

Rapid Response

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Rapid Response is a federal program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) designed to offer high quality services to communities, businesses, and individuals who are addressing economic impacts, industry changes, and natural disasters that may lead to worker layoffs.

Rapid Response services are flexible and strategically designed to bridge economic and workforce development. The program brokers partnerships and tailors solutions for businesses and workers during any stage of the business cycle. By maximizing resources, Rapid Response helps businesses and individuals in transition succeed.

Rapid Response helps businesses that are hiring connect with available workers, helps struggling businesses by connecting them with resources available to help with their individual needs, helps businesses retain their workers by providing alternatives to layoffs by exploring layoff-aversion strategies, and in the event of a layoff, helps ensure the layoff goes as smoothly as possible.

When layoffs are unavoidable, Rapid Response provides support to the employer, union (if applicable), and workers to assist with an orderly and legal layoff. Information on the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) is provided, and services are tailored to the layoff. Services may include and are not limited to:

- 1. On-site employee meetings with the workers regarding services to assist with re-employment.**

These meetings typically include representatives from Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, and Career Support and Training 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 it will affect their eligibility for programs such as job training and Unemployment Insurance.

- 2. On-site workshops tailored to employee needs.**

Depending on employer and employee interest, potential workshops may include topics such as resumé 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.

3. 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 resumé 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, and so forth, are also available, as well as screening for and referral to other appropriate services, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, and credit counseling.

Specific services available to workers laid off from employment may include:

- Employment services 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, and so forth.
- 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 online or by phone.