



Rapid Response Overview for Employers

In our increasingly globalized and highly competitive economy, most companies go through cycles of growing or shrinking as factors external to their businesses impact them. KentuckianaWorks, Greater Louisville's Workforce Investment Board, offers many resources that assist companies regardless of where they are in the business cycle. One such resource is called Rapid Response, a program that provides short-term, early intervention and immediate assistance with layoffs and/or plant closures.

What is the Rapid Response process?

KentuckianaWorks coordinates the seven-county region's Rapid Response Team, which meets with an employer as soon as the team receives notice of any substantial layoff or closure as required by the federal Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, or when the team becomes aware of such events through other sources.

At this meeting, staff members inform the employer of available transition services for employees losing their jobs, who are also known as dislocated workers. Rapid Response activities, authorized and funded by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), are provided regardless of the reason for dislocation – downsizing, restructuring, natural disaster, plant relocation, bankruptcy and/or NAFTA-TAA (North American Free Trade Agreement-Transitional Adjustment Assistance).

The team asks the employer to schedule a meeting or series of meetings with affected employees so Rapid Response activities can begin as soon as possible. At the employee meeting, dislocated workers are given information about immediate needs, such as applying for unemployment insurance, extending their health coverage and qualifying for social service programs (food stamps and Medicaid, for example). They also receive information about Rapid Response activities that will help them transition to a new job.

What are Rapid Response activities?

Rapid Response activities run the gamut from helping dislocated workers apply for unemployment insurance and initiate a job search to finding financial assistance for training. Services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▶ **Job search and placement assistance**
- ▶ **Career counseling**
- ▶ **Labor market information**
- ▶ **Assessment of skills and needs**
- ▶ **Individual employment plans**
- ▶ **Occupational skills training**
- ▶ **On-the-job training**
- ▶ **Skills upgrades**
- ▶ **Job readiness training**
- ▶ **Supportive services** (for example, books and uniforms)
- ▶ **Temporary income support to enable participants to remain in training**



Rapid Response activities also include developing a plan to access funds and services for worker assistance (as eligibility permits), including TAA and NAFTA-TAA entitlements (if workers are trade-certified), Pell grants and WIA funds.



“Our partnership with KentuckianaWorks has been phenomenal – both for the hospitals and for the employees.”

DEBRA RAYMAN
Director of Norton Healthcare Workforce Development

Norton Healthcare and Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's HealthCare partnered with KentuckianaWorks to implement an incumbent worker training program to move LPNs to RNs, funded in part with Rapid Response dollars.

How do employers benefit from Rapid Response?

Providing Rapid Response services during layoffs or facility closings results in multiple benefits to the employer. The more quickly a Rapid Response strategy is implemented, the better off a company and its employees will be.

Providing Rapid Response services will help assure:

- ▶ Higher productivity, better morale and lower absenteeism during layoff due to reduced employee stress.
- ▶ Lower unemployment insurance costs as employees are re-employed more quickly.
- ▶ Decreased likelihood of sabotage or work disruptions.
- ▶ Better public relations for an employer as the Rapid Response team can work with the media to highlight services the employer is providing during the layoff period.

The team also can provide information regarding state or federal requirements or laws for notification, including the WARN Act.

How do employees benefit?

No employer wants to make the decision to layoff employees. However, sometimes layoffs and closings are inevitable. Inviting the Rapid Response team to meet with affected employees prior to the layoff will allow employees to access services and programs as soon as possible to help them through this difficult time.

Who is represented on the Rapid Response team?

The Rapid Response team brings together many partnering agencies to connect dislocated workers to an array of services, from employment assistance to health care. Coordinated by KentuckianaWorks, the team is a collaborative effort involving the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Kentucky Adult Education, U.S. Department of Labor Employee Benefit Security Administration and economic development representatives.

How do employers meet legal reporting requirements?

Under certain conditions, the WARN Act requires employers to provide workers a 60-day notice before a plant closing or mass layoff. Regardless of the number of affected workers, all employers are encouraged to provide notice to the Kentucky Division of Workforce and Employment Services as quickly as possible. Contact one of the staff members below to find out about Rapid Response services or more information on notice requirements.

STATE CONTACTS

George W. Scott
GeorgeW.Scott@ky.gov

Kentucky Division of Workforce and Employment Services
(502) 564-7456
(502) 564-7459 (fax)

Kentucky Relay Service
(800) 648-6057
(for individuals with hearing or speech impairments)
www.oet.ky.gov/rresponse/rapidresponse.htm



REGIONAL CONTACT

Tasha Griffith
tasha.griffith@kentuckianaworks.org

KentuckianaWorks One-Stop Career Center
600 West Cedar St., Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 595-4131 ext. 4047
(502) 595-4623 (fax)
www.kentuckianaworks.org

In addition, the **U.S. Department of Labor** provides an online Employment Law Advisor to help you understand your rights and responsibilities under employment laws and regulations. Employers may access online assistance at www.dol.gov/elaws/FirstStep.

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