RAPID RESPONSE

Rapid Response encompasses the strategies and activities necessary to plan for and respond to announcements of a closure or layoff; or mass job dislocations due to natural or other disasters; and to deliver services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible. The purpose of rapid response is to promote economic recovery by responding to layoffs and dislocations and preventing or minimizing the impact on workers, businesses and communities.

Rapid Response Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Informational and direct reemployment services for workers, including but not limited to information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims, information on the impacts of layoff on health coverage and other benefits, information on and referral to career services, reemployment-focused workshops and services, and training;
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses to transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement and layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment;
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating the connections, networks and partners to ensure the ability to provide assistance to dislocated workers and their families such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial advice; and
- Strategic planning, data gathering and analysis designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.

REQUIRED RAPID RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

- Layoff aversion activities
- Immediate contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers, and the local community, including an assessment of and plans to address the:
  - Layoff plans and schedule of the employer;
  - Background and probable assistance needs of the affected workers;
  - Reemployment prospects for workers; and
  - Available resources to meet the short and long-term assistance needs of the affected workers
- The provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, one-stop system services, employment and training activities, including information on the WIOA Dislocated Worker program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Pell Grants, the GI Bill, and other resources.
- The delivery of other necessary services and resources including workshops, classes and job fairs to support reemployment efforts for the affected workers.
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with other appropriate Federal, State and local agencies and officials, employer associations, industry business councils, labor organizations, and other public and private organizations, in order to:
  - Conduct strategic planning to develop strategies to address dislocation events and ensure timely access to a broad range of necessary services.
  - Develop mechanisms for gathering and exchanging information and data relating to potential dislocations, resources available, and the customization of layoff aversion or rapid response activities, to ensure the ability to provide rapid response services as quickly as possible.
- Delivery of services to worker groups for which a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance has been filed.

LAYOFF AVERSION

Consists of strategies and activities to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs. Layoff aversion strategies and activities may include, but are not limited to:
• Providing assistance to employers in managing reductions in force, which may include early identification of firms at risk of layoff, assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of services to address those needs.
• Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community, in order to create an environment for successful layoff aversion efforts and to enable the provision of assistance to dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible.
• Establishing linkages with economic development entities including local business retention and expansion activities.
• Connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, or customized training programs and apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment.

LOCAL RAPID RESPONSE ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES

Responding to and documenting layoffs or potential layoffs
When The Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) learns of a layoff or possible layoff; within 2 business days, they contact the business to gather more information, explain the services available to both the business and the workers and arrange a way to get information about services to the affected workers as soon as possible. In these initial contacts, staff will provide the business information about the WIOA Dislocated Worker program; WARN Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA) and National Emergency Grants (NEG) that might possibly apply to the dislocation. If applicable and approved, the TAA and NEG programs would provide additional funding beyond the WIA Dislocated Worker program to meet the reemployment needs of the affected workers.

DLR Job Service Offices are responsible for documenting all layoffs regardless of size in their respective communities at the earliest possible time after learning of the layoffs.

DLR shall respond to WARN notices as quickly as possible of the layoff or plant closure notice. In those cases where a WARN notice is not required but the closure or layoffs will have a significant impact on the community, DLR will respond at the earliest possible time. A significant layoff is defined as one which impacts the community, taking into consideration the occupations and skill levels of the laid off workers, in which it is located. Services to dislocated workers shall be provided to those who are most in need and can most benefit from those services.

Disseminating information to the affected workers
Ideally, DLR would meet with the workers in a group setting for a Rapid Response informational meeting. These meetings provide information to workers of the services available to them through the workforce system. If possible, these meetings would take place at the work site, but can also be done at the local Job Service or in a rented meeting room at a time that is convenient to the workers. The partners in the communities who provide various services to people are invited to attend the Rapid Response meeting and present their program information to the workers. Some of the partners who might attend a Rapid Response meeting are as follows: the Dislocated Worker program specialist, Unemployment Insurance representatives, and DLR staff.

RR Workshop/Meeting Reports:
If a Rapid Response group meeting is conducted, staff should prepare and submit a report to the Title I Program Specialist that includes the business name, location, date, number of workers in affected, if it was a temporary or permanent layoff, the business or industry represented, and other information that may be valuable (See Rapid Response form).

When group meetings are not possible, information is disseminated to workers individually by either leaving informational packets at the business or, if names and addresses can be obtained from the employer, contacting the workers by mail and encouraging them to schedule an appointment to learn about the available services.
Assessment of worker needs and documentation of Rapid Response service
Whether in a group setting or one-on-one, Rapid Response Worker Surveys are to be completed on each of the affected employees to assess their particular needs and goals. Rapid Response services provided to each worker include registering for work, resume assistance, information and assistance in how to file for Unemployment Insurance, information on the Dislocated Worker program and other services as appropriate.

Referral to WIOA
Workers may then follow-up by scheduling an appointment with a WIOA case manager to determine if enrollment into the Dislocated Worker program would be a possibility based on their particular needs/goals and the program guidelines and capabilities. If determined eligible and enrolled into the Dislocated Worker program, services that may be provided could include: retraining or skills upgrade through a classroom setting or On-the-Job (OJT), supportive services to assist with participation in training, conducting job search and/or relocating out of the area to new employment.

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