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I. APPLICABILITY/SCOPE

This policy applies to all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I B staff and contractors (if applicable) delivering workforce development Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and services.

II. PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines and criteria to be used in Rapid Response (RR) services to assist participants and employers in the event of a layoff, plan closure or natural or other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation.


III. BACKGROUND

Rapid Response provides customer-focused services to both employers and workers affected by job dislocation, plant closures, natural or other disasters resulting in a mass layoff while ensuring immediate access to affected workers to help them quickly re-enter the workforce. Rapid Response promotes economic development vitality and delivers critically important solutions to workers and businesses in transition. Assistance to employers focuses on providing guidance and coordination to ensure a smooth transition for their employees by facilitating linkages to available resources and services.

IV. POLICY


- A. Rapid Response services are required to be delivered in the case of a permanent closure and irrespective of whether information about the layoff is received via an announcement or other notification method. There is no numerical threshold for delivering Rapid Response services in these instances. Rapid Response is required, regardless of the number of workers affected by the closure and upon receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), or mass layoff; regardless of the number of workers affected by the layoff announced. While businesses are under no obligation to allow or help ensure smooth delivery of rapid response services, Rapid Response Teams must make all reasonable efforts to deliver services to affected workers. Reasonable efforts are more than cursory attempts, such as providing services at off-site locations and during convenient hours. Rapid Response services must be delivered when one or more of the following circumstances occur:
 - 1. Announcement or notification of a permanent closure, regardless of the number of workers affected;
 - 2. Announcement or notification of a mass layoff that affects 50 or more workers or when a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notice has been filed, regardless of the number of workers affected by the layoff announcement; or
 - 3. A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster; or the filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

- B. The City of Phoenix has assigned a Local Rapid Response Coordinator (LRRC) to provide on-site assistance for dislocation events such as permanent closures and layoffs throughout the ARIZONA@WORK City of Phoenix Local Area. The LRCC has overall responsibility for ensuring the


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Rapid Response team is fulfilling the obligation of effective delivery of Rapid Response assistance to affected workers. The Rapid Response team consists of the following:


1. Rapid Response Coordinator;
 2. Unemployment Insurance Staff;
 3. Employment Services Staff;
 4. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Staff (if applicable);
 5. The ARIZONA@WORK Maricopa County's Rapid Response team; and
 6. The Arizona Department of Economic Security's Business Services staff when applicable.
- C. The Local Rapid Response Coordinator Is responsible for maintaining the state of Arizona's comprehensive workforce case management and reporting system (currently AJC) for effective program management review and evaluation. All plant closures and layoffs must be recorded at the local level regardless of whether WARN compliance is required. The Local Rapid Response Coordinator must:
1. Maintain all Rapid Response presentations, location of presentations and presenters at each site;
 2. Document outreach activities offered to affected workers;
 3. Maintain a report developed by ARIZONA@WORK City of Phoenix regarding Rapid Response events that contains the following information:
 - a. Name of the company;
 - b. Brief description of the company;
 - c. Date of layoff;
 - d. Reason for layoff;
 - e. Number of positions affected by layoff; and
 - f. Services provided by Rapid Response team.
 4. Provide Rapid Response event reports to the State Rapid Response coordinator no later than the 15th calendar day monthly. When there are no Rapid Response events to report, a report indicating that there was no Rapid Response activity must be submitted; and
 5. Provide the names of mayor, city of Phoenix council members and bargaining agencies to employers when they are uncertain who to contact regarding a Worker Adjustment and Retraining (WARN) notice.
- D. The Local Rapid Response Team must:
1. Jointly provide Rapid Response services and resources to laid-off workers and employers;
 2. Work with employers and labor organizations in promoting labor management cooperating to achieve stated goals;
 3. Operate a monitoring, reporting, and management system to provide adequate information for effective program management, review, and evaluation;
 4. Exchange information and coordinate programs with the appropriate economic development agencies, Arizona Department of Education, and training and social service programs;

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5. Coordinate the gathering of information from multiple databases, including Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, Trade Adjustment Agreement, and other programs;
 6. Fully consult with labor organizations where substantial numbers of their members are to be served; and
 7. Distribute information on the availability of services and activities under the WIOA Title I B Dislocated Worker program, including efforts to ensure major employers, organized labor, and groups of employees not represented by organized labor are aware of the availability of Rapid Response assistance. The Rapid Response Team must make equal effort when responding to dislocation events regardless of whether affected workers are represented by a union.
- F. Required Rapid Response activities provide customer-focused services to both dislocated workers and employers and ensure immediate access to affected workers to help them re-enter the workforce more quickly and include the following
1. Layoff aversion, which may include:
 - a. Early identification of plants or firms at risk of layoffs, assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivers of services to address these needs;
 - b. Continuing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community;
 - c. Funding feasibility studies to determine if a company’s operations may be sustained through a buyout or other means to avoid or minimize layoffs;
 - d. Developing and managing incumbent worker training programs or other approaches to improving worker skills;
 - e. Connecting companies to:
 - I. Short-term compensation or other programs designed to prevent layoffs or to quickly reemploy dislocated workers;
 - II. Employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and
 - III. Other federal, state, and local resources necessary to address business needs that cannot be funded with Rapid Response funds.
 - f. Establishing linkages with economic development activities at the federal, state, and local levels, including Federal Department of Commerce programs and available state and local business retention and expansion activities;
 - g. Partnering or contracting with business-focused organizations to assess risks to companies, propose strategies to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered;
 - h. Conducting analyses of the suppliers of an affected company to assess their risks and vulnerabilities from a potential closing or shift in production of their major customer;
 - i. Engaging in proactive measures to identify opportunities for potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses; and

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- j. 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;
2. Immediate on-site contact with the employer, affected workers or their representatives, and the local community that include an assessment of and strategy to address:
 - a. Layoff plans and schedule of the employer;
 - b. Background, assistance needs, and reemployment prospects of the affected workers; and
 - c. Available resources to meet both short-term and long-term assistance needs of affected workers;
3. Provision of information and access to Unemployment Insurance benefits and programs, employment and training activities, including information on the TAA program, Pell Grants, the GI Bill, and other resources;
4. Delivery of other necessary services and resources including workshops and classes, use of worker transition centers, and job fairs, to support reemployment efforts for affected workers;
5. Establishing partnerships with local boards and chief elected officials to ensure coordinated responses to dislocation events and, as needed, obtain access to state or local economic development assistance;
6. Provision of emergency assistance adapted to a particular layoff, disaster, or other emergency situation, as determined by each LWDA;
7. Developing systems and processes, as appropriate, for identifying and gathering information for early warning of potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion, which may include:
 - a. Analyzing and acting upon data and information on dislocations and other economic activity in the local area and training outcome and perform; and
 - b. Tracking outcome and performance data and information related to the activities of the Rapid Response program;
8. Developing and maintaining partnerships with other federal, state, and local agencies and officials, business associations, technical councils, industry councils, labor organizations, and other public and private organizations to ensure the ability to provide Rapid Response services as early as possible. These partnerships may conduct strategic planning activities, address dislocation events and ensure timely access to a broad range of assistance. They may also develop mechanisms for gathering and exchanging information and data relating to potential dislocations, available resources, and the customization of layoff aversion or Rapid Response activities;
9. Delivery of services to worker groups for which a petition for TAA has been filed;
10. Provision of additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, layoffs, or other dislocation events that exceed the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources; and
11. Provision of guidance and financial assistance, as appropriate, when establishing a labor-management committee if voluntarily agreed to by the bargaining representative for the employees and management. The assistance to such a committee may include training and technical assistance to members of the committee and funding the operating costs of a committee to enable it to provide advice and assistance in carrying out Rapid Response activities and in the design and delivery of WIOA Title I-B authorized services to affected workers.

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V. Allowable Rapid Response Activities

1. Connecting employers and workers with short-term, customized, or other training or apprenticeships before or after layoff to ensure appropriate skills for new employment;
2. Facilitation of incumbent worker training for eligible workers based on state or local rules (see Section 500 -Training Services Policy);
3. Identification of heavily concentrated industries and sectors and related training needs in a geographic area;
4. Proactive measures, such as business visitation or layoff forecasting programs, to identify indicators of potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses;
5. Talent transfer events or reemployment boot camps that will connect businesses in growing industries or sectors with available talent;
6. Effective partnerships with a wide range of organizations to support allowable strategies and activities;
7. Collection of data and intelligence related to economic transition trends within industries, communities, or at specific employers, and planning strategies for intervention; or
8. Development of an early warning network and system using data and intelligence gathered.
9. Provision of additional assistance, per 20 CFR 682.350.

V. POLICY MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Administrative revisions to the policy may be made by the Phoenix Business and Workforce Development (PBWD) Board Executive Director, with notice to the PBWD Board’s Executive Leadership Committee. All other substantive revisions will go to the PBWD Board’s Executive Leadership Committee for review and recommendation to the PBWD Board for approval.

VI. ADDITIONAL OR MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Arizona Department of Economic Security Rapid Response policy link:

https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/media/rapidresponse5_22_18.pdf

TEGL 02-15: Operational Guidance for National Dislocated Worker Grants. pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) link: http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_02-15.pdf

Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 32-10: Revised National Emergency Grant Application Submission and Review Process link: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/ten2010/TEN32-10.pdf>