



**WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND  
OPPORTUNITY ACT POLICY  
MANUAL**

**CHAPTER 2 - SECTION 900**

**SUBJECT: RAPID RESPONSE**

**900 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The purpose of Rapid Response is to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities.

It is the cooperative effort of Arizona’s workforce system, branded as ARIZONA@WORK, and partner programs. Rapid Response offers assistance and services to workers affected by layoffs, plant closures, or job loss due to natural or other disasters resulting in mass job dislocation as well as proactively mitigating potential layoffs or closings with layoff aversion strategies. Rapid Response promotes economic development and vitality while delivering crucial services to workers and businesses in transition.

In Arizona, Rapid Response activities are administered by the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS), a division of the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES).

**901 AUTHORITY**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 (P.L 113-128), [20 CFR Part 682 - Subpart C](#), Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) [19-16](#), [12-19](#), [Change 1](#), and Training and Employment Notices (TENs) [03-10](#), [09-12](#).

**902 APPLICABILITY**

This section provides policy for the state, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), service providers, and other ARIZONA@WORK partners to use regarding the standards of the WIOA related to Rapid Response activities.

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**903 ACRONYMS**

- Arizona Job Connection (AJC)
- Chief Elected Official (CEO)
- Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)
- Customized Training (CT)
- Department of Economic Security (DES)
- Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS)
- Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
- Emergency Rental Assistance Programs (ERAP)
- Employer Engagement Administration (EEA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)
- Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)
- Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)
- National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL)
- Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Work-Based Training (WBT)
- Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

**904 DISLOCATION EVENTS TO TRIGGER RAPID RESPONSE SERVICES AND  
NOTICE**

Employers who fall into one of the categories listed below shall submit a notification to the DERS Rapid Response team to inform DERS of the layoff or closure and begin the process for receiving Rapid Response services.

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## **01. Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act**

The WARN Act, effective February 4, 1989, requires employers covered by the act (“covered employers”) to provide 60 days advance notice of certain events such as plant closures or mass layoffs to affected workers, employee representatives, the DERS State Rapid Response Coordinator, and appropriate units of local government.

Arizona adheres to the federal WARN guidelines found [here](#).

- A. Employers are covered by WARN if they are:
1. Private, for-profit, and nonprofit entities; or
  2. Public and quasi-public entities that operate in a commercial context and are separate from the regular government; and
  3. Employ 100 or more employees, or is laying off at least 50 workers at a single-site, not counting employees who:
    - a. Worked less than six months in the previous 12 months;
    - b. Work an average of less than 20 hours per week;
    - c. Retire, resign, or are terminated for cause; or
    - d. Are offered a transfer to another site of employment within a reasonable commuting distance if:
      - i. The closing or layoff is a result of a relocation or consolidation of all or part of the employer’s business;
      - ii. The transfer involves no more than a six-month break in employment; and

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- iii. The worker accepts the offer within 30 days of the offer or the closing or layoff, whichever is later.
- B. Employees entitled to WARN notice include:
1. Hourly and salaried workers; and
  2. Managerial and supervisory employees.
- C. Employees who are not protected by WARN and not entitled to a WARN notice are as follows:
1. Workers on a labor strike or who have been locked out in a labor dispute;
  2. Temporary workers who clearly understand the temporary nature of the work for which they were hired; and
  3. Business partners, consultants, or contracted employees who are paid by another employer or who are self-employed.
- D. The employer must provide a WARN notice to:
1. The State Rapid Response Coordinator;
  2. The Chief Elected Official of the LWDA in which the employment site is located;
  3. The Chief Executive Officer of the representative(s) or bargaining agency(ies) of affected workers, or potentially affected workers; and
  4. Individual workers who are not represented by a bargaining agency and who may reasonably be expected to experience an employment loss, including workers who may lose their employment due to “bumping” or displacement by other workers.

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- E. The WARN must include the following information:
1. The business name and address of the employment site where the plant closing or mass layoff will occur.
  2. The corporate or company name and address, if different from the employment site;
  3. The name, email address, and telephone number of a company official to contact for further information;
  4. A statement as to whether the planned action is expected to be permanent or temporary and, if the entire plant is to be closed, a statement to that effect;
  5. The expected date of the first separation, and if applicable, the anticipated schedule for making separations;
  6. The job titles of positions to be affected, and the number of affected employees in each job title;
  7. An indication as to whether or not bumping rights exist;
  8. The name of each union representing affected employees, and the name and address of the Chief Elected Officer of each union, if applicable.
- F. Any reasonable method of delivery to ensure receipt 60 days before a closing or layoff is acceptable. Notice may be given conditionally upon the occurrence or non-occurrence of an event only when the event is definite, and its occurrence or non-occurrence will result in a covered employment action less than 60 days after the event.

**02. Non-WARN Dislocations**

Employers experiencing plant closures or layoffs who do not meet WARN

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requirements may voluntarily choose to report such plant closures or layoffs to the DERS Rapid Response team or LWDB staff. When an employer voluntarily chooses to report plant closures or layoffs to DERS or the LWDB, the DERS and/or LWDB Rapid Response team(s) will ensure Rapid Response services are provided, regardless of the size of the employer or number of workers affected.

**03. Disasters**

Any employer experiencing a mass layoff or closure due to natural or other disasters may seek Rapid Response services from DERS and/or the LWDB.

**04. Layoff Aversion Events**

Employers seeking strategies and activities to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs may request layoff aversion assistance.

**05. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Events**

An employer who is experiencing a dislocation for whom there has been or are plans to submit a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition to the U.S. Department of Labor may also contact the State Rapid Response Coordinator for services. The Trade Act of 1974 (Pub. L. No. 93-618) established the TAA Program, to assist workers who have been laid off or whose jobs have been threatened because of foreign trade or competition (trade-affected workers).

**905 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**01. State Rapid Response Coordinator and Team**

The State Rapid Response Coordinator is responsible for the following:

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- A. Leading the DERS Rapid Response team (the State Rapid Response Coordinator and their team) to oversee the Rapid Response program which includes all activities and services provided within the state of Arizona.
- B. Serving as the point of contact for the State for notification of dislocation events by employers.
  - 1. Ensuring that WARNs are entered into the state system of record within two (2) business days of receipt.
  - 2. Ensuring that the Rapid Response program inbox and submission platform is maintained and monitored for employers to submit notification of dislocation events.
  - 3. Managing the LWDB staff reports of all dislocation events in their Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to the DERS Rapid Response team.
- C. Managing the overall State Rapid Response team which is comprised of representatives from the following:
  - 1. DERS Rapid Response team;
  - 2. DERS Business Services team;
  - 3. Local Area Rapid Response Coordinator and/or a representative(s) from the LWDA(s) impacted by dislocation event;
- D. Coordination of teams and partners to provide Rapid Response services in response to dislocation events. Such teams shall consist at a minimum of representatives from the following:
  - 1. State Rapid Response team;

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2. DERS staff member to provide meaningful assistance on how to access Unemployment Insurance benefits;
3. Representative of the LWDB(s) from LWDA(s) impacted by dislocation event;
4. Employment Services;
5. TAA staff (if applicable); and
6. Labor organizations representing affected workers (if applicable).
7. Local representatives of the WIOA Title I-B programs (LWDB service providers), as applicable.

E. Coordinate with LWDBs as follows:

1. To co-enroll participants for WIOA Title I dislocated worker activities, such as training and support services, if needed to assist workers affected by dislocation events.
2. Assist LWDBs with the process of accessing state Rapid Response funds needed to address a dislocation event in their LWDA.
3. Assist LWDBs as needed with smaller dislocation events (i.e., less than 25 affected workers).
4. Provide a monthly report to the Local Rapid Response Coordinators on all Rapid Response activities using the data provided by the state’s system of record.

F. Manage a public facing dashboard and an internal dashboard.

**02. LWDBs and Service Providers**

LWDBs are responsible for the following:

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- A. Designate staff to serve on the State Rapid Response team for dislocation events that affect workers in their LWDA.
- B. Coordinate with local additional partners (other ARIZONA@WORK partners and other community partners) to serve on the State Response team, as needed.
- C. Notify the State Rapid Response Coordinator of dislocation events in their LWDA.
- D. Coordinate and take the lead for Rapid Response services for smaller dislocation events (i.e., less than 25 workers affected).
- E. Determining eligibility (see Section 100 of the WIOA [Policy](#) Manual, Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Registration, Eligibility, Enrollment, and Tracking Policy) and enrolling affected workers whose assessment indicates a need for WIOA Title I services, and providing appropriate Title I services.
- F. Providing support services funded under WIOA Title I in accordance with the LWDB approved support services policy to affected workers enrolled in Title I, whose assessment indicates a need for such services.

**03. Employment Service**

Employment Service as part of the DERS Rapid Response team (or LWDB Rapid Response team for smaller dislocations) is responsible for the following:

- A. Ensuring all affected workers seeking assistance are registered into the state system of record and ensuring appropriate program enrollments and services for affected workers are entered.

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- B. When feasible, registration and services are entered in the state system of record within two (2) business days of a Rapid Response service. Entry of services ensures the accuracy of PIRL reports.

**906 STAGES OF RAPID RESPONSE**

In order to conduct layoff aversion activities or to prepare for and respond to dislocation events, Rapid Response Teams may devise strategies or conduct activities that are intended to minimize the negative impacts of dislocation on workers, businesses, communities and ensure that workers impacted by dislocations are able to be reemployed as quickly as possible. Such activities include, but are not limited to:

- A. Connecting employers and workers with short-term, customized, or other training or apprenticeships before or after layoff to ensure appropriate skills for new employment;
- B. Facilitation of incumbent worker training for eligible workers based on state or local policy;
- C. Identification of heavily concentrated industries and sectors and related training needs in a geographic area;
- D. Proactive measures, such as business visitation or layoff forecasting programs, to identify indicators of potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses;
- E. Talent transfer events, which allow employers and workers to identify skills that may be transferred to other occupations, or reemployment boot camps, where employers and workers can take short and concentrated classes to learn how to look for employment in today's job market, that will connect employers in growing industries or sectors with available talent;

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- F. Effective partnerships with a wide range of organizations to support allowable strategies and activities, as defined in 20 CFR § 682.330 and 20 CFR § 682.340;
- G. Collection of data and intelligence related to economic transition trends within industries, communities, or at specific employers, and planning strategies for intervention;
- H. Development of an early warning network and system using data and intelligence gathered; or
- I. Provision of additional assistance, as defined in 20 CFR § 682.350.

**01. Layoff Aversion Activities**

DES must make Rapid Response resources available to proactively support employers and mitigate potential layoffs or closings, as applicable. Such activities may include the following:

- A. Early identification of plants or firms at risk of layoffs, assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of services to address these needs;
- B. Continuing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community;
- C. Funding feasibility studies to determine if a company’s operations may be sustained through a buyout or other means to avoid or minimize layoffs;
- D. Connecting employers and workers with work-based training in compliance with the requirements set forth in Sections 507.01 (Business Requirements for Work-Based Training ) and 507.02 (Work-Based Training Requirements) of the WIOA Training Services [Policy](#), which are as follows:

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1. On-the-Job Training (OJT): OJT, as described in 20 CFR [§ 680.700](#) and Section 508 of the WIOA Training Services [Policy](#), is training provided under a contract with an employer who is reimbursed a percentage of the wage rate of the participant being trained while engaged in productive work in a job, and will be made available to workers affected by dislocations, as appropriate.
2. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP): RAPs, as described in Section 509 of the WIOA Training Services [Policy](#), is an industry-driven system of employment, OJT and related technical instruction (RTI), and will be made available to workers affected by dislocations, as appropriate.
3. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT): IWT, as described in Section 510 of the WIOA Training Services [Policy](#), is designed to meet the special needs of an employer (including a group of employers) to retain a skilled workforce, or to avert the need to lay off employees, by helping workers gain skills needed to retain employment and increasing the occupational competitiveness of the employee or the employer, and will be made available to workers affected by dislocations, as appropriate.
4. Customized Training: Customized Training, as described in Section 511 of the WIOA Training Services [Policy](#), is designed to meet the specific needs of an employer or a group of employers committed to employing an individual upon the successful completion of the program, for which the employer pays a significant portion of the training, and will be made available to workers affected by dislocations, as appropriate.

E. Connecting companies to:

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1. Short-term compensation (known in Arizona as the *Shared Work Program*) or other programs designed to prevent layoffs or to quickly reemploy dislocated workers;
  2. Employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and
  3. Other federal, state, and local resources necessary to address business needs that cannot be funded with Rapid Response funds.
- F. Establishing linkages with economic development activities at the federal, state, and local levels, including Federal Department of Commerce programs and available state and local business retention and expansion activities;
- G. Partnering or contracting with business-focused organizations to assess risks to companies, propose strategies to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered;
- H. Conducting analyses of the suppliers of an affected company to assess their risks and vulnerabilities from a potential closing or shift in production of their major customer; and
- I. Engaging in proactive measures to identify opportunities for potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses.

**02. Immediate Employer Contact**

After notice of a dislocation event, the State Rapid Response Coordinator will contact the employer and employee representatives (if applicable) within two (2) business days to:

- A. Verify the details of the layoff or plant closure;

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- B. Provide information to the employer about Rapid Response services, to include information on unemployment insurance benefits and the Shared Work Program; and
- C. Invite the employer to meet with the State Rapid Response Team to establish a plan to carry out Rapid Response services to the affected workers.

**03. Initial Employer Meeting**

Once the employer is engaged, the initial meeting of the State Rapid Response Team, employer, and employee representatives must take place as soon as possible, and may also be attended by the local labor representative and LWDB staff. The initial contact meeting will provide information and discussion of:

- A. Available programs, service providers, and resources in the LWDA to meet the short-term and long-term assistance needs of the affected workers, including:
  - 1. Unemployment Insurance;
  - 2. Reemployment Services;
  - 3. Job Training;
  - 4. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA);
  - 5. Financial counseling; and
  - 6. Federal and state emergency management agencies, if the dislocation is due to a disaster.
- B. Rapid Response content, format, and benefits to the employer and affected workers.
- C. An assessment of the employer's layoff plan and schedule.

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- D. Identification of the affected workers, their current wage scale, occupations, skill levels, and length of service.
- E. Benefits provided by the employer to the affected workers, i.e. severance pay, health insurance and other employee benefits, job development, job search activities, relocation or reemployment opportunities.
- F. Projected assistance needs of the affected workers.
- G. Reemployment prospects for workers in the local community.
- H. Potential for averting the layoff or closure, which may be discussed in consultation with state or local economic development agencies, including local Chambers of Commerce.

**04. Information Sessions for Affected Workers**

As soon as possible after the initial meeting with the employer, the State Rapid Response team will hold information sessions with the affected employees to provide, at a minimum, information and resources for the following:

- A. Unemployment Insurance benefits;
- B. Services available through ARIZONA@WORK;
- C. Continuation of health insurance through COBRA;
- D. Employers currently hiring in the LWDA;
- E. Training and supportive services available through Title I of WIOA;
- F. TAA services, if applicable;
- G. Services available for veterans, including services available through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant and the GI Bill;

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- H. Federal and state emergency management agencies, if the dislocation is due to a disaster;
- I. Services available in the community to meet basic needs, which include but are not limited to:
  - 1. Financial Counseling;
  - 2. Emergency Rental Assistance Programs (ERAP);
  - 3. Utility Assistance;
  - 4. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including the Disaster Nutrition Assistance;
  - 5. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
  - 6. Other emergency assistance programs.

**907 ADDITIONAL RAPID RESPONSE SERVICES TO BE MADE AVAILABLE**

The following services are to be made available by the Rapid Response team as part of layoff aversion and dislocation events, based on the needs of the employers and affected workers.

**01. Professional Outplacement Team**

A professional outplacement team, composed of staff from partner agencies, may be coordinated by the State Rapid Response team, using resources from all partners, to support the reemployment efforts of affected workers, as appropriate. Services may be provided virtually, by phone, or in person:

- A. Assessments to identify transferable skills of the affected workers.
- B. One on one services between Employment Specialists and affected workers to assist with career guidance, job match and referral to employers in the system to meet the specific needs of the worker.

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- C. Workshops, such as employment skills, resume writing, job readiness.
- D. Referrals to partners to provide job loss/grief counseling.
- E. Follow-up assistance for those affected placed in new employment.
- F. Referral to WIOA Title I-B partners, and local community partners for additional training, resources and/or support services assistance.

**02. Work-Based Training**

Work-based training, as described in 20 CFR § 680.700 and the WIOA Training Services [Policy](#), and Section 906.01.D of this policy, are valuable business engagement activities which are to be made available as a Rapid Response service for any layoff aversion and any dislocation event.

**03. Transition Centers**

- A. Transition Centers are fully equipped and staffed “mini job centers” with computers, a copier, and resource information, as necessary, for preparing a job search. It may be onsite at the employer’s location or in a building convenient to the affected employees.
- B. The State Rapid Response team must be consulted prior to committing to setting up a transition center. Many factors must be considered, such as:
  - 1. Geographic proximity of the company to an ARIZONA@WORK Job Center;
  - 2. Capacity of the existing ARIZONA@WORK Job Center in (size, staffing, capability of staff) in closest proximity to the location of the dislocation;

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3. Size and impact of the dislocation (usually 100 or more impacted);
4. Availability of local and state funds and whether it is cost effective; and
5. Likelihood of reemployment by the affected workers in the same or similar occupations with little or no need for services.

**04. Upskilling**

Upskilling is the process of identifying skills gaps and then elevating the skills and knowledge to a new level, by acquiring new soft skills, competencies and certifications. Upskilling may be provided to affected workers through partnerships with LWDBs, employers, local community colleges or training providers on the State’s ETPL to meet in-demand occupation and credential needs for employers, through work-based learning activities, and using IWT for a layoff aversion activity.

**05. Reskilling**

Reskilling is the process of learning that is needed to do an entirely different job for those affected workers who must find new careers as their jobs are no longer in-demand. Reskilling may be provided through partnerships with LWDBs, employers, local community colleges or training providers on the State ETPL to meet in-demand occupation and credential needs for employers, through work-based learning activities, and using IWT for a layoff aversion activity.

**06. Community Transition Teams**

Rapid Response Teams may provide guidance and/or financial assistance to establish community transition teams to assist the impacted community in organizing support for dislocated workers, and in meeting the basic needs of their families. Such assistance may include, but is not limited to,

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providing heat, shelter, food, clothing, and other necessities and services that are beyond the resources and ability of the ARIZONA@WORK Job Center partners to provide.

**908 COORDINATION WITH TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM**

If it appears the dislocation is due to an employer’s inability to compete with foreign imports or the outsourcing of jobs to another country, the state TAA Coordinator will be notified by the State Rapid Response Coordinator.

- A. When possible, the TAA State Coordinator or a TAA designated staff member will be present at any meetings with the employer to provide information on the program benefits and services.
- B. A petition will be completed by TAA designated staff and submitted to the Department of Labor, as described in Title 20, Chapter V, Part 618, [Subpart B](#) of the Code of Federal Regulations, preferably prior to the commencement of any layoffs.
- C. TAA staff will participate in any information sessions held for affected employees to present about the TAA Program benefits and services.

**909 DATA COLLECTION AND PERFORMANCE**

The DERS Rapid Response team (or LWDB Rapid Response team for smaller dislocations) is responsible for timely entry of Rapid Response services into the system of record and ensuring accuracy in the reports submitted to DOL by reviewing the quarterly reports. Data must be validated for any participant enrolled in Rapid Response service in compliance with DERS policy.

**910 NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANT**

National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs) temporarily expand training and employment service to dislocated workers, including military service

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members, by providing additional funding when unexpected economic events or a natural disaster cause significant job losses with the purpose to reemploy laid off workers and enhance their employability and earnings. Disaster NDWGs provide funding to create temporary employment opportunities to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts when an area impacted by disaster is declared eligible for public assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or otherwise recognized by a Federal agency with authority or jurisdiction over Federal response to the emergency or disaster. Both states and LWDBs may apply for a NDWG if applicable. More information on NDWGs is found in [TEGL 12-19](#), Change 1, *National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Guidance*.

**911 LWDB REQUEST FOR RAPID RESPONSE FUNDING**

Rapid Response funds expended for dislocation events or layoff aversion assistance are event-driven. Rapid Response funds may be used by the LWDB to provide the following activities:

- Rapid Response services to a local dislocation event
- Layoff aversion assistance
- Direct services to participants
- Demonstration or pilot project. DES additional approval is required.

When local WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker formula funds are insufficient to assist workers impacted by a dislocation event, LWDBs may request state Rapid Response funds.

The State Rapid Response Coordinator will consult with the DERS fiscal team to review requests received from LWDBs and provide determination of the funds no later than three business days of the request. The State Rapid Response Coordinator will notify the LWDB of the determination and may also request the LWDB utilize other allowable funds to support the request until reimbursement can be provided by DERS.

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**912 RAPID RESPONSE MONITORING**

**01. State Rapid Response Team**

To ensure that policies are being followed and expectations are being met, the State, LWDBs, and all service providers will be monitored by a DERS team responsible for monitoring activities. DERS will require prompt corrective action and the State Rapid Response team will provide technical assistance if any monitoring issues are identified. DERS will take corrective action with any Rapid Response team member, including local team members that are not meeting the State’s expectations in terms of overall performance and tracking data in the state system of record and/or in fiscal and administrative reports.

**02. LWDBs**

LWDBs are required to follow their own established monitoring policies and procedures to monitor service providers who are receiving Rapid Response funds.

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