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|  | Subject Rapid Response Policy ARIZONA@WORK-Yuma County | |
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| | Authorized by: Yuma County Workforce Development Board | |

Background/Purpose

This policy for the Yuma County Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) on providing Rapid Response services as defined in the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy Manual for Rapid Response Services. Rapid Response is a critical component of the workforce system’s approach to addressing economic transition and a comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs, dislocations; and preventing or minimizing the impact on workers, businesses, and communities.

The primary purpose of Rapid Response services is to enable affected workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible following a layoff, or to prevent layoffs altogether. Rapid Response encompasses the business-related strategies and activities necessary to avert, plan for, and respond to an announcement or notification of a permanent closure or mass layoff or mass job dislocation due to natural or other disasters; or the filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

References

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 (P.L. 113-128); 20 CFR Part 682 Subpart C; Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) 19-16 and 12-19 Change 1; Training and Employment Notices (TENs) 03-10 and 09-12; WIOA State Policy Manual Chapter 2 Section 900.

Policy

This policy describes the roles and responsibilities of the Rapid Response Team when delivering Rapid Response activities and services under WIOA; as well as the stages of Rapid Response and procedures to be followed by the Rapid Response Team.

A. Rapid Response Team- Roles & Responsibilities

The Rapid Response Team will work together when an announcement of a permanent closure or mass layoff at a plant, facility, or enterprise has occurred. This can include natural or other disasters which can result in mass job dislocation. The Rapid Response Team consists of the following members:

- *State Rapid Response Representative-* work together with the local area to determine the appropriate Rapid Response services required to assist the employer and affected workers.
- *Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator* – conduct and lead the Rapid Response meetings providing informational workshops to employers and affected workers in the event of a closure or layoff. Makes the initial contact and provides early intervention services to employers as needed.
- *One Stop Operator-* provides an overview of WIOA services available through the comprehensive One Stop Center.
- *Contracted Service Providers-* provide assessments to the affected workers and determines eligibility for Title IB WIOA Dislocated Worker Program.
- *Business Services Staff-* provides support to the Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator as needed with Rapid Services events and activities.
- *DES Employment Services-* provide onsite information to the affected workers about the services that will be made available to them to ease the transition of re-employment.
- *DES Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits program-* provide onsite UI information to the affected workers about the UI benefits and the application process.
- *TAA staff (if applicable)* - provide information to the affected employers and workers about the TAA reemployment services and benefits that may be available to them, as well as assisting them through the petition process.
- *Other ARIZONA@WORK partners as needed such as DES Veteran Services, Title II Adult Education Services, etc.* - provide additional information and resources available through their programs and agencies.

B. Rapid Response Activities/Services

The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator along with the Business Services Staff will provide early intervention services that are designed to assist the affected workers transition back to work. Rapid Response meetings are scheduled to provide informational workshops to employers and the affected workers in the event of a closure or lay off. Some of the Rapid Response services include but not limited to:

- The establishment of onsite contact with employer and employee representatives.
- Unemployment Insurance information and assistance.
- The provision of information and access to available employment and training activities.
- Connecting employers and workers with short term, customized, incumbent worker training, apprenticeships, or other training before or after the layoff to ensure appropriate skills for new employment. *Note: Individuals must first be*

determined eligible and enrolled in a WIOA Title IB program (Adult or Dislocated Worker) to receive training services such as OJT, Registered Apprenticeship, or Customized Training; with the exception of Incumbent Worker Training unless other career and training services will be provided.

- Effective partnerships with a wide range of organizations to support allowable activities.

C. Layoff Aversion Activities/Services

The Rapid Response Team works closely with employers to avert layoffs and to keep a skill workforce engaged in the existing regional economy or industry. Layoff aversion strategies and activities are customized to specific needs, rapidly deployable, informed by economic data, and include on-going engagement and partnerships with businesses in the community to assist dislocated workers with reemployment as soon as possible minimizing periods of unemployment.

When there is an indication that the business closing or mass layoff might be averted, the Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator along with the Business Services staff can provide technical assistance to investigate possible layoff aversion strategies such as:

- Identify strategies to avert layoffs.
- Coordinate with state and local economic development entities.
- Provide incumbent worker training.
- Connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on the job training, or customized training program and apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment.
- Communicate directly with the employers on their needs and what is necessary to avoid layoffs.
- Matching businesses that are in transition with similar skill sets.
- Educate employers on various State and Local programs which include;
 - Work Sharing Program
 - Program Training Funds
 - Career Centers
 - Tax Incentives/credit (i.e. Work Opportunity Tax Credit (*WOTC*))
 - Small Business Administration Information (SBA)/Business Loans (i.e. PPEP Microbusiness, Arizona Small Business Development Center)

D. Stages of Rapid Response

1. Notification:

The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) is received from the State Rapid Response Coordinator and the Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator is notified within 24 hours. Notifications can also be received directly from employers and or announcements/articles from the newspaper. The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator will identify if the rapid response event will be lead locally or managed by the State Rapid Response Coordinator.

Note:

Non-Warn Dislocations are those where employers experiencing closures or layoffs who do not meet the WARN Requirements as described in the DES WIOA Policy Manual for Rapid Response Services, may voluntarily choose to report such closures or layoffs to the State Rapid Response Coordinator or the Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator.

Rapid Response services must be offered regardless of the employer's size or the number of workers affected when an employer voluntarily reports closures or layoffs.

The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator is required to complete and submit the NON-WARN State Form to request an event number for the affected employer/business.

2. *Immediate Employer Contact/Investigation:*

The Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator contacts the employer and affected union(s) within two business days of being notified of a closure or layoff to provide a brief explanation of what Rapid Response is and the WIOA services that are potentially available. The Coordinator obtains pertinent information from the company regarding the closure or layoff, identifies what support is needed to assist the employer, and schedules an initial on-site meeting with the company as soon as possible.

3. *Initial On-Site Employer Meeting:*

The initial on-site employer meeting must take place as soon as possible and is designed to provide the employer and employee representatives with the following;

- An overview of services available to the affected workers through WIOA; and define the role of each member from the Rapid Response Team.
- A variety of on-site services can be offered to the affected workers. These may include:
 - Workshops tailored to the specific dislocation event (*i.e. resume writing, interviewing, job search resources and techniques, financial planning, etc.*)
 - Access to TAA
 - Career Counseling
 - Initial Career Assessments
 - Basic Education classes through partners from Title II
 - English Language Learner classes through partners from Title II
 - Job and Education Fairs
- Obtain specific information from company management and the union, which will aid the Rapid Response Team in planning for services.

The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator will attempt to obtain the commitment of the employer to actively participate in the planning and implementation of key project activities such as the Interest Survey Form given to the affected worker, information sessions/workshops, and outreach and placement activities.

4. *Orientation/Informational Sessions:*

The Rapid Response team will provide information to the affected workers about the services that will be made available to them to ease the transition to re-employment. A survey of the workers is conducted to obtain their direct input such as information related to demography, employment, and the types of programs and services they may wish to utilize.

The team may present information which will aid the affected workers in identifying barriers to employment, and learn about resources that can help them secure new employment. Additional state agencies or partner agencies may participate as appropriate as determined by the Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator.

5. ***Planning For Services:***

The Rapid Response Team develops an effective plan for Title IB WIOA services utilizing a coordinated service strategy based upon information obtained during prior rapid response activities.

6. ***Project Implementation:***

The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator maintains periodic contact with the Operations Director with respect to the implementation of Rapid Response services delivered to the affected workers. The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator may recommend or make modifications to the service delivery plan based on updated data and or identified additional needs of the affected workers.

E. Rapid Response Reporting Requirements

- An employer contact data entry is required to be recorded into the Arizona Job Connection System (AJC) by the Business Services Team or the Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator to report rapid response services. Staff must refer to the Rapid Response Information Form.
- The Service Provider Staff, if applicable, is responsible for ensuring the timely entry of Rapid Response services into AJC. Data must be validated for any participant enrolled in Rapid Response Services in accordance to the DES Data Validation checklist.
- The Local Rapid Response Employer Engagement Coordinator must submit a report regarding Rapid Response events to the State Rapid Response Coordinator at the beginning of every month. If there were no Rapid Response events for the month, the report will still be required for State submission indicating no rapid response activities.