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Rapid Response / Layoff Aversion

Under the Federally-funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), two services that help to address the effects of mass employee layoffs or company closures are **Rapid Response** and **Layoff Aversion**.

Rapid Response is a pro-active, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed for two purposes.

- To help growing companies access the resources they need to continue to be competitive and successful, including helping meet existing and future talent needs.
- To respond to announcements of layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate assistance to companies and their affected workers, to ensure rapid reemployment of impacted workers, and to minimize the negative impacts of a layoff.

Layoff Aversion, includes strategies and activities that are designed to *prevent* unemployment or minimize the duration of unemployment. If there is an indication that the business closing or mass layoff might be averted, the Rapid Response Team, in conjunction with other partners can provide technical assistance to interested parties to assess possible layoff aversion strategies.

How does Rapid Response work?

Under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, employers in the counties of Kenosha, Racine and Walworth inform the State of Wisconsin of any layoffs and plant closures.

- The Southeastern Wisconsin Rapid Response Team will go on-site to companies that have issued WARN Notices for the layoff of 50 or more employees, or otherwise notified the Rapid Response Team of impending employee layoffs of 50 or less.
- The Rapid Response Team will work with your company and any employee representative (s) to quickly maximize public and private resources, and minimize the disruptions that are associated with job losses on your business, your workers, and the communities in which you do business and live.
- Rapid Response can provide customized services on-site at an affected your company, accommodate any work schedules, and assist company leadership and affected workers through the painful transitions associated with job loss.

What is the value of Rapid Response to an employer?

Providing Rapid Response services to your workers during layoffs or closures benefits your company and your impacted employees.

Benefits:

- Higher productivity, better worker morale and lower absenteeism by reducing stress after a layoff announcement.
- Lower unemployment insurance costs-impacted workers become re-employed faster when early intervention services are begun prior to the layoff.
- Decreased likelihood of retaliations, theft, or other work disruptions.
- Human Resources staff saves time and resources.
- Media and rumor management control. Rapid Response understands the often confidential nature of layoffs, and will work with the company to ensure confidentiality at all times.
- Better public relations for an employer. Rapid Response teams can work with the media to highlight services an employer is providing to its workers during a layoff period, and assist with maintaining a company's public image.

What is the value of Rapid Response workshops for an employee?

Rapid Response can coordinate no-cost worker informational meetings designed to educate workers facing layoffs about programs and services that are available to help them transition into new employment as smoothly as possible.

These meetings can be held on-site at the employer's place of business prior to the layoff or off-site after the layoff.

A standard informational meeting include:

- Information regarding programs and services, including: Unemployment Insurance, the Dislocated Worker Program (funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that provides job search assistance and funding for post-secondary training, and Job Center services and resources
- Targeted Job Fairs with area employers
- Group workshops on a variety of topics, including: job search skills, career exploration, resume assistance, interviewing and more.
- Tailored labor market information on industry sectors and in-demand occupations for the region.

By providing information about these programs, workers are informed regarding benefits to dislocated workers and associated requirements. Services can be tailored to meet the needs of the business and its workers. The services are available at **no cost** to the company. Funding provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through the U.S. Department of Labor.

Layoff Aversion—A New Way of Thinking

Layoff Aversion has two objectives: prevention of layoffs, thereby preventing unemployment, or minimizing the duration of unemployment. Layoff Aversion **requires a new mindset** on behalf of the employer:

- If you THINK it, you are more likely to DO it
- *be innovative and creative*
- Layoff aversion may require you to re-orient your worldview — the business is your customer
- *be flexible and adaptable*
- If you always strive to prevent or minimize unemployment, you will look for solutions
- *be proactive and strategic*
- When you look for solutions you will realize you need partners across the economic spectrum
- *be knowledgeable and curious*
- You will need to create strategies and activities that remain relevant in a transitioning economy
- *be persistent and responsive*

The benefits derived from preventing layoffs or minimizing the duration of unemployment are undeniable—layoff aversion saves jobs, saves businesses, saves money, increases economic productivity, decreases the negative impact of unemployment, and ensures more resources are available to provide comprehensive services to those individuals with the greatest needs.

Layoff Aversion Strategies

Layoff aversion is often situation-dependent, and potential options and successful outcomes depend on a variety of factors. One important factor is **time**—the longer the time period until a layoff or potential layoff, the more options that exist for comprehensive layoff aversion opportunities.

Layoff aversion strategies that may be used by a Rapid Response Team include:

- Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community, in order to create an environment for successful layoff aversion efforts or to enable the provision of assistance to dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible should a layoff occur. This would include recruitments and specialized hiring events that connect dislocated workers with other companies from that industry sector with open positions.
- Connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, or customized training programs and registered apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment.
- Connecting employers to Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant, which is an innovative talent development solution driven by Wisconsin businesses to train and retain highly skilled workers.

Grant funds support short-term and medium-term employer-led worker training projects that:

- Encourage increased collaboration between Wisconsin businesses and workforce training partners.
 - Fill current and ongoing skill requirements of Wisconsin employers to ensure competitiveness.
 - Place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement (for further information on Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant please visit: www.wisconsinfastforward.com)
- Collaboration and coordination with local economic development agencies and other regional partners throughout the three county region.
 - Tapping under-utilized, capable labor pools (ex-offenders, individuals with disabilities, older workers, etc.)



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Engage, Empower, Survive and Thrive!

Let our Rapid Response team help you and your employees.

Change is stressful and losing valued employees is difficult. Our Rapid Response program is designed to help businesses make the events of potential layoffs less traumatic for your business and your employees.

In the case of potential layoff or closure, our multi-agency Rapid Response Team, is here to help soften the impact by providing customized, confidential, and convenient on-site services for businesses and employees in transition.

For more information about the rapid response or layoff aversion process, please contact the following:

Walworth County Center
400 County Rd., H
Elkhorn, WI 53121
(262) 741-5263

Racine County Center
1717 Taylor Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
(262) 638-6351

Kenosha County Center
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