mil or the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-336-4590 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, or direct contact with ESGR volunteers.

Puerto Rico Committee staff and volunteers exhibit ESGR products and programs at a Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) conference.

For USERRA information or

mediation assistance:
www.ESGR.mil
or the National Customer Service Center
1-800-336-4590

For more about ESGR go to:

www.ESGR.mil

www.Facebook.com/GoESGR

www.Twitter.com/ESGR

www.YouTube.com/EmployerSupport

www.Linkedin.com – ESGR Group

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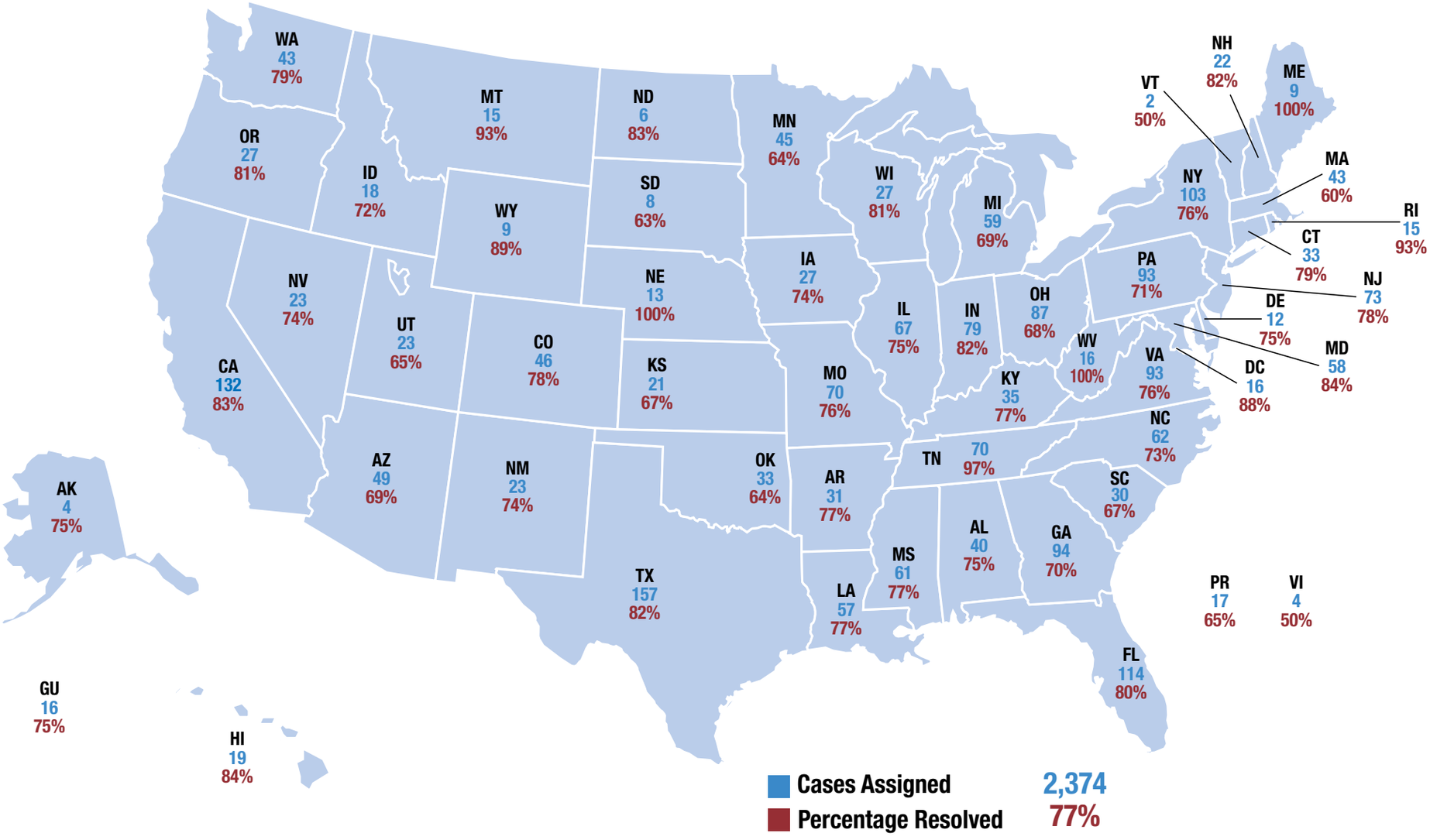
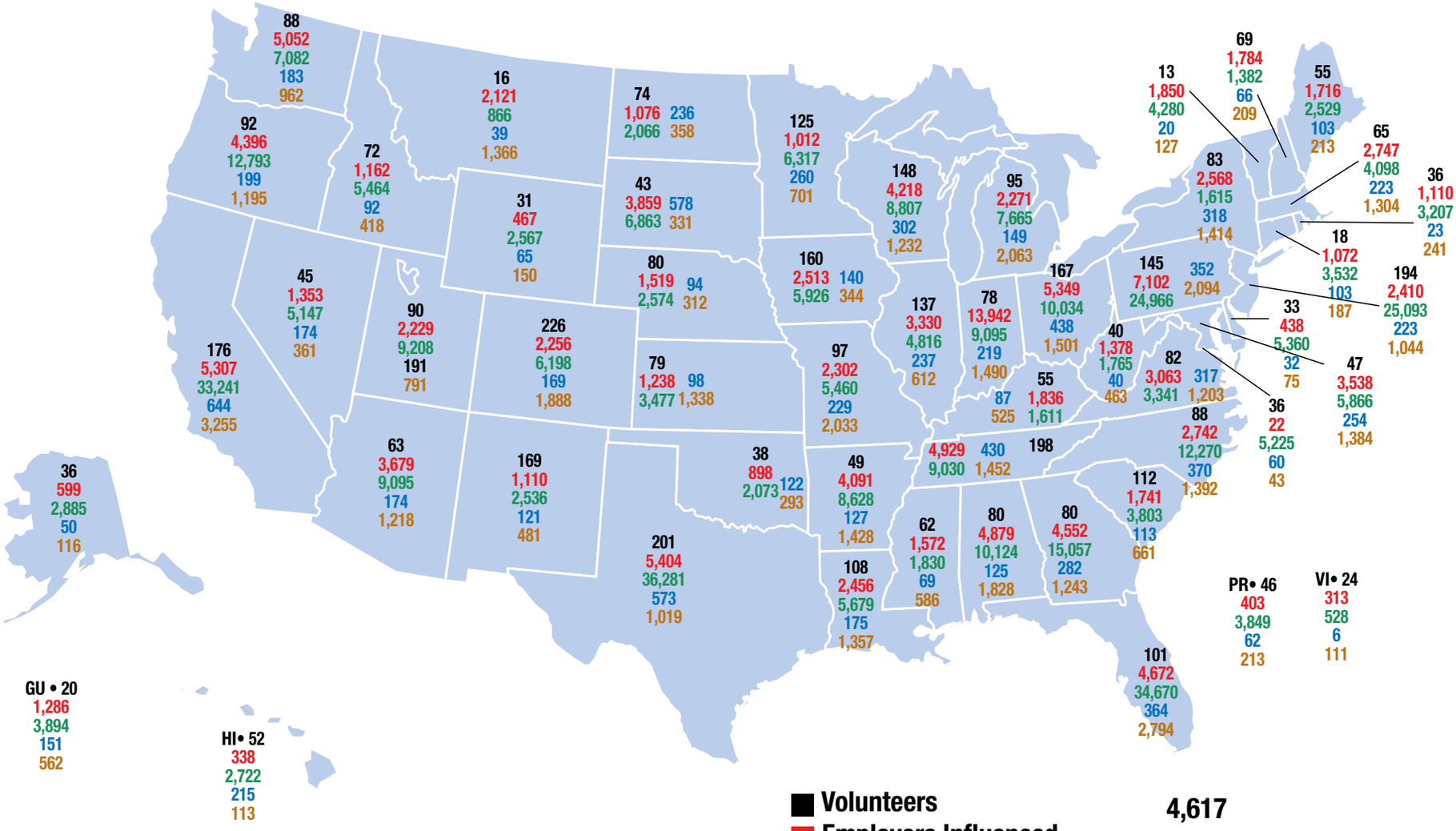
Volunteer Spotlight

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) case statistics



Influencing the Workforce



ESGR by the Numbers FY14

Outreach Mission: Employer & Service Member

Events Executed	Employers Influenced	Service Members Briefed	Service Member Direct Mail	Direct Hires/Indirect Hires H2H
6,408	145,270	414,490	94,793	6,704/127,078

Statements of Support	Patriot Award Nominations	Freedom Award Nominations	Volunteer Hours	* Return on Investment
50,094	10,489	2,864	242,848	$5.47 million

Ombudsmen Mission

USERRA Related Inquiries	Cases Assigned	Cases Resolved / % resolved	Average Number of Days to Mediate (resolve)	** Federal Government Cost Avoidance
16,089	2,374	1,824/77%	9.02	$6.1 million

*Based on 2013 National Average (Bureau of Labor Statistics) of a volunteer hour: 1 hour @ $22.55

**This figure is based on $3,379 for investigating a Department of Labor USERRA case.

Combined, these figures equate to an additional $11.57 million in services provided by ESGR.

We All Serve!

PARTNERSHIP OF PROGRAMS

Department of Defense
Partnership of Programs

ESGR®
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Yellow Ribbon
Reintegration Program
For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support℠

H2H HERO 2 HIRED

Supporting Reserve Component Members, Families and Employers