

State of Alaska
Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Divisions: Employment and Training Services

Policy: 07-545.1

Subject: Rapid Response Activities

Pages: 3

Reference: [20 CFR 682 Subpart C](#); [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) sec. 134\(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#); [TEGL 19-16](#)

Effective: 01/27/2025

Revised: 04/04/2025

Approved:



Paloma Harbour, Director, DETS

4/4/2025

Date

1. Parties Affected:

This policy applies to dislocated workers, Alaska businesses, and the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS).

2. Background:

Rapid Response is a United States Department of Labor (USDOL) program established through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Rapid Response encompasses the strategies and activities necessary to plan for, avert, and respond as quickly as possible following an announcement or notification of a permanent closure or mass layoff, a mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster, or filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition. Rapid Response delivers services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible. Rapid Response enables states to provide on-site services at no cost to minimize disruptions associated with job loss. The purpose of Rapid Response is to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing ongoing, comprehensive approaches to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing the impacts on workers, businesses, and communities.

3. Policy:

Overview

Rapid Response offers high quality services to communities, businesses, and individuals who are facing economic impacts, industry changes, and natural disasters that may lead to worker layoffs or dislocations. Rapid Response helps businesses retain their workers by providing alternatives to layoffs through layoff-aversion strategies and activities. In the event of a layoff, Rapid Response ensures services are available to affected workers to assist in their transition to new employment as quickly as possible.

The DETS Rapid Response team consists of a statewide Rapid Response Coordinator, regional rapid response representatives, and trained backup rapid response representatives. The Rapid Response team coordinates services to aid dislocated workers and businesses affected by closures or layoffs.

While the Rapid Response team will offer services when notified of any layoff, regardless of the number of workers affected, Rapid Response services must be offered when one or more of the following circumstances occur:

- Announcement or notification of a mass layoff (50 or more workers laid off).
- A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster.
- The filing of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN).
- The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.
- Announcement or notification of a permanent closure, regardless of the number of workers affected.

Layoff Aversion Strategies and Activities

Utilizing various data and resources provided by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Unemployment Insurance and Research and Analysis teams, the statewide Rapid Response Coordinator will:

- Identify and gather information for early warning of potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion.
- Analyze, and act upon, the data and information as appropriate.

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 prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Developing, funding, and managing the state Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program or other worker upskilling approaches as part of a layoff aversion strategy or activity.
- Referring employers to other federal, state, and local resources to address business needs that cannot be funded with resources provided under WIOA.
- Connecting businesses to employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading. For example, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development's Division of Investments administers several state employer loan programs.
- Establishing linkages with economic development entities including local business retention and expansion activities.
- Referring employers and workers to an Unemployment Insurance consultation regarding potential benefits for reduced work hours.
- Connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, or customized training programs and registered apprenticeships before or after a layoff to help facilitate continued employment or rapid reemployment.
- Providing employers with information on Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) and other programs that may help defray payroll expenses.

Partnerships

The Rapid Response team is responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies; the Alaska Workforce Investment Board; elected officials; employer associations; labor organizations; and other public and private organizations to share resources and provide timely assistance to dislocated workers. This includes working within these partnerships when needed regarding state or local economic development assistance. The team will also partner and coordinate with the provision of emergency assistance adapted to a layoff or disaster, as needed.

Layoff and Closure Procedures

The Rapid Response team receives notification of potential layoffs and business closures via media announcements, partnerships, workers filing unemployment insurance claims, direct contact from impacted employers and workers, and WARN notices. When notified of a potential layoff or closure, the Rapid Response team will immediately reach out to the employer to gather further information on the potential layoff or closure. The Rapid Response team will provide the employer with information on layoff aversion strategies and activities to consider for avoiding layoffs if possible. If that is not possible, the Rapid Response team will provide the employer with information on WARN, a copy of the state's Rapid Response Layoff Guide, and information on services that could be provided to the affected workers.

The Rapid Response team will then conduct an assessment, coordinating with appropriate stakeholders and partners, and implement a plan to address:

- Layoff plans and schedule of the employer.
- Backgrounds and needs of the affected workers.
- Reemployment prospects for workers.
- Available resources to meet the short and long-term assistance needs of the affected workers.

Other Rapid Response Activities

Rapid Response services are flexible and tailored to each dislocation. By maximizing resources, Rapid Response helps businesses and individuals in transition succeed. Services may include, but are not limited to:

- On-site or virtual worker meetings with the affected workers regarding services to assist with short and long-term assistance needs and reemployment, which typically include representatives from Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, Career Support and Training Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance (if applicable), and other partner agencies who provide information on services and benefits that are available and necessary to appropriately serve the affected workers.
- On-site or virtual job fairs or workshops tailored to employers' and workers' needs. Topics for workshops may include resumé preparation, interviewing skills, labor market information, and making a career change.
- Job Center services and resources, including:
 - Access to career services, assessments, educational services, supportive services, employer services, the Alaska Jobs Center Network, and information on Unemployment Insurance, the TAA program, Pell Grants, the GI Bill, and other resources.
- Guidance and financial assistance in establishing a labor-management committee to devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers, if appropriate for the specific dislocation.

Reporting and Monitoring

The statewide Rapid Response Coordinator will track outcome and performance data related to the activities of the Rapid Response program. An analysis of Rapid Response activities will be included in the Alaska WIOA Annual Report Narrative. The DETS, Employment and Training Technical Unit will monitor Rapid Response initiatives and projects annually for outcomes and compliance.