



Rapid Response Services for Employers and Employees

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Rapid Response is a federal program designed to assist states, communities and individuals recover from economic dislocations, industry declines and natural disasters that lead to worker dislocation.

Rapid response is a service that is provided both before and after a dislocation event and is tailored to each event. The response may include a variety of services such as the following:

1. Employee meetings regarding services to assist with re-employment.

These meetings typically include representatives from Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services and Workforce Development programs located at the Job Centers who provide information on services and benefits that are available to laid off employees. Employees are encouraged to keep their options open and not to quit before the layoff date as this will affect eligibility for programs such as job training and Unemployment Insurance.

Packets are available for attendees with Dalhstrom handbooks on Surviving a Layoff, Job Hunting Handbook, Out of Hock, flyers on filing Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services, Workshop schedules, information on program orientations, future Job Fairs, lists of web sites for job searches, etc. Presentations are generally brief and informal. Questions and discussion are encouraged. Meetings may be held at the employee worksite, a typical employee meeting location or at a location away from the employer. Employers are often asked to introduce the meeting and labor organization representatives are invited to attend.

2. On-site workshops tailored to employee needs.

Depending on employer and employee interest, potential workshops may include topics such as resume preparation, interviewing skills, labor market information, and making a career change. Employees of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development including Employment Counselors are available to lead the workshops. Other workshops may include financial planning, and stress management.

On-site orientation to the Dislocated Worker Program, the federal assistance program for laid off workers can be provided. This workshop provides information about the program, how it works and the benefits available to participants including assistance for funding out of area job search, relocation to another job and job training, skills upgrading, assistance with occupational certification, etc.

3. Facilitation of Labor-Management Committees.

In the context of a layoff, Labor-Management Committees provide the voice of the worker to program services. They also provide a single, accurate source of information to the workers. When there is a shortfall of program funds the Labor-Management Committee assists in the application for additional funds through a federal National Emergency Grant.

4. Peer Support.

One or more individuals from the affected dislocation group are hired in a temporary position (through a grant) based on the recommendation of fellow laid off workers and an interview. Peers, who share the experience of the layoff, are experts on the specific conditions and needs of the workforce. This expertise fills a vital role in developing service delivery systems by providing on-going feedback about emerging needs and service effectiveness.

Peers:

- Establish a bridge to services providing community assistance and program information to the dislocated worker when the individual is ready to use the information. This effectively helps workers explore and access their options.
- Assist those who enter unfamiliar systems be better prepared to navigate and meet the related challenges.
- Assist dislocated workers with information about services such as tax or credit counseling to find and access these services.

Because Peers are often new to this type of work, they are supported on a daily basis by Peer Leaders. Peers have a minimum of 5 days of formal training in topics such as the impacts of job loss, making good referrals to service agencies, listening skills and confidentiality.

5. Other Rapid Response services.

Includes studies of impacts affecting employment on an industry, the organization and coordination of regional responses, pre-feasibility studies for employee purchase of the business, planning incumbent worker training, and the collection of statewide data.

6. Transition centers.

Transition centers are specifically designed to meet the needs of the impacted workers. The center may be located at the worksite or off. Many of the services that are located at a Job Center are provided at the transition center.

7. Job Center services.

Job Center services are available to the general public and include access to computers, job search sites, workshops on topics such as resume preparation and interviewing skills, labor market information about the availability of employment in any occupation and location and the forecast for employment in that occupation, and individualized assistance in searching for information. Program specific services for veterans, older workers, etc., as well as screening for and referral to other appropriate services such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, and credit counseling are also available.

Specific services available to workers laid off from employment include:

- Career Counseling staff to assess and interpret interests, aptitudes and skills of individuals, help to find information about potential occupations that make use of their transferable skills and strengths, and identify and resolve other barriers to employment.
- Career planning, establishing a career goal and strategy for meeting the goal.
- Short-term supportive services to enable job search when other sources of funding are not available. Examples of supportive services include minor car repair, clothing for interviews, dental care, ID cards, etc.
- Assistance paying for out-of-area job search when one or more interviews are scheduled.
- Assistance paying for relocation to another job when a job offer is made.
- Skill upgrading in an individual's existing career field or when the labor market indicates a low demand for existing skills, retraining into a new occupation.
- A variety of other job training scenarios including but not limited to on-the-job training and internships.
- Unemployment Insurance benefits are available to qualified individuals and can be filed via the telephone.

Additional information can be located at <http://www.jobs.state.ak.us/> .