



DEPARTMENT OF
CAREER SERVICES

Workforce Issuance

100 DCS 11.101.1

☒ Policy ☐ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
MassHire Career Center Directors
MassHire Fiscal Officers
MDCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
MassHire Department of Career Services

Date: October 8, 2020

Subject: **MassHire Rapid Response Process Under WIOA**

Purpose: To notify MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators and other local workforce partners of the process for Rapid Response layoff aversion, plant closing and/or mass layoff activity under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).

Background: Rapid Response (RR) is a Layoff Aversion / Outplacement program designed to respond to businesses in transition, including major layoffs and plant closings, by rapidly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to affected companies and their workers. The success of any effort to avoid potential closings or layoffs is dependent on how quickly and smoothly state and local workforce development partners can implement an appropriate service strategy.

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), as the Commonwealth's Dislocated Worker service entity, is responsible for providing all pre-layoff, early intervention Rapid Response activities (WIOA Sec. 3(51)) in coordination with Local MassHire Workforce Boards (MWBs) and Chief Elected Officials (CEOs).

These activities are provided as part of a comprehensive workforce development system designed to respond quickly to a company that provides notice under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN), a general announcement of a plant closing or other notification when a layoff appears imminent. It is the responsibility of the MDCS Rapid Response Team to plan and provide early, on-site* intervention services to assist dislocated workers, to promote their efficient and rapid transition into gainful employment, and to notify the MassHire Workforce Boards and Chief Elected Officials of these services.

*Any references to on-site can also include virtual type services.

Policy: The Commonwealth's policy regarding Rapid Response activities, under WIOA is specified herein.

MASSHIRE RAPID RESPONSE PROCESS

Step 1: Plant Closing / Layoff Notification

Rapid Response activities are initiated upon receipt of information regarding a plant closing or a significant layoff. Such information may come from a number of sources such as but not limited to: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), MassHire Career Centers (MCCs), Organized Labor, the MassHire Rapid Response (RR) Team or through a formal WARN notification submitted by the company, itself.

If the information is not received directly by the Rapid Response Team, please ensure that the **Rapid Response Manager and/or local Rapid Response Coordinator are notified immediately of any plant closing or layoff.**

Step 2: Call to Company

Upon receipt of notification, it is the responsibility of the Rapid Response Manager or designated Rapid Response Coordinator to:

- make the initial contact to the identified company to verify the information regarding a layoff/closing
- investigate possible layoff aversion strategies
- determine labor union involvement
- introduce the company to potential services, and
- request the scheduling of an initial on-site company meeting

Step 3: Initial On-site Company Meeting

- The Rapid Response Manager and/or Rapid Response Coordinator will attend the initial on-site company meeting.
- The Rapid Response Manager or Coordinator will provide the company with general information regarding the services available to the company and its workers through the MassHire Workforce Development/MassHire Career Center system. The presentation will also include information with respect to layoff aversion strategies, matching affected workers with area employers who are hiring, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG), Rapid Response Set-Aside Grants, the MA WorkShare Program and the other available on-site services.
- The Rapid Response Manager or Coordinator will coordinate completion of the Company Questionnaire/Demographic Report (Attachment A) that includes a confidentiality waiver.
- The local Rapid Response Coordinator will enter all available company information, the employer services rendered and the workforce demographics into the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database.

Step 4: Local Area Notification Process

Upon verification of the layoff or closure, it is the responsibility of the Rapid Response Manager or designated Rapid Response Coordinator to:

- notify the Local MassHire Workforce Board and Local MassHire Career Center utilizing the Workforce Delivery Area Notice (WDA) for layoffs of 50 or more employees (Attachment B)
- for layoffs of 50 or less employees, an email notification will be sent to the Local MassHire Workforce Board and Local MassHire Career Center.

Step 5: On-Site Services

At a minimum the Rapid Response Team will deliver on-site employee meetings that provide workers with information and access to unemployment compensation benefits, comprehensive MassHire (One-Stop) Career Center system services, and employment and training activities including information on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA) and National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG).

When appropriate, the Rapid Response Team will provide additional services on-site to employees, which may include:

- Group or Individual Registration
- Job Search Workshops
- Individual Assessment/Counseling
- Job Search Strategies and Techniques
- Resume Writing
- Interviewing
- TAA Orientations
- Job fairs/Company matching
- Other services as necessary
- Rapid Response Referral Process to the local MassHire Career Center

After Rapid Response on-site services and a layoff occurs an email referral will be made through the MOSES system to the MassHire Career Center designated staff person for receiving such referrals. The MCC referral is made based on the MassHire Career Center location chosen by the customer at the time of registration. It is the responsibility of the MCC designee to contact the referred customer within 2 weeks of the email referral date to engage in partaking of services offered by the Career Center.

Administrative outreach activities, (phone calls, emails, etc.) must be documented on the Administrative Services tab in MOSES.

Step 6: Layoff Aversion

The Rapid Response Team will develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with a range of organizations that can help identify and avert potential layoffs. These partnerships will include but are not limited to: Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD), the U.S. Department of Commerce Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms and the Department of Unemployment Assistance Incumbent Worker Training and WorkShare Programs. Information will be gathered at all downsizing companies regarding reasons for layoff as well as what, if anything, the state can do to avert the layoff. Through job matching and on site job fairs, Rapid Response will also work with affected employees to assist with transition to either a different job with the same employer or to a new job with a different employer while experiencing minimal or no spell of unemployment. The Rapid Response Team will support the strategic planning and implementation of revitalized or enhanced business engagement activities within the state.

Rapid Response, working with our workforce development partners, shall focus on the goal of improving program performance through the delivery of enhanced business services, with the focus stemming from the Mass BizWorks strategic, statewide business engagement plan.

Step 6: Other Rapid Response Activities

Additional Rapid Response activities include the following:

- Operate a reporting and management system for program management, tracking and oversight of Rapid Response activities as well as maintain the Massachusetts WARN data base.
- Exchange information and coordinate programs with appropriate economic development agencies and educational programs to provide effective Rapid Response services upon notification of a permanent closure or mass layoff.
- Disseminate and exchange information on Rapid Response activities to ensure that employer organizations, organized labor and employee groups are aware of the availability of Rapid Response services.

The Rapid Response Team will assist the local community, Workforce Board and Chief Elected Official in connecting with state Economic Development Agencies and other organizations to assist in efforts to avert layoffs and plant closings.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE:

Rapid Response will provide Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) information to companies and when appropriate, assist in the completion of the company's application for certification and coordinate and communicate with the State's designated TAA Manager. The Rapid Response Team will coordinate and disseminate information to affected workers regarding the Trade Program and will outline the various services and benefits available under the Trade Program and the criteria for eligibility for training.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS (NDWGs):

Part of a coordinated response to a dislocation event may include the development of an application for a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG), formerly known as National Emergency Grant (NEG). The Rapid Response Team is responsible for gathering demographics for National Dislocated Worker Grant proposals and providing company and layoff information for the development of the grant application. During group or individual meetings, the Rapid Response Team will assess the workers to determine skill levels, occupations, wages, and length of service with the company. The data collected may be used to inform a NDWG application. As part of the NDWG application process, the Rapid Response Coordinator will collaborate with the relevant MassHire Workforce

Board and MassHire Career Center to develop the plan to address the dislocation event.

RAPID RESPONSE SET ASIDE FUNDS:

Rapid Response Set-Aside funding may be made available as additional assistance to local areas that experience mass layoffs, plant closings, or other dislocation events when such events substantially increase the number of dislocated workers requiring career services. Such awards must be utilized for services to dislocated workers from identified targeted companies. The MassHire Rapid Response Team in conjunction with the local MassHire Workforce Board will develop a strategy to address the dislocation event to ensure rapid access to the range of available assistance.

Please refer to Workforce Issuance **100 DCS 11.103 Issued: 07/18/2017 for additional information and the application process for set-aside funding** <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-rapid-response-policy-issuances> .

All members of the Rapid Response Team and appropriate partners must be in compliance with all information confidentiality requirements as expressed in WIOA Policy to Protect Confidential Information including submission of a signed Confidentiality Agreement Form.

Effective: Immediately

References: WIOA Sec. 134

Attachments: A. Company Questionnaire / Demographic Report
B. Sample Board Notification

Inquiries: Please email all questions to PolicyQA@MassMail.State.MA.US , indicate Issuance number and description or contact Ken Messina, Business Services Manager, ken.messina@detma.org .