

Minutes for Rapid Response Forecasting Team Meeting

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1. **Layoff Aversion: “Get Your Mind Right”** was the title of the presentation at the Forecasting Team Meeting. The phrase “*Get Your Mind Right?*” is credited as being heard and used by Steve Harvey of *The Steve Harvey Morning Radio Show*. The phrase means to mentally prepare the mind in all aspects for what you are about to endeavor or seek to accomplish. The facilitator began the meeting by asking the question what it means when you hear and see the title Layoff Aversion: “*Get Your Mind Right?*” By way of background, as a Forecasting Team, we had spent a little more than a year discussing and developing a Workforce Information/Intelligence Network System (WINS); developing and implementing a Service Plan; and, developing and implementing a Layoff Aversion System plan that works for the Southeast region.

Now is the time to operationalize the Layoff Aversion concept and supporting systems to develop specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART) goals and metrics. As viable partners within the Virginia Workforce Network, we had to be on the same page as to what Layoff Aversion is and what it is not, and we were not there yet. We needed to be able to understand what each other does and can bring to the table, in order to give the process a continuous *internal scrub*; so that as collaborating partners, we could ascertain how to best serve each other as internal customers, thereby, optimizing our product to our external customers as service providers.

In the past, layoffs had been expressly associated with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker program representing, primarily, reactive Rapid Response. Layoff Aversion is fundamentally a new way of thinking in transition management and in nature and character, is *proactive* Rapid Response that can only occur in a proactive phase (see SEVARAPIDRESPONSE.ORG-Rapid Response Service Plan: The second phase of Rapid Response). This separate phase from reactive Rapid Response aligns with early warning networks and early intervention with affected employers and employees; seeks to diminish knowledge deficits through empowerment and situational awareness of both the affected employer and employees; and, fundamentally, supports national trends and mandates.

The confusion is that often people talk about conducting Layoff Aversion when, in fact, the layoff has already occurred. They use the terms Layoff Aversion and Dislocated Worker

interchangeably and have not wrapped their minds entirely around the definition of Layoff Aversion and the holistic concept. Think about it for a moment, if the layoff has already occurred, then it is not Layoff Aversion, but a Dislocation....falling under the auspices of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), a concept that most of us who grew up in Workforce Development know very well.

To change and fully embrace the new concept of Layoff Aversion, we must now allow our minds to shift from the engrained concept of dislocation and embrace the new concept of aversion. Both are equally important, but in different phases of the transition, transition management, and the Southeast Region Service Plan. Hence, at the front end or beginning, we must get our minds active to thinking proactively; to bring all forces to bear to get people back to work before the layoff occurs. This is a paradigm shift in thought and action, and more difficult than what people realize. Ideally speaking, in an optimum state, if the employment commission, community colleges, economic development, and the one stop system, work together in a collective and collaborative synergy of effort and in concert and in the true spirit of partnership that job 1 is to get the affected employee back to work as quickly as possible, then with early warning, notification, and proactive intervention, an affected employee may be laid off from his or her job on Friday and back to work on Monday. Note: This is an ideal situation that we should strive to attain in every layoff situation.

All partners have contributing interplay and would benefit from the concept of Layoff Aversion in telling an individual partner and/or collective partner group job service story. Their story could be used as future support and substantiation and as a shining example of reciprocity of effort for gainful return on the investment (ROI) for future funding. By way of examples, there would be no greater story for any employment commission to tell than to show or demonstrate how many affected employees they wholly and summarily kept off the rolls of collecting unemployment insurance and what the net dollar savings to the taxpayers was as a result of their layoff aversion efforts. The One Stop could tell an equally compelling story of how they conducted resume writing, interviewing techniques, and job search strategy workshops in preparing the affected employee in the aversion phase, and as a result of their direct, indirect, or tangential efforts, the affected employee attained reemployment before the layoff occurred. Currently, within the reporting realm of the One Stop System, this is an untold story. Or, the One Stop could tangibly demonstrate the effective use of On-The-Job-Training and Incumbent Worker programs optimally as aversion tactics. These are just some examples. The overarching metrics as an end state of the Forecasting Team is to ask who is doing Layoff Aversion well; what does "well" mean; and, thereby, determine what is optimal Layoff Aversion?

Forecasting Teams exist to predict layoffs before they happen and to develop strategies to avert or lessen the number of employees affected by the layoff and/or company closures. In doing this, Forecasting Teams should continuously attempt to build multiple partnerships; work with the business community, unions, local and state government agencies; and, develop and maintain an aggressive early warning intelligence and information network. This network is the linchpin for successful Layoff Aversion.

2. Temporary Staffing Agencies:

- A. At the Rapid Response Compliance Monitoring Luncheon on January 25, 2012, a member of the Hampton Economic Development Directorate suggested the idea of making temporary staffing agencies as a member of the Rapid Response Forecasting Team. This was seen as a brilliant idea and Reliance Staffing attended the Forecasting Team meeting and provided invaluable input. Staffing agencies are valuable assets to the layoff aversion process for primarily two reasons: (1) staffing agencies are a vital intervening stop-gap of employment from the last desired job to the next desired job. This stop-gap is significant and important in developing a cogent and succinct income maintenance strategy while in a job loss transition; (2) more importantly, staffing agencies are knowledgeable and are in the employer contact-loop with those positions that have temp-to-hire positions as an end state. Temp-to-hire is an optimal status in Layoff Aversion for an affected worker. Imagine that...hired as a temporary worker; and, it works out that you will become a permanently hired employee (win-win) and avert being laid off altogether.

3. DIAGRAM REVIEW:

- A. The facilitator reviewed the diagrams provided as attachments on the importance of the Workforce Information/Intelligence Network (WIN). The proactive Rapid Response Layoff Aversion process starts with fundamentally understanding intelligence and information flow. The WIN diagram must be, strategically, operationally, and tactically understood to work optimally. The lowest person within the organization must understand the importance of potential layoff intelligence and what to do with the potential intelligence. The intelligence is confirmed by the Rapid Response Coordinator and then the information is disseminated in a timely fashion to all relevant partners within the Virginia Workforce Network. The center decision matrix provides the

contingency opportunity for optimum layoff aversion, which requires two tenets: (1) early warning/notification and (2) ideally, a protracted layoff. See attachment 2.

- B. The facilitator reviewed the diagram on the importance of the Layoff Aversion System. The Layoff Aversion System displays both the formal and informal methods of communication and the receipt and verification of layoff intelligence. Front end layoff aversion is confirmation of layoff intelligence with no terminal of end date. If the layoff is protracted with no end date, then aversion can be conducted within an indefinite amount of time. Backend layoff aversion completes the box and aversion can only be accomplished in a finite window of opportunity and time. The red box in the diagram expressly represents the aversion phase and process. See attachments 3 and 4. Note the parameters of the red box and where aversion begins and ends and where dislocation begins in attachment 4.
- C. The facilitator reviewed the diagram on the importance of how the members of the Virginia Workforce Network provide feeder input into the layoff aversion system. Note the inclusion of staffing agencies as feeders to the aversion process. See attachment 5.

4. Chesapeake Economic Development Directorate:

- A. Provided a 5 minute presentation on how Economic Development Directorates partnering with members of the Virginia Workforce Network can benefit in employee retention and attraction. Provided an example of partnering with Opportunity INC Business Services Representative were used with affected employer Pitney Bowes, Chesapeake; and how Chesapeake Economic Development provided assistance with Pitney Bowes Chesapeake, working with the employer in the layoff aversion phase with impending and current employers in the Chesapeake territory that have fill requirements.

- 5. Operationalizing The Layoff Aversion Concept:** The facilitator invited discussion that became the linchpin for operational process development by asking each partner within the Virginia Workforce Network their *voluntary* dedication and commitment to layoff aversion. The following were the commitments from each partner agency:

A. The Regional One Stop shall:

1. Business Services will work collaboratively with regional Economic Development directorates to ascertain current and future employer position-fill requirements.

2. Aggressively pursue On-the-Job Training and applicable Incumbent Worker programs for affected workers for the aversion phase.
3. Conduct Resume Writing, Interviewing Techniques, and Job Search Strategy workshops to increase the situation awareness and prepare the affected employee for the job market prior to the layoff. Collaborate with the Virginia Employment Commission on these workshops.
4. Work to develop a tracking system in the aversion vice dislocation phase to ascertain and track influential direct, indirect, or tangential relationships, or involvement the One Stop may have had on an affected employee averting the layoff and being hired or reemployed prior to a layoff (the untold story). Currently, this process is tracked in the dislocated worker *intensive services* phase only and not in the *core services phase*. Because of this there is a continuous untold story of workforce job service accomplishment by the One Stop System.
5. Conduct job club and networking workshops
6. Report all hires in the **aversion phase**

B. The Regional Community Colleges shall:

1. Conduct up-skilling and just-in-time training for current and impending employers who have a requirement, but the current affected employees are deficient on skillsets and/or training.
2. Tailor in-demand/needs based training to certificates/certifications and diplomas
3. Conduct job fairs
4. Act as a service provider for conducting preparatory key train labs and administering work keys testing for career readiness certificates

C. The Regional Economic Development Directorates shall:

1. Provide information on current and impending employer requirements
2. Aggressively attempt to retain skill workers for employers through business retention and business attraction
3. Notify the Community Colleges on skill deficits to develop training/retraining courses
4. Partner and collaborate with One Stop Business Services and the Virginia Employment Commission Business and Economic division
5. Report all hires in the **aversion phase**

D. The Regional Virginia Employment Commissions shall:

1. Conduct a job comparison analysis (scrub) on jobs available in the database and comparable transferable skill sets for affected employees

2. Provider of Labor Market Information (LMI)
3. Collaborate with the One Stop and conduct resume writing and interviewing techniques workshops for transition preparation in the aversion phase
4. Conduct federal resume workshops
5. Conduct job club and networking workshops
6. Partner and collaborate with One Stop Business Services division
7. Host Job fairs
8. Host Employers with fill-requirements and provide space to conduct interviews
9. Aggressively attempt to register affected employees early in the aversion phase during Rapid Response Manager's Meetings and/or Employee Briefings
10. Report all hires in the **aversion phase**

E. Staffing Agencies shall:

1. Continuously conduct job availability review
2. Aggressively pursue to fill temp-to-hire positions
3. Conduct skill testing
4. Report all hires in the **aversion phase**

- 6. Review of Current Employer Requirements:** The facilitator reviewed all of the current employers that had scheduled Rapid Response Events (Managers Meetings and/or Employee Briefings) and had discussion, questions, and input from the group. They were: Potomac Supply, Westmoreland County; Warsaw Healthcare, Richmond County; Pitney Bowes, Chesapeake; Sears, Norfolk; and, Virginia Port Authority, Norfolk.

7. Administrative Remarks:

All partners participating in Rapid Response events, were to ensure that they have the Equal Opportunity Statement disclaimer on all handout material and not just on the outside of the folders. This was a discussion point at the monitoring audit on January 25, 2012.

8. Rapid Response Regional Self-Assessment:

Partners were divided into four groups and provided the Rapid Response Self-Assessment Form (The 10 Essential Elements of Rapid Response) by the facilitator and were given 30 minutes to discuss and complete the survey . The grading scale was (1) We Don't Do; (2) We do; (3) We Do Well; and, (4) We're the Best! As a group, we discussed consensus 1s and 2s. We will work to as a goal to attain the number 4 in all categories with discrepancies. The following were the results:

A. Element 2 Building and Maintaining Relationships with Stakeholders:

1. Rapid Response team members continue to network, identify, and recruit additional stakeholder representatives-faith and community based organizations, investment groups, foundations, and philanthropic organizations etc. Score=1
2. RR team members routinely meet with employers and develop relationships in order to earn their trust and ensure they understand the full range of RR services offered. Score =2

B. Element 3 Policies and Procedures:

1. State procedures identify measurable standards of success, with a feedback mechanism for improving RR services. Score =2
2. The state has conducted an emergency preparedness assessment of RR capacity, statewide and in local areas, and has developed a contingency plan to respond to a large dislocation. Score=2
3. The state's contingency planning for dislocations exceeding normal capacity statewide, or in any one local area, includes specific provisions for:
 - a. Cross-training of staff to enable a flexible response to a large layoff
 - b. Additional facilities or transitions centers to handle the overflow
 - c. Assistance from RR team members throughout the state
 - d. Backup assistance in processing UI claims by staff from other parts of the state, or from other states, through inter-cooperative agreements
 - e. Deployment of case managers from other local workforce areas or other agencies
 - f. Emergency procurement policies –Collective 3. a-f Score=2

C. Element 7 Collecting and Analyzing Worker Survey Data

1. The state or local RR unit uses a machine-readable survey instrument or other technology that enables immediate compilation of survey results. Score=2.
2. The survey results are used to:
 - a. Produce a systematic array of worker skill sets that are provided to economic development agencies and business organizations to market the workers to employers with available jobs. Score=2.

b. Prepare a labor-shed analysis that maps current commuting patterns for affected workers, the distances they are willing to commute for future jobs, and the employment prospects within that commuting range. Score=2.

c. The state or local area uses available tools to calculate the secondary impact of the layoff event on the regional economy in terms of the number of other workers and occupations likely to be affected, personal income and government tax losses, and other impact. Score=2.

d. States that are addressing layoffs having statewide or sector-wide impact (e.g., auto and supplier layoffs) have NEGs approved and funded to provide services to affected workers on a statewide basis. Score=2.

D. Element 8 Providing Information, Solutions, and Services to Employers, Workers, and the Community:

1. Representatives from social services and other resource agencies are present to provide advice and counseling on health insurance, financial management, child care, mental health, housing, legal issues, etc. Score=1.

2. Staff and equipment are available at or near the RR meeting site for workers to immediately file UI claims and applications for other services. Score=2.

E. Element 9 Connecting Affected Workers to the Workforce System and One Stop Career Centers:

1. Peer counselors, who are more likely to gain the trust of their co-workers, assist them in navigating through the social services network. Score=1.

F. Element 10 Providing Service to Employers:

1. There is an ongoing effort to provide employers with information on layoff aversion options - e.g., incumbent worker training; business loan programs; making connections to economic development, chambers of commerce, business enterprises, etc. Score=2.