



Southwest Georgia Workforce Development Board
Policy/Procedure Name: **Rapid Response**
Policy/Procedure #: **WIOA-2018-069**
Effective Date: February 28, 2018

PURPOSE

Rapid Response is a United States Department of Labor (USDOL) grant program established through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Rapid Response enables each state to provide front-line assistance to employees who are laid off through no fault of their own, known as “dislocated workers”. The Program provides a pro-active response to company layoffs and plant/facility closures in which a state’s Rapid Response team coordinates services to aid dislocated workers and companies affected by closures/layoffs. Rapid Response enables states to provide on-site services, at no cost to the employer, to assist with minimizing the disruptions associated with job loss as well as assisting the dislocated worker in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible. In Georgia, Rapid Response is provided through Local Workforce Development Area’s (LWDA) and is coordinated at the state level by Rapid Response Coordinators (RRC). These teams of local workforce representatives and RRC offer options, resources, and information to aid the employer and the workers as they go through this transition.

The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) was enacted on August 4, 1988 and became effective on February 4, 1989. WARN offers protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide notice 60 days in advance of covered plant closings and covered mass layoffs.

STATE POLICY

Reference Georgia Department of Economic Development Policy and Procedure Section 5 Rapid Response

The State Workforce Division (WFD) serves as the State’s Dislocated Worker Unit. When a layoff occurs, the company notifies WFD of the impending dislocation. WFD, through its RRC teams will then coordinate with the LWDA in which the layoffs will occur. The state’s responsibility is largely to coordinate the meetings, the provision of services and to follow up with all necessary parties as necessary.

LOCAL POLICY

Rapid Response usually involves layoffs of twenty-five (25) or more employees in the service area. Once an employer provides notice of impending layoffs, the Rapid Response Team meets with them to obtain company-specific layoff information, worker-supplied descriptions of the supportive services available to them, labor market information, and contact persons for follow-up and questions regarding layoff-aversion efforts. Also, referrals are made to the



appropriate social service agencies, training providers, educational institutions, and economic development agencies. WARN alerts are also communicated to other local partners, such as elected officials and service providers, regarding the possibility of a mass-dislocation event happening in an area.

Building and maintaining relationships with the business community, throughout the growth and decline that characterizes the business cycle, is a critical aspect of rapid response; establishing and maintaining these relationships allows for early knowledge of potential layoffs. This information not only provides time for undertaking actions that may prevent the layoffs from occurring but may also allow affected workers to connect, in a timely manner, with businesses that can use their skills, thereby avoiding unemployment or minimizing its duration.

As part of the regional Rapid Response Team, the LWDA responds to layoffs or potential layoffs of at least twenty-five (25) workers according to state requirements. The LWDA will also provide Rapid Response services to employers that experience less than 25 dislocations.

The Rapid Response Team meets with them to obtain company-specific layoff information, worker-supplied descriptions of the supportive services available to them, labor market information, and contact persons for follow-up and questions regarding layoff-aversion efforts.

In situations whereby the actual size of the dislocation is uncertain, state Rapid Response Teams will investigate and make a determination as to the size and scope of the potential layoff event. If information about a dislocation is received by the LWDA within any of the fourteen county regions in confidence, staff will alert the state's Rapid Response Team no later than when the potential layoff turns into an actual dislocation event. Even in a "confidential" layoff, the comprehensive One-Stop and four job centers throughout the fourteen-county region encourage the employers to contact the State of Georgia's staff.

As part of the regional Rapid Response Team, the LWDA responds to layoffs or potential layoffs of at least twenty-five (25) workers according to state requirements. The process is as follows:

1. Upon receipt of the WARN notice, the team notifies essential entities and staff of a potential layoff event.
2. Team then contacts the employer within forty-eight (48) hours of notice of layoff.
3. Next, it informs both employers and employees of the available services and resources.
4. The team also assesses the reason for the plant closing or mass layoff. If it seems feasible the business closing or mass layoff might be averted, the LWDA, in conjunction with the local One-Stop center, provides technical assistance to investigate possible layoff aversion strategies.



Services provided on an as needed or requested basis may include the following:

- Facilitating workshops on job search techniques, interviewing skills, résumé building, salary negotiation, etc.;
- Enrolling eligible job seekers to provide case management, support services, and funding for in-demand training;
- Providing referrals to core partners and community resources;
- Coordinating unemployment services through/with the Georgia Department of Labor;
- Offering individual and group counseling;
- Performing skills assessment and case management;
- Reviewing Labor Market Information (LMI) and matching to job openings;
- Conducting regional group meetings to work with local partners in assisting dislocated workers;
- Interacting at job fairs, expos, and opportunities fairs.

The LWDA approach is based on the premise that successful rapid response programs are flexible, agile, and focused on promptly delivering comprehensive solutions to businesses and workers in transition. Rapid response, when operated successfully, delivers on the promises that the workforce system makes to businesses, workers, and communities—to provide economically valuable solutions to businesses and critically important services to workers at the time when they are most needed.

Layoff Aversion

LWDA's have the unique opportunity to implement proactive programs, thereby saving jobs and helping the community grow and prosper. Documented layoff aversion strategies, including Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) may be used to serve communities.

Companies may receive IWT funding assistance needed in order to avert potential layoffs. Funds are based on the size of the company and are used to re-train the potentially effected employer to be placed or shifted to another permanent position within the company.

REFERENCES

WIOA section 134 (a)(2), § 682.300. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) of 1988.

Georgia Department of Economic Development – Workforce Division Policy and Procedure Section 5 Rapid Response

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