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A Guide to Rapid Response Worker Adjustment

RRWA Handbook for Industrial Adjustment and Rapid Response Specialists

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Part I: Introduction to Worker, Community and Enterprise Adjustment

The USDOL/WSI Adjustment Model

Experience gained during the early 1990s by USDOL technical assistance experts working in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to help workers and communities severely impacted by economic restructuring led to the development of a comprehensive adjustment model or strategy comprised of four components. The objective of this strategy is to reduce the serious worker and community adjustment problems caused by the privatization and restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). When governments adopt this model and use it in a systematic and integrative way with other active labor market measures, it reduces the economic and social costs of adjustment, shortens the time required for re-employment and facilitates the transition to a market economy.

Three very important lessons were learned from the USDOL technical assistance experts work in CEE countries over a five-year period. First, the delivery of such basic labor market measures as employment services, unemployment payment and other types of payments are important and necessary, but not sufficient to achieve successful worker adjustment. Second, projects using discrete or separately administered adjustment programs (e.g., dislocated worker assistance, vocational training, business incubators, or local economic development planning) to facilitate enterprise restructuring are less successful than projects using a comprehensive, integrated approach that incorporates worker, community, and enterprise adjustment needs in a systematic and holistic way. Third, the successful alleviation of the negative impacts of SOE restructuring and privatization on workers and their communities requires the effective use of four adjustment components. These four components constitute the USDOL/WSI Adjustment Model.

Components of the USDOL/WSI Adjustment Model

The USDOL/WSI adjustment model is comprised of the following four components:

- **I** ***a Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Component*** to plan, organize and facilitate the transition of workers to new jobs;
- **II.** a ***Community Economic Renewal Component*** to stimulate local economic development efforts and generate new jobs in communities impacted by enterprise restructuring;
- **III.** an ***Enterprise Competitiveness Component*** to strengthen surviving enterprises and preserve jobs; and
- **IV.** a ***Financial Resources Component*** to provide funds to implement the worker, community and enterprise adjustment components.

The four elements of this model are interconnected components that rely heavily on a variety of governmental, non-governmental, and private groups to produce successful results. These public-private partnerships can bring greater awareness and resources to achieve these outcomes.

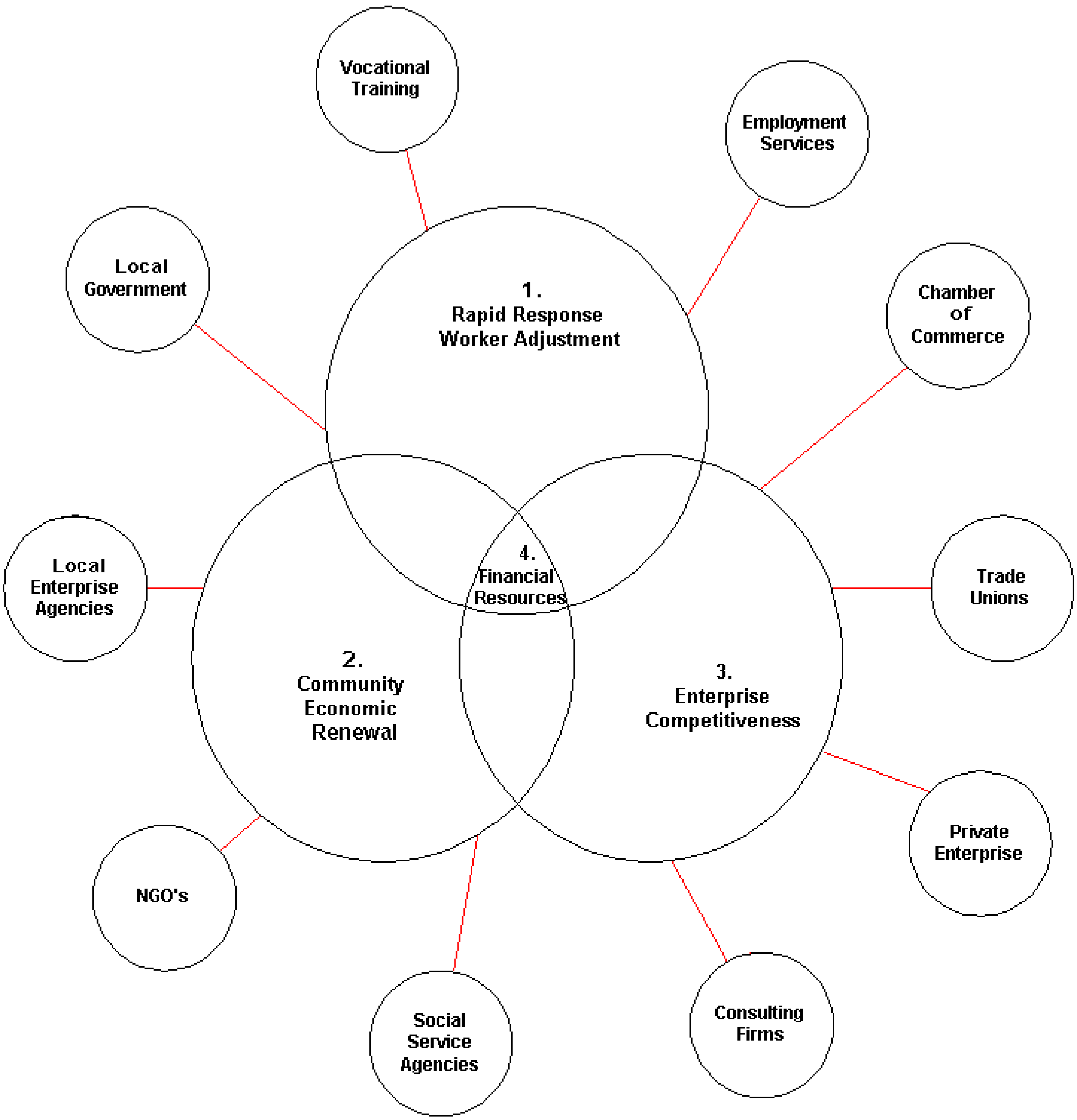
The Adjustment Model cannot be considered a rigid or regulated approach addressing these four components. Though certain elements as defined in this handbook should exist, each event must be taken as a unique situation with the model having the flexibility to customize approach and development. Groups identified to participate should be included depending on the situation, needs identified, and value they can bring to the model. This allows for a dynamic model that can be customized to each situation.

Though not always the lead organization, government groups such as the National Employment Service and Employment Centers, can support the model through its awareness of the local labor market and economic factors. The daily contact with employers and job seekers provides a stream of information that makes them an important part of the model in addition to its regular role in labor market exchange services.

Chart 1 graphically presents the interrelationship between these four integrated adjustment components and each of the components is described in greater detail on the subsequent pages.

Chart 1

USDOL Model for worker, community, and enterprise adjustment used in the United States, Central and Eastern Europe



Managing economic restructuring to compete in a global economy

Appendix A, at the end of Part I, provides a one-page summary of the primary objectives of each of the components and the procedures used to implement them. This adjustment model has been successfully used by the USDOL and Worldwide Strategies to implement adjustment projects in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Macedonia.

1 Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Component

The Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Component is implemented by a small group of highly skilled industrial adjustment (IA) specialists who function as an industrial adjustment unit or *rapid response team.* These individuals are carefully selected and trained by experienced international trainers in the most advanced techniques of worker adjustment. This unit or team can be located within the regional or local offices of the MOL or national employment service, attached to another government agency (such as a restructuring or regional development agency), or set up as a separate non-governmental organization (NGO).

IA specialists facilitate the timely organization and implementation of a systematic worker adjustment process in enterprises and communities undergoing economic restructuring. They work with restructuring Enterprise managers and worker representatives to develop and implement plans to provide adjustment services and programs to transition large groups of workers to new employment as quickly as possible. They also meet with community leaders and Enterprise managers to assess how the restructuring will impact the community and enterprise, and provide technical assistance to help them develop and implement effective community economic renewal and enterprise competitiveness strategies (outlined below).
Chart 2 outlines eight steps IA Specialists and rapid response teams use to help local communities and leaders start a rapid response worker adjustment program for restructuring Enterprises:

Chart 2
Steps to starting a Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Component

1. Establish early warning networks and make continuing assessments of enterprises and industries subject to economic restructuring, downsizing or closure
2. Initiate direct contact with the restructuring employers and labor organizations representing the worker; meet with them about the impending restructuring or closing
3. Make a preliminary assessment to determine the size and complexity of the potential labor dislocation
4. Assess the ability of those affected to cope with the anticipated change
5. Set up a mechanism to manage the worker adjustment program
6. Provide technical assistance to the Reemployment Assistance Committee or Community Task Force as they conduct a survey of workers to determine the most vulnerable employees and their needs
7. Provide training and technical assistance to the Reemployment Assistance Committee or Community Task Force as they develop and implement an action plan and establish a

Reemployment Assistance Committees (RACs) or Labor-Management Adjustment Teams (LMATs) as they are sometimes called play a significant role in facilitating worker adjustment in restructuring enterprises. The RAC is a non-regulated, in-plant group of workers and managers that organizes and coordinates the delivery of adjustment services with the help of an IA specialist and other stakeholders. Whenever possible IA specialists work with managers and worker representatives to organize a RAC or LMAT. The RAC or LMAT becomes the primary mechanism to:

- conduct surveys to determine worker needs
- plan, organize and implement" in-plant" pre-layoff services
- establish a transition or worker assistance resource center at or near the plant if one is needed and start a peer support program if appropriate, and
- arrange for the delivery of pre- and post-layoff employment and training services to workers being dislocated, including job search training, job development, job clubs, job placement, self-employment help, vocational counseling, retraining, financial planning, remedial education, entrepreneurship training, and other forms of employment assistance

Twenty years of experience in North America and Western Europe, and more recently in Hungary and other CEE countries, has demonstrated that when RACs provide the leadership for worker adjustment efforts in a restructuring enterprise and community they substantially increase the reemployment rates and reduce the length of unemployment of the dislocated workers. They also reduce the financial costs to the public treasury and the social costs to the workers and their families.

2 Community Economic Renewal Component

The Community Economic Renewal (CER) component of the USDOL/WSI Adjustment Model helps communities and regions experiencing restructuring, downsizing or enterprise closures to develop and use a systematic business growth, job retention and job creation strategy to begin or expand local economic development efforts.

IA specialists work with government, business/enterprise, and labor leaders in communities experiencing economic restructuring and privatization to help them better understand the essential local economic development (LED) principles and processes required to revitalize their economies. Implementing the two-phase USDOL/WSI CER process creates a new sense of "community," purpose and direction in the face of serious economic threats.

Phase I of the CER process starts with IA specialists inviting local government, community, business/enterprise leaders and other people in affected communities to participate in a series of four grassroots participatory workshops. The economic development workshops help them to systematically assess their situation, design definite blueprints for local economic renewal, generate project ideas, and select suitable projects for further development and implementation. Workshops incorporate topics necessary to plan and develop project proposals geared toward economic renewal. The series includes: factors analysis, economic renewal principles analysis, generating project ideas, evaluating project ideas, and preparing a “Blueprint for Action”. Those completing the Phase 1 workshops become the team member prospects for the Phase II.

Communities, after completing the four Phase I CER workshops, are invited by the IA Specialist and USDOL/WSI Adjustment Project to participate in Phase II of the CER process. Workshop participation is the first step in Phase II. The community CER Team is provided training and technical assistance to help them complete their strategic plan, refine their project design and then implement a CER project. They prepare a formal proposal detailing the additional work they need to do and steps they need to take to further their economic renewal efforts. Communities that complete and submit acceptable proposals may receive seed grants from the USDOL/WSI Adjustment Project financial resources component to help them carry out one or more of their economic renewal projects.

Four steps are taken by communities as part of Phase II during and after they complete the workshop: (1) complete the strategic plan for the community and write a formal project proposal (2) develop a structure and teams to carry out the project, (3) implement the project, and (4) evaluate the results of their efforts. Finally, the team considers “next steps” to continue the economic renewal process. Chart three shows how a community implementation team carries out the Phase II CER implementation process after they complete the workshop.

Chart 3

Phase II: Community Economic Renewal Project Implementation

“Implementing Business Solutions in your community”

Workshop Topic: Strategic CER plan and project proposal development
Step One: Strategic Plan and Proposal Development
Complete the Strategic plan for your community
Write and submit proposal to implement CER project(s) in the community

Step Two: Project Organization and Management
Establish organization and management structures needed to implement projects

Step Three: Project Implementation
Develop action plan for projects and make assignments to each work group or team.
Implement action plan using project management tools:

Step Four: Project Evaluation
Evaluate results and impact of projects on business conditions

Next Steps

3 Enterprise Competitiveness Component

The Enterprise Competitiveness (EC) component helps state-owned enterprises undergoing restructuring and downsizing, as well as other business enterprises located in impacted communities or region, to become more productive and competitive in the global economy. Healthy enterprises provide more secure jobs for their managers and workers and generate additional jobs in the community.

IA Specialists help communities and enterprises accomplish these objectives by providing information to enterprise management and worker representatives about innovative techniques and programs that can be made available to help them strengthen their enterprises, by helping them to assess their situation, and by arranging for or delivering specific EC training and technical assistance services. Chart 4 outlines the five essential elements of the USDOL/WSI Adjustment Project Enterprise Competitiveness Component:

Chart 4

Essential Elements of the Enterprise Competitiveness Component

1. **Upgrading workers' skills** by helping restructuring SOEs and other enterprises increase their competitiveness or expand their operations by using Quick Start Training to upgrade their existing workers' skills or to train new workers
2. **Improving labor-management relations** by providing "Training for Partnership," and "Interest-based Problem-Solving" workshops that teach managers, workers, and union officials in affected enterprises and communities the techniques that can be used to solve problems, build cooperative partnerships, and generate high-performance workplaces
3. **Increasing productivity and reducing costs** by helping restructuring enterprise managers and their unions to establish plant-level productivity improvement and cost saving (PVCS) projects to reduce costs and increase productivity
4. **Improving human resource utilization** by helping restructuring enterprises to develop and implement strategies that improve human resource utilization to preserve jobs
5. **Maximizing joint competitive advantage of small enterprises** by assessing the need and opportunity for inter-firm cooperation and collaborative networks of small companies in communities or regions to help them maximize their joint competitive advantage in the global

4 Financial Resources Component

The USDOL/WSI Adjustment Project financial resources component relates to the funding necessary to carry out the three essential adjustment components. The financial component can be organized and implemented in several ways:

- USAID or Congressionally appropriated funds that are allocated for non-U.S. adjustment projects are normally placed under the control of the USDOL/WSI Worker Adjustment Project (such as the USDOL Rapid Response Project in Hungary, the USDOL Labor Redeployment Project in Romania, the USDOL PLEDGE Project)

- Salaries of IA Specialists and operating costs of Industrial Adjustment units are normally provided by the partner government
- Special appropriations made using World Bank loans by partner governments to provide retraining and other services for workers displaced by enterprise restructuring, (as has been done with World Bank loan funds in Romania).
- Alternatively, the partner government money or World Bank loan may be placed in a special fund with its own administrative structure and procedures for disbursement.

Appendix A

Essential adjustment components needed to assist workers and communities impacted by enterprises undergoing restructuring.

1. Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Component

Objectives: ***Facilitate the transition of workers to new jobs and careers. Reduce unemployment.***

Process: ***Industrial Adjustment (IA) specialists work with enterprise managers, worker representatives and community leaders to assess the adjustment needs of workers, develop a strategy and plan to provide transition services, and mobilize resources and service providers to deliver them.*** Whenever possible, labor-management committees are organized in restructuring enterprises to direct the adjustment process and help dislocated workers find jobs.

2. Community Economic Renewal Component

Objectives: ***Build community partnerships to improve the business environment, strengthen the local economy and create jobs for displaced workers.*** Rebuild the economic foundation and increase citizen participation in local economic development efforts.

Process: *A specialist* helps ***organize a broad-based citizen task force to conduct an economic assessment and planning effort for the community.*** Business and community leaders are invited to participate in a structured economic renewal program designed specifically to strengthen their local economies and create more jobs. Four one-day workshops are conducted over a four-month period to help residents learn the principles of local economic development, assess their community's needs, write a strategic plan, develop projects, and begin implementing them. Following the workshops, the community team completes a strategic plan, writes a project proposal and implements their economic renewal project.

3. Enterprise Competitiveness Component

Objective: ***Build labor-management and employer-vocational training center-employment center partnership to strengthen the competitiveness of business enterprises to preserve and create jobs.***

Process: ***A specialist invites management and labor leaders in restructuring and other enterprises to participate in Training for Partnership and Interest-based Problem-solving workshops and other activities to help them learn how to work together more effectively.*** IA specialists then help employers and workers start in-plant productivity improvement and cost saving (PVCS) projects. IA Quick Start specialists work with employers and vocational training centers to design Quick Start training projects to provide specific upgrade or skill training for existing workers or unemployed workers who will be hired to meet the needs of the business.

4. Financial Resources Component

Objective: ***Provide financial resources to accomplish essential rapid response worker adjustment, community economic renewal and enterprise competitiveness activities.***

Process: ***Responsible government agencies establish suitable mechanisms to disburse financial resources in a timely and fiscally responsible manner:*** (a) to the Industrial Adjustment unit to carry out its work of planning, organizing and delivering basic adjustment services, and (b) to public agencies (e.g., National Employment Service, vocational training centers) and contractors (NGOs and other service providers) designated or hired to provide job search assistance, vocational counseling, skill training programs and other essential adjustment services.

Part II. Four Phases of Rapid Response and Worker Adjustment

Overview

Job loss through worker dislocation may be the last resort after many, sometimes years, of attempts to keep an enterprise profitable or as a result of state-owned enterprise restructuring. Highly trained IA specialists are equipped to recognize the signals of an at risk situation and begin the necessary steps to possibly avert the dislocations or soften their impact. Though worker dislocation may be the end reality, early detection and intervention may help reduce the number of workers who lose their jobs and give the Rapid Response/Worker Adjustment process a longer timeframe in which to assist the affected workers.

Worker dislocation is experienced widely throughout all employment sectors. During the 1990's one in every five large U.S. employers reported downsizing their workforce as reported by the American Management Associations, *Staffing and Structure Survey.* This means that over the years indicators or signs that a company may be reducing its labor force have become more apparent. During this time, numerous studies of companies that laid-off workers provided the information used to develop the four phases.

The four phases of the rapid response and worker adjustment process are:

Early Detection used to create awareness of possible dislocations. Through the use of information, strong local networks, and known indicators IA specialists can either assist in aversion or begin to mobilize resources.

- **Intervention and aversion** used to either assist an enterprise in finding possible solutions that may reduce the likelihood of worker dislocations or allow for a longer transition period for the affected workers
- **Pre-lay off period** allows for the formation of the Rapid Response process and the Worker Adjustment team
- **Worker Displacement** is the point that services to the workers losing their jobs are fully engaged and transition time to reemployment shortened

All members of the early intervention rapid response, community response, service delivery system and supporting organizations such as NGO's must fully understand the issues of worker displacement. Though worker displacement is noted as the fourth phase of the Rapid Response Worker Adjustment process, the needs and characteristics of those who are losing or in fear of losing their jobs are present from the early detection stage on.

The basic characteristics and stress factors must be clearly understood so that the professionals working with enterprises and workers, even within the labor management committee, are informed and able to deal with these issues effectively while maintaining a positive, productive environment.

Early detection phase 1

The IA specialist and other selected rapid response team members must be trained in the signs that an enterprise might be at risk of laying off workers. This means having a network and clearly defined process in place to identify at risk enterprises and the next steps taken. An alternate approach is for the rapid response team to have networks with worker groups, the employment centers, or business groups who are trained and willing to identify potential problem areas.

There are a number of resources that can indicate that an enterprise may be in trouble. These include data or market trends, reports from workers, specific data or information obtained about the enterprise, or simply by hearsay. The most valid resource in anticipating worker dislocations relies on information. Data may be available through Employment Centers, vendors or suppliers, or community officials.

National or regional indicators may include economic and labor market projections to identify declining industries or jobs. State-owned enterprises restructuring are also likely candidates for reducing its number of workers. Using this information IA specialists or rapid response teams can target these declining industries for visits intending to assess the needs of the enterprise. Other data sources such as financial trouble, changing markets, and business climate changes that could lead to early detection will be covered in more detail later in this handbook.

Early signs that there is a potential for worker dislocations may be a single or multiple indicators. Yet it is essential to meet with an enterprise demonstrating these factors to assess if the changes and factors are planned or symptoms of a greater problem. Examples of indicators include:

- Declining productivity
- Product being produced is no longer in demand
- Declining employment numbers with frequent lay-offs and call backs or seasonal lay-offs that extend beyond the standard season
- Loss of a specific product line
- Equipment or facility is outdated or needs major capital expenditures to bring it up to date
- Sale of an enterprise or numerous changes in leadership
- Duplicate capacity in another facility
- Removal of materials, equipment, or product lines
- Cash flow problems whereby bills, worker pay, or facility costs go unpaid

Maintaining a strong network and close ties with groups who can identify these early warning signs, gives the IA specialist or rapid response specialist an indication that it is time to schedule a visit with an enterprise. The visit with management should not be seen as an investigation but as a consulting visit to see if there are resources that might assist the company.

Intervention and Aversion Phase 2

A well trained IA specialist or rapid response specialist knows the indicators that suggest that an enterprise may be in the early stages of difficulty. Assessing the factors early can lead to developing solutions that have caused the initial distress.

After careful analysis of the factors, causing enterprise distress the IA specialist or rapid response specialist can begin to formal a comprehensive approach to addressing the initial needs. This may include the development of a retention plan complete with the risk factors and resources to address those factors. This may mean calling upon specialists in worker training, finance, business management, industrial consulting, employee relations or various other individuals. Since each situation will be different, it is important that the visit take place and a complete assessment completed prior to bringing in the resources.

The IA or rapid response specialist will not be equipped to address all risk factors that an enterprise might demonstrate. But having a well-defined network of individuals who have the means to address these various factors, the likelihood of aversion or at a minimum reducing the number of workers who loose their jobs is improved.

Pre-lay off period phase 3

Reorganization, downsizing or closure will still take place in some cases regardless of the efforts put forth during the early detection and intervention phases. When it is inevitable that there will be workers loosing their jobs the pre-lay off period becomes the critical component to reducing the length of unemployment and increasing the successful outcomes of a worker adjustment program.

The pre-lay off period is the point when the detection and intervention have validated that workers will loose their job until the point that the workers are actually laid off. During this phase many activities my take place simultaneously. The rapid response team must be trained to focus on both the needs of the business and the needs of the workers. This will mean developing mechanisms to communicate effectively with both parties, make sure that the needs are assessed and being addressed, and prepare for the re-employment services.

The model that has proven greatest results in reducing the length workers are unemployed is one that begins to offer transition services to the workers prior to their last day of work. This frequently becomes a source of stress between the management and workers as the enterprise may still be in production up to the final days of work.

The pre-lay off period must quickly establish timetables, bring together management and workers, evaluate worker needs, and prepare a plan. The IA specialist or rapid response team must demonstrate a knowledgeable, cohesive approach intended to guide management and workers through this phase. Any attempt to control or place demands on either party could result in a breakdown between rapid response and delay the development of services.

Worker displacement and defining characteristics of affected workers phase 4

[Adapted from Chapter 2 in Serving Workers in Transition: A Guide for Peer Support, published by the AFL-CIO Human Resources Institute, 1995. Prepared by Lee Schore and Jerry Atkin]

The characteristics of workers who are in fear of, have been notified of, or have lost their jobs through lay-off is one of the most critical elements of establishing a successful worker adjustment process. All members of the rapid response team, LMAC's, and re-employment center staff must be fully aware of these characteristics so that all activities and services are equipped to address these important issues. Therefore, this handbook will go into the stages of dislocation and characteristics of dislocated workers with some detail. All persons involved with rapid response and worker adjustment models must be fully trained and aware of this information.

Specialists need to fully understand the problems facing workers when they begin working with employers and worker representatives to guide them through the development of Labor Management Adjustment Committees, Transition Centers, peer support programs and other services for dislocated workers.

Millions of workers in recent years have had to make unexpected transitions in their working lives because of plant closings, workforce downsizing, and changing skill requirements. In our current economy, workers looking for new jobs have to compete in a changing job market that is unlike anything they knew before.

All staff from the IA specialist/rapid response team to the WARC professionals must understand that dislocated workers include people who are preparing for an announced layoff through those who have already lost their jobs. Dislocation may be a result of workers who face transitions caused by enterprise restructuring, new technology, work systems, or skill requirements. It is important to understand the problems workers may face during this transition.

Who are the "dislocated workers"?

Dislocated workers are people whose jobs have temporarily or permanently disappeared because of new technology and automation, foreign competition, mergers, downsizing, re-engineering, restructuring of state-owned enterprises, or other conditions beyond their control. They increasingly come from every sector of the workforce.

A dislocated worker may have high skills and education or skills that are obsolete due to modernization. Worker dislocation is less predictable than past eras due to the increased competition, buy-out options, and economic changes. Displaced workers include all types of jobs and effect men and women of all age categories.

What most dislocated workers have in common is that they thought they had jobs they could count on, and they are victims of circumstances over which they have no direct control.

The loss of a job represents a personal crisis that people must deal with. It is not the end of the world, but it is a crisis. Some of the difficulty in making a transition from one job to another or to additional training has to do with economics and the job market, and some of it has to do with physical, emotional, and psychological factors that can intensify the objective problems that people face. For example, not being able to meet a mortgage payment is an objective problem; how you feel about being in this situation also becomes a factor in your ability to cope.

Many dislocated workers make this transition with relatively little difficulty. Others experience severe problems in finding work and getting on with their lives. For some the experience represents a loss of security and a leap into the unknown. With enough support, they will get through this time and move on to other jobs or careers. Many of these workers have prided themselves on being able to handle their problems by themselves.

Now they need some help and may not know how to get it. It is important to keep in mind that dislocated workers are essentially healthy people experiencing a crisis that's real and not of their making. As a Peer Support Specialist or WARC counselor, the information and support you provide can help them get the services they need to overcome the crisis.

Stages of Unemployment

In working with people, it's important to keep in mind that everyone's experience with layoffs and unemployment is different. It is important not to make assumptions without checking them out, Careful listening and asking the right questions will give you the information you need that is specific to each person.

In spite of this principle of uniqueness, people's responses to unemployment follow certain general patterns. Knowing these patterns can help you anticipate what problems people may be dealing with at different stages of the unemployment cycle and can serve as a framework for knowing what questions to ask and knowing how to interpret the answers you get.

A laid-off worker typically goes through six stages of unemployment. The six stages are summarized in chart 5, which you can use as a handout when you talk to unemployed workers. Of course, not everyone goes through all of the six stages. Some people get new jobs before they must deal with them. The stages often overlap.

Chart 5

Stages of Unemployment

Effects on workers

Stage 1

Before lay-off is confirmed: Rumors, uncertainty, increased accidents, illness, high worker stress

Stage 2

The lay-off period
Initial relief that uncertainty is over; followed by anger, depression or difficulty in moving forward

Stage 3

Refining or upgrading skills
Defining skills to translate to other jobs or acquiring new skills a period of acceptance

Stage 4

Job Search
If competition is high may feel frustration, anger, low self esteem or become withdrawn

Stage 5

Diminishing financial or personal support
Lower motivation, seeking support, looking for solutions, individuals helping others

Stage 6

Adjusting to new job
New wage scales, loss of seniority, may feel lost or uncomfortable with surroundings

Adapted from AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute model

Before the job loss: Workers can begin to experience problems well in advance of the actual layoff date. The pre-layoff stage is one of the hardest to deal with because there is a lot of uncertainty and because everyone really wants to believe that something will happen to keep the layoff from actually occurring.

There are many things people can do before the layoff to make the transition between jobs easier and quicker, but often they don't take advantage of the opportunity. Denying the reality of the layoff means that people put off thinking about what will happen next -- hoping that the problem will just go away. One reason people give is that they don't want to lose their seniority or their pensions, so they'll hang on until the last possible moment. Another reason is that people feel that if the worksite actually closes, it represents some sort of personal failure. For people who always thought they would retire out of their current job, it may also feel like the loss of the American (or Ukrainian) Dream.

The period of intense anxiety and anticipation before a layoff may last a long time, even years. The time is often filled with rumors. The uncertainty creates an ongoing strain on both the workers and their families. There are more illnesses, more accidents, and more drug and alcohol related problems. Even when issues related to the loss of work are openly discussed, symptoms of stress (including fatigue, headaches, general loss of energy and enthusiasm, and irritability) increase. One cause of stress is the anxiety and helplessness of feeling that something is about to happen. Anxiety often heightens a sense of individual survival and begins to weaken the support system that exists in the workplace. Tensions can surface between workers who face layoff and those who don't. Younger workers, for example, may resent older workers who could take early retirement.

The layoff: When the layoff finally occurs or the plant actually closes, there is often a temporary sense of relief. The anxiety of anticipation is over, and for a while, benefits and services may soften the impact. It feels like a much-needed short break from the pressures of work. People continue to hope they will be called back, the plant or worksite will reopen and that somehow it will work out.

Depending on the conditions of the termination and any benefits available, this can feel like a hopeful period, a chance to make a change. In the early days after the layoff, it may be difficult for a Peer Support Specialist or WARC counselor to get people actively involved in planning and using program services. This is natural, if it doesn't go on too long. It's a period when people need to be contacted and encouraged to use the services. People may still be in denial and may not have felt the real impact of the layoff.

For some workers, this can be a time when it feels like there is little hope for a better future. The anxiety in their family is usually very high, reflecting the loss of security, income, and often, medical insurance. Workers feel a great deal of pressure to get a job. Tensions can arise from having a family member at home who is not part of the daily routine. Many marriages dissolve during this period, and it is another stage at which drug and alcohol use can rise. This segment of the population will need a lot of follow-up and support.

Unique or emerging characteristics of worker displacement

Workers confronted in their jobs by changing technology or changing work systems face another kind of transition. This involves making decisions to upgrade skills, or change careers. These situations create uncertainty and will benefit from the Worker Adjustment model to transition this period.

Change is widespread in today's workplaces and the ability to adapt to change is now an important job skill. Workers usually hear about all the improvements that change will bring. But change is also about loss -- the loss of what is familiar, the loss of what is known, the loss of comfort in using the skills developed over years as they are replaced by new skills. Recognizing that loss is a big step in helping people come to grips with the change process.

The change process usually moves through four stages:

- **Denial --** a natural reaction and a way of putting off the experience of loss as long as possible.
- **Resistance --** when people recognize that change is happening but are not yet convinced it will affect them.
- **Exploration --** when people begin to check out the planned changes themselves.
- **Acceptance --** a process of moving from no trust to building trust.

New technology and work organization

Workplace change is taking place today in two major arenas:

- The introduction of new technologies, and
- The reorganization of work, going from a hierarchical system that broke work into repetitive tasks requiring minimal training, to one where workers must take more responsibility for production and quality assurance, often in teams or work groups.

Workers must come to grips with these revolutionary changes in the way work is done. They often feel their previous work, skills, and identity are not valued. The disruption they experience can make them feel confused and in limbo. A peer support system gives these workers a chance to voice concerns, ask questions, and get the information and encouragement they need to move through the change.

Peer support and WARC counseling can help people move through these stages. A peer support system is the perfect vehicle for testing ideas, checking rumors, getting information to people as it's needed and as they're ready to hear it. It's also a means of bringing workers' ideas into the planning process so the changes will meet their needs, too.

Many times, changes in the workplace will require that workers get additional skills. These can range from reading or math to technical skills and critical thinking skills. In the changing workplace, education is an increasingly important part of keeping companies competitive and protecting workers' jobs. In changes from state-owned enterprises to privately held companies, workers must understand new workplace expectations. These changes may place emphasis on people returning to school for new skills. Some workers will have barriers to overcome before they can do that successfully.

Establishing a peer support and WARC counseling system of "learning stewards" can provide the support workers need to succeed in these classes. Peer Support Specialists and WARC counselors, trained as learning stewards, sometimes become part of the teaching team. They work with teachers providing courses to dislocated workers to develop work-based curriculum and monitor teaching methods to make sure they're appropriate and effective education means

III. Early Detection

Anticipating lay-offs

The reason an enterprise or company closes or reduces it labor force by laying off workers is generally the result of a series of compounding factors. The reduction of its employment when an enterprise is not closing completely is a short-term way to reduce overall expenses and seen to increase profits.

Understanding that letting workers go is a cost saving measure suggests that there are a number of reasons that an enterprise might find a need to reduce costs. These reasons become the basis for the early warning signs. IA specialists can develop community networks of individuals in various roles who are in a position to see some of these signs. Developing an early warning network will allow the IA specialist to identify at risk companies months or even years before the actual reduction to the workforce takes place.

The following are possible members to include in the early detection network:

- Business organization representatives
- Unions
- Government officials
- Employment Center staff
- Banking institutions
- NGO's
- News, radio, television resources
- Other community groups

These individuals should have a regional perspective and be able to make referrals of possible firms in trouble to the IA specialist. The IA Specialist then can track the indicators to determine if a company visit is in order. The visit would be to further assess the risk factors that have been identified.

The warning signs of an enterprise that may be at risk can vary. Below is a checklist of possible indicators that may signal future difficulties.

Early Warning Signs of At Risk Factors

- **Disinvestment**
  Equipment is not being maintained or being taken out of the facility. Profits are being used for other facilities or to purchase other enterprises. Hiring freezes

- **Money trouble**
  Production slowed due to lack of materials or supplies, employees not being paid or pay checks not covered, delinquent bills or government payments

- **Declining sales**
  Loss of major customers or enterprise is doing worse than most other similar businesses in the industry

- **Capacity duplication**
  Enterprise has more than one plant producing the same thing within a reasonable distance

- **Ownership problems**
  Changes in ownership or no obvious successor for an aging owner

- **Management instability**
  Series of turnover at the high-end management level or within the high-level technical areas

- **Changes in land use**
  Facilities and other enterprises around the area are being sold and land used for non-manufacturing purposes

- **Inadequate research and development**
  No new product lines or improvements to existing products are being done. Competitors are producing newer versions more in line with the times

Enterprises can demonstrate one or more of these indicators but not be at risk. Yet all indicators are worth checking into. If the analysis and visit with the company confirm these indicators then resources may be brought in to address the root cause long before the loss of jobs.

Intervention and averting lay-offs

Not all turnover, closures, or changes with enterprises can always be avoided, though it is sometimes possible to reduce the numbers affected in a large dislocation or possibly avert job loss in smaller enterprises. Through the use of retraining, community economic renewal, enterprise competitiveness, economic development and local government resources an IA or rapid response specialist may be able to facilitate linkages that address the primary issues.

Quick, accurate assessment is important to the intervention strategy. This means collecting valid data to support the risk factors and meeting with the company in an attempt to validate the information. The meeting should be done using an approach of gathering information and not with one of an investigative nature. The IA specialist must have a comprehensive list of possible resources that can become a source of referral. Resources might include local economic development initiatives, financial resource options, training opportunities for workers, business consulting, or business mentor options.

Implementing business retention strategies

Once an enterprise has been determined to be at risk and the company willing to receive information there are a number of strategies than can be deployed. The primary steps should be intended to help the enterprise avert business closure or substantial reduction in its workforce. The strategies to consider during discussion would include:

- Exploring options for possible by out;
- Establishing possible linkages that might foster new leadership;
- Use community response system to acquire business financial counseling; or
- Assist in finding possible consultants in business restructuring

Though the IA specialist will not be equipped to provide these services a well thought out community response system could have identified individuals and organizations whose expertise lends itself to these retention needs. The IA specials may call upon these resources to meet with the company officials by way of developing a plan of action.

If the need that presents itself appears to be related to poorly trained workers then the IA specialist should proceed to establish linkages with schools or educational institutions that could work with the enterprise to upgrade worker skills.

Employee or private buy-out options

Certain circumstances may present themselves whereby a group of workers losing their jobs could express the interest in becoming entrepreneurs. Although a number of steps must be taken before this option becomes viable, IA specialists should not discount this as an option. Worker buy-outs have been successful throughout the United States for many years and continually re-emerge as a method for reducing the number of workers who will lose their job.

There are two factors that must take place initially if an employee buy-out is suggested. First is a pre-feasibility study to determine if the company is for sale and an employee buy-out would be considered. The study is also used to determine if the business is too troubled for further consideration. The factors addressed with the pre-feasibility study would be:

- ➢ An analysis of the financial situation
- ➢ A rough estimate of the value
- ➢ A review of the financing required for the proposed purchase
- ➢ Evaluation of the financing prospects
- ➢ Determine if the buy-out group is suitable
- ➢ Review of the market for the firm’s products or services
- ➢ An analysis of the management strengths and weaknesses
- ➢ Evaluate the possible future workers
- ➢ Evaluate the production
- ➢ Prepare a summary and recommendation

If the pre-feasibility study indicates that the two initial factors warrant further exploration then a full feasibility study must take place. A feasibility study is a more in-depth look at the company as it currently exists and projects what it will look like over the next three to five years based on proposed changes in ownership, financing, the markets, cost of labor and raw materials. This feasibility study would become an important part of a business plan provided to prospective lenders.

The initial on-site visit

Rapid response contact is made with the employer and an employee representative as soon as the National Employment Service or IA Specialist receives notice of any substantial layoffs or plant closures that have occurred or are scheduled to occur, or when these two organizations become aware of such events through other sources. Rapid response services are provided to workers regardless of the reason for dislocation.

The initial on-site meeting should include the management of the enterprise and worker representation whenever possible. Since company willingness improves the likelihood of early intervention with the workers and for services at the workplace, at a minimum a meeting with enterprise officials must take place prior to any other types of intervention.

The first meeting should be used for the IA specialist to gain credibility and with business and workers. The IA specialist may decide to take key community response team members on the initial visit, but due to the sensitive nature of worker dislocations, the numbers chosen to attend should be kept to a minimum. The IA specialist or Rapid Response team must listen effectively to understand the situation and be prepared to provide professional response to concerns or issues expressed by either management or workers.

This preliminary response team must assure confidentiality and demonstrate how using the services of the IA specialist and rapid response team results in benefits to both management and workers.

The objectives of the initial on-site meeting should be:

- Confirm the situation and that the information during the early intervention phase is accurate.
- Collect the general characteristics of the workforce including numbers that may be affected, general ages, skill levels, academic levels, and average length of employment. Some enterprises may not have these figures readily available but the team should reinforce the need for this information as soon as it can be collected.
- Determine what services are perceived as needed for the workers and if any similar services are presently available
- Provide an overview of what the rapid response team is, what their level of involvement would be, and how they relate to setting up Labor-Management committees and subsequent services
- Describe the basic components of the worker adjustment program

- Explain the options for delivery systems including on site services, services available out of the Employment Centers, and possible off site options
- Discuss any financial expectations of setting up an adjustment model
- Determine timeframes and the level of urgency

A sample agenda for the initial on-site meeting is provided on the next page as a possible guide for organizing this meeting.

Ball-Foster Glass
Rapid Response Initial On-site Meeting

Introductions

Management members represented
Worker representation
IA and/or rapid response specialist
Employment Service or Employment Center Staff
Special rapid response team members

Company and worker profile and review of lay-off or closure status

Discuss anticipated release dates and process enterprise will follow
Number of worker to be laid-off and average salaries for various groups
Information about the workers

- Skills
- Education level if needed
- Profile of workers such are commuting distances, average age, and so forth

Any benefits the workers might qualify for

Early Intervention Services

Discuss first worker orientation meetings

- Review sample orientation agenda
- Discuss location and how workers will attend (either during work hours or not)
- Review initial worker needs survey

Worker Adjustment Committee or Labor-Management Committee

- Provide an explanation of why the committee is important (if done prior to this meeting repeat the explanation for all present)
- Gain support by both management and workers
- Agree upon timeline to establish LMAC

Finalize Next Steps and Meeting Date

Part IV. Organizing the Rapid Response Activity

Defining Rapid Response

Often, an advanced notice of a plant closing or mass layoff triggers rapid response. However, sometimes rapid response activities are triggered without advance notice. The DWU may learn of an impending layoff or closure from local elected officials, a newspaper article, Employment Center staff, affected employees, union representatives, employer inquiries, and other sources.

Sufficient lead-time is a key element in successful rapid response activities. Sixty-day advance notice gives little time to develop and implement early intervention and pre-layoff services for closures and mass layoffs. Some employers who recognize the value of early intervention services and/or are required to do so by the collective bargaining agreement give longer advance warning.

"Rapid response" is the initial information sharing activity (for employees as well as employers) to facilitate access to all public programs to assist individual about-to-be dislocated workers find new employment. Rapid response activities are authorized and funded under the Labor Redeployment Project (or other similar projects) that may have been developed to assist workers dislocated from state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The responsibility for rapid response either rests with an agency of government (such as the National Employment Service) or with the regional representatives of the USDOL level rapid response Industrial Adjustment specialists.

The regional representatives and rapid response teams are responsible for providing early intervention assistance for all workers being dislocated by mass layoffs or closures within regions of the country, regardless of the reason for the dislocation. The assistance is generally a collaborative effort involving representatives of many organizations, including the local employment service, vocational training institutions, economic development, social services and other appropriate agencies and NGOs.

During the past three decades, major changes in world economies have dramatically increased the numbers of workers losing their jobs. Technological innovations, consumer preference changes, and increased global competition are causing the closure of marginal businesses and raising the level at which companies must perform to succeed.

To address these problems more comprehensively, the Canadian Parliament and the United States Congress adopted legislation in their respective countries that provides a basic framework for responding rapidly and delivering an increased level and variety of adjustment services to help workers faced with mass layoffs and plant closings find new jobs prior to or after their existing jobs are terminated.

In the United States, originally the 1988 Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAA) required each state to have an identifiable Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU) or Industrial Adjustment Service (IAS) with the capability to respond rapidly to plant closures and mass layoffs. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN), also passed in 1988, requires companies to notify the State DWU in writing 60 days prior to a layoff.

Next in 1998, the United States passed new workforce and dislocated worker legislation called the Workforce Investment Act. Although there were numerous differences between this legislation and its predecessor, EDWAA, the government retained the requirement that each state and sub-state area have Rapid Response specialists equipped to provide both early intervention and lead the rapid response activities.

In Canada, legislation passed by Parliament created the national Industrial Adjustment Service and charged it with providing rapid response reemployment services to Canadian workers facing mass layoffs or plant closures when remedial productivity improvement or cost saving (PI/CS) efforts are inappropriate or unable to solve enterprise problems.

Generally, over the past decade and a half the approaches and methodologies used in rapid response have remained fairly consistent. Though IA specialists may not be supported by this requirement of an early notice, being trained to observe the early detection signs noted earlier will help provide additional time to establish the activities recommended below.

The “rapid response” concept is much more than providing Unemployment support, the Employment Center provides job search or reemployment services, and community services to assist during the transition period. All of these activities are necessary for a comprehensive program of adjustment assistance to help workers deal with layoffs and plant closings but must take place in a highly coordinated fashion to make sure that projects achieve the best possible results.

Rapid Response Activities Include:

- Contacting the employer and employee representatives within a short period of time (preferably 48 hours of less) after notice or information is received, to provide information on and facilitate access to all available public programs and services available;
- Promoting the formation of a labor-management or worker transition team or committee (including providing funds for its establishment and operation) to determine what types of assistance (or combinations thereof) the workers at a specific site are expected to require or are likely to be eligible for;
- Developing a plan to access funds and active labor services (e.g., retraining services, needs related payments, certificates of eligibility, contracting arrangements) for customized worker assistance activities;
- Assessing the need for establishing a worker assistance resource or transition center (WARC) to provide on site access to specialized forms of assistance and services such as outreach and intake, testing and counseling, development of individual service plans, labor market information, job development, job search and placement, job clubs, peer support programs, supportive services (including child care and financial counseling), and pre-layoff assistance programs;

- Providing or obtaining appropriate financial and technical advice and liaison with economic development agencies and/or to assist the local community in developing a coordinated response and obtaining access to public economic development assistance;
- Assessing the enterprise competitiveness needs of surviving SOEs and other business enterprises in the community impacted by plant closures or downsizing, and providing or obtaining appropriate financial and technical advice to help them cut costs and improve their productivity-and preserve jobs.

The local response team: Identifying the members or roles

The local response team should be comprised of representatives from the National Employment Service, local economic development, local Employment Centers, Industrial Adjustment Specialist (if different from one of the previous groups), and a representative from other related community or non-governmental organizations. Though not all situations would necessitate the use of the full team, it is good to have the prospective members fully trained and able to make a field visit on short notice.

When setting up this team the IA specialist will take the lead in recruiting and making provisions for the necessary training. The team should be trained together regardless of their skill level or previous experience. Although this may seem to be a duplication of effort, it is important that those who may be part of the early response effort know each other and clearly understand the roles and functions of each team member.

The local rapid response team's effectiveness will rely on selecting individuals who have various perspectives rather than to regulate participation from specific groups. This means that having requirements that certain organizations must be represented on this team might not work in all situations. The team must be trained and able to work without barriers. They must be allowed to represent the various roles regardless of the position they hold. Having a rigid set of rules for the local response team might result in losing the focus on the needs of the workers due to a team members need to satisfy their own requirements.

Defining the Roles

Industrial Adjustment Specialist's Role

The IA specialist must have the capability to respond rapidly to plant closures and mass layoffs within a short time upon receiving the information. This puts the IA specialist generally in the lead position in calling the team together, making the initial contact and scheduling the on site meeting. This could all take place within a very short period of time and even during evenings or weekends. The IA specialist must have the capability, flexibility, and authority to carry out this role.

Though there are a variety of approaches, depending on the circumstances, for the defining and use of the IA specialist. The most effective approach that allows for the highest quality response is having a full-time rapid response team. This team would be made up of specialists from different organizations and with a variety of expertise, yet be competent to cover the lead role in addition to their specialty. This way with adequate cross training the initial follow up and contact is not reliant on a single individual.

In the United States the prevalent model is for IA specialist to have a Supervisor, one or more rapid response or industrial adjustment specialists (who may be from the Employment Services), a representative of organized labor (usually on contract from a labor organization), and someone from the employment service delivery system or unemployment insurance division where the dislocation of workers is occurring. Generally funding is made available by Congress though the U.S. Department of Labor to pay for these activities.

Effective rapid response relies on the IA specialist to lay sufficient groundwork by collecting information, developing linkages, and establishing a public information/communication system with businesses, labor, and communities throughout the region prior to the initial on-site visit to a plant experiencing a layoff or closure. The rapid response concept involves establishing ongoing linkages and coordination with other local social service agencies and business and labor organizations, gathering and sharing of information about the dislocation and the availability of services, and making the whole community aware of the availability of services for dislocated workers.

Job Description Industrial Adjustment Specialist

IA Specialists are responsible for organizing broad-based responses to worker dislocation events resulting in mass layoffs and plant closures. They need to be able to bring together all concerned partners, including employers, affected employees and union representatives, as well as appropriate governmental and NGO's, local officials, community organizations and others as the circumstances require. IA Specialists also need to be able to facilitate the organization and operation of reemployment assistance (RA) committees or teams to plan, organize and arrange for the timely delivery of services to dislocated workers.

The IA specialist should be able to demonstrate skills, knowledge or expertise in the following:

1. Knowledge in retraining and basic readjustment services available through rapid response teams and other appropriate organizations
2. Ability to work with employers and labor organizations to promote labor-management cooperation
3. Knowledge of, or experience in, working with managers and employees in threatened enterprises to strengthen the competitiveness of the business and preserve jobs.
4. An ability to work with economic development organizations and other appropriate agencies to avert worker dislocation and assist local communities to obtain access to economic development assistance
5. An understanding on how to assist local communities to develop their own coordinated response to plant closings and mass layoffs

6. Ability to promote to local enterprises the value of voluntary notices of plant closings and mass layoffs if mandatory notice is not required
7. Knowledge on how to set up and operate a monitoring, reporting and management system
8. Skills in providing technical assistance and advice to local organizations working with the dislocated workers
9. Ability to collect, disseminate, and exchange information, and coordinating programs with organizations and NGO's to assist dislocated workers
10. Ability to disseminate information about programs and services to managers, workers and the public
11. Knowledge of how to locate and identify possible funds, when other public or private resources are not available, to support the workers needs

General responsibilities of Industrial Adjustment Specialists

Some of the general responsibilities of Industrial Adjustment Specialists are:

- Promoting, starting and providing technical assistance to RACs, LMATs or other mechanisms to assist dislocated workers find new jobs quickly
- Making sure that basic readjustment services are available in a timely manner to meet the needs of dislocated workers and coordinating their delivery
- Ensuring that the proper agencies and individuals are informed quickly of enterprise restructuring resulting in dislocations of workers so they can participate in the development and provision of services
- Assisting local communities to develop their own coordinated response to plant closings and mass layoffs
- Promoting labor-management cooperation among employers and labor organizations as a technique to strengthen their competitiveness and prevent or reduce the impact of worker dislocation
- Working with managers and employees in threatened and restructuring enterprises to set up Labor-Management committees to strengthen the competitiveness of downsized businesses and preserve jobs
- Coordinating with local economic development agencies or groups to link worker adjustment programs with economic development efforts
- Introducing and promoting the use of CER workshops in communities with restructuring enterprises and assist them in obtaining access to all available economic development assistance to generate replacement jobs and economic growth
- Establishing and operating a worker adjustment monitoring, reporting and management information system in the local communities and region
- Collecting, disseminating, and exchanging information with public and private agencies in the community concerning assistance needs of dislocated workers
- Communicating information to the regional and national levels of the employment service and MOL systems concerning dislocated worker needs and adjustment activities carried out in the local and regional area
- Introducing and promoting the concept of Quick Start Training as a means of preserving and creating jobs and strengthening enterprises

Role of the IA Specialist during basic industrial adjustment activities

- Establishing early warning networks and making continuing assessments of enterprises and industries subject to economic restructuring
- marketing of integrative (worker, community and enterprise) adjustment model concepts; communicating role of IA Specialists and adjustment objectives to employers, workers, and community partners
- determining the size and complexity of the potential labor dislocation
- making analyses of adjustment situations, worker needs, environment, culture, trends, and conditions of the workplace in enterprises threatened with restructuring, downsizing or closure
- assessing the potential for establishing a successful reemployment assistance committee or team
- demonstrating the needs and benefits of RA committees or teams in facilitating the adjustment process.
- gaining approval to form a RA committee or team.
- coordinating the work of partners, including management, unions, employment service representatives, vocational training agencies, social service organizations and economic development institutions, in providing assistance and services to dislocated workers
- identifying resources needed to support RA committees and teams

Role of the IA Specialist with worker adjustment activities

- acting as a resource or liaison to identify potential committee members and neutral chairpersons
- clarifying the roles of committee or team members
- providing information, resources and skills training
- assisting in monitoring and follow-up activities
- developing worker services and action plans
- assuring that a final report is completed to document the work of the committee and that it is disseminated to all partners

On-going role/responsibilities of IA Specialists

On-going responsibilities and activities of IA Specialists include:

- identifying critical partners
- providing coordination for dislocated worker efforts within community, region and nation
- working with USDOL Reemployment Assistance Project staff in developing activities and plans
- organizing schedules and keeping records of IA activities
- participating in quarterly IA meetings and training sessions
- implementing training for RA committees and teams
- delivering training for future IA Specialists

- functioning as facilitators and problem-solvers
- providing monitoring and follow-up support to RA committees
- necessary reports, writing up case studies, and documenting unique activities and experiences

Other Rapid Response Specialists' role

The term Rapid Response specialist generally represents an individual who specializes in the events leading up to and the activities of rapid response. In some cases, this role may be the same as the IA specialist. Although the these two roles may be interchangeable, some areas find that having a specialist who can focus on all aspects of Industrial Adjustment and another more highly trained worker to deal with the tasks of rapid response provides greater flexibility when dealing with multiple dislocations.

Many times throughout this manual the roles and responsibility will allow for either the IA Specialist or a Rapid Response Specialist. It is important to understand that this may be two different people and roles or a single one combined.

Rapid response specialists must have experience and expertise in a number of areas essential to developing and maintaining an effective rapid response capability. To establish credibility and to be able to work effectively with both employer and employee groups, these specialists need to be knowledgeable of and equipped to discuss:

- training and employment programs
- private industry and the public sector
- market trends and their relationship to potential layoffs and closures
- local economic development activities
- committee effectiveness, problem solving and teambuilding
- labor-management relations, and
- union activities

Rapid response specialists must be able to organize a broad-based response to a dislocation event. They need to be able to bring together all concerned parties, including employers, affected employees, and union representatives, as well as appropriate governmental agencies, local officials, community organizations and others as the circumstances require.

Employers and Enterprises role

The role that employers or enterprises play in the rapid response efforts is central to this process. This role can be in the form of an ongoing advising capacity or they may be brought in on a situational basis. Examples of roles for business include:

- on going information sharing with the IA Specialist regarding economic conditions generally and specific market sectors, potential dislocations, and labor-management relations
- on going support for and providing advance notice of plant closures and layoffs as soon as possible to facilitate worker readjustment services
- active involvement in the formation and operation of the Labor-Management committees to strengthen the competitiveness of the enterprise and preserve jobs in the community
- active involvement in the process of planning for and, to the extent feasible, the delivery of readjustment services to affected workers
- on going assistance in the formation and operation of workforce reduction LMACs; e.g., identifying prospective chairpersons, supporting management members on the committee and, to the extent feasible, financial and non-financial support of such committees
- general leadership in the community and throughout the region to help promote an awareness of the dislocation services available and the advantages of rapid response work force adjustment and substantive retraining for both businesses and employees
- active involvement with local economic development groups to facilitate the creation of new jobs and enterprises in the community to replace those lost in the layoffs or closures

Labor's role

The establishment of an active, ongoing cooperative relationship between IA Specialist or rapid response specialists and the labor community to deliver services to dislocated workers can be an important part of building trust and improving service availability.
Potential roles for organized labor include:

- ongoing consultation and information sharing with the Worker Adjustment system regarding economic developments, potential dislocations, labor-management relations and collective bargaining trends
- consultation and assistance related to rapid response contacts regarding notice of or awareness of potential layoffs and plant shutdowns when appropriate
- ongoing assistance in the formation and operation of labor-management and adjustment committees, e.g., identifying prospective chairpersons; supporting labor members on the committee, and, to the extent feasible, providing financial and non-financial support of such committees
- consultation in the design and delivery of services (e.g., peer counseling) or acting as a service provider pursuant to rapid response
- leadership in the community regarding the availability of rapid response services and the advantages of members participating early in readjustment programs and retraining services as a means to long-term career growth.

Other agencies and NGO's role

A meaningful rapid response requires a number of advance program linkages with governmental and non-governmental agencies needed to implement effective linkages with unemployment insurance, Employment Centers, and public training agencies. Those rapid response team members from these groups must be able to respond to situations over their legally mandated responsibilities. This means they must have the flexibility to represent their specific services as well as those of the other key groups.

Developing a written process

Even when the Rapid Response team is fully trained and aware of their respective roles, it is important to have a written process that all members can follow. The steps below are an example of the order and general activities that would be involved in each step. There should be agreements with each member to describe the primary lead and back up for these various steps.

Step-by-step Process for Rapid Response

1. *Determine if rapid response should be activated.* Upon receiving information about a potential layoff or plant closing, rapid response or industrial adjustment specialist decides if rapid response is warranted.

2. *Arrange for on-site meeting within 48 hours.* If rapid response is warranted, IA or rapid response specialist initiates contact with employers and labor organizations or employees to arrange an on-site meeting. If an on-site plant meeting is not acceptable to the employer, the specialist makes alternative arrangements for a community meeting.

3. *Conduct on-site meeting at the plant with management and worker representatives.* The rapid response specialist conducts an on-site meeting separately with employer and employee representatives and then jointly. At this meeting, the specialist explains the services available from the government and community, then explains the Labor-Management adjustment committee (LMAC) concept and promotes its use.

   If the LMAC concept is agreed upon, the LA specialist provides names of possible chairpersons, offers LMAC group effectiveness training, and provides linkages to the Dislocated Worker services center.

   If the LMAC approach is not agreed upon, the specialist should consider the formation of a community task force, begin to implement linkages, and ensure that a meeting with the employees is arranged.

4. *Make a preliminary assessment of services needed.* The specialist conducts preliminary assessment of the services needed, taking into consideration the information already available. The preliminary assessment includes the:

- Layoff size and number of workers likely to need services -- numbers affected minus likely retirees, transfers and workers with easily transferable skills;
- Characteristics of the work force -- wage levels, education, age, etc.
- State of the local economy – open or closed labor market? High unemployment? Number of unemployed unskilled workers? Present economic development activity?
- Appropriateness of strategies to avert closure or layoff.

5. *Develop an agreement covering roles, services, and facilities to be used.* Based on the outcome of the previous meeting, an agreement is developed and negotiated with the employer (and union if one is present) as to the roles, services and facilities to be used to address this dislocation event.

   If the parties agree to establish an LMAC, an agreement spelling out who will provide the needed facilities, services, staff, etc should be developed early on. Representatives of the company, the union or workers, and the IA Specialist sign this agreement.

   If the parties do not agree to establish an LMAC, an agreement with the employer may be written or be based on a general understanding from earlier interagency agreements between the concerned agencies. Employer and employee representative roles are voluntary, and one or both may not be involved.

   The Worker Adjustment unit notifies the appropriate agencies of likely needs and arranges for further actions -- meetings, training, etc., (to bring someone in to provide the services identified as appropriate in Step 3 or Step 8 below).

6. *Alert the broader community of possible needs.* The Worker Adjustment unit alerts the broader community and various organizations about the needs of the dislocated workers. The support of the community will help by assisting dislocated workers to find new jobs. These boarder community groups might include ministerial association, financial community, mental health agencies, schools, etc.

7. *Arrange for and coordinate necessary resources and local services.* Arrange for and coordinate the necessary adjustment program resources – Job Registration, Employment Center services, Vocational Training and Technical Education, etc.

   Arrange for the types of local services to be provided by, or other entities, as appropriate, including:
   - Early intervention pre-layoff services
   - Basic readjustment services
   - Retraining services
   - Community services including mental health, family and financial counseling, etc.

8 . *Provide technical assistance to the employer or LMAC as needed.* The Rapid Response team or IA specialist makes one or more follow-up visits (after the initial on-site visit) with the LMAC (or employer if a LMAC is not used) to provide technical assistance to develop a local service strategy. This assistance might include:

- Helping to organize and conduct a survey of affected workers
- Determining what pre-layoff assistance/early intervention services could be provided
- Assessing the need for emergency financial assistance
- Developing a plan for regular communications with the workers and the local press
- Helping the LMAC or employer review and analyze returned surveys
- Providing information from the demand occupations collection
- Training and analysis of local labor market conditions
- Serving in a liaison role, if indicated, regarding education assistance that could be provided prior to layoff or closure
- Encouraging the LMAC or employer to establish contact with service providers relative to training for occupations in demand
- Encouraging project linkages to ongoing services offered in the community such as job referrals, job search workshops, counseling, etc.

9. Monitor the progress and assess the relevance of strategies used. Monitor the progress and success of the LMAC (or employer-developed adjustment program if a LMAC is not used) and other partner agencies to see whether the needs of the workers are being met in a timely and cost effective way. The IA specialist or rapid response team assesses the relevance of various strategies to avert the layoff or closing, such as those involving economic development or pre-feasibility studies,

Together with the employer and LMAC assess the need for additional resources and take appropriate additional action to access such resources when indicated. The steps above should be carefully documented and serve as the basis for various written agreements or reports that are put into place.

Types of agreements and written process within the Worker Adjustment system

Agreements within the worker adjustment system could be used to define assistance needed in identifying demand occupations for retraining, obtaining labor market information, developing a profile to identify declining industries and occupations in addition to determining the types of closures and layoffs. Agreements or written processes are also used in establishing an institutional framework to provide “rapid response” and “adjustment assistance” or job search and job development assistance at the plant or a site other than the Dislocated Worker or Employment Center.

Every rapid response linkage requires a written agreement outlining the agency’s commitment of staff, resources and time period. These written agreements should also include the funding source(s) as well as how long after notification and rapid response the agreed upon activities will be implemented and the circumstances for termination of such activities. Written agreements should also be made with other relevant agencies and organizations, such as unemployment, Employment Services, vocational and technical education, and social services.

Ongoing communications and coordination with economic development agencies are essential. These agencies should be included when developing strategies to avert layoffs and closures and accelerate the reemployment of affected workers. They can also serve as sources of financial and technical advice to organizations and communities developing coordinated responses to plant closures or mass layoffs. Coordination with these support groups should be clear and concise in a written agreement or memorandums of understanding so all parties are aware of each other's roles.

Defining when detection becomes rapid response activity

Distinguishing Between Rapid Response and Delivery of Services

In a Rapid Response system, the rapid response process is responsible "to provide for" (not provide) the various adjustment services. The role of the rapid response or industrial adjustment specialist is to serve as a facilitator between the employer, Labor-Management committee or adjustment committee, and consultants or service providers contracted with to provide the required services to employers or dislocated workers in a worker adjustment program.

When do rapid response activities end? With the exception of a Labor-Management committee being established to carry out a project, or a Labor Management Adjustment Committee being established (as discussed below), extensive rapid response staff activity and involvement for a specific mass layoff or plant closing usually end with the initiation of program services to workers.

However, a minimal level of rapid response staff involvement may be maintained for necessary technical assistance to LMACs or monitoring. The IA Specialist or rapid response team develops or accesses a management information system to track the progress of provision of services to the affected workers throughout the delivery of services. In addition, it oversees the program implementation.

Normally, the financial resources are available through its funding source to pay for the IA Specialist or rapid response staff salaries and other expenses such as:

- On-site contacts with employers and employee representatives.
- the promotion of Labor-Management committees and Labor-Management adjustment committees, including technical assistance to a committee, as well as liaison with other public and private groups and programs within the scope of the project to explain service concepts, such as early intervention
- the advisability of long-term retraining, and the operation of an early warning information collection system relating to potential closings and layoffs and resources available to help dislocated workers
- arrangements to ensure the provision of basic readjustment and retraining services
- the provision of financial and technical advice in liaison with economic development agencies and other organizations to assist in efforts to avert layoffs (including the

provision of funds for a pre-feasibility study of the advisability of having another company or a group of managers or workers from the enterprise purchase the plant and keep it in operation)

- ❖ the costs of developing public information material about IA Specialist services and activities to be disseminated; and
- ❖ time spent training or otherwise assisting a community to develop its own coordinated response to dislocation events and obtain access to economic development assistance

Basic readjustment services such as outreach, intake, employee surveys, assessment, other early intervention or pre-layoff assistance, and retraining services are not considered rapid response activities and are normally funded by funds allocated to provide services for this layoff or closing or by funds made available from other public and private sources.

The role enterprises can take to facilitate worker adjustment

Experience in the U.S. and other countries identified some basic actions that responsible employers can take, with or without the assistance of rapid response specialists or teams, to ease the burden on and facilitate the successful readjustment of workers who must be permanently displaced as a result of restructuring, downsizing, or plant closings.

Getting Started

Helping displaced workers prepare for and find new jobs

1. Provide enough advance notice
2. Organize to help displaced workers
3. Provide bridging financial support
4. Motivate and prepare workers for reemployment
5. Target jobs and develop jobs

STEP 1: Provide enough advance notice

Enterprises should provide enough advance notice to their workers and to the DWU (or whatever agency is responsible for assisting dislocated workers) before a permanent layoff or shutdown to prepare workers for new jobs. Six-months to one-year advance notice are needed to carry out successful adjustment programs for workers terminated as a result of mass layoffs and plant closings.

Advance notice, careful planning, and effective use of the time preceding layoffs or plant closings are essential to successful transition programs. Well-designed worker adjustment programs strive for the shortest possible unemployment period for transitioning workers. A short period saves money for both the company and community in the long run.

STEP 2: How an enterprise can organize to help displaced workers

Establishing an effective framework to organize and deliver appropriate adjustment services to workers who will be losing their jobs, includes:

- ❖ Meeting with the IA Specialist or rapid response specialists to discuss the forthcoming layoff or closure and working closely with them to facilitate the organization and delivery of services to the workers who will be laid off
- ❖ Negotiating and/or implementing a mass layoff or plant closing agreement (if the workers are represented by a union)
- ❖ Setting up a labor-management adjustment committee to plan for and oversee the delivery of services to the dislocated workers (the next section explains how Labor-Management committees are organized and operate)
- ❖ creating an organizational structure in the form of a reemployment or worker assistance resource center (WARC)
- ❖ staffing the center with competent personnel and delegating sufficient authority to do the job
- ❖ obtaining sufficient resources (internal and external) to carry out the work of the reemployment center and outplacement program
- ❖ locating the center for availability and convenience of services
- ❖ opening the center before the workers are discharged
- ❖ Establishing working relationships with other agencies that can help provide the needed services.

High-level enterprise and/or union officials, not plant-level managers or local union representatives, usually take the lead in initiating and planning a worker assistance center for the following reasons:

- ❖ major choices about the future of the plant are made at the corporate level, not the plant level;
- ❖ plant-level managers and union officials usually have little experience with or knowledge about cooperatively run assistance centers; and
- ❖ Decisions on staffing, budgets, and company-union interactions are usually beyond the scope of the plant.

In some cases, a third-party consultant, a non-profit organization, or a public agency plays a central role in the planning process. But local officials and center staff must learn by doing, using guides and other materials to help them.

In the early stages of the planning process, the primary focus should be on developing a basic blueprint for the worker assistance resource center (WARC). Once the company and union agree on a blueprint, plant-level managers and local union officials join the planning process. The major planning for the WARC usually begins with the establishment of a working group composed of an equal number of company and worker representatives (union representatives if the plant is unionized) and, in most cases, a consultant or DWU industrial adjustment or rapid response specialist.

The financing of the center must be decided. Usually the companies contribute most or all of the total costs. They sometimes pay the salaries of a union peer counselor and part or all of the salaries of staff who are detailed to the WARC. Many companies establish a fund with a specific dollar amount to be allocated as the program proceeds. They also pay for retraining programs beyond those agreed to in the labor contract and the accounting services. Companies usually contribute space, the equipment such as telephone banks for workers to use in their job searches, and at least one center staff member, often the center director.

The early planning stage provides the local plant management and worker representatives with an understanding of what the WARC is all about and a sense of joint “ownership” of the assistance center. Early in the planning process, the working group seeks out individuals, agencies, and organizations that can provide support for the assistance center. In most cases, this search begins at the regional or national level to obtain information about government adjustment programs.

Meetings are held with IA Specialists, employment center officials, economic development, NGO’s, education and training agencies, etc., to:

- explain how the assistance center works;
- announce the budget that the company and union have agreed upon;
- request community and agency support for the program;
- discuss potential roles for various agencies in service delivery and program operations; and
- Begin developing funding proposals or other activities that will be needed to initiate the operations of the center.

Both enterprises and unions are sensitive to the issue of where the assistance center is located. Often, the center is located on the company premises, but at a location removed from the former work site. When companies do not have suitable space, centers have been located in union halls, community centers, and other central, convenient, and cost-effective sites.

Ideally, the WARC operations begin before workers are laid off and continue for a significant period after the layoffs end. Assisting dislocated workers to find new jobs WARC facilities usually include:

- classrooms for orientation sessions, workshops, and other group activities;
- offices for individual counseling and administrative and clerical operations; and
- A resource area with telephones, newspapers, and other materials to assist workers in their job searches.

Typical worker assistance services include:

- *Center orientation and employee benefits counseling:* The center staff explain the services that are available, encourage worker participation, and provide information on employee benefits, such as severance pay and early retirement options;

- *Self-help reemployment assistance.* This assistance includes job search workshops, job clubs, resume development, resource materials, and job counseling;
- *Services to offset the impact of job* loss. These services include peer counseling, individual job counseling, stress management workshops, and referrals to social service agencies;
- *Direct job placement assistance.* This assistance includes job development, job placement information and counseling, coordination with the employment service and local employment and training agencies, and relocation assistance;
- *Education and retraining.* These help employees acquire the basic educational and occupational skills they need to make the transition to new jobs and careers. On-the-job training is usually available.

WARC personnel usually include:

- a director (or co-directors representing the company and union);
- one or more union (or worker if union is not present) peer counselors who work with employees and serve as liaisons to the union local;
- several staff on detail from the local employment and training agencies (often on a part-time basis) to assist with job development, retraining, and job search workshops; and
- One or more administrative/clerical staff.

In most cases, a LMAC or steering committee oversees the worker adjustment program. Local agency representatives (Employment Centers or Dislocated Worker Adjustment Centers) and independent consultants frequently participate in planning and oversight, especially during the early stages.

The primary responsibilities of the plant-level working group include:

- promoting the WARC and encouraging participation;
- designing and implementing worker orientation sessions;
- developing brochures and other informational materials that explain the services provided by the center;
- planning the center services-retraining, job development, job search workshops, job clubs, individual counseling, intake and enrollment, social services; and
- Establishing financial, administrative and client tracking operations.

Because plant closings and work force reductions usually affect salaried employees as well as hourly workers, assistance centers for salaried workers are usually established near the hourly workers’ center (they may be combined if there is no union). Both centers often share facilities and equipment.

When the number of workers being displaced by an enterprise is relatively small, or enterprises in a community are laying off small numbers of workers over an extended period of time, it may be inappropriate to set up a WARC in each plant as described in this section. In these cases, the Employment Center or a group or consortium of local public and private agencies may choose to organize a centralized reemployment center to provide adjustment services to the workers being displaced for a longer period of time.

STEP 3: Provide bridging financial support.

Income support during the transition period and structuring benefits to facilitate reemployment is very important. If bridging financial support from the company and other public sources is properly structured, it can cushion the income of workers during their job searches, retraining, or shortfalls in pay during the early period of a new job. Enterprises must evaluate the possibility of support to the workers during this transition.

STEP 4: Motivate and prepare workers

Motivating and preparing displaced workers to seek other employment is critical. Long-service workers lack knowledge of the labor market and job-seeking skills. Employers can help these workers by:

- Orienting all workers about benefits and the other services that will be made available to them;
- Arranging for the testing and assessment of workers to determine the education and training they need to prepare them for new jobs;
- Providing job-search skill training for all workers;
- Making counseling (peer, personal, financial, medical, marital, drug, and alcohol) available to help workers deal with personal problems and career changes;
- Arranging for remedial education for workers who lack basic skills; and
- Arranging for occupational or vocational training and retraining for workers who need and desire them.

Motivating and preparing workers to reenter the labor market is facilitated greatly by a WARC organized and operated along the lines explained in Step 2 above, or by the labor-management adjustment committee's plan.

STEP 5: Target jobs and develop jobs

Targeting jobs and developing jobs for dislocated workers are important activities. Important tasks in this area that management can undertake include:

- Considering transfer rights and geographic relocation if other enterprise jobs can be made available to the displaced workers;
- Assessing the skills and abilities of the displaced workers relative to the surrounding labor market;
- Assessing the labor market demand for workers generally and identifying the types of skills needed;

- Identifying potential employers in the industry, local area, and surrounding region who could use the workers' skills;
- Informing other employers about the workers being displaced and inviting the employers to interview them on-site, or arranging for the workers to go for interviews without penalty or loss of benefits; and
- Using labor-market intermediaries and other experts (e.g., Employment Services, Job Centers, placement consultants, etc.) to help develop jobs and place workers.

A U.S. CASE STUDY: 'An Early Perspective'

USA: Using a joint labor-management committee to help workers dislocated by the closing of the Ford San Jose Assembly Plant:

[In the U.S., the experience ***of*** *Ford Motor Company and the United Auto Workers Union (Ford- UAW) during the early I980s provided considerable knowledge and insights about the value of rapid response and the LMAC process to organize and direct the delivery of worker adjustment services. The insights gained in this and other closings that used the LMAC process were subsequently incorporated into the worker adjustment legislation passed by the US Congress in 1988.*

The Ford Motor Company and the United Autoworkers Union organized one of the most successful examples of an effective LMAC in the U.S. when a severe recession compelled Ford to close its San Jose Assembly Plant in Milpitas, California, in May 1983.

Immediately after the impending plant closure was announced to the work force and community on November 18, 1982, six months prior to the scheduled closure, an eight-member LMAC mobilized resources to help the 2,400 workers employed at the facility. The committee (which had been organized earlier as a local employee development and training program committee under the company and union collective bargaining agreement) immediately transformed itself into an LMAC, co-chaired by the union bargaining chairman and the plant industrial relations manager.

Four days after the announcement of the closing, and six months before the actual shutdown, the LMAC and Ford management set up an employment and retraining center in the plant, staffed by two supervisors and two hourly union members qualified to function as training coordinators. Space in the plant was made available to house the staff of other public agencies, including the Job Service and the local adult education program.

Delivery of services to the workers began immediately and continued for twenty-two months, until September 30, 1984. The comprehensive array of timely adjustment services that were made available on-site under the direction of the LMAC resulted in many beneficial outcomes.

During the six months prior to the closure, the plant functioned as an auto assembly plant, a school, and a vocational training center. Both day and evening classes were conducted on-site. Classrooms to accommodate the worker-students were set up in offices and work areas, and teachers from the local school district taught the classes. Nearly 800 employees enrolled in adult education courses to improve their basic skills in math and English. One hundred eighty-three of them earned their high school diplomas or passed the GED examination.

Vocational training courses were offered on-site using company equipment when it was not being used for production purposes. Skilled workers in the plant became the instructors and offered courses to their fellow workers. Over 2,100 workers enrolled for these in-plant vocational exploration courses, including upholstery, welding, painting, computers, auto mechanics, etc.

Over 750 employees enrolled in the intensive full-time vocational training courses offered by the local training institutions; 500 employees enrolled in technical training. The dropout rate in the vocational training classes was less than 10 percent, indicating good student preparation and motivation. Over 2,000 workers took advantage of the orientation, assessment, and testing programs provided by the California Employment Development Department (Job Service) and others to help determine their interests and aptitudes prior to starting training. Four hundred thirty-eight employees attended a job-search skills training workshop to prepare them to seek new jobs.

By September 30, 1984, over 80 percent of the employees who took training were employed as were over 83 percent of those who had re-entered the labor market.

During the final six months before closing, worker morale, plant productivity, and product quality all remained high. There was a lower incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, child and spouse abuse, and health problems than in similar plant closing situations elsewhere. No suicides resulted from the closure. (Ten displaced workers had committed suicide after an auto assembly plant in a nearby community shut down.)

The Ford managers assigned to the San Jose plant employment and retraining center contacted other employers in the Silicon Valley area to tell them of the availability of high quality workers and invited them to interview the workers at the plant while it was still operating. Visits to the plant by these employers convinced them of the competence and quality of the workers. Job interviews were subsequently arranged on site with these employers.

Through these proactive steps taken by the LMAC and the job search assistance provided by the California Employment Development Department, hundreds of jobs were found for the workers. This was no small feat because several thousand semi-skilled autoworkers, average age 43, were trying to obtain jobs in Silicon Valley, the home of personal computers and high technology.

The important role of the LMAC and Reemployment Center were demonstrated by the results of a post shutdown survey taken two years after the closure, which indicated that over 90 percent of the displaced Ford workers were pleased with the adjustment services they had received and still had high regard for both the company and the union.

The comprehensive and successful Ford-UAW San Jose Assembly Plant worker adjustment program demonstrated that a cooperative labor-management committee-directed approach could successfully deal with serious worker dislocation problems arising from plant closures. It also provided considerable input into the subsequent design of America's current system of worker adjustment. Many of its rapid response concepts and LMAC features were incorporated into the 1988 Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act.

The basic components of the UAW-Ford job security and adjustment program, first outlined in its 1982 collective bargaining agreement and expanded in subsequent agreements, are a landmark in American industrial relations and have served as a model for other American business enterprises and industries.

7. Gary B. Hansen, Preventing *Layoffs,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1988, pp. 24-28; and Gary B. Hansen, *The San Jose Assembly Plant. UAW-Ford Approaches to Retraining and Job Assistance for Dislocated Employees.* Centre Report 4, Dearborn, MI. A UAW-Ford National Development and Training Centre Publication, November *1984.*

Part V: Using the risk factors and initiating the labor-management committees and their plan

Organizing and processing the information collected

It is important that all information collected be documented and organized in a way that the LMAC can put it to use. The following list suggests the types of information that should be collected and made available to the LMAC.

- Demographics about the enterprise relating to the workers including, number projected for lay off, job categories and skill levels, average age, average length of employment, education levels, and other pertinent information regarding those being affected.
- Enterprise and union information such as primary and secondary contact persons, other facilities in the corporation, and job availability within the enterprise.
- General timetable for the lay-off and the progression that is anticipated.
- List of worker names.
- Prospective list of neutral chairpersons.
- Community resources that can be used to assist the workers.
- Financial resources that may be accessed.

Establishing the Labor-Management Adjustment Committee

Part VIII of this manual provides a training program for the development and implementation of the Labor-Management Committees. This section outlines how to prepare for the training and the material needed to deliver the training to its members.

Seven steps to help enterprises organize Labor-Management Adjustment committees

As has been suggested previously, experience in Canada and the United States demonstrates that the best way to systematically address massive layoffs or plant closures caused by major structural adjustments or other circumstances is to combine rapid response with in-plant labor-management adjustment committees (LMACs).

An LMAC is an ad hoc in-plant group of workers and managers that addresses and coordinates (with the help of a local IA Specialist or rapid response specialist) the employment, retraining, placement and other adjustment activities to help the workers find new, productive jobs.

The LMAC concept can be implemented through:

- ❖ the joint efforts of labor and management representatives in a plant facing a major reduction in force or closure; or
- ❖ a local IA Specialist (provided by a partner organization such as WSI) or rapid response specialist; o r

- ❖ a designated trained representative of the Nation Employment Service
- ❖ another public agency concerned about workers and jobs, such as economic development, employment service, or regional planning.

The LMAC concept can be implemented in plants with or without a union representing the workers. The following material describes in greater detail the essential steps to organize a LMAC.

Using LMAC's to provide adjustment Services to dislocated workers
1. Make preparations **2.** Make the initial contact and obtain agreement for an LMAC **3.** Organize the LMAC **4.** Hold the first employee meeting **5.** Assess employee service needs **6.** Provide worker adjustment services **7.** Close out

STEP 1: Make preparations

Establish an Early Warning System
Once an IA Specialist or rapid response specialists receive word (officially or otherwise) that a layoff or closing is possible, they take the following steps prior to making personal visits to the plant or office.

Verify Job Losses
Every hint that a layoff or closing is possible should be verified. When a rumor or unofficial notice comes to an IA or rapid response team's attention, the specialists can turn to a number of excellent sources for information about what may be happening:

- ❖ newspapers,
- ❖ area industry or industry groups
- ❖ local employment offices
- ❖ local government officials
- ❖ local union and employer association officials

Information to be obtained when verifying job losses includes:

- ❖ the accuracy of the information
- ❖ the dates of the closing or lay off
- ❖ the key people--including managers and union or other employee leaders
- ❖ the number of workers affected
- ❖ persons to contact about forming an LMAC

Reevaluate Resources

Because overall resources can vary from time to time, each closing or mass layoff should spark a reevaluation of the available local resources. This reevaluation should take into account the amount of time before the layoff and the resources the affected parties could contribute to an LMAC effort.

Evaluate the Labor-Management Environment

LMACs are more readily accepted when labor and management have a history of cooperation and mutual respect. Therefore, IA or rapid response specialists should learn the following before developing an approach to introduce an LMAC in a layoff situation:

- Is the organization involved in any labor negotiations?
- If there is a union, is the relationship between the union and management cooperative or hostile?
- If there is no union, is there any type of an established employee organization working cooperatively with the management?

Assess the Company Culture

Each organization has its own culture made up of a set of standards, beliefs, and relationships outside the official organizational structure that govern the way the organization ***really*** works. Recognizing that organizations have both an informal and formal structure, the IA Specialist or rapid response specialists need to know the following ***before*** visiting on-site:

- Who the key officials in the organization are; what they know about labor-management relations, and their basic attitudes about them.
- What the key officials believe the employer's and union's responsibilities are for employee outplacement.
- Who the real, official and unofficial, opinion leaders are within the organization.
- The best approach to use to sell the LMAC idea in that particular environment.
- Pitfalls to avoid when trying to sell the LMAC idea to the organization.
- Key people in the organization who should be involved in selling the LMAC concept.

STEP 2: Make the initial contact and obtain agreement for an LMAC

Make the Initial Presentation

Once a decision is made to pursue a LMAC, the IA Specialist or rapid response specialist makes a presentation to the employer about the kinds of help the LMAC can provide during the dislocation. The employer may invite worker representatives to a meeting to learn about the services that the Worker Adjustment Centers can make available. Alternatively, the specialist can contact labor and management representatives individually.

The specialist must explain the LMAC process to the decision maker in the company. If (after consultation with local management officials) it becomes clear that final decisions are made at a higher level, the specialist should contact the appropriate official. The same procedure should be followed in contacting union leadership.

The marketing approach the IA Specialist or Rapid Response specialist develops for a meeting with the employer and employee representatives should stress the benefits of the LMAC for both management and employees. In preparing the presentation, the IA or rapid response specialist must be sensitive to the pressures on everyone in the enterprise. While managers and workers alike face dislocation the firm may continue to produce goods and fill orders while preparing for layoffs or closure. The following items should become part of the presentation on the value of a LMAC.

- *The LMAC can help reduce administrative burdens.* Businesses may not have sufficient staff to handle all the details of managing a dislocation while maintaining production. The LMAC can assume the administrative and management functions associated with retraining and outplacement.
- *The LMAC can help maintain productivity and product quality.* Maintaining productivity and quality benefits both management and workers. Because the LMAC represents the company's commitment to the workers, it can help sustain morale, reduce absenteeism, minimize employee errors, and reduce deliberate acts of sabotage. It also can serve as a communication and rumor control forum and address employee concerns directly and immediately. These actions help to maintain productivity and quality.
- *The LMAC can help preserve the image of the company and the union.* A cooperative employer- employee response tailored to the workers' needs projects a positive image of both the company and the union. It also helps to retain and attract employees during the remaining operations.
- *The LMAC can help reduce the number of worker accidents or injuries.* Maintaining worker morale reduces the incidence of on-the-job accidents that, in turn, reduces lost work time and health related claims.

Gain an Agreement for an LMAC

At the initial meeting, management and labor representatives should enter into a simple written agreement that sets forth the duties and responsibilities of the LMAC as well as those of the employer, employee representatives, and IA Specialist or rapid response specialist to the LMAC mission. The purpose is to establish a climate of understanding, trust, and consensus. A speedy decision is particularly critical when the lead-time is short.

- *Financial support:* The agreement should establish the mix and level of financial support to the LMAC by the parties and the IA Specialist or Rapid Response specialist. The amount needed is determined in large part by decisions on whether the chair and committee members are paid and the scope of their duties. Some agreements also spell out other resources (such as equipment, facilities, and staff) that the employer, employee representatives and Worker Adjustment program will make available to the LMAC.
- *Status* of *the LMAC*: The agreement should indicate that the committee represents both workers and management. To underscore the LMAC's independence from conflicting

pressures, the agreement should state unequivocally that the LMAC does not participate in nor is it subject to collective bargaining. The LMAC ceases operations during any collective bargaining sessions.

- *Neutral chair*. To avoid the possibility of a conflict of interest, or the appearance of it, the agreement should specify that the chair is not to be affiliated with any service provider, such as the employment service, vocational training department, etc.

A neutral chairperson has proven to be the most effective way to preserve the LMAC's independence and ensure impartiality during meetings. This neutral role is especially helpful if the labor-management relationship is unpleasant or workers and management distrust each other. However, in some instances, co-chairs, one from labor and one from management, have been used to expedite consensus and help guarantee impartiality. Co-chairs work well when the parties have a cooperative labor-management relationship.

STEP 3: Organize the LMAC

Once an agreement is reached to form an LMAC, the IA or rapid response specialist, in consultation with management and worker representatives, begins organizing the committee. The first decisions to be made are:

- the size, membership, structure and orientation of the committee;
- specific objectives; and
- The selection of the chairperson.

Determine Committee Size and Membership

Two principles guide the size and selection of the LMAC membership. First, the committee should represent all shifts and employee groups. Second, any imbalance in membership should favor employee representation.

The typical LMAC has three primary members: a representative from management, representative from labor/workers, and one neutral chairperson. Ex officio status is usually accorded to a representative from the funding entity (the jurisdiction that oversees the getting funds down to the local level) and the local Employment Center staff.

Select Members

The IA Specialist or rapid response specialist can draw on the experience of other LMACs to advise the committee on the type of people best suited for LMAC service. The major reasons for LMAC effectiveness are that the LMAC members work at the affected work site and also are scheduled for layoff.

Labor and management each select their own representatives. Note: The presence of high-ranking company or union officials on the committee may interfere with the equality and openness necessary for the committee to succeed. Alternates should be selected to replace committee members who leave.

The IA Specialist or rapid response specialist (as an ex officio member of the committee) serves as a staff support person and technical resource and as the primary liaison between the re-employment services or worker adjustment center. As such, he/she attends all meetings.

Orient Committee Members

Orienting LMAC members to their tasks can take many forms, from delivering basic information on LMAC responsibilities to providing group dynamics and committee effectiveness training. The nature and extent of the orientation depends on the LMAC members' experience and the time available to both the committee members and the rapid response specialist. The following elements should be included in the LMAC orientation.

- *Basics:* Committee members should be advised on the essential purpose of their work, the tasks to be performed, support available from the IA Specialist or Worker Adjustment Unit, and the local training and employment system components that can be used.
- *Specific objectives:* Although the LMAC has a broadly defined mission and the labor-management agreement sets some LMAC goals, committee members should further refine their agreement with objectives that reflect their particular situation. Defining the objectives helps the committee members better understand their work, gives them ownership of the worker adjustment process they are launching, and starts team building.
- *Committee Structure:* Developing worker adjustment procedures, staying in touch with the workers, and helping them find new jobs are time-consuming activities, especially when the LMAC members are also in the throes of job dislocation. During their orientation, the members decide how to carry out their work in the face of all the demands on their time.
- *Qualifications for the chairperson:* During their orientation, the LMAC members also develop a list of criteria for selecting the chairperson and the qualifications they would like that person to bring to the task.

Select the Neutral Chairperson

The next order of committee business is selecting the neutral chairperson. Numerous sources can be drawn upon, including LMAC members, the local employment service or center staff, business organizations, NGO's, local chapters of professional and trade associations, retired trade union officials, etc.

Among the qualities to look for are proven business knowledge and organizational, interpersonal, and facilitating skills. Also, the chairperson should be able to work in a climate requiring consensus decision making. Many LMAC members may be new to group decision making so the chairperson should be skilled at drawing everyone into discussion and deliberation. Familiarity with local employers and labor markets is highly desirable. A willingness to see the committee through to the completion of its mission is also important.

The chair conducts the LMAC meetings, provides leadership, serves as chief LMAC spokesperson, and otherwise conducts the business of the LMAC. Meetings are held as often as needed, and the chair, in consultation with the committee members, sets each meeting agenda and organizes the meeting in response to the level of job readjustment activity taking place. In addition, the chair is responsible for approving all expenditures, including payments to contractors, and reporting all payments made to the full committee.

Sometimes the rapid response specialist helps with advertising, applicant screening, and compiling a list of candidates for the LMAC to choose from. If the chairperson is to be paid then compliance with that organization's hiring and personnel policies may have to be addressed.

Develop an Operating Plan
The LMAC should develop an operating plan for the entire worker adjustment effort. A minimum plan should lay out:

- methods for assessing individual needs and providing personal counseling;
- services to be provided by contractors;
- services to be received as a contribution to the project;
- services to be provided by the LMAC;
- location of services; and
- Methods for tracking worker progress and contractor performance.

STEP 4: Hold the first employee meeting

Once the committee completes its orientation, sets out its goals, selects a neutral chairperson, and develops an operating plan, it schedules a meeting with the affected employees. The meeting informs the employees of the committee's goals, introduces the chairperson, and explains the survey or other activities to be carried out.

The IA or rapid response specialist helps the committee organize and conduct the meeting. At the first meeting, the rapid response specialist stands ready to provide technical information about services available through local government and other sources to assist the committee.

STEP 5: Assess employee service needs

The LMAC approach provides adjustment services to all employees being displaced. An employee survey can help lay the groundwork for this approach. At a minimum, a survey should establish the workers' skills and education levels; identify their concerns about the dislocation, their interests, and their plans for future employment; and ascertain the job adjustment services they want.

The LMAC should attempt to get every affected worker to complete a survey. Suggestions for gaining 100% participation include:

- Having the workers hand in their completed surveys when they pick up their paychecks.

- Asking the workers to fill out the survey at the employee meeting. This helps the LMAC to identify workers who have reading or writing problems.
- Personally contacting anyone who does not return the survey.
- Using peer counselors to contact workers within their work area
- Having IA Specialist or Rapid Response specialist available during lunch or breaks to talk with and encourage filling out of surveys
- Using group orientations to provide information and have groups fill out surveys at that time.

STEP 6: Provide worker adjustment services

Using the results of the employee survey, the LMAC can assess the kinds of worker adjustment services needed, determine the number of workers needing each kind of service, develop a list of potential service providers, and determine the supplementary adjustment services to be provided directly by the committee. The survey results, not the actual surveys that might identify individual workers, should be shared with the LMAC to provide needed information during decision-making.

The IA Specialist or rapid response specialist stands ready to provide expertise to the committee as they assume their primary purpose of arranging for or providing adjustment services. The committee may need assistance in developing a survey, media relations, newsletter, and contract negotiation and management.

Select Service Providers

The rapid response specialist helps the committee members identify the appropriate providers to support the placement and training services. The local Employment Center and Worker Adjustment Center should be considered based on the services they already have in place. The committee also can choose from among the interested providers, preferably negotiating with several vendors (if more than one is available) to get the mix of services the workers need and want.

Formal contracts are entered into with selected vendors to provide the types of services being purchased, service sites, staffing arrangements, and the number of workers to be served. The IA or rapid response specialist works with the committee and contractors to provide any assistance or clarification they need to develop the contract. The IA or rapid response specialist coordinates services and helps gather information to track progress.

Supplement the Service Providers
The LMAC members help affected workers cope with many of the problems triggered by job loss. Although not all individuals will need the same mix of services, the survey results might demonstrate several clusters of needs that workers have. These needs can be satisfied in specialty type activities or workshops.

Some surveys may indicate a special need that takes one on one referral, examples might be a request for substance abuse counseling or family violence. If the worker has identified him/herself then the Specialist or Peer Counselor (in available) can meet with this individual in private to make the necessary arrangements.

Job Search/ job development and the LMAC's role
Frequently, committee members actively involve themselves in the job search and job development efforts. Members can search a variety of sources to find jobs in both the visible and hidden job markets. Tasks in this area might include:

- ❖ Providing or arranging for job-search training for all workers.
- ❖ Assessing the labor market demand for workers generally and identifying the types of skills needed.
- ❖ Handing out brochures explaining the work of the LMAC, getting media coverage of committee progress, and placing ads in local newspapers and other media to uncover job sources.
- ❖ Holding special events such as job fairs and open houses so potential employers can meet the workers face to face.
- ❖ Identifying potential employers who can use the workers' skills.
- ❖ Telling other employers about the workers being displaced and inviting them to interview the workers on-site, or arranging for workers to go for interviews without penalty or loss of benefits.
- ❖ Using labor-market intermediaries such as employment centers or outplacement consultants effectively.

Counseling
A cornerstone of the LMAC strategy is personalizing the adjustment process by having LMAC members reach out to individuals, usually through regular telephone calls, one on one appointments, and informal meetings.

Denial is a common response of workers to dislocation. Thus, an important aspect of counseling is to continue to offer help to those who initially reject it.

Establishing peer counseling programs is an effective way to help employees deal with these concerns and fears. The LMAC may decide to select and train peer counselors, chosen from the workers, to provide support and guidance through the dislocation.

Meet to review the program and disseminate information
Each LMAC should schedule meetings as needed. The primary focus of the meetings is to determine how well the program is working. The IA Specialist or rapid response specialist attends all meetings and participates in the review. This involves working with the committee to track the number of workers actively involved in the worker adjustment effort, the status of workers participating in the services provided, and the performance of service providers and contractors. Ongoing reviews permit timely corrections of deficiencies in the program.

Subcommittees make status reports, particularly about actions specifically recommended at the prior meeting, at LMAC meetings.

A primary function of the LMAC (and WARC) is to serve as the center of and accurate source for worker information. Bulletin board notices, fliers, newsletters, and special mailings are good ways to supplement personal outreach with written information. Because job dislocation is a family problem, all communications should address the entire family, not just the worker. Information should be accurate and timely. A regular flow of information and updates on the LMAC progress serves to reduce worker stress and increase participation.

STEP 7: Close out

The LMAC nears the completion of its mission when the chairperson decides that as many affected workers as possible have been placed in jobs, retrained or are still in education or training programs. In some instances, an LMAC may cease operation when members agree that its effectiveness has been exhausted. When necessary, the committee should continue to provide services after the plant or office closes.

The chairperson is responsible for the final tasks, including closing out the finances and filing a report with the worker adjustment program. This may include a summary of the worker adjustment process, including services provided, problems encountered, and placement rates.

Community Adjustment Committees

Adapted from USDOL approaches to Workforce Adjustment Committees materials.

An alternate strategy

A Community Adjustment Committee (CAC) is a variation of the LMAC and used when an enterprise is not willing to support the development of a LMAC, when the dislocation takes place without advanced notice or as an ongoing effort in communities with multiple worker dislocation. Therefore, CAC can be developed for a particular dislocation or become part of an ongoing response to dislocations taking place in a community.

What is the CAC?

The CAC is a group that includes members such as workers, business representatives, local officials, IA or rapid response specialists, economic development, NGO's, and employment service employees. The size of the CAC varies depending on the mix of entities represented.

The purpose of this committee is to help workers who have been displaced make a successful transition to re-employment within their community. The CAC works to develop the employment alternatives available to dislocated workers and to organize and provide the services needed to assist these workers. The committee activities may include:

- Organize job search assistance programs and services
- Organize retraining opportunities
- Work with economic development efforts to help attract new jobs for workers
- Assist to market community and its workers
- Provide information to the community and workers on activities available to the dislocated workers
- Develop networks that will increase the service opportunities for worker transition

What is the structure of the CAC?

The CAC can be organized by an IA specialist, by local officials, or by the National Employment Service/Employment Center staff. The membership should be broad-based and include all groups within a community that can assist in the worker transition efforts. This could include worker groups, agencies, training institutions, personnel services, economic development and local leadership.

Due to the nature of the CAC and that they are sometimes used as a support structure for multiple incidence of worker dislocations the CAC may be organized using a subcommittee structure. This allows for the various factors influencing the re-employment efforts to remain clearly focused. If the subcommittee structure is used then representatives or chairs from each subcommittee must meet periodically to coordinate efforts under the leadership of an overall CAC chair. Examples of committees might be developed could include: Communications and Marketing Subcommittee; Worker/Enterprise Needs Assessment Subcommittee; Economic Development and Job Creation Subcommittee; and a Worker Retraining Subcommittee.

The CAC can be a stand a lone group or used in an advising capacity with company specific LMAC's. Their work must be overseen and coordinated to ensure ongoing viability to the community.

A CASE STUDY: The use of rapid response in other countries

Central and Eastern Europe: Using rapid response and reemployment assistance committees to assist dislocated workers in Hungary

The highly successful rapid response and labor-management adjustment committee techniques for dealing with mass layoffs and plant closings in North America have been adapted for use in economic restructuring situations in central and eastern European countries. Hungary provides one example of how these techniques are being implemented.

In Hungary, a pilot project using the rapid response approach and LMAC process was started in 1994 to help workers displaced by mass layoffs and plant shutdowns in five locations. The initial success achieved soon led to the expansion of this program nationwide. In the next five years some 60 LMACs were established to help dislocated Hungarian workers find new jobs.

Example 1: Hungary Rapid Response Project

[The Hungary Rapid Response Project was a joint initiative of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Labor. It was implemented in cooperation with the Hungarian Ministry of Labor and the National Labor Center. This example has been excerpt from a paper written by Gary Hansen, who designed the USDOL Adjustment Model, and Maria Heidkamp, who ran the Rapid Response project in Hungary from its inception in June I994 until its closure in June 1999.1

Introduction
The goal of the Rapid Response Project was to improve the capacity of the Hungarian Government to respond to layoffs, particularly those caused by privatization and economic restructuring. Ultimately, the Project hoped to incorporate the lessons learned from field experience into an appropriate Hungarian layoff response component or model that could be institutionalized nationwide.

The Rapid Response Project approach is based on the tripartite labor-management neutral chair committee model developed originally by the Canadian Industrial Adjustment Service and subsequently modified and used in the U.S. In Hungary, the committees are called Reemployment Assistance Committees (RAC). The RACs are organized by and work closely with the Hungarian County Labor Centers (CLCs) and focus on providing training and technical assistance to help employees targeted for layoffs. Another component of the USDOL Rapid Response Project that was subsequently implemented in Hungary by the CLCs emphasized local economic development.

The idea behind the Rapid Response Project is that early intervention in layoff situations is a key to avoiding long-term unemployment. As noted earlier in the Chapter, experience in other countries had shown that workers facing layoffs are more inclined to take advantage of services before they leave their present enterprises than after they become officially unemployed.

In addition to advance notice requirements, Hungarian law called for the creation of a layoff committee of employer and employee representatives. The layoff committee generally concentrates on setting the priorities for the layoff program. This includes reviewing the list of employees scheduled for layoff, assisting dislocated workers to find new job,s and setting guidelines to insure that husbands and wives working at the same factory are not dismissed at the same time. In several cases, layoff committees have been transformed into RACs with some changes in membership and the addition of a neutral chair.

Project Structure

The USDOL Hungary Rapid Response Project began in July 1994 with a one-week training course for 30 County Labor Center (CLC) directors and designated industrial adjustment specialists (called layoff coordinators) from the four pilot areas originally selected by the government. The pilot areas included Budapest and the counties of Baranya, Borsod and Szolnok. Budapest, with a fifth of the country's population, had a relatively low unemployment rate but a very high absolute number of unemployed individuals. The three counties had higher than average unemployment rates and expected additional mass layoffs.

Prior to conducting the course for the industrial adjustment specialists, the Project Director and an international rapid response trainer prepared a manual based on the latest North American rapid response techniques. This manual was translated into Hungarian, and the course for the Hungarian IA specialists was conducted by the international trainer and Hungary Project director.

Following the training, the Project planned for three pilot RAC sites in the first year. The Rapid Response Project provided technical assistance to the CLCs, but required the CLC IA specialists to implement the RACs. Early on, the CLC IA specialists revised and adapted sample U.S. adjustment committee documents and procedures into Hungarian for the RAC projects. Employers and trade unions were pleased with the work of the RACs in the first pilot sites. Consequently, in March 1995, before the first RAC projects were completed in the pilot sites, the NLC requested that all CLCs in Hungary participate in the one week IA specialist training course. In subsequent rounds, the RAC process was expanded by the Rapid Response Project and CLCs to cover the entire country.

The four phase process used by CLC IA specialists for implementing a RAC in Hungary is as follows:

The Rapid Response/ Reemployment Assistance Committee (RAC) Process

Phase one: Verify layoff and determine needs

- ❖ Verify the layoff situation
- ❖ Look for layoff alternatives
- ❖ Demonstrate the value of a RAC to management and workers

Upon receiving notice of an impending layoff, a CLC IA specialist contacts the company to verify the situation, offers assistance and helps the company consider alternatives to layoffs. In some cases the CLCs can offer a job-retaining subsidy or cover the cost of "preventive training" if an employer states that the layoff can be avoided by upgrading the workers' skills. Depending upon the situation, the CLC IA specialist discusses the possibility of establishing a RAC, ideally located on site, with the company. If the company and employee representatives agree, the CLC IA specialist helps them set up a RAC.

Phase Two: RAC Inception

- ❖ Select RAC members from trade union, works council, dislocated workers and management.
- ❖ Select a neutral chair
- ❖ Sign an agreement among the CLC, enterprise and employee representatives specifying responsibilities and procedures
- ❖ Orient the RAC to its mission and how to use brainstorming and consensus decision making

Hungarian RACs have had as few as six members to as many as 16 members and include representatives from labor (trade union and works council), management and the dislocated workers. They also include a neutral chair from the community. The chair should be well-respected and able to help with job development. Retired HR managers, local elected officials, members of parliament, teachers, professors and staff from Local Enterprise Agencies have served as chairs.

Hungarians often joke that the best way to obscure a problem is to create a committee. To insure that this does not happen, the RAC must be focused, proactive and productive.

The CLC IA specialist takes several draft documents to the RAC inception meeting, including: sample RAC agreement forms that outline each party's roles and responsibilities and the resources that can be made available to assist them; RAC procedural rules; and a description of the chair's role.

At the first RAC session, the CLC IA specialist helps the RAC members learn how RACs work and helps them to define their mission. The RAC members also receive training to help them function effectively as a committee or team, including how to use brainstorming, problem solving and consensus decision making techniques.

Phase Three: RAC work

- ❖ Inform workers about the RAC and its goals
- ❖ Survey dislocated workers about their skills and needs
- ❖ Analyze dislocated workers' needs survey
- ❖ Develop and implement an Action Plan
- ❖ Organize job search skills workshops and job fairs with employers
- ❖ Develop employment opportunities and tap into "the hidden job market"
- ❖ Serve as an advocate for the about-to-be dislocated workers
- ❖ Monitor employee participation and adjust RAC efforts as needed
- ❖ Foster links with or start new job creation/economic development efforts
- ❖ Evaluate needs and start enterprise competitiveness projects as needed

Typically, a RAC begins its work by surveying the about-to-be dislocated workers concerning their needs and skills. The agenda for the initial meeting usually includes making plans for the survey by reviewing draft surveys.

Following an analysis of the completed survey supplemented by personal interviews, the RAC, with the help of the CLC IA specialist, develops and implements an action plan for the transitioning workers. Typical activities included in a Hungarian RAC action plan are:

1. Setting up an on-site worker assistance resource center (WARC) where the dislocated workers can go for peer support, information, counseling and job listings;
2. Arranging for information sessions and workshops on training programs, entrepreneurship, legal and financial questions, job search skills, and other topics;
3. Communicating with the dislocated workers and the community at large through newsletters, the media, personal interviews, and small group meetings;
4. Developing employment opportunities by organizing job fairs, advertising workers' skills, contacting area employers, word-of-mouth outreach, and tapping into the "hidden job market" to learn about jobs not listed with the employment service;
5. Serving as advocates for the workers in obtaining services;
6. Encouraging partnerships with other agencies that may have resources to assist the effort, such as Local Enterprise Agencies (LEA's), municipalities, chambers of commerce, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others, whose representatives sometimes become regularly invited guests to RAC meetings;
7. Monitoring employee participation and adjust RAC efforts as needed by reviewing (a) the survey of workers' skills and needs, (b) attendance at RAC sessions, (c) registration for training, job clubs, etc., and (d) job placements;
8. Fostering links with or starting new job creation/economic development efforts; and
9. Evaluating the need for and starting enterprise competitiveness (EC) efforts if needed.

During the initial phase of their work, RACs generally meet one or more times a week; then every two or three weeks as needed. In between meetings, RAC members, the chair and the CLC and its local branch office IA specialist do committee tasks and keep the lines of communication open.

Phase Four: Evaluate and Wrap Up
When the work of a Hungarian RAC is completed, which could take anywhere from several months to several years, the RAC members and CLC IA specialist assess their efforts, and the RAC chair prepares a final report. Then the RAC ceases operations or temporarily suspends if there is a significant time break between the phases of the layoff.

But even when a RAC disbands, the partnerships formed between it, the CLC and other community actors--Local Enterprise Agencies, municipalities, chambers of commerce, employers, trade unions, Job Clubs, training institutions, NGOs, the media and others--often evolve into ongoing relationships that serve as a catalyst for future local economic development.

Financing RAC Worker Adjustment Activities

During the first year of the USDOL Hungary Rapid Response Project no U.S. funds were made available to the CLCs or to the RACs because it was thought that existing government resources could cover most of the costs. But after the first RACs were established, it became clear that the CLCs could not readily cover their operating costs.

Some employers were willing to pay for the chair in addition to making in-kind contributions. But U.S. experience shows that a chair is not likely to be perceived as "neutral" when paid for by the company. Therefore, it was decided that a separate source of committee operating support is necessary.

Beginning in the second year of the pilot project, the RACs could apply for up to $2,500 for operating costs, including neutral chair fees, job fairs, newsletters, and WARC costs. But employers and CLCs continued to make in-kind contributions, including space for meetings and staff time. Generally, existing CLC resources were used to finance training, Job Clubs and other activities.

When the project started in Hungary, the concept of early intervention was difficult to achieve because some CLC services could not be accessed until a worker was officially registered as unemployed. But once the Hungarian government institutionalized the RAC model, the RAC clients were allowed to access services during their notice period.

Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Outcomes

The Hungary Project found that the rapid response worker adjustment component of the USDOL Adjustment Model works best when its partners are committed to the process and motivated RAC members design programs that meet the workers' needs, communicate important information, and provide moral and peer support. The facilitation and support provided by the CLC IA specialists were critical, especially during the early phases of RAC work.

Number of workers served by RACs. During the four years after the RACs were introduced, the CLC IA specialists helped 60 firms with enterprise layoffs (including heavy and light industry, public administration and the army) that dislocated 10,578 workers. Of those workers, 8,115 (77 percent of them) participated in the RAC programs. At the 60 sites, the RACs helped

3,551 dislocated workers (49 percent of the 7,256 active job seekers) to find new jobs. The RACs also tried to empower the job seekers to help themselves. Several RAC members said that the RAC efforts highlighted new realities for them.

RAC costs versus unemployment benefit costs. In one county that undertook five pilot sites, 43 percent of the active job seekers found new jobs. If that 43 percent had not found jobs through RAC activities, it is estimated that they would have cost the government 30 million forints in unemployment costs in one year. The unemployment costs would have far exceeded the estimated cost of 2 million forints for the total RAC activities, including staff and in-kind costs of the CLC and a small Rapid Response Project contribution for operating costs and a training project. Another 31 percent of the job seekers either found jobs or sorted out their job situations on their own, but they may have used some RAC services. Only 25 percent of the workers registered as unemployed.

Reduction in time of unemployment. In addition to reducing unemployment costs, the RACs significantly reduced the amount of time it took about-to-be dislocated workers to find new jobs. Project statistics show that RAC services cut the amount of time it took dislocated workers to find jobs from 265 days to 130. This reduction saved the government considerable unemployment and other social service costs. The reduced costs plus the high worker placement rate earned government support to institutionalize the model.

Customer satisfaction. A customer satisfaction survey of a sample of the RAC participants found that 73 percent of the job seekers who found new jobs credited the RAC for their success, 97 percent said they would use RAC services again, and 97 percent said they would recommend RAC services to other workers in similar situations.

Other Project Findings The USDOL Hungary Rapid Response Project's experience with layoffs confirms similar findings in other countries. Among the most important is that early intervention is critical when dealing with layoffs. CLC staff were surprised to learn that about-to-be-dislocated workers are easier to help while they are still employed and during their notice period than after they have been unemployed for several months.

The project also found that even in high unemployment areas, an active RAC with a well equipped on-site WARC can find job leads. A CLC branch office in one area with a 30 percent unemployment rate averaged only one job listing per 100 job seekers until a local RAC actively canvassed area contacts. That RAC operated WARC achieved a 60 percent active job seeker placement rate. This approach is called tapping into the "hidden job market"; meaning finding jobs that are not listed with the employment service or are hidden from view.

RACs can also help with local economic development. For example, an entrepreneur who wanted to set up a seamstress workshop in an area contacted a RAC to help identify a possible location and potential employees. The RAC put the entrepreneur in touch with the mayor and Local Enterprise Agency director who were also RAC partners. Shortly thereafter, the seamstress workshop was set up.

The Hungary Rapid Response Project found that several factors affect layoffs in an economy in transition. When the project began, unemployment was still a relatively new phenomenon in Hungary. Consequently, information about how to cope with bouts of joblessness, skills transfer and occupational change was very limited or nonexistent. Many people expected the government to solve the unemployment problems. The project helped change their perspective and empower and motivate them to help themselves.

Sustainability of Rapid Response techniques in Hungary

Because of the RACs' success in reducing the time from unemployment to new jobs and reduced the associated unemployment benefit costs, in November 1997 Hungary's Parliament decided to include the rapid response worker adjustment component in its Employment Act. Since mid-1998 Hungarian support for RACs has been available in all County Labor Centers.

Additional efforts by the Rapid Response Project in conjunction with the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs (successor to the Ministry of Labor) to support the sustainability of the rapid response worker adjustment component include:

- the development of a Hungarianized RAC training manual/ reference handbook
- the development of RAC software to track the progress of dislocated workers and to compute basic committee statistics.
- training for 18 CLC trainers
- training provided by Project-trained trainers to 389 staff from all 200 CLC branch offices in the country during 20 sessions in May and June 1998
- quarterly meetings to continue technical and professional support to a network of IA specialists (called CLC Regional Employment Counselors in Hungary)
- the development of a sample RAC brochure for employers anticipating layoffs

Hungary is currently involved in restructuring its nonintegrated coal mines. The Ministry of Economic Affairs has integrated the Rapid Response RAC component into the government's plans to address the consequent layoffs. This should provide valuable lessons for other countries facing similar mining sector restructuring.

Footnotes: Employers are required to give 90.days notice to the CLC about prospective layoffs and 30-days notice to the affected individuals.

The Ministry of Labor oversees the National Labor Center, which oversees 19 County Labor Centers and one municipal Labor Center (Budapest). The CLCs in turn oversee local branch offices.

Part VI. Pre/Post Lay off Services

The Resource Centers: Providing Services and Support to Dislocated Workers

Important note: This section primarily refers to the IA Specialist as the lead role, but it is not to suggest that this individual is the lead in all cases. The leadership for the Pre/Post lay off services may be a designated rapid response specialist or a representative from the National Employment Service or Employment Center staff person. This guide should be used by any group chosen to take the lead in facilitating the set up of pre/post lay off services.

This part covers three topics: first, the Industrial Adjustment (IA) Specialist's role in organizing "resource centers" called Worker Assistance (or Adjustment) Resource Centers (WARCs); second, what WARCs are and how they operate; and third, the types of services dislocated workers need and how WARCs provide these services.

The IA Specialist's role in organizing transition centers

Previous sections have stated that transition centers or WARCs are an important component of every successful rapid response worker adjustment program. Once a labor-management adjustment committee (LMAC) is organized, one of its primary tasks is to develop a blueprint for a WARC that provides services and support to dislocated workers. The IA Specialist (or rapid response specialist, depending on the situation) assists the LMAC in this effort, and provides them with training to prepare them for their work.

The early planning stage should help the LMAC members, local enterprise managers and worker representatives understand what a WARC is and create in them a sense of joint "ownership" of the center. The IA Specialist conducts meetings with the LMAC and/or company and union representatives to:

- explain what a WARC is and how it operates as part of the RRWA component
- explore the costs involved in starting a WARC, the staff required, and the contributions the enterprise and the union make
- spell out the resources that can be provided through the USDOL/WSI Adjustment Project
- identify available community and agency support for the WARC
- discuss the roles of various agencies for service delivery and program operations
- help the LMAC develop funding proposals and consider other actions to initiate the operation of a WARC

Subsequent meetings are held by the IA Specialist and the LMAC with representatives of the local organizations (employment centers, vocational training, social service agencies, etc.) to identify the services they are willing or able to provide to workers at or through the WARC.

The basic responsibilities of the LMAC regarding the establishment of a WARC include:

- Hiring a director and staff
- Promoting the WARC and encouraging worker participation
- Designing and implementing worker orientation sessions
- Planning WARC services--outreach, job development, job search workshops, job clubs, individual assessment and counseling, intake and enrollment, social support networks, peer support, etc.
- Developing a communications strategy and program to inform the affected workers and community about the work of the dislocated worker assistance program and WARC
- Developing brochures and other informational materials that explain the services of the WARC
- Establishing financial, administrative, and client tracking operations.

The IA Specialist, in cooperation with the LMAC, provides or arranges for training and technical assistance to the WARC staff during the start-up stage and monitors the operation of the center until it ceases operations.

The Worker Assistance Resource Centers (WARCs)

[Most of the material in the remaining sections has been adapted from Chapter 5 of Serving Workers in Transition: A Guide for Peer Support, prepared for the AFL-CIO HRDI by Lee Schore and Jerry Atkin]

Specialized WARCs have been an essential component of successful dislocated worker programs in the United States and Canada for nearly 20 years. They also have been used successfully in Central and Eastern Europe during the past ten years as part of the USDOL Labor Market Transition Program funded by the SEED Act.

Unlike employment centers that provide employment, training referral and other services to all unemployed workers, WARCs are designed specifically to deliver tailored services and support to dislocated workers in transition. These individuals are generally long service workers dislocated as a result of a mass layoff or plant closing due to economic restructuring or a decline in the productivity of a private company.

Physical Facilities. The WARC may occupy one room or a whole building. It may be located in the union hall, at the work site, or in a one-stop employment center. When possible, it will be created and operated under the direction of an LMAC, or it can be established as part of a larger consortium of services organized under the local Employment Center or other community/non-governmental group.

Regardless of how the WARC is organized, it provides a friendly and supportive environment for the dislocated workers. In addition to providing workers with the information and services they need, it also serves as a bridge to other community services and helps workers transition to training or a new job. The WARC also serves as a supportive place where workers can visit with other workers or just get a cup of coffee and a friendly smile.

Location. The WARC should be located in a place that workers can get to easily and conveniently, preferably on-site at the enterprise or nearby. Ideally, it should have a resource room large enough to hold support groups or job club meetings as well as a place where people can talk privately.

Equipment and Resources. The WARC needs office equipment for its staff and a variety of resource materials to help workers find new jobs and services, including a job board and/or an employment hotline that lists job openings, information about resume preparation, sample job applications, and similar self-help materials. Some worker assistance programs also use the job board to list a skills bartering exchange, places where people can volunteer, and post pictures of people who have started training or new jobs.

The box titled *Worker Assistance Resource Center requirements* lists the type of equipment and resources that a WARC should have. The size of the facility and the amount of equipment needed depends on the nature of the enterprise, the number of workers being displaced, the available resources, and the services to be provided. The staff should continually seek new materials and provide opportunities for workers to identify additional resources that would be beneficial.

Worker Assistance Resource Center requirements

Equipment

Large tables and chairs
Desks
Telephones
Voice mail or an answering machine
Computers and printers
Photocopy machine
VCR
Bookshelves
Easel or chalk board

Bulletin boards
File cabinets
Office supplies
Coffee pot

When Possible
E-mail
Fax
Videotape equipment for interview practice.

Materials

Job search
File folders with pockets for each worker
Bulletin board or notebook of job listings
Bulletin board or notebook of job leads
Listings of major employers in the area
City newspapers
Books on resume writing, job search, etc.
Phone books for region
Job search videos
Where appropriate: notebook on benefits, layoff schedule, recall status, seniority lists, etc.

Skill enhancement
University catalogs
Info on brush-up and courses
Books about using a computer
Magazines
Computer tutorials
Skill assessment materials

Training and education resources

Community college catalogs
Brochures on approved training programs
Vocational training center course listings
Community medical services
Family counseling services

Community resources

Child care
NGO's
Housing referrals
Financial planning services

Transition Services and the WARC

Workers from a restructuring enterprise typically need and benefit from some or all of the following pre- and post-layoff services:

- Outreach
- Assessment and planning
- Job development
- Job search
- Job clubs or networking
- Vocational testing and counseling
- Referral to training
- Social support networks
- Referral to social, financial, and health services
- Relocation assistance

Most or all of these activities and services take place or are provided at a WARC that is located on-site or at a location convenient for the workers in the enterprise being restructured or closed. Ideally the WARC would remain open until most of the workers obtain reemployment, enter training or no longer need help.

Pre-layoff Services

Many RRWA programs establish WARCS and offer pre-layoff services **before** workers lose their jobs. Pre-layoff services offered in the workplace before the actual layoff occurs are intended to help minimize the workers' difficulties that precede and accompany a layoff. Such services help them make a smoother transition to post-layoff services, new employment or further training.

Peer counseling and support

Peer counseling and support can be a very important part of the adjustment services provided to dislocated workers by a WARC. Often peer support programs are created by the LMAC that has been established to oversee an enterprise's layoff process. Peer counseling can help workers make better use of the services available to them.

A peer support specialist or WARC staff members provide peer counseling to workers on every shift for three to six months prior to and following a layoff. A good ratio is one peer counselor or peer support specialist for every fifty workers. Peer support specialists receive training that contains program information, develops peer support skills, and helps build a fully functioning peer support team. During their training, peer support specialists often have a chance to suggest ways to better serve their co-workers and build relationships with the local service providers typically involved in their training. As part of the RRWA Adjustment Component, a separate set of training material is available that can be used to train these people to work in a shutdown or mass layoff situation.

Peer support team members are drawn from the workforce and trained for their role. They remain on their jobs, but are available to help co-workers during the pre-layoff period. One of their most important roles is to help their co-workers work through their anger and despair prior to their termination and thereby maintain a productive working environment.

Information sharing

To prevent the spread of damaging rumors, the peer support team provides workers with accurate and up-to-date information about the layoff. Accurate and timely information about the shutdown and the services that will be available to them is critical to the workers' successful transition. The WARC and peer support specialists can arrange for and hold meetings to inform workers about the reemployment assistance services.

Delivery of other services

Six months or more advance notice of a layoff or closure is needed to be able to organize and provide timely and effective assistance programs to the workers and their families. While some employers fear that workers will leave early or that productivity and quality will suffer if a LMAC is set up and a WARC is established before the closure or layoff, experience suggests that this is seldom the case. Because the workers appreciate their employer's concern and effort on their behalf, product quality and productivity seldom fall and have even risen to new heights.

Post-layoff Services

In a post-layoff setting, the WARC staff and peer support specialists help the workers as they go through the stages of unemployment. After a major layoff or plant closure, post-layoff services typically emphasize job search, job development, and social support for workers in training. This may involve more WARC staff and fewer peer support specialists than in a pre-layoff situation. Some of the peer support specialists may work at a local agency or program office instead of at the old work site. WARC staff and peer support specialists work with families and community agencies to carry out the following ten activities:

Outreach

Outreach activity is significantly enhanced by establishing a WARC and a peer support program. The goal is to contact all the workers who are eligible for the RRWA program, give them information about the available services, and help them use the services of the WARC. With good outreach activities a WARC can reach the workers who need the most help.

Reaching hard-to-find people. While some workers will go to the WARC on their own, others may need a lot of encouragement and support. Workers who do not come on their own may suffer from low self-esteem, family problems, or a lack of basic skills. The greatest outreach challenge is to get the information and services to these workers so they do not "fall through the cracks. "

The best way to find the workers most in need is word of mouth from co-workers. WARC staff and peer support specialists should view every worker they contact as a potential source for locating other workers not yet reached. Co-workers often keep in touch with friends and relatives or bump into co-workers at church, in the market, in the bar or on the soccer field and should be given printed material to hand out. Workers who are comfortable with the RRWA program services and feel they are getting the help they need, are the best public relations people for the WARC.

Keep track of worker outreach
To keep their outreach efforts on track, WARCs and peer support specialists need to design their own written outreach plan, including a time line. Different situations require different strategies. Rural areas require different approaches than urban areas. A closure that affects a whole community is very different from a downsizing in a Large metropolitan area.

WARC staff **and peer support specialists should keep some records for themselves,** such as an Outreach Log to record the names of people they have contacted and workers who need follow-up or more encouragement, notes about materials sent or handed out, personal contacts, phone calls made, follow-up notes sent, etc.

Hotline. Direct telephone access is a good way to inform workers about WARC services and give them job information. A WARC hotline allows workers to make initial contact with the program via the telephone and provides peer support specialists with an opportunity to encourage them to come in and use the services. If the hotline is staffed only part of the day, its hours need to be widely publicized. If the WARC has a voice mail system, it can be used to publicize services, announce job opportunities, or provide up-to-date information about the proposed closure or layoff. Information for the hotline can be obtained from the company, the union, and local agencies serving the dislocated workers.

Personal contact. The most effective form of outreach is personal face-to-face contact. Personal contact helps prevent workers from becoming isolated, a major danger for job-less workers. Much personal contact occurs outside work and the WARC. Telling people and workers about what the WARC is doing and what the transition program offers can connect them to the RRWA program and help workers get answers to their questions. Every casual contact WARC staff and peer support specialists have with workers eligible for the program (or with their friends or families) is an important outreach activity. Workers spread the word everywhere they go.

Telephone calls. Telephone calls are often a primary form of personal contact with workers not fully using the WARC's services. WARC staff should set up a calling system for peer support specialists or others to talk with those workers. Regular telephone calls to say hello, ask how they are doing, and if they need anything usually bring reluctant workers to the WARC. Some unemployed workers served by the WARC may welcome an opportunity to call fellow workers for a few hours each week. Most workers welcome phone calls from fellow workers who know what they are going through.

Social activities. Volunteer help is often available to set up social activities at the WARC that create a greater sense of community and make the WARC a welcoming place. Group projects connect both the workers and their families, holding an open house to introduce the WARC, monthly dinners whereby members bring in food to share, markets that workers can bring in items to barter or exchange, and family sporting games have worked well for some WARCs.

A skills exchange is another way to give workers an opportunity to help each other and save money. Workers can exchange a wide range of skills, including car repairs, home repairs, childcare, and cooking. Many workers who are not ready to enroll in a program will visit the WARC if they have other reasons to come, such as talking with friends in a resource room.

Meetings. A good way for WARC staff to publicize information about the WARC is to make presentations to local organizations. Have a business card to give out and, whenever possible, circulate a sign-up sheet so people can volunteer to help. Even if a staff member or peer support specialist is not making a presentation, attending community meetings is a good way to make contacts and distribute information about the program that people can give to their friends, neighbors, and relatives who are being laid off.

Mail. WARC staff and peer support specialists should send mail, including informational letters or booklets, meeting announcements, newsletters, or information for the family, to the workers' home addresses even if the workers are still employed. Mail increases the likelihood that the workers will share the information with their families. Families can be a major source of "recruitment. " But peer support specialists and WARC staff should not assume that the workers read what is mailed to them. Some workers will not or cannot read. The workers should be asked if they have seen the information that was mailed to them or posted on a bulletin board. If the workers say, "Yes," the WARC staff can ask them if they have any questions or would like more information. If the workers say, "No," it is an opportunity to develop personal contact and review the information with them.

Community outreach. Public service announcements and feature stories on radio and television and in local newspapers can help WARCs provide outreach and support. Some programs have TV to give workers an opportunity to talk about their skills and the kind of work they are looking for. Peer support specialists should take brochures, posters, and flyers to the places where workers gather, such as the unemployment office, bars, sporting events, churches, union halls, and libraries, and tell the people who work there about the WARC so they can tell others about its services.

One RRWA transition program invited local businesses to sign up with their WARC. The stores that signed up gave dislocated workers enrolled in the program ten percent discounts.

Assessment and Individual Planning

Assessment means looking at the workers' strengths and weaknesses, relating them to their retraining and reemployment options and developing a plan to help the workers get from where they are to where they want to be. Barriers some workers face include a fear of taking tests and childcare needs. Some of the strengths and resources that help workers reach their goals include strong family support or a savings account that increases their training options.

The assessment process. First, the WARC staff and peer support specialists should go through the assessment process so they have first-hand knowledge of what it involves (including any tests) and how it is used. The word assessment triggers fears and self-doubt in many workers. They fear that assessment means exposing their deficiencies to ridicule. They need to know that the assessment process does not involve any judgments or punishments, that it respects their dignity and pride and confidentiality is maintained. Workers need to understand that an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses is necessary to help them improve the areas they need to improve.

Individual planning sessions/interviews. Although some RRWA programs require formal vocational assessments, including testing, the WARC may first want to conduct alternative informal individual planning sessions to start the assessment process. These one-on-one individual planning sessions/interviews have three main purposes:

1. **Communicating basic information about the transition program.** Individual planning sessions give the WARC staff and peer support specialists a chance to follow up on any group orientation and make sure that the workers know how to use the services available to them.
2. **Gathering background information as a basis for individual planning and goal-setting.** Background information includes the workers' education, work experience, skills and special needs.
3. **Establishing a relationship with the workers.** These one-on-one contacts help the WARC peer support staff and workers to get to know each other better and build trust. These contacts also influence how the workers feel about the WARC and its services.

The information gathered in these individual planning sessions/interviews helps the workers plan the education, training, or other services they need to make their transition successful (as discussed in the section on "Individual Action Plans"). Workers who have a clear idea of what they need and want can be referred immediately to the appropriate services. Some workers may need a more complete assessment. Serious workers' problems must be addressed to help them use the program effectively.

When conducting the informal individual planning sessions/interviews, the WARC staff and/or peer support specialists need to use their social support skills to help the workers realize how much experience and skill they already have and to repair damage to their self worth. Workers can be asked what problems they anticipate after layoff and what help, if any, they think they might need rather than being grilled about their special needs.

The RRWA program may have its own form to gather information for individual development plan or one may be supplied by a local employment and training agency. The end of Part VI provides a sample of a “Goals and Plans Worksheet.” This worksheet can be completed jointly by a WARC staff member or peer support specialist and worker during the individual planning sessions/interviews, or the workers can fill them in on their own as a basis for discussion at their next meeting.

Individual action plans. During their first individual planning session/interview with a peer support specialist or WARC staff member, workers are helped to develop realistic and achievable action plans (See “Goals and Steps to Meet Them” in the back of Part VI) to guide them through their transition. Preparing an action plan takes time as the workers identify their short-range and long-range goals, specific steps to accomplish those goals and a timeline to follow. If workers lack basic skills, their first step is to take brush-up language and/or math classes. Detailed, realistic action plans are necessary for the workers to accomplish them.

WARC staff and peer support specialists also need to help workers develop a personal strategy to stay healthy and get the necessary support to reduce their and their families’ stress as they go through the transition. This may mean scheduling some recreation time, volunteer work, or doing projects around their homes that make them feel productive.

Budgeting

The best time for workers to develop a budget/spending plan is before they are laid off. During a pre-layoff program, the WARC staff and peer support specialists can encourage co-workers to think about cutting their household expenses by ten to thirty percent while they are still working. The money they save can help cushion them and their families while taking long-term training or during unemployment.

As budgeting may be a new activity for some workers and their families, a WARC counselor or peer support specialist can provide budgeting/spending plan materials to workers and help them develop realistic budgets. This is essential for workers to make realistic decisions about training, relocation, or taking a new job at reduced pay. A budget should be prepared with the help of the WARC staff that reviews current and future financial needs or demands, other sources of income, and plans for unexpected expenses. Involving the whole family in developing a family budget helps kids understand family financial constraints and how they can contribute. Often sons and daughters come up with the best ideas for saving money or earning extra income.

Steps in Budgeting

1. **List all your monthly income.**
   As income can vary from month to month, write down all your sources of income and the amount for at least three months. (See our sample "Budget Worksheet")

2. **List all your monthly expenses.**
   As expenses can vary from month to month, write down all your expenses, including rent or mortgage, car, appliance, credit card, loan, and other payments for at least three months. Check your checkbook, debit card, credit card and other payment statements for expenses and amounts.

3. **Evaluate the importance of each expense item to your family.**
   As a family, look at all the expenses you've written down and decide which ones are most important to you. Write an H for high priority, M for medium, and L for low priority after each expense.

4. **Prioritize your expenses**
   First, list your High priority items (rent, food, transportation, loan payments, laundry, etc.) and how much you spend on them each month. Next, list your Medium priority items (cable, cell phone, hair cuts, subscriptions, donations, etc.) and how much you spend on them on each month. These are items that are important to you but could be reduced or skipped some months. Then, list your Low priority items (cigarettes, non-essential clothing, parties, entertainment, gifts, vacations, etc.). These are the items that you can begin to eliminate.

5. **Subtract your total monthly expenses from your total monthly income.**
   Add your total average monthly income and subtract your average total expenses.

6. **If your income exceeds your expenses, set that amount aside.**

7. **If your expenses exceed your income, identify expenses to cut.**
   Ask your family to help you find ways to cut costs.

If the RRWA program runs a job club (discussed later in this section), budgeting is a good subject for a meeting. The WARC staff or peer support specialists facilitating the job club can introduce budgeting steps, hand out budgeting materials for workers to take home and have them share their ideas and experiences the following week.

Job Search and Job Development

Job Search

In most cases, a local job training agency or the Employment Center has the primary responsibility for the job search activities of workers being dislocated, but the WARC staff and peer support specialists can do a lot to help the workers succeed.

Feeling prepared gives workers confidence when applying for jobs. Having the WARC provide sample application forms that the workers can fill out at the WARC is a good way to prepare them. Another way is to develop a check list that helps the workers put together all the documents and information they might need to fill out a job application and prepare a resume and go prepared with references, letters of recommendation from their supervisors and pens, pencils, and paper when applying for a job. Perhaps the company personnel office will prepare letters of reference as well. The WARC staff also may be able to help workers obtain their school transcripts if needed.

If the RRWA program has the money individual folders can be prepared to give to workers who come to the WARC for help. These folders can have various job search support forms such as job search checklist or job search logs (see sample at end of Part VI), that the worker can use to organize and maintain an record of their activities. Workers can refer to these lists when filling out application forms. The sample "Your Job Search Log" in Appendix F can also help workers organize and keep track of their job-hunting activities.

In addition to participating in job search workshops or job search classes, WARC staff and peer support specialists have frequent opportunities to support workers with their job search during their individual and group contracts with them and can conduct a job club (discussed later in this chapter) to keep workers on track.

Job development

Job development involves talking with employers and finding out where the jobs are. Since timing is critical in getting a job, the goal is to set up a system that helps the WARC get job information to both job-seekers and employers as quickly as possible. This is very important because many jobs are in the "hidden job market," and are not known to the Job Service. Experience demonstrates that leaving job development solely to the Job Service is not in the best interests of transitioning workers.

The following paragraphs provide a few ideas from other RRWA programs. At the simplest level, setting up a job board can be very helpful to workers. WARC staff should make sure that job openings are posted promptly and legibly on the board and removed when they are no longer open. WARCs can also use a job board to post training opportunities and examinations for civil service and other positions.

If the WARC has job development responsibilities, its staff should set up a file of the workers' skills. Then, when staff learns that an employer is hiring, they can easily reach the workers with the required skills. The WARC staff and peer support specialists should also keep a list of where workers have gotten jobs and periodically check back with those employers to learn when they plan to do more hiring. This is also a good way to tell employers about the WARC and its services and help them recognize applicants from their RRWA program. WARC staff and peer support specialists can also encourage companies laying off workers to place ads that tell other employers about their excellent workers. The restructuring company can invite prospective employers to come to the plant to see the workers and the workplace before it closes.

In some cases, LMACs have a job development subcommittee that conducts job development. In other cases, this activity is part of the WARC function. Some centers have a full-time job developer who generates job openings for the dislocated workers. In a few cases, restructuring employers assign some of their managers to the WARC as job developers. Even if the WARC is not primarily responsible for job development, a WARC job developer and peer support specialist can tap into the hidden job market and provide services that improve job development. If someone else has the primary responsibility, WARC staff or peer specialists can meet with them and ask how they can help.

Job clubs

"Job club" is the name given to a group of workers who meet together regularly as part of their job search efforts. An Employment Center or a WARC job developer and a peer support specialist sometimes conduct job clubs jointly. The job developer usually provides the information the workers need, and the peer support specialist provides support to workers seeking new jobs. Workers need information, encouragement and respect to get jobs. Job clubs can take a variety of forms. In some places they are simply weekly meetings where workers get job leads and job referrals, but they can be much more than that. They are ideal places to teach workers job search skills and have them practice them.

A lot of social support can take place at job club meetings. Workers can talk about their job-hunting frustrations, their fears, the effects of unemployment on them and their families, and receive support from workers in the same situation. Meeting together can break down damaging isolation and help the workers help each other-one of the best ways to keep workers strong and maintain their self-respect and self-confidence. The role of the WARC job club facilitator or peer support specialist is to make that happen.

What happens in a job club?

A typical job club provides a variety of activities. Each group should determine what activities it needs. Other activities can be added to the list.

- Getting job leads from job developers
- Sharing information about job openings with each other
- Developing job-search strategies
- Preparing resumes
- Creating job-hunting teams for moral support and shared transportation
- Taking field trips to workplaces that may be hiring
- Helping each other complete job applications
- Gaining skill and confidence by role-playing job interviews
- Practicing phone skills and phone follow-up
- Listening to guests talk about different kinds of jobs
- Brushing up on skills to prepare for employment exams
- Reducing test anxiety by practicing test taking
- Sharing experiences, good and bad
- Talking about how they feel trying to crash the job market
- Talking about the effects of unemployment on them and their families
- Getting and sharing information about housing, legal aid, medical assistance, and other community resources
- Planning social events

Dealing with workers' feelings. A job club can be a safe place for workers to express their anger, self-blame, and depression that often result from unemployment. Feeling free to talk, to be understood and cared about helps workers deal with their turmoil and develop positive strategies for moving ahead. This is especially true when they feel the job club is a caring place that will help them. The help may come from another group member who volunteers a service, a WARC staff member who helps them find needed resources or a peer support specialist who provides support and encouragement. Job clubs can recreate much of the team strength that workers felt when they were working together.

During job club sessions workers can express their frustrations, including how angry they feel about the way they are treated when applying for jobs, and learn that they are not alone. When workers experience difficult job searches, other workers in the same situation are their best source of understanding, advice, and support.

Job search activities. At each job club session workers report on their job search activities during the previous week, including not looking for a job if they did not. As the job club members talk about their experiences, the facilitator asks questions that help them learn from their experiences. For example, if workers were frustrated by interview questions they were not prepared for, the facilitator writes the questions on a flip chart and keeps a list of "worst questions" to use when they practice interview skills. One member of the group is the interviewee, and another member is the interviewer. If the WARC has a video camera, the mock interview activity is videotaped. The club members then offer tips and suggestions about how to answer difficult interview questions.

If the RRWA program has a job developer, he/she should attend a portion of each job club session to give job leads. Based on the job leads and information from the workers seeking jobs, the facilitator makes a list of where members have had job interviews or applications accepted, and a list of places where applications are not being accepted.

Social support activities. Attending a job club helps workers stay active and connected instead of staying home and brooding. While job clubs have serious purposes, they are also a place where workers can relax and have some fun. No job club is complete without a coffee pot and time for workers to socialize. Through the job club, workers can organize carry in dinners for workers and families, picnics, swap meets or barter opportunities, and sports events.

Plant closures and layoffs make workers feel angry and unproductive. The WARC job club can organize a skills exchange so workers can trade car and home repairs, childcare, and other needed services. Feeling productive improves their frame of mind which is very important to workers' job search and quality of life.

Setting up a job club. There are two basic types of job clubs. The first type has an open membership, meets on a regular basis with set hours, and operates something like a drop-in center. The second has a closed membership, meets weekly or twice weekly and decides as a group when to admit new members.

To set up a job club, the WARC needs a room that can be used on a regular basis (separate from the main WARC space); someone to lead the meetings; and workers who want to participate.

The job club facilitators and participants make a job club successful. The facilitators can use peer counseling skills and group skills, active listening, helpful questions, withholding judgment, responding with respect, and putting people at ease to create a comfortable, safe environment that encourages workers to open up about their concerns and feelings. Getting them to talk about what is happening in their lives is a key step in developing action plans that work. Talking together and clarifying what workers need to do strengthens them. A job club is one of the best places to make that happen.

The more comfortable and informal the setting, the better. If the WARC lacks enough room to house a job club and the restructuring enterprise lacks adequate space near the WARC, the union hall may be a good site because it is familiar to the workers and belongs to them. The materials and equipment needed for a job club resource room are similar to those listed on the "Worker Assistance Resource Center requirements" earlier in this part.

Vocational testing and counseling

In some cases, the National Employment Service or Employment Center staff, another public agency, or an NGO may have received sufficient counseling techniques and testing training to create an effective vocational assessment and counseling program as part of an overall employment and training system. Where this is the case, the LMAC and/or WARC should work with the Employment Center to arrange to have a formal vocational testing and counseling program made available to the workers. If possible, the testing and counseling services should be located at the WARC so workers can easily obtain professional help to help them select new careers and needed training. If it is not possible to arrange for on-site delivery of these services, the WARC should help workers get to where they are available.

When a high quality vocational testing and counseling program is available, workers can take the appropriate tests and vocational counseling prior to being referred to training or other educational programs. Either the Employment Center staff or the WARC staff can then assist them to find suitable training programs to meet their needs and, if money is available at the national or local level, help them access resources to pay for these programs.

Referral to training

Whether or not WARC staff and peer support specialists are directly responsible for referring workers to training, they play a key role in helping them overcome any resistance to training. In some RRWA programs, employment and training agencies (e.g. the Employment Center) perform this function. If so, it is important that the vocational testing and counseling and the referral and registration processes for education and training programs be made available at the WARC when possible. The WARC staff and peer support specialists should help the workers take advantage of these training programs.

Workers dislocated after many years of work in an enterprise may be reluctant to enroll in raining. Social support is important in helping them enter training and keeping them there. Organizing a study club for workers in training is one way the WARC staff and peer support specialists can help the workers support each other so they do not drop out.

Prior to a layoff or job restructuring, the WARC staff and peer support specialists are often in a good position to identify workers' educational needs. This is especially true if they conduct the assessment and planning discussed in number 2 above. If WARC staff or peer support specialists become aware that the workers have limited math or reading skills, the WARC may be able to initiate brush-up classes to help them qualify for new jobs or retraining. WARC staff should use their knowledge of local education and training resources to help the workers identify programs that interest them and then encourage and assist them to apply. In some cases, they may be able to arrange for educational classes and vocational courses to be provided for groups of workers at the WARC.

The Social Support Network

The role of the WARC staff and peer support specialists is to help the workers get needed services both in and out of the RRWA program, but they are not expected to be mental health counselors or social workers. Instead, WARC staff and peer support specialists should refer workers who need emergency housing, legal advice, medical care, or help with financial, personal, and family problems, etc. to the appropriate community agencies or programs.

The art of making referrals. How workers are referred to agencies and how they are treated by those agencies are critical factors. WARC staff and peer support specialists need to preserve the worker's dignity when making referrals. When workers are reluctant to call or contact the agencies to whom they are referred, the WARC staff must do more than give them an address and a phone number. The workers may need to be told that there is nothing wrong with asking for help because they have contributed to the community for many years and are entitled to use the services.

Making referrals is a four-part process:

1. Identifying and investigating community resources.
2. Giving workers accurate information about available resources.
3. Listening to workers' fears and feelings about needing help
4. Checking with the workers and the agencies to make sure that the workers get the help they need.

Any time workers go to a public agency to get help they may be turned off by the bureaucratic approach and attitude of the staff, or "fall through the cracks." One way to increase the likelihood that the workers get good service is to have the WARC staff familiarize themselves with the agencies and their services and procedures and to tell the agencies something about the dislocated workers' needs.

The following box, “Service Agency Information Checklist,” suggests what WARC staff need to know about every community resource. The next box, “Developing a Referral Network,” suggests steps to follow in that process.

Service agency information checklist	
Agency name	Is the agency familiar with your program?
Address and phone number	Have you visited this agency?
Agency head	What can a worker expect when visiting this agency?
Contact person	Have you observed how the agency treats people?
Services available	Do you feel competent referring workers?
Eligibility requirements	
Application process	
Agency materials on hand	
Applications on hand	

Developing a referral network	
Identify outside agencies	Investigate the services available through your community agencies.
Contact agencies	Visit community agencies to introduce yourselves, learn all you can about their services, pick up copies of agency materials, including forms that must be filled out, and familiarize yourself with the forms.
Identify a contact person	Identify an agency contact person you can call if you have questions and, if possible, a staff member you can refer workers to personally. This will eliminate some of the workers’ anxieties. Good personal connections may eliminate some “red tape,” help referred workers to get good service and smooth problems that arise.
Know agency requirements	Know who is eligible for agency services and who is not. It is very demoralizing for workers to be turned away from an agency. Find out what kinds of records and papers workers need to take with them.
Be available to help with problems	Workers may find agency bureaucracies with very difficult to deal with if they have not had to do that before. Help the referred workers with agency problems. Show them a copy of the agency’s application form and, if necessary, help them fill it out.
Be a resource to the agency	Networking means helping the agencies that help your referrals. Your assistance makes the agency more responsive. Arrange for their representatives to speak at union meetings or help them recruit volunteers for a special project.
Educate agencies about workers in transition	Laid-off and dislocated workers are new to many agencies. To pave the way for the workers you refer, talk with your agency contact people or attend an agency staff meeting to help them

Developing a referral network	
	understand the referred workers' problems.
Advocate for workers' rights	Even with your best preparation and the best intentions of staff members at community agencies, bureaucratic hang-ups can occur. They may require the "clout" of your overall program. Learn how the system works, make phone calls, and demand service for the workers in your program.

If the community lacks agencies that can provide essential services to dislocated workers and the RRWA program has sufficient resources and a supportive employer, the WARC may be able to hire certain kinds of specialized services to be delivered to the workers. For example, in some instances family financial planners have been engaged to come to the WARC and hold budgeting and financial planning workshops for the workers and their families. In other instances, enterprise managers have arranged to have a staff member provide some skill training needed in the local labor market to the workers during the transition period. For example, several companies have provided personal computing classes to employees or used company equipment to teach them transferable skills such as welding, auto mechanics, upholstering, and painting that are part of their production operations.

Relocation activities

One of the most difficult decisions workers and their families may have to make is whether or not to relocate. Relocation can be a very complicated decision that many personnel officers or service providers do not readily understand. While moving to another city where there is work may make economic sense, it may be a bad decision for some workers and their families where housing shortages and other relocation issues pose significant problems. WARC staff need to be sensitive to the reasons families may not want to move, such as elderly parents, grandchildren, kids in school, or a spouse's job.

Support needs. The whole family, not just the laid-off worker, should make the relocation decision. WARC staff and peer support specialists should encourage workers to talk with their families to reach a decision together. When possible, families should visit a new area to see what it is like and talk with the school personnel there. Kids may have an easier time moving if they have visited the place.

Workers struggling with a relocation decision need a lot of information, patience, and understanding from the WARC staff and peer support specialists. The WARC staff and peer support specialists should not try to tell the workers and their families what to do, but they can help them evaluate their options and the benefits and risks involved in each one. If workers decide not to relocate, the WARC and its resources continue to help them.

Sharing information. The WARC can help workers get information about potential relocation areas from local business organizations, newspapers, area employers, local unions, and schools.

Workers thinking about relocation need information about housing costs, schools and churches. They also need some contacts in the area when they visit or relocate. If co-workers have friends or relatives in the area, they are a valuable source of information as well as friendly faces.

If workers from the same layoff are considering relocating to the same city, WARCs or peer support specialists can set up a carry in dinner for them and their families so they can meet each other and maybe initiate shared rides, shared housing, and shared child care. Children feel better if they know someone else who is moving there. If families stay behind while the workers take new jobs, WARC or peer support specialists can help them stay in touch with each other and build a support system.

It is a good idea for the WARC to set up a relocation board to post information about selling houses, moving tips, buying a house or renting an apartment, etc. The board can also display letters from workers who have moved and are settling in, from local unions and employers in areas where workers and their families might want to relocate.

Peer Support Programs

What they are and how to start one

[*The material in this chapter has been adapted from Chapter 1 in "Serving Workers in Transition: A guide for Peer Support" by Lee Schore and Jerry Atkin, and Sections One, Two and Three of the "Oregon Peer Support Train the Trainer Manual" by the same author]*

This section describes a unique social support system, called a "peer support program," that can be organized by the Labor-Management Adjustment Committee (LMAC) and Worker Assistance Resource Center (WARC) to help workers obtain the information and services they need to make a successful transition to new employment.

The IA specialist's role in organizing peer support programs

One of the responsibilities of the IA Specialist is to facilitate the organization of an LMAC, and the assist in training in the committee members for their work. In the course of their training, the LMAC members should receive information about the functions of a WARC and role of peer support programs in helping dislocated workers transitions to new jobs. If the LMAC decides to organize a peer support programs the IA Specialist should arrange for the USDOL/WSI RRWA Project to provide the technical assistance needed to establish a program, including selecting and training support specialists.

Purpose of the peer support program

The goal of the peer support program is to help workers get the information and services they need to make a successful transition to new employment. Peer support specialists are valuable sources of program information plus friendly faces and listening ears for the workers going through the difficulties and uncertainty following job loss. They are able to : (1) validate what the workers are feeling; (2) break down their isolations; (3) help them institute a planning process; and (4) help them overcome their resistance to retraining and reemployment opportunities.

While peer support specialist are not professional service providers, therapist, or social workers, they can make a big difference in the success of the programs to help workers cope with job loss or obsolete skills. Their worker support role makes the professional staff more effective. They also play a major role in linking workers with the WARC staff, service providers and worker organizations and helping to demystify and maximize the use of the worker services through outreach, recruitment, and program follow-up.

Peer support specialist are “experts” on : (1) specific workplace conditions; (2) effectively identifying workers needs; and (3) finding ways to meet those needs. Their knowledge for the workplace and connection with the workers help them play a vital role in planning and developing effective service delivery systems and providing valuable on-going feedback from program design through implementation.

Peer support may include:

- outreach
- recruitment
- information and referral
- advocacy
- programs liaison and monitoring
- social support
- early intervention and prevention

Typical peer support program activities

Program Activities	Peer support activities
❑ Run orientation sessions ❑ Do program outreach-publicize the services offered ❑ Provide clear and accurate program information ❑ Help workers plan training or reemployment goals ❑ Support workers with their problem-solving ❑ Facilitate workshops and groups ❑ Monitor programs effectiveness ❑ Make referrals to community agencies to develop services ❑ Act as a rumor control center ❑ Help set up a WARC ❑ Run a WARC ❑ Provide job search assistance ❑ Do job development with employers ❑ Help develop self-help groups	❑ Provide social support to co-workers ❑ Facilitate outreach programs ❑ Disseminate clear and accurate information ❑ Stamp out rumors ❑ Facilitate program readiness ❑ Help with groups and workshops ❑ Serve as a referral source to community agencies ❑ Help co-workers understand the impacts of dislocation ❑ Help co-workers deal with denial and anger ❑ Affirm the basic worth and dignity of co-workers ❑ Validate co-workers feelings ❑ Aid co-workers with problem-solving ❑ Help co-workers make the transition ❑ Prepare co-workers for job loss and it's effects ❑ Encourage co-workers to begin making plans

Every peer support program is different

While the peer support principles are the same in every program. Their activities can very widely. No two worksites have the same peer support needs. A small plant closure may need only one peer support specialist, while the shutdown of a large enterprise may require 10 or 20 peer support specialists. A employment center may need several to function as case managers to help workers take advantage of all the programs available to help them.

Peer support specialist may be located in a union hall office, on site in the workplace, or with the public Employment Service. They may assist at a facility laying off workers over a period of months or even years, or with a workplace closure that will be completed in a few days or weeks. They also may assist with job restructuring programs instead of layoffs and job loss.

In successful disclosure workers programs Industrial Adjustment (IA) Specialist work with the Labor-Management Adjustment Committee (LMAC) members and the Workers Assistance

Resource Center (WARC) staff to customize peer support to their workers' specific needs and strengths and develop links with all available workers services.

Role of the peer support specialist

The peer support specialist's chief role is "being there" for workers in transition. The role is founded on the "social support model" that was developed from working with employed and unemployed workers in both dislocated worker programs and workplace education programs in the United States. The Model looks at both the emotional and psychological issues that affects workers' lives. It assumes that workers in transition are healthy, competent human beings who are facing stressful job changes that are having major impact on their lives.

A social support model has five basic elements:

1. **Letting people know they are not alone**
   The basic philosophy of social support is that people face situations more effectively when they feel they are not dealing with things alone or when they are getting support. The model uses existing social support networks (family, friends, the union, social groups) and creates new ones (within the reemployment or training programs).

2. **Reinforcing dignity and respect**
   Social support is based on accepting people, and problems they faced, without judging them. The goal is to treat people with the dignity and respect they deserve. Too often people are not treated with the dignity and respect on the job or in the classroom, and that contributes to self-blame and low self-esteem. Social support makes people feel valued and valuable.

3. **Recognizing what people are going though**
   People need acceptance and respect for what they are going though and the way they are feeling. If feelings such as anger about a layoff are not addressed, they can become a barrier to retraining and reemployment.

4. **Letting people know their feelings are normal**
   Workers often feel they are the only ones having a hard time getting through this transition and that there is something "wrong" with them. When they understand that others are having very similar experiences, they can face their problems without blaming themselves.

5. **Helping people develop action strategies**
   The ultimate role of the support model is to help people, individually and in groups, gain the information and skill necessary to develop plans and addresses obstacles that prevent them from reaching their goals. The model helps people take control of their lives rather than simply react to the situation they are in.

The social support model seeks to help workers in transition receive the acceptance, understanding support, information and services they need to deal with the problems they face and figure out ways to make a successful transition to new employment. In this model, peer support specialists use their expertise and knowledge as part of the service delivery team. Workers also can get social support from people who are important to them such as their family, friends, their co-workers and union, fellow church members and community organizations.

While everyone tends to benefit from this user-friendly approach, the social support model is particularly important in helping workers who often "fall through the cracks" of otherwise excellent programs. These workers may have personal difficulties, including language and literacy barriers and inexperience with instructions and bureaucracies , that cause them to drop out of programs after enrolling. The social support model is geared to finding these workers and giving them additional support they require to make successful transitions.

Basic Responsibilities

Peer support specialist's responsibilities can be summed up in four words: connections, trust, advocacy, and feedback.

Connections: One of the peer support specialist's key functions is to connect workers with the services they need. Peer support specialists help workers develop appropriate goals and plans, find the services they need, and provide support that helps workers to use those services effectively. Even the best services are ineffective if workers do not use them. This often happens when dislocated workers have had little experience with public agencies or social service organizations and are reluctant to use their services. Peer support specialist can help to demystify these services to the workers

Trust: A second key function of the peer support is to build worker trust in the dislocated worker program. Such trust creates a friendly and cooperative atmosphere with every service provider thus increasing the effectiveness of the program. Peer support specialists create trust by showing workers that they care and understand what they are going through. That trust legitimizes the program in the workers eyes and increases the likelihood that they will fully use the services. In an ideal situation, the workers in the program already know and trust the peer support specialist.

Advocacy: The peer support specialists' third key function is to be a workers' advocate to serve as a knowledgeable friend they can count on when facing difficulties and to help them do all the things they need to make their transition successful.

Feedback: The peer support specialist fourth key function is to provide feedback to the program operator about what is working and what needs to be changed. Because peer support specialists are in contact with all the people in the program, they know the problems. WARC managers or LMAC's use the feedback to make adjustments to keep the services running smoothly.

Limits of the peer support role

The peer support specialist role is a limited one. They are paraprofessional support staff, not professionally credentialed service providers, therapist, or social workers. They are not to provide therapy on personal issues like marital or financial problems. While peer support specialists make services more accessible for the workers who need them and aid the professional staff, they are not personally responsible from the success of the workers or the dislocated workers program.

Setting up a peer support program

While many peer support programs are post-layoff programs, initiating a pre-layoff peer support program one to six months before a layoff is most effective in preparing the affected workers to use the services. A good pre-layoff program gets understandable information to every worker, helps them to move through their denial and anger while they still have a work family to support them and helps the workers begin developing educational plans. These plans can maximize the training.

Hiring peer support staff

IA Specialists usually deal with small lay-offs with little advance notice. As a result, the most common use of peer support is for post-layoff outreach, advocacy, and support. The best model for a post layoff program is to hire an appropriate number of peer support specialists for a specific amount of time. The recommended amount of time is nine months to a year because the most difficult problems often show up after unemployment benefits are exhausted. This time frame is also appropriate for workers completing short-term retraining who need job-search assistance.

Layoffs are not always a one-time event. In some cases, large layoffs are phased in over one-to two-year periods. In other cases, small layoffs may be the beginning of a series of layoffs that cumulatively affected a large number of workers. This makes it more difficult to predict how many peer support specialist will be needed. A good rule of thumb is to train more peer support specialists than are needed so they can be replaced. During the post-layoff situations, some of the peer support specialist may find permanent jobs or a perfect training situation may open up for them. A layoff of 50 workers may only need one peer support specialist, but having two is always better. In a large layoff, 1000 or more workers, ten or more peer support specialists are needed for the first three months. Later the number of peer support specialists can probably be reduced to four or five.

Peer support specialist salaries

How peer support specialist are hired and how they are paid depends on the nature of the program. During pre-layoff programs, peer support specialist are generally not paid but are given "paid work time" by the employer, much like union stewards in the United States.   This means that they are still on the job, and their employer covers their time. An alternative is for the union or service provider to cover a specific amount of paid time (for example: one hour a day, four hours a week) when the peer support specialist is off the clock.

During post-layoff programs, peer support specialist are usually hired and paid by the WARC or the RRWA project. The salary issue is negotiated with the employer, the LMAC or the union when the peer support program is established. In union programs in the United States it is understood that peer support specialist are paid the same hourly wage that they earned on their job in the workplace. In CEE counties the peer support specialists pay was adjusted to local conditions and available resources.

From workers points of view, some may want to work as peer support specialists and be the best people for the job, but may not be able to because they need to earn more money. From the programs point of view, it may pay to hire the most qualified peer support specialists because they will make the greatest contribution to the program.

Pay becomes a problem for the service providers if the peer support specialists hourly wages are higher than the providers' staff salary scales. If so, the providers need to discuss the pay issue with their staffs ahead of time so they understand these conditions. This is essential to building a team relationship between the staff and the peer support specialist. When peer support specialists complete their initial contract time, some agencies may invite them to become staff members. If so, the peer support specialists may choose a new career path at the staff salary level.

Full-time peer support specialists are most effective and the ideal situation. Part-time peer support specialists need very flexible schedules to make sure they are available when the workers are in need of services. Peer support specialist work not only during office hours, but are often called at home and meet with workers after training classes or temporary jobs.

Using peer support specialist effectively

Peer support specialists are useful in contacting laid-off workers and setting up appointments, but their real value lies in helping workers who have a hard time using program services effectively. Helping these workers may take more time than professional staff has available. Through personal contact, advocacy, and support, peer support specialists help to make sure that these workers do not "fall through the cracks" This leaves the WARC and the service provider professional staff free to work with the workers who are ready to move into training or search for jobs.

Value of peer support during pre-layoff programs

Pre-layoff programs have several real advances over post-layoff programs. Pre-layoff programs usually begin three to six months prior to closing or layoff and include services that help workers through their denial and resistance so they can begin to plan for the transition before they are actually laid-off. As a result, workers who have been through pre-layoff programs are better able to take advantage of available services. Hard-to-serve workers who may otherwise "fall through the cracks" also benefit from the layoff programs because they are more accessible to peer support specialists and program staff while they are still on-site. Early intervention makes it is possible to prevent serious problems from becoming crises.

In post-layoff programs the peer support specialists have a job and have already moved through some of the changes themselves. In pre-layoff programs the peer support specialist are experiencing the changes along with all the other workers.

When training workers to become peer support specialist for a pre-layoff situation keep the following differences in mind:

- The ratio of peer support to workers is lower (50 to 1)
- More formal training is needed
- It is more complex because the peer support specialists are also dealing with their own anger and denial.
- There are more unknowns in the work environment
- The pre-layoff period is more volatile.

Guidelines for selecting the peer support specialist

There are two sets of criteria for choosing workers to fill peer support specialist role. The first is shared first-hand knowledge of the daily lives of fellow workers and their families. This knowledge helps them win the trust of the workers who use the program services. Successful peer support specialists often have had jobs that put them in touch with many people.

The second set of criteria involves personal qualities. Do they like people? Do they have a healthy respect for the people who are different from them? Do other people naturally trust them? Do others describe them as "easy to talk to" or "someone who cares"? Do they help people find solutions to their problems without telling them what to do and without judging them? Are they good listeners? Do they keep confidences? Do they affirm the abilities and dignity of others?

People meeting these two criteria are good candidates for peer support specialist training. Peer support training gives them additional information and training to increase their natural abilities.

The most important guidelines in choosing effective peer support specialists is to find workers who are natural helpers in their workplace, the ones fellow workers turn to for help. These natural helpers exist in every workplace and in most departments sometimes as leaders, union officers, or staff personnel. Often they show empathy for other people, listen well, and are willing to take an extra step to help. Peer support specialist can draw on their own experience of dealing with difficulties and overcoming them.

Look for workers who:

- care about others
- are respected and trusted
- show empathy and compassion
- listen activity
- accept people with different opinions and values

Do not choose workers who:

- think they are always right
- think they have the right answers for everything
- judge other people, advise or boss them

Peer support specialists need to be true peers

Hourly workers should provide peer support to other hourly workers, salaried personnel should provide peer support to other supervisors. Peer support specialists should not have superior/inferior relationships with workers.

The selection of a peer support specialist should reflect the workplace in age, gender, and culture. If there are multi-cultured language groups in the workplace, bilingual peer support specialists are especially important. All shifts should be covered. In workplaces that cover several locations, the peer support specialists need to take information about services to the various sites.

The peer support selection process

There is no one right way to select a peer support specialist. Each workplace will be different. Some forms of selection include:

> Open the position to volunteers who are reviewed by a selective committee made up of members of the WARC, the LMAC, or service providers. The committee reviews the list, interviews the volunteers, and makes the selection.
>
> Union officers, worker representatives, and management personnel submit the names of workers that they feel have the desired characteristics to a selection committee. The committee reviews the list, interviews the people, and makes the selection.

Either of the above groups can also be used, including the addition of neutral person to make the actual selections. Community service committees that work with people also can be used as a selection committee.

Peer support specialists should not be selected on the basis of owing them something or wanting to give them perks.

Things to look for during interviews
Here are some things for those people who have the responsibility for selecting the peer support specialist to consider during interviews:

- Why is this person interested in becoming involved in this program? Is it a job opportunity or is it a role he/she truly wants to play? What experience has he/she had working with people.

- Is he/she truly interested in helping workers affected by the layoff? Does he/she think he/she knows how a worker should deal with the situation?
- Does he/she realize how difficult it is?

- Does he/she accept people who have different values and attitudes? Avoid people who make strong blaming or judging statements such as, "Some people just don't want to listen." Or, "Everyone can find a good job if they are willing to try"

- Does he/she understand the kinds of demands this position will make on him/her? Is he/she confident that he/she and his/her family can handle them?

- Is he/she dealing with emotions that would make it hard for him/her to offer support to others?

- Is he/she prepared to deal with frustrations? Give examples such as: "You give people information and they use it but keep coming back for more." Will he/she be able to be able to accept such behavior and continue to be available?

- Is he/she open to new ideas and new ways of doing things? Is he/she flexible? And creative in solving problems?

- Does he/she understand the importance of keeping confidences?

The training period for Peer Support Specialists is also a time for final self-selection. Give people an opportunity to decide for themselves whether or not they are prepared to take on the peer support specialist role and responsibility.

Job Search Resources

The following pages represent various job search resources and forms that can be used by the IA Specialist with dislocated workers or as part of a program offered out of the Worker Assistance Resource Center. Though these resources are not a complete set of materials to use during the job search period they can be included as part of a comprehensive set of materials.

The Jobseekers Guide

Introduction
[The material in this chapter has been adapted from the "Job Search Series" and "Tips for finding and keeping the right job", pamphlets published and used by the Utah Department of Workforce Services]

Industrial Adjustment (IA) Specialists, and others who will be working in Transition Centers or Employment Centers set up to assist dislocated workers, need to know the basic concepts and procedures that are used to help dislocated workers find a new job. In some cases the Employment Service may not be equipped to provide job search training workshops for the dislocated workers, or to provide the range of employment services these workers need to find new jobs. Consequently, it is important to provide the IA or rapid response specialist with some basic materials about process and steps used by job seekers to find jobs. This material can be used by specialists to provide training for those persons who may be assigned to work as employment counselors or peer support specialists in the transition center, or to help them understand the skills and techniques needed by those who will be providing these services.

Job Search
Looking for work is a full-time job and is the hardest work a person may ever do! A serious job search requires as much time looking for work as was spent on the Job. A 40 hour per work week while on the job equals a 40 hour per week job search.

Employers' Expectations
Conveying how you can contribute to the employer's business needs when filling out a job application, resume and during an interview is very important. Keep the basic needs of the employer in mind.

- Employers need to make money
- Employers need to save money
- Employers need a problem free work environment
- Employers need people who get along well with others

Clear occupational goals and objectives are required for an effective job search. Knowing the kind of work you are looking for will keep your search in focus. No one is really looking for" anything" Every job seeker has requirements for employment and limitations on their current qualifications. Without clear job search goals, the search will become aimless and ineffective.

Begin your job search by gathering and organizing all the information you need to sell your qualifications and satisfy the needs of a prospective employer.

Next, complete a thorough identification and analysis of your skills. Employers not only want to know where you have worked, your job title, and that you need a job, they want to know what you can do. If you were looking to purchase a product that would cost you thousands of dollars a year for many years, you would want to know its capabilities.

There are some basic tools you should develop to help in this effort. First, prepare a personal data sheet with all your employment-related information. This will make employment applications easier to complete. Second, write one or more resumes that advertise your skills to an employer.

Now you are ready to begin seeking that new job. The job market is constantly changing. During one period of time job opportunities may be scarce, during another period they may be plentiful. Regardless of job market conditions there is always strong competition for the better jobs. Successful candidates are those who use up-to-date job search techniques.

Experts agree that today the vast majority (80 percent or more) of job openings are not advertised. Most employment opportunities are hidden. A primary reason is simply that most employers do not need to advertise. They have enough applicants without it. Another reason is that employers prefer to hire on a referral from someone they trust.

There are a variety of strategies that increase your chances of identifying job openings and breaking into the "hidden job market." These techniques include: networking, informational interviewing, direct employer contact, employment services' electronic bulletin boards, various listings on organizations websites, and resume scanning systems.

Networking

Job search networking is a targeted effort to talk to people about your job search. It should not be limited to casual conversations with people you meet. It should be a calculated campaign to contact people for ideas, suggestions and information. Networking is not new, it is simply the sharing of information and resources with others. Everyone carries with them a wealth of information and insight. When we share information, we tap into this wealth of knowledge and open the doors of opportunity. This exchange is often informal and not planned. Networking, as a job search strategy, is more formal and calculated.

Informational Interviewing

The informational interview is a networking effort targeted toward potential employers and professionals within a specific industry. This technique is used to gather information regarding skills, training and experience needed for an occupation. It is also a method to learn about a specific company or about an industry. It is inappropriate to ask for a job during an informational interview.

Direct Employer Contact

Direct contact is essential for the serous job seeker. But direct contact takes planning and preparation. It is not enough to just walk in and ask "Are you hiring?" A successful job search is a sales campaign and your challenge is to sell your qualifications.

The first step is to list potential employers. During the length of your job search you will continually add to this list. The local public library is a priceless resource in this effort. The library is an excellent place to identify potential employers and prepare your job search strategy. Specific publications to review include the telephone book, area business listings, employer profiles, industry guides and newspapers. Additional sources for information include your local Workforce Services Employment Center, schools and community agencies.

Once you have your list, plan a strategy to approach each employer. There are many approaches available and you will want to vary them depending upon the circumstances and your preferences. You can fill out an application, send a resume, call the employer directly, or arrange for an informational interview.

Persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful job search. If you are serious about employment, plan your follow-up. There is no such thing as a wasted effort and every lead provides something of value as long as you are willing to look for it. Situations change and the employer who is not hiring today may be looking for someone with your qualifications in the future.

Private Placement Agencies
Employment agencies come in all shapes, sizes and prices. Some specialize in very specific occupational areas. Many employers have exclusive arrangements with employment agencies and they can be an excellent resource for job leads. If you are interested in the services of an agency, investigate them carefully. Determine what they will do for you and how much it will cost.

Planning
Planning is extremely important in your search for a job. By taking a few minutes and establishing a plan to follow, your search will be much more effective. Finding work is a full-time job in and of itself!

Here are a few ideas that will help you establish an effective plan. They will be discussed in more detail throughout this handbook.

- Make a "To Do List" every day. Outline daily activities to look for a job.

- Apply for jobs early in the day. This will make a good impression and give you time to complete applications, have interviews, take tests, etc.

- Call employers to find out the best times to apply. Some companies take applications only on certain days and times during the week.

- Write down all employers you contact, the date of your contacts, people you talk to, and special notes about your contacts.

- Apply at several companies in the same area when possible. This saves time and money.

- Be prepared. Have a "master application" and resumes, pens, maps and job information with you all the time. Who knows when a "hot lead" will come your way?

- Follow up leads immediately. If you find out about a job late in the day, call right then! Don’t wait until the next day.

- Network. Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Stay in touch with friends and contacts.

- Read books and information on how to get a job at the library or on the Internet (there is a reference list in this handbook). The time you spend reading these materials will save you a lot of time in your search.

In a full-time job, you:
- Have responsibilities (work duties and procedures)
- Arrive at the job on time and sometimes work over the end time
- Work hard all day, 40 hours a week
- Report to a boss, who makes sure you carry our your responsibilities

To find a job, you must:
- Set your own responsibilities (things you must do every day to get a job)
- Wake up early to start looking for work
- Look hard for a job, all day, and all week
- Be your own boss, or have a friend be your “boss,” to make sure you carry out your job search responsibilities

Goals and Plans Worksheet

(Use extra pages if necessary)

Name		**Date**	

Part 1. Background and Experience

Work Experience and Skills	***Most Recent Job:***
	Previous Job:

Education
Training
Special Skills (work-related and non-work- related)
Special Interests (hobbies, other activities)

Part 2: Special Needs During this Transition

Educational Needs	***Barriers***	***Bridges***

Goals and Plans Worksheet

(Use extra pages if necessary)

Training Needs	***Barriers***	***Bridges***
Economic Support Needs	***Barriers***	***Bridges***
Personal Support Needs	***Barriers***	***Bridges***

Part 3: Individual Goals and Steps to Meet Them

Goal #1

Steps: What and When

Progress/Updates

Goal #2

Goals and Plans Worksheet (Use extra pages if necessary)
Steps: What and When
Progress/Updates
Continue on additional pages as necessary ________________________________ ________________________________ Individual Signature Assessment Counselor Date____________________________ Date____________________________

Job Search Checklist

Complete items 1-3 on this checklist before starting your job search. Complete items 4-5 every day of your job search. Complete items 6-9 when you have interviews. Before starting your job search, read the remaining chapters in this guide. These chapters will provide you with more detailed information about how to complete the items on the checklist.

1. Identify skills and occupations

- Identify, list and describe your skills
- List by title any jobs you have held
- Write a detailed description of four to five major duties
- Think of all the skills needed to accomplish each duty
- Repeat the previous steps for each activity you anticipate describing to an employer

2. Identify Employers:

- Ask relatives, friends, etc., to help you look for job openings
- Go to your local Transition or Employment Center for assistance
- Contact employers to get company and job information
- Utilize other sources to get job leads
- Obtain job announcements and descriptions

3. Prepare Materials

- Write resumes. Use job announcements to “fit” your skills with job requirements.
- Make the resume scannable
- Write cover letters
- Assemble a job search kit: pens, writing tablet, maps public transportation guides, clean copies of resumes, applications and references, background and experience list, and picture identification.

4. Plan your Time

- Wake up early to start looking for work
- Make a “to do” list of everything you will do to look for a job
- Work hard all day to find a job
- Reward yourself (do a hobby or sport, visit friends, etc.)

5. Contact Employers

- Call employers directly (even if they are not advertising openings). Talk to the person who would supervise you if you were hired
- Go to companies to fill out applications
- Contact your friends and relatives to see if they know about any openings

- Use the "Contact Tracker" to keep track of your contacts

6. Take Tests:

- Find out about any test(s) you may need to take
- Brush up on job skills
- Relax and be confident

7. Prepare for Interview:

- Learn about the company you're interviewing with
- Review job announcements to determine how your skills will help you do the job
- Assemble resumes, application forms, etc. (Make sure every thing is neat)
- Arrange for babysitters, transportation, etc.

8. Go to Interviews:

- Dress appropriately for the interview
- Go alone
- Be clean, concise, and positive
- Thank the interviewer

9. Evaluate Interviews:

- Send a note that acknowledged the interview the next day
- Think about how you could improve the interview
- Continue the process of interviewing until you find a job

10. Accept a Job!!

- Understand the job duties and expectations, work hours, salary, benefits, etc.
- Be flexible when discussing salary (but don't sell yourself short).

Good Luck!!

Application Check Sheet

Personnel Officers look for applications that are:

- Complete—every question answered, every space filled
- Legible
- Filled out on the correct line

Therefore:

1. Read all the instructions before starting to write.
2. Read the entire application before starting to write.
3. Make sure you are on the right line before starting to write.
4. Make sure you have enough space to finish what you are writing.
5. Fill in every space.
6. If something does not apply to you, write NA (not applicable).
7. If asked to list your skills and qualifications, write a basic list (do not write "see resume")
8. While answering questions, answer them in general and mention that your resume contains more detail.
9. Carry both pens and pencils with you to fill out forms.
10. If possible, ask for 2 copies of the application form. First, complete one with pencil, and then complete a final copy with ink to hand in.
11. Make it as easy as possible for the person reading the application to find the information they are looking for.

<u>Your Job Search Log</u>

1. Make a job search schedule and keep to it.
2. Keep a file of all your job search leads and contacts.
3. Keep a complete on-going log of your job search.

For Each Workplace include

<u>Name of Organization</u> Address Phone Directions
<u>Personal Contact</u> Name Title Phone
<u>Application or Resume Submitted</u> Date
<u>Interview</u> Date Name of Interviewer
<u>Follow Up</u> Date

10. Organizing a Job Fair

One of the post-layoff services that can be provided to dislocated (or other unemployed workers) through a Worker Assistance Resource Center is a “job fair.” The purpose of a job fair is simply to provide a means to connect employers having job openings with dislocated workers looking for employment. The Center can organize general job fairs with employers offering a variety of job openings, or specialized job fairs where it concentrates on a specific types of jobs such as professional jobs, clerical jobs, constructions jobs, or customer service jobs. The WARC can also organize job fairs that concentrate on a specific type of job seeker such as youth, women, or dislocated workers.

The following Job Fair Checklist and employer and job seeker survey instruments are examples of the type of procedures used by Rapid Response Units, Industrial Adjustment Specialists and Transition Center staff to organize job fairs for dislocated workers.

WORKER ASSITANCE RESOURCE CENTER

JOB FAIR CHECKLIST

3 MONTHS BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Confirm/Decide date of job fair

_____ Make list of potential employers

_____ Find and sign up for suitable location to hold job fair (rooms, number of tables and chairs)

_____ Advertise in local Newsletters (coordinate with employer reps)

_____ Organize Job Fair Committee

6 to 8 WEEKS BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Call potential employers to recruit for participation in job fair

.

_____Coordinate with the Employment Center use of facilities, staff support, and other details

_____ Arrangements for refreshments (if applicable).

4 WEEKS BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Notify other organizations of impending Job Fair and recruit volunteer staff

_____Send/Fax Recruitment Letters to potential attendees

_____ Send confirmation letters to companies

_____ First team meeting to assign duties to volunteer staff

_____ Confirm rooms, tables & chairs

2 WEEKS BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Send out information to the press and radio

_____ Make follow up calls to employers. Ask for special needs, parking spaces needed, job descriptions

_____ Distribute flyers to community/school resources

_____ Distribute flyers to other Employment Centers

_____ Finalize staff sign ups to work event

_____ Obtain Job Descriptions from participating employers

_____ Develop ad for the Sunday newspaper and place it the Sunday preceding the event

_____ Prepare employer packet for Employers, packet includes:
Employer Greeting/instructions
Employer Evaluation Form
Job Vacancy form and list of WARC services
Map of the Job Fair booth set up

ONE WEEK TO 4 DAYS BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Send final notices to prospective participants

_____ Write up all vacancies from the Employment Centers to put on job board

_____ Prepare Applicant packets with job listings filled and copied, packet should include:
Mini registration form
Employment Center Address Card
Listing of participating companies & available positions
Map of the Job Fair booth set up

_____ Create poster board size layout map of job fair and participating employers. This will be displayed at the door where the job fair participants enter.

2 DAYS BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Information packet to participating employers

_____ Final discussion with facility management

_____ Notify security/police if needed for after dark

1 DAY BEFORE JOB FAIR:

_____ Information packet of available positions for applicants is complete & copied

_____ Develop a map for applicants indicating where employers are located in building

_____ Check all equipment that is to be used to make sure it is in good working order

_____ All forms/signs completed and copied:

- _____ Employers/applicant surveys
- _____ Employer appointment sheets
- _____ Employer company name signs
- _____ Sign for recognition of refreshments
- _____ Job registration forms

_____ Supplies ready and collected:

- _____ Employer applications
- _____ Pencils
- _____ Tables and chairs

DAY OF JOB FAIR:

_____ Conduct orientation for participating staff

_____ Arrange/move/change job boards and tables.

At conclusion of job fair, collect Employer Evaluation forms, and collect any additional job orders.

3 DAYS AFTER JOB FAIR:

_____ Participating staff meets to wrap-up and evaluate event

_____ IA Specialist (or Employment Center Staff) turn in data for job Fair Report

____ Thank you letters sent to:

- _____ Employers
- _____ Refreshment provider
- _____ Staff

Part VII Training outlines for trainers

(to be developed upon content agreement)