



A Guide to Services

The USDA Employee Services & Recreation Association

202-720-ESRA

www.usdaesra.org

How Does ESRA Work?

ESRA is incorporated within the District of Columbia, operates under an MOU with the Secretary of Agriculture, and is governed by a Board of Directors composed of a representative from each agency within the Department. Each Board member acts as a liaison between the employees in their agency and the Association. Board members are selected by each agency and are allowed time from their regular job to serve as volunteers and perform their duties for the betterment of their fellow employees. Elected officers are a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Alternate Secretary, General Counsel, and Assistant General Counsel.

A full-time staff paid for from the various revenue sources of the Association carries out the day-to-day operations of the Association. The staff are not Federal employees. The Association receives no direct funding from the Department and is entirely self-supporting.

Services Provided by ESRA.

ESRA provides numerous services for the benefit of USDA employees. The headquarters for all of these services is the “Ag Connection”, the ESRA store and general offices, located in Room SM-8 and SM-10 in the Ag Promenade mall of the South Building (sub-basement of 3rd wing) at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. Satellite operations are located in Riverdale, MD, Beltsville, MD, and Kansas City, MO.

At the “Ag Connection,” you can purchase a variety of products at prices far less than retail; register for activities; obtain tickets for a number of events in the DC area and elsewhere- many at reduced rates; sign up for trips; obtain information on “things to do;” purchase discount tickets for theme parks and movies—the list goes on and on!

The following are more detailed descriptions of some of ESRA’s services:

Recreation Activities.

ESRA provides a wide variety of recreation activi-

ties on a year-round basis. Examples of activities offered in the past include:

Team Sports, such as softball, coed volleyball, basketball

Special Events, including fashion shows, talent shows, tennis tournaments, golf tournaments, photo contests, Travel Expo, Fitness Fairs.

If there is a particular club you would like to see get started, contact ESRA.

ESRA also supplies “picnic packs” containing softball equipment, badminton and volleyball sets, etc. for use at family or company/agency picnics. During the winter holiday season, “Santa Suits” are also available to rent. Reservations must be made and there is a nominal rental fee.

Educational Programs.

ESRA provides opportunities for USDA employees to participate in a variety of educational programs. Most are held over lunch hour. Topics in the past have included: stress management, CPR Training, real estate planning, money management, weight control, pre-retirement planning, photography, karate/self-defense, cancer prevention, smoking cessation, long term care, etc.

Trips and Tours.

ESRA organizes a number of trips and tours throughout the year. Most of the trips are within a few hours drive of the DC area although on occasion the Association offers vacation tours to more exotic destinations, such as the Caribbean. Examples of trips that have been offered include: Atlantic City, Ski weekends, whitewater rafting, sailing, Christmas shopping in Pennsylvania, Tangier Island, Cruises, NY City and Radio City Music Hall.

If you are planning a vacation, ESRA offers discount coupons and special offers for any hotels, resorts and car rentals.

Are you planning a trip for a group? ESRA can assist in your group travel plans

Discount Tickets.

USDA employees can purchase discount tickets for a variety of events, including:

- Washington Capitals & Wizards
- Hershey Park
- Baltimore Orioles
- Colonial Williamsburg
- Anheuser Busch Theme Parks
- Kings Dominion
- Maryland Renaissance Festival
- Baltimore Aquarium
- Most movie theater chains
- Jamestown/Yorktown
- Six Flags theme parks
- Sesame Place
- Ski Liberty, Roundtop, Whitetail tickets
- Tourmobile

In addition, ESRA can supply you with discount coupons to holiday destinations, such as Disney World, Sea World, Universal Studios, etc. In particular, ask for our “Florida Pack” which is chalk full of discounts for those traveling to the Orlando/Disney World area. There is a small fee for the pack.

From time-to-time, ESRA makes available special discount tickets for one-time events. In the past, tickets have been available for events at the Kennedy Center, (e.g. “Sheer Madness”), Patriot Center (e.g. “Moscow Circus”), Arena Stage, Washington Ballet, and events at the MCI Center.

Tickets can be obtained at the Ag Connection or by phone (credit card orders only) by calling 202-720-3772, or from our website (<http://www.usdaesra.org>). There is a small shipping and handling fee for phone or website orders.

The “Ag Connection” Store.

The Ag Connection offers USDA employees some of the best deals in town. Located in the Ag Promenade Mall (sub-basement 3rd wing of the South Building) this ESRA employee store and buying service is where you can obtain:

- photo finishing (next day service)
- Magazines
- photo supplies
- gift items
- travel products
- laminating service
- famous “Barcelona” nuts
- wearing apparel
- USDA logo items
- business cards
- sundries for everyday needs
- See’s candy

- greeting cards
- and much, much more!

We also have the United Buying Service Catalog which save you money on the purchase of automobiles and furniture, plus the Employee Printing Service catalogs which save you up to 40% for invitations, cards, etc. ESRA also has its “*Visiting Merchant*” program in which vendors who carry unique products are brought into the Ag Promenade Mall for a 2-3 day period.

ESRA Online Catalog Program.

ESRA has an online catalog of a number of products carried in the Ag Connection store. Go to our website at <http://www.usdaesra.org> to view the catalog. The catalog allows USDA employees outside of the DC area to order items embossed with the USDA logos and related insignia. Orders can be sent in by mail, over the Internet, or through our toll-free number 1-800-626-ESRA.

ESRA Dry Cleaners and Shoe Repair.

Located in the Ag Connection store, the ESRA Dry Cleaners provides high quality dry cleaning, laundry service, shoe repair, and alterations all at very reasonable prices.

ESRA Insurance Service.

ESRA provides USDA employees the opportunity to participate in a number of insurance programs, including:

- group term life
- long term disability income
- accidental death and dismemberment
- supplemental health insurance
- individual retirement annuity
- hospital income plan
- major medical plan for temporary employees
- supplemental retirement plan
- automobile insurance
- long term care insurance
- professional liability insurance
- viatical policies
- pet insurance

ESRA Fitness Centers.

ESRA currently operates 3 fitness centers in the DC area and an additional center in Kansas City. The South Building facility is located in the Ag Promenade and is open from 6:00 am to 7 pm Monday through Friday. The center consists of a cardiovascular room (including bikes, rowers, tread mills, and step machines), a free weight room, a machine weight room, an aerobics room,

locker rooms and showers. Membership is available to USDA employees and contract employees within the Department. A nominal fee is charged for membership. There are a variety of classes offered at the Center, including:

- stretch and tone
- shape-up
- total fitness
- Karate
- low and high impact aerobics
- step classes
- lunchtime fitness
- spin cycles, and more!

The Association also operates fitness centers at the USDA Center in Riverdale, MD, the Carver Center in Beltsville, MD, and the Beacon Street Center in Kansas City, MO. Hours of operation for these centers is 11am to 7pm Monday through Friday (times are subject to change.)

ESRA Barber Shop/Hair Salon.

The ESRA Barber Shop and Hair Salon is located in the Ag Promenade mall and is open from 7:30am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. Men's and women's haircuts and styling services are available by appointment at very reasonable prices. Manicurist service and shoeshine service are also available.

ESRA "McGill's Deli.

Located in the Ag Promenade, "McGill's" offers USDA employees fresh pizza, delicious sandwiches, gyros, salads, and many other delights. Full breakfasts and delicious pastries are also available. "McGill's" proudly brews Starbucks coffee, and catering services for meetings and luncheons are available. Phone 202-205-2949.

ESRA Conference Room.

Located in Room SM-7A of the Ag Promenade, the ESRA Conference Room is available at no charge for use by USDA clubs, organizations and agencies for meetings, seminars and other special events. Reservations for the room must be made at the Ag Connection or by calling 720-ESRA.

ESRA Presents.

The ESRA *Presents* newsletter is printed monthly to publicize upcoming events sponsored by the Association or other USDA clubs and/or organizations. Copies are distributed throughout the Department and are also available at the Ag Connection, the ESRA Fitness Centers, and at other locations throughout the complex. A PDF version of the newsletter is available on our website.

In addition to the newsletter, information about ESRA services and activities can be found on the USDA Video network, on various bulletin boards throughout the Department, or by dropping by the "Ag Connection."

ESRA Website.

We encourage all employees to visit our award-winning website at:

<http://www.usdaesra.org>

Bookmark the site and visit often for the latest ESRA information and to order products, tickets, or event registration.! While there, subscribe to our electronic newsletter.

Other Organizations and Services in USDA.

US Postal Service Post Office.

Located in the Ag Promenade, this full service post office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Phone 202-720-9592.

Agriculture Federal Credit Union.

The AFCU was founded in 1934 for the benefit of all USDA employees and their families. A full-financial institution, AFCU has eight branch locations in the DC area.

- Main Branch location: Ag Promenade Mall
Hours: 8:30am- 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday
Phone: 202-479-2270 or 1-800-368-3552

Membership is open to all USDA employees and their families.

OPEDA.

The Organization of Professional Employees of the US Department of Agriculture is a nonprofit organization that has its thrust to support professional employees of USDA in their daily delivery of quality services to the American people and to our government. OPEDA provides members representation before The White House, OPM, USDA officials and other governmental organizations in situations and with issues affecting their employment, benefits, and the quality of their public service. Offices are located in the Ag Promenade, phone 202-720-4898.

Graduate School, USDA.

Created in 1921 by the Secretary of Agriculture, the Graduate School is a leader in adult education annually serving nearly 40,000 students in 1,000 different courses. Courses offered by the School can improve your productiv-

ity with a newly learned skill or can enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of your office. Information about their wide array of course can be obtained by calling 202-314-3650 (metro), or 888-744-GRAD (national).

USDA Child Development Centers.

The USDA has three such centers in the DC area. The Center serving the headquarters complex opened in 1991, and is located in the Yates Building. It serves children age 6 weeks to 5 years and is open from 6:30am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Phone 202-205-1133. Other Centers are at Riverdale (301-864-0714) and Beltsville (301-504-2392).

Answers to Common Questions About ESRA.

How much does it cost to join ESRA?

At present, there is no membership fee. All USDA employees are considered members of the Association. There is a fee to join the Fitness Centers.

What are the hours of operation of the “Ag Connection?”

The Ag Connection is open from 8:30am to 3:00pm Monday through Friday. It is closed on all Federal holidays.

Can I pay for purchases, activity fees, etc. with a personal check?

By all means! Just remember to bring your USDA badge (building pass) and drivers license with you.

Do you accept credit cards?

Yes, Visa and Mastercard.

Does ESRA assist other USDA organizations in sponsoring events within USDA?

Yes, but all requests for assistance must be made in writing at least one month in advance of the event.

Can USDA employees located outside the main downtown complex use the services of ESRA?

Yes! All are invited to use all of our services. Just give us a call if you need information. You will find a great deal of services available on our website.

Employees outside of the DC area are considered associate members, and are eligible for all ESRA services and privileges except the right to vote for Board members.

What can I do if I have a suggestion or idea for ESRA?

Please tell us! This is YOUR Association- we'd love to hear from you-the good and the bad!

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS (All have area code 202 unless noted)

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| ESRA Ag Connection | 720-ESRA (metro) or 1-800-626-ESRA (national) |
| ESRA Activities & General Offices | 720-ESRA FAX: 690-2737 |
| ESRA Fitness Center (South) | 720-8995 |
| ESRA Fitness Center (Beltsville) | 301-504-2495 |
| ESRA Fitness Center (Riverdale) | 301-734-4347 |
| ESRA Fitness Center (Kansas City) | 816-823-4754 |
| ESRA Barber Shop/Hair Salon | 720-2139 or 6299 |
| ESRA “McGill’s” Deli | 205-2949 or 2950 |
| ESRA Dry Cleaners/Shoe Repair | 720-3772 |
| U.S. Post Office (Ag Promenade Mall) | 720-9592 |
| Agriculture Federal Credit Union | 479-2270 or 1-800-368-3552 |
| OPEDA | 720-4898 |
| Graduate School, USDA | 314-3650 or 1-888-744-GRAD |
| USDA Child Develop. Center (Yates) | 205-1133 |
| “ “ (Beltsville) | 301-504-2392 |
| “ “ (Riverdale) | 301-864-0714 |

The official mailing address for ESRA is:

USDA/ESRA

Rm. SM-10 South Building

Department of Agriculture

Washington, DC 20250-9902

ESRA Website: <http://www.usdaesra.org>;

Email: usdaesra@erols.com

General Manager: Roger.Lancaster@usda.gov