

QNA to webinar on
Rapid Response: Layoff Aversion, Sept. 18, 2014

Question: Each of our counties has a large number of businesses. What advertising is the state going to do to make sure employers are aware of this program? We are very connected in our counties, but there are still many, many businesses we aren't connected to and do not have the staff and time to do this type of outreach.

Answer: At present, OWD conducts outreach through our on-line web portal, through the Veterans Business Services office, state Workforce Specialists, and other methods. Information on accessing layoff aversion will be shared in order to let employers in need of help know about this service. ODJFS has no current media marketing plan to outreach to employers, but relies on the local WIA arm to know how to best engage employers in your communities. A layoff aversion plan, as part of an Early Warning Network, can include a staff solution in order to meet that outreach goal.

Q: Just to be clear - are you saying that we can use layoff aversion dollars to fund outreach/marketing materials for advertising the program?

A: Outreach, yes! Your plan must outline how your outreach is reasonable and necessary to make the layoff aversion successful. For more information on allowable outreach costs, see 2 CFR part §200.421 Advertising and public relations. (2) Costs of communicating with the public and press pertaining to specific activities or accomplishments which result from performance of the Federal award **(these costs are considered necessary as part of the outreach effort for the Federal award)** This link also lists unallowable costs, too.

See guidance at (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations e-CFR Data is current as of September 18, 2014)
http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=f375a2132fbb09c437f0a44310be769d&node=se2.1.200_1421&rgn=div8.

Q: Can we use layoff aversion dollars to fund staff to do outreach?

A: Your layoff aversion/early warning network may include a staffing plan, absolutely! Costs of outreach must be necessary and reasonable relative to the number of employers served and benefit received.

Q: How do we need to put in a layoff aversion requisition for staff funding and outreach material funding? It wouldn't be specific to one company so how to do we it?

A: You would have to fill out our Layoff Aversion Plan JFS 01815. Section 3 with Project Narrative and provide a list of activities to support your project plan, example below:

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3. Proposed Budget Information

Project Narrative			
Manufacturers of this subsystem are unaware of our ability to upgrade worker skill sets to make business more competitive. Through our proposed outreach to this specific employer group, we will....			
Please list activities below	# of Workers, if applicable	Planned Costs	Total
purchase space on two bill boards			
purchase 1000 flyers, plus postage			
support 1000 of a staff person (provide phone ...)			
support business service rep 20 hours weekly to...			

Q: What are the differences between layoff aversion and incumbent worker training (IWT)?

A: Layoff aversion IWT is one concept under RR – you would only use RR funds if averting a layoff with IWT. Many other methods of layoff aversion may be possible in addition to IWT such as Rapid Response early intervention, pre-feasibility studies, assistance with succession planning, assistance with labor-management cooperation, etc.

Q: Would you consider replacing equipment or updating machinery?

A: RR is dislocated worker dollars, so it is workforce-specific. It does not pay for equipment or machinery updates.

Q: What are some examples of services available under layoff aversion outside of incumbent worker training?

A: The DOL advisory TEN 9-12 at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=3894 includes a listing of activities such as: assorted assessments, business and industry forecasting, comprehensive production cost studies, and more. Learn what your small business needs are, and then review this list.

Q: We meet with an employer about the employees possibly purchasing the company to keep the jobs here. Unfortunately, it did not work out. Wouldn't that be under layoff aversion?

A: Prefeasibility studies are layoff aversion opportunities.

Q: On OhioMeansJobs.com the only contact number available for rapid response is in Columbus. Is it possible to have the local areas' contact information more readily available on the site?

A: Good idea! We can recommend it.

Q: Can we email you with additional questions specific to our areas?

A: Rapid Response's email is: RAPDRESP@jfs.ohio.gov

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Q: I am new to this. How do we find out who the regional coordinator is?

A: <http://innerweb.odjfs.state.oh.us/olo/Employment-Services.stm>

Q: The Regional Coordinators need to be updated on the website too.

A: Good point.

Q: It sounds like we would have a little more flexibility with training people with rapid response funds. If, however, we haven't used enough of our dislocated worker formula funds, we can't get rapid response funds. How can we get that flexibility with our formula funds?

A: Complete and send in the application.

Q: Can you give an example of how layoff aversion funds could help with succession?

A: Upgrade skill set of successor; OJT or IWT. May discuss with a business development center ways to determine what succession planning is needed. Assessments and feasibility studies may be part of the layoff aversion plan.

Q: Don't you have to put the individuals in OWCMS?

A: IWT, yes, and there is a screen for that.

Q: Define "at risk".

A: Businesses, or individuals, at risk of layoff or closure. From DOL TEGL 30-09. "...have had success with early indicator systems that are helpful in assessing an at-risk company. These systems use indicators such as declining sales, supply chain issues, adverse industry market trends, changes in management behavior or ownership, and other indicators to identify when a company may be at risk of a layoff." Economic Development partner may have more insight.

Q: If we don't know what we can spend the money on how can we tell the employers about it?

A: The funds can support workforce development, analyses of the business and more. Innovation comes in fully understanding the business challenges. From DOL TEGL 30-09: "Training, including IWT, is another tactic that, when appropriately deployed, can effectively avert layoffs either by saving the job with an existing employer through skill upgrades **or by providing the worker with skills to transfer to a new job.**"

From DOL TEGL 30-09 Employer Assessment

- The company remains open, but it is phasing out a function which will lead to layoffs unless the workers can be retrained to perform new functions.
For example, a large hospital that transitions from paper-based medical records to electronic medical records may need medical records staff with different or more advanced skills than the staff that handles the paper-based records. Unless these workers can be retrained in electronic records, the hospital may choose to lay them off and hire other workers with the needed skills.
- A worker's job has changing skill requirements as a result of external economic or market forces, significant changes in technology or operating processes, rapidly changing industry or occupational job requirements, or emergence of new products.

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- The changing skill requirements are outside of normal skill growth and upkeep that would be provided by the employer.
- Training programs reasonably prepare workers to address these skill gaps.
- The employer demonstrates a commitment to retain employees or otherwise provide a tangible benefit to employees who receive IWT.

Q: On the funding application if you are doing outreach- you wouldn't have any employers to list- is that ok?

A: Listing employers may help to make your case as to why your outreach plan is reasonable and necessary. Or, it may not.

Q: Is layoff aversion only for businesses with 50 or more employees?

A: No, layoff aversion can be used with any size business.

Q: Is the 1 million set aside, for a number of years, or is it this year? If so, do you expect another 1 million available next year?

A: RR dollars are available July 1- June 30. We do not know if we will have the same budget for next year. Much rides on how well we do in spending these dollars this year.

"Q: How do you define business size? By # of employees? Sales? What do consider to be a small sized company? Medium sized company?

A: Different sources have their definition based on multiple criteria, such as the Small Business Administration. SBA provides guidance: <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/contracting/contracting-officials/small-business-size-standards>. BLS has a size class by employment – not exactly small, medium, and large:

1 1 to 9

2 10 to 49

3 50 to 249

4 250 to 999

5 1,000 or more

Christopher Long (Manager, Client/Center Development, Office of Business Assistance, 614.466.5656) shared that from the 2012 Ohio SBA census, 150,000 Ohio employer-based entities with one or more employees at 250,000 locations across the state have 49 or less employees (93.7% of the 250,000 locations). Plenty of opportunities to serve BLS classes 1 and 2.

Q: Supposing that workforce skills are sufficient, will funds be available for market expansion? Or is that a question for Jobs Ohio?

A: That is a question for JobsOhio.

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Q: if you use RR dollars to fund training for people, do they get enrolled in WIA and found in performance standards like normal adult and dislocated?

A: Yes, IWT is captured in OWCMS. IWT is part of statewide performance. No, they do not get enrolled into WIA. For other forms of training such as RR-funded ITA or OJT, the participants should be enrolled in the Rapid Response special grant office, outcomes count toward statewide performance and may (or may not) count toward local performance depending on how the information is entered in the OWCMS system.