

RAPID RESPONSE

Rapid Response encompasses the strategies and activities necessary to plan for and respond to announcements of a business closure, 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, minimizing the impact on workers, businesses, and communities.

Rapid Response activities include, but are not limited to:

- Informational and direct re-employment services for workers, including but not limited to information and support for filing Reemployment Assistance (RA) benefits, information on the impacts of layoff on health coverage and other benefits, information on and referral to career services, re-employment-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 include:

- 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;
 - Re-employment 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 RA benefits and programs, one-stop system services, employment and training activities, including information on the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Pell Grants, the GI Bill, and other resources.
- The delivery of other necessary services and resources including workshops, classes and job fairs to support re-employment 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 (TAA) has been filed.

LAYOFF AVERSION

Layoff aversion strategies and activities prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs and 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 new employment 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 employment.

OUTREACH AND COORDINATION

DLR outreach should be made to a business planning a layoff within two business days of learning of the possible dislocation 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 information to the business which may apply to the dislocation: the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program, the WARN Act, TAA, and the National Emergency Grants (NEG). If applicable and approved, the TAA and NEG programs would provide additional funding beyond WIOA to meet the re-employment 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 will respond to WARN notices as quickly as possible. If 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, considering the occupations and skill levels of the workers. Services to dislocated workers shall be provided to those who are most in need and can most benefit from those services.

Emergencies

In the event of a natural disaster, such as tornado, flood, earthquake, drought, storm, or similar events caused by nature, emergency rapid response will coordinate services quickly to convene partners who will be dedicated to help the community navigate difficult times and address the short-term impacts of such an event. Coordination can also include state and local emergency management teams and Federal Emergency Management Agency. Emergency Operation Centers may be established. Job service office staff are onsite to assist individuals with accessing unemployment or disaster unemployment, and connecting individuals to other state and local organizations.

Disseminating Information to the Affected Workers

Employees are informed of Rapid Response events through their employer or directly through DLR by mail, email, or social media and newspaper ads. Job Service Office staff work with the employer to identify appropriate meeting times for the employees.

When informed of a layoff, Job Service Office staff will meet with impacted employees. These meetings share resources to reduce the burden from being laid off and to assist the individual in returning to work. During a Rapid Response meeting, individuals are provided a folder with a number of resources and information sheets. Every item in the packet is reviewed during the meeting. Workforce and community partners are gathered to share how their programs may assist the impacted employees. These partners may include but are not limited to representatives from: the DLR RA Division, technical schools or university, local career learning center, and social service agencies. A typical Rapid Response meeting takes anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half based on questions from the audience.

A Rapid Response meeting can take place in a variety of methods. If possible, group meetings are scheduled prior to the closure or layoff and are held at the worksite. However, when this is not feasible, they can also be done at the local Job Service or in a rented meeting room in a location convenient to the impacted employees.

If an on-site meeting is not feasible, this process can be completed virtually. When a Rapid Response event is completed virtually, emails are sent out to the affected workers with the time, date and instructions for joining the meeting. If an email is not available, individuals are notified by mail and through other means such as social media.

If an employee is not able to attend a scheduled meeting, packets of information are left with the employer to disseminate or sent via mail to the individuals. Employees are encouraged to meet with a Job Service Office representative individually to review the information. A recorded Rapid Response and list of resources are also available on the DLR website for employers and employees.

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.

REPORTS

If a Rapid Response group meeting is conducted, job service staff should prepare and submit a report to the Title I Labor 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 (refer to the Rapid Response form in SDWORKS).

SERVICES

Assessment and Documentation

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 RA benefits, information on the Title I Dislocated Worker program and other services as appropriate.

Referral to WIOA

Enrollment into the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program can be determined in follow-up meetings between the worker and job service office staff and based on individual needs, employment goals, program guidelines, and capabilities. If determined eligible and enrolled into the Title I Dislocated Worker program, services may include a combination of retraining or skills upgrade through a classroom setting or on-the-job, Support Services to assist with participation in training, conducting job search, or relocating out of the area to new employment.

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