

Regional Program Standards

Focus: ☒ WorkSource Centers ☐ Youth Program Services
☒ Other: Workforce Development Board Policy

Topic: Rapid Response

Date: July 1, 2025

☐ New

☒ Revised

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Purpose

This policy defines the Workforce Development Board’s responsibilities for delivering Rapid Response services in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), ensuring affected employers and workers receive timely, coordinated assistance to support reemployment, retraining, and business transition.

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Policy Statement

Rapid Response services must be delivered when one or more of the following circumstances occur:

- Announcement or notification of a permanent closure, regardless of the number of workers affected.
- Announcement or notification of a mass layoff.
- A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster.
- The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

For the purposes of this policy and the provision of Rapid Response, a mass layoff is one that affects ten or more Affected Employees. Every effort must be made to provide Rapid Response services for all layoff events regardless of the number of workers impacted.

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The term "Affected Employees" includes managerial and supervisory employees but does not include business partners, consultants or contracted employees who have a separate employment relationship with another employer, or who are self-employed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Local Workforce Development Board – Worksystems, Inc.

Worksystems role is to oversee Rapid Response Transition Assistance services in Multnomah and Washington Counties. Worksystems has the following responsibilities as it relates to Rapid Response Transition Assistance:

- Develop and revise policies, procedures, and guidelines related to Rapid Response Transition Assistance services.
- Provide technical assistance to the WorkSource Rapid Response team to ensure proper implementation of policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Initiate contact with the employer or assign this task to the WorkSource Rapid Response Team. Initial conversations with the employer must include collection of information relating to the layoff plans and schedules, background and probable assistance needs of the affected workers, reemployment prospects for workers, available resources to meet the needs of the workers, and union contact information if the affected worksite is union-represented. This information must be entered in ORRATS.
- Forward all notices of closings and mass layoffs to the appropriate WorkSource Center in the local area in which the employer operates.
- Maintain documentation regarding Rapid Response Transition Assistance activities.

Worksystems must designate a Rapid Response Coordinator. Contact information for that individual must be provided to the Office of Workforce Investments (OWI). The Worksystems' Rapid Response Coordinator duties include but is not limited to:

- Create a record in the Oregon Rapid Response Activity Tracking System (ORRATS) and initiate contact with employers upon being notified of a closure, a mass layoff, a mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster, or the filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.
- Register for receipt of Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs). Registration is initiated by sending an email request to HECC.DWOregon@hecc.oregon.gov.
- Request and maintain access to the Oregon Rapid Response Activity Tracking System (ORRATS). Access to ORRATS is established by sending an email request to HECC.DW-Oregon@hecc.oregon.gov.

Labor's Community Service Agency (LCSA)

Through the LCSA Labor Liaison, LCSA takes the lead on providing a customized set of pre-layoff services to affected union workers and their employers in Multnomah and Washington Counties. For union layoffs, the LCSA must be notified and will coordinate Rapid Response Transition Assistance sessions with the WorkSource RR staff. All communication should include Worksystems' RR Coordinator. All printed or digital materials must be approved by Worksystems' RR Coordinator.

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Oregon Employment Department Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Oregon Unemployment Insurance (UI) information is an essential component of all Rapid Response Transition Assistance sessions. UI staff are typically the first presenters in the Rapid Response Transition Assistance sessions and discuss how and when to apply for UI benefits, how a person's weekly benefit amount is calculated and job search requirements while receiving UI.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA)

Staff from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) attend Rapid Response Transition Assistance sessions to inform Affected Employees of their options for health care insurance coverage following their separation from employment. OHA staff discuss coverage options such as COBRA, the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace, and the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid).

Regional Business Services (RBS)

The Oregon Employment Department's Regional Business Services (RBS) staff manage the labor exchange in WorkSource. RBS staff work with employers in the tri-county region to list job openings in WorkSource and recruit and refer qualified candidates. For Rapid Response Transition Assistance sessions, RBS staff are assigned based on their industry of focus with those occupations and industries of the Affected Employees. RBS staff discuss how to access job openings in the WorkSource system and inform Affected Employees of current recruitments that match their occupations and industry. In larger layoffs, RBS staff may work with WorkSource Rapid Response staff to coordinate an "outplacement" pre-layoff hiring event so other employers can connect with and hire the workers who are being laid off.

Trade Act Assistance (TRA)

When a layoff or closure is due to increased imports from, or shifts in production to, foreign countries, the Trade Act Navigator may become involved in the Rapid Response Transition Assistance session. Trade Act Navigators may provide several points of information as needed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and/or Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA). All information sessions must include information about trade act services regardless of the reason for the layoff.

WorkSource Portland Metro

There are five WorkSource Centers in the Portland Metro region. Each WorkSource Center has a designated Rapid Response staff member whose role is to provide assistance to laid off workers in partnership with the employer. The assigned WorkSource Rapid Response staff member serves as the point of contact on behalf of their WorkSource Center for all matters pertaining to Rapid Response Transition Assistance services. Each WorkSource Center has the following responsibilities as it relates to Rapid Response Transition Assistance:

- Carry out Rapid Response Transition Assistance services in partnership with the employer for Affected Employees.
- Coordinate the WorkSource Rapid Response team to deliver Rapid Response Transition Assistance services to Affected Employees.
- Manage responses to the Dislocated Worker Google Survey Form (see *Rapid Response Transition Assistance Manual*) to learn what Affected Employees may need and design sessions based on the collected information to carry out effective and relevant sessions.

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- Prepare and maintain documentation regarding Rapid Response Transition Assistance services.

During Rapid Response Transition Assistance sessions, the assigned WorkSource Rapid Response staff member will discuss WorkSource services such as WorkSource workshops (resume, interview, job search, etc.), Training services, and community and supportive services. Based on the needs of Affected Employees, WorkSource staff may conduct onsite workshops.

Rapid Response Transition Assistance Services

Information sessions

Pre-layoff information sessions should be delivered onsite at the business and at a time that is convenient for Affected Employees. Multiple information sessions may be required to accommodate workers on a variety of shifts. The WorkSource Rapid Response Team works with the employer to accommodate in-person information sessions as much as possible. Virtual sessions may be provided at the request of the employer.

Information sessions must include:

- Unemployment Insurance
- WorkSource Services and Oregon Employment Department Regional Business Team Services
- Health Insurance Information
- Labor and Community Resources (211 and represented workers)
- Trade Act Information

Job Fairs

The WorkSource Rapid Response Team may coordinate pre-lay off job fairs and hiring events.

WorkSource Workshops

WorkSource Workshops may be provided onsite at the employer including but not limited to: resume, interview, job search and WSPM Scholarship Application for Training.

Language Accommodations

When requested by an employer or Affected Employee, other languages must be accommodated for all Rapid Response Transition Assistance services.

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Rapid Response Layoff Aversion Services

Layoff Aversion activities are coordinated by the Worksystems' Rapid Response Coordinator and the Regional Business Services team. Layoff Aversion activities must deliver solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction) and includes ongoing engagement, Providing assistance to employers in managing reductions in their workforce, which may include early partnership and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community. Layoff Aversion services may include:

- Identification of employers at risk of layoffs, assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk employers, and the delivery of services to address these needs.
- Developing, funding, and managing incumbent worker training programs or other worker upskilling approaches as part of a Layoff Aversion strategy or activity.
- Connecting companies to: (a) Work Share or other programs designed to prevent layoffs or to reemploy dislocated workers quickly, available under Unemployment Insurance programs; (b) Employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and (c) Other Federal, State, and local resources as necessary to address other business needs that cannot be funded with resources provided under Rapid Response Transition Assistance services.
- Funding feasibility studies to determine if a company's operations may be sustained through a buyout or other means to avoid or minimize layoffs.
- Establishing linkages with economic development activities at the Federal, State, and local levels, including Federal Department of Commerce programs and available State and local business retention and expansion activities.
- Partnering or contracting with business-focused organizations to assess risks to companies, propose strategies to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered.
- Conducting analyses of the suppliers of an affected company to assess their risks and vulnerabilities from a potential closing or shift in production of their major customer.
- Engaging in proactive measures to identify opportunities for potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses.
- 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.

Union Coordination

If an affected worksite is union represented, Worksystems Rapid Response Coordinator must establish communication with the state Workforce Labor Liaison. The state Workforce Labor Liaison will help to ensure that local union representatives are included in the planning, coordination, and delivery of any rapid response activities. Union-involved layoffs and closure situations often include effects bargaining, which are separate negotiations that take place between union representatives and the employer specific to the layoff or closure. Worksystems Rapid Response Coordinator must remain in contact with the state Workforce Labor Liaison and ensure that delivery of Rapid Response services is appropriately coordinated and does not negatively impact other services which may be made available to the workers. Union representatives are to be involved in the coordination of the information sessions and are afforded a slot on the agenda.

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Oregon Rapid Response Activity Tracking System

Worksystems' Rapid Response Coordinator must establish a record in the Oregon Rapid Response Activity Tracking System (ORRATS) once notification is received of a permanent closure, layoff, mass job dislocation or the filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition. ORRATS records must be established to track employer engagement. A record must be created in ORRATS even if services are not provided, if an employer refuses to allow for services, or an employer refuses to engage or return phone calls. ORRATS is the system utilized to compile the annual report required in Oregon Revised Statute.

The Worksystems' Rapid Response Coordinator is responsible for all data entry in ORRATS. Information details in ORRATS must be entered at the time the information is received to ensure that the information is consistently maintained and kept current. Worksystems' Rapid Response Coordinator must:

- Ensure that information is entered in all tabs, screens, and drop-down menus.
- Information must not be entered in the comments fields, as those sections of the system do not tabulate for report generating purposes.
- Information emailed to OWI staff in lieu of data entry in ORRATS is not allowed.

References

20 CFR 679.310
20 CFR 682.302
20 CFR 682.305
20 CFR 682.310
20 CFR 682.330 (b), (c), (d), and (e)
20 CFR 687.130 (a)(2) and (3)
Oregon Revised Statute 285A.522