

**CHARLESTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
Sheriff Kristin Graziano  
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North Charleston, SC 29405



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## **CCSO wins prestigious Freedom Award for support of Guard, Reserve employees**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022

**NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C.** – The Charleston County Sheriff's Office has been awarded the highest national honor for organizations that support employees' service in military reserve forces, the U.S. Department of Defense announced this week.

Of 2,777 nominations from across all 50 states, CCSO was picked as one of 15 recipients of the 2022 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest U.S. government recognition of employers for their support of National Guard and Reserve employees.

The Sheriff's Office proudly employs more than a dozen members of the Guard and Reserve. It is the first Freedom Award for the agency, which was announced as a finalist in June. CCSO was the only organization from the Palmetto State and was one of four law enforcement agencies to receive the prestigious national award. The agency is expected to be recognized in a local ceremony.

"The Charleston County Sheriff's Office is thrilled to receive this national recognition," Charleston County Sheriff Kristin Graziano said. "It is an honor to employ and support Reservists and Guardsmen, who sacrifice so much for us all. Their dedication and their families' commitment to our nation and our community is the epitome of our agency's motto of Service Beyond the Call. This award belongs to them."

CCSO in June also received the Seven Seals Award, a state-level recognition from the South Carolina Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, for its meritorious leadership and initiative in support of Guardsmen and Reservists.

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**CONNECT WITH CCSO**



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The ESGR is a Defense Department program formed in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve members and their civilian employers. About half of the U.S. military force is made up of Reserve and Guard members, many of whom have civilian careers.

Since its inception in 1996, the Freedom Award has been given out to 325 employers nationwide.

"I am proud to salute the employers who have distinguished themselves by being named Freedom Award recipients as we mark the 26th year of this highly coveted recognition," Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III said in a statement. "The men and women of the National Guard and Reserve make significant contributions to our communities and our national security through their civilian and military careers. By valuing and supporting their employees' military service, these employers enhance the strength, readiness, and diversity of our National Guard and Reserve forces, and the readiness of the Total Force. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, recognizing the sacrifices and stalwart dedication of our Reserve Components, their Service members, and the outstanding supportive employers who go above and beyond."

Defense Department full news release:

<https://www.esgr.mil/News-Events/ESGR-In-The-News/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/9916/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-ANNOUNCES-RECIPIENTS-OF-THE-2022-SECRETARY-OF-DEFENSE-EMPLOYER-SUPPORT-FREEDOM-AWARD>

Previous CCSO news release on state award:

<https://sheriff.charlestoncounty.org/news/2022/ccso-receives-award-for-support-of-reservists.pdf>

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*Two military-themed patrol vehicles are pictured with some of the more than one dozen members of the National Guard and military Reserve who work at the Charleston County Sheriff's Office.*

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