Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Which employer category should I use for my employer (located under Employer Information on the nomination form)?

A: *Freedom award nominations fall under four categories, as defined below:*

- ***Small businesses****: have 499 employees or less and can be publicly or privately held entities organized for profit or non-profit.*
- ***Large businesses****: have 500 or more employees and can be publicly or privately held entities organized for profit or non-profit.*
- ***Public sector employers****: government agencies (Federal, state, and local) that hire employees to fulfill official functions and perform public services, such as law enforcement, public education, and public safety.*
- ***Defense Industrial Base (DIB)*** *–* ***New Category Option**** *– Employers whose contributions in manufacturing, engineering, energy, and national laboratory operations are essential to sustaining the Nation's defense readiness and supporting the Total Force.*

Q: Can a family member submit a nomination for a service members employer?

A: *Service members serving in the National Guard or Reserve, or a designated individual acting on behalf of the Service member are the only individual who can nominate an employer.*

Q: Are comments required on the nomination form?

A: *Comments are required on the nomination form when the nominator selects "yes" to a question. Comments are absolutely essential to telling the story behind a supportive employer and their contributions. These comments are used to evaluate and score the nomination through various levels of review and provide the narrative to demonstrate why this employer should receive the Secretary of War Employer Support Freedom Award.*

Q: The nomination references USERRA awareness but I am not familiar with this. Where can I find more information?

A: *USERRA is the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Additional information on USERRA can be found at the following link: https://esgr.mil/USERRA/What-is-USERRA.*

Q: Is my employer eligible for nomination if the company is located outside of the United States?

A: *Only employers in the U.S. and U.S. Territories under USERRA are eligible for the Secretary of War Employer Support Freedom Award.*

Q: Who can I contact if I have additional questions on the nomination form?

A: *For additional questions, please contact the ESGR Outreach team at: osd.freedomaward@mail.mil.*

** Note: ESGR introduced a new Defense Industrial Base (DIB) category during the review process in 2026, recognizing employers who enable research and development, as well as design, production, delivery, and maintenance of military weapons systems, subsystems, components or parts, to meet military requirements. 2027 will be the first year this selection is available as a nomination category, increasing the number of Freedom Award recipients from fifteen total employers across three categories to twenty total employers across four categories. This is evidence of ESGRs continued commitment to recognize those that support our service members.*