



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
JB Pritzker, Governor

WIOA NOTICE NO. 26-NOT-01

TO: Chief Elected Officials
Local Workforce Innovation Board Chairpersons
Local Workforce Innovation Board Staff
WIOA Fiscal Agents
WIOA Grant Recipients
WIOA Program Services Administrators
Illinois workNet® Operators
WIOA State Agency Partners
Other Interested Persons

SUBJECT: Program Year 2026 (PY'26) Rapid Response (1E) Grant Funding Notice

DATE: July 23 XX, 2026

I. SUBJECT INDEX

Layoff Aversion
Planning
Rapid Response

II. PURPOSE

To provide information to all Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) on the availability of Statewide Rapid Response Funding to assist in economic recovery, rapid response, and layoff aversion activities.

III. ISSUANCES AFFECTED

A. References:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Public Law 113-128, as amended
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 Final Rule at 20 CFR 682.320
U.S. DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 19-16, Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules (March 01, 2017)

U.S. DOL Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 09-12, Layoff Aversion in Rapid Response Systems (August 31, 2012)
U.S. DOL Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 08-20, Public Workforce System Role in Reopening State and Local Economies (December 10, 2020)
U.S. DOL Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 13-20, Advancing a *One Workforce* Vision and Strategy (January 04, 2021)
WIOA Policy 9.1 Rapid Response (April 29, 2021)

B. Rescissions:

WIOA Notice No. 24-NOT-05 Program Year 2025 (PY'25) Rapid Response (1E) Grant Funds Application (May 30, 2025)

IV. **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of Rapid Response is to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs and dislocations and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities. Rapid Response encompasses strategies and activities to respond as quickly as possible following an announcement of a permanent closure, mass layoff, or natural or other disaster that results in mass job loss. Rapid Response delivers services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible.

WIOA offers significant flexibility regarding the use of Rapid Response funds. To conduct layoff aversion activities or to respond to dislocation events, Rapid Response providers may devise additional strategies or conduct activities to support those identified in the regulations that are intended to minimize the negative impacts of dislocation on workers, businesses, and communities and to ensure that workers impacted by layoffs can be reemployed as quickly as possible. Layoff aversion is a comprehensive approach requiring the integration of data, relationships, partnerships, and policies and procedures to allow an assessment of the economic situation that exists within a given area. This approach enables the development of a plan that may be applied, at any time, to intervene and manage the transition that occurs within that area.

Additionally, when circumstances allow, Rapid Response providers may provide guidance and/or financial assistance to establish community transition teams to assist the impacted community in organizing support for dislocated workers and meeting their families' basic needs. Such assistance can include, but is not limited to, providing heat, shelter, food, clothing, and other necessities and services beyond the resources and ability of the one-stop delivery system to provide.

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) issued Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 13-20 that outlines strategies for state and local workforce agencies regarding service delivery, customer outreach, and business engagement.

V. COMPONENTS

This notice provides funding to LWIBs to respond to job seekers' immediate training needs and avoid waiting lists for training services. It also encourages LWIBs to apply for 1E funds to support the strategies outlined in TEN 13-20 to address the immediate needs of impacted job seekers and businesses in Illinois.

A. Rapid Response (1E) Funding

Illinois will continue to provide 1E funds to LWIBs to help laid-off workers quickly transition to new employment. Funds are available to support the following activities:

Strategies to Rapidly Connect Jobseekers to Work

Funding will support enhanced efforts to connect dislocated workers to jobs, including individualized career counseling, job search assistance, short-term training credentialing opportunities, and local labor market guidance to inform workers of possible career pathways. Strategies include:

- Increased outreach activities;
- Coordinate talent transfer initiatives and hiring events to connect laid-off workers with employers that have immediate workforce needs and accelerate reemployment.
- Increase capacity for online services and training;
 - Contract training: contract with training providers to deliver high-demand occupation training
 - Training program: flexible online training design
 - Supplies: computers / tablets / devices
 - Services: broadband service and digital literacy
- Respond to artificial intelligence (AI)-related job changes and prevent job loss where possible;
- Aligning workforce programs with jobseekers' immediate needs;
- Strengthen coordination with Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) to align reemployment services and eligibility assessment (RESEA) and unemployment insurance (UI) claimant profiling strategies for referrals to the dislocated worker program;
- Adjusting physical service delivery options; and
- Adapting work-based learning opportunities.

Strategies to Expand Supportive Services

The state will award funding to LWIBs that provide enhanced supportive services to help workers overcome barriers to employment. This may require a review of the local supportive service policy and a temporary (or permanent) expansion of the supportive services that are offered. Strategies include:

- Deploy Career Navigators (can include WEX for a displaced worker) to provide individualized guidance, connect dislocated workers to training and supportive services, and accelerate reemployment following layoffs and economic changes;
- Training case managers to be "resource navigators" who identify the appropriate supportive services that are available from all workforce and human service programs;

- Expanding childcare options, especially for workers, by exploring flexibility in eligibility for public funds and WIOA supportive services; and
- Expanding transportation allowances for individuals who must find alternative transportation to work and training.

Strategies to Support Workers in Targeted Industries

The state will award funding to LWIBs that administer pilot programs and innovative interventions focused on serving workers in key industries in the local workforce area.

Strategies include:

- Implementing pilot programs that help restore employment opportunities;
- Support displaced energy workers through alignment with the CEJA Displaced Energy Worker Bill of Rights;
- Offering -industry-recognized training; and
- Providing comprehensive assessments to identify transferable skills to connect job seekers with alternative career pathways.

Strategies to Support Employers

Businesses are vital to the success of the public workforce system as customers, partners, and leaders of the workforce system. Strategies include:

- Business Engagement to connect employers to their immediate needs, including, but not limited to, OSHA and Public Health information, referrals to small business experts, and workforce strategies;
- Incumbent Worker Training projects to help upskill and retain the existing workforce;
- Expanding Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training to place new workers in businesses;
- Convening industry leaders in key sectors to identify the immediate needs and identify solutions from workforce education and economic development partners. Funding would be used to support industry sector partnership activities; and
- Funding for other Layoff Aversion Activities, as appropriate and allowable.

Allowable Activities

LWIBs must utilize funds to support dislocated workers, rapid response, disaster, and layoff aversion activities. Requests must be reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the purpose of this notice.

Program Funding

The Department is expected to award \$2-5 million on the 1E projects. Consideration will be given to the geographic distribution of awards. LWIBs are encouraged to work with regional partners (including, but not limited to, other LWIBs) to streamline the management of projects located in multiple local workforce areas.

Application Submission

LWIBs that request 1E funds to increase the services to job seekers and employers under this notice should submit a completed application electronically to

CEO.OET.Grants@illinois.gov and copy their Office of Employment and Training Regional Manager using the attached application template (Attachment A).

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. LWIAs may consolidate Layoff Aversion projects under one submission to the Department or submit individual projects as soon as an application is completed. At a minimum, a completed application must provide the applicable information listed below:

- The number of employees affected;
- The number of dislocated workers served;
- The number of businesses assisted;
- The number of incumbent workers served;
- A brief profile of the business, including industry, occupation, and physical location(s);
- A brief narrative describing the layoff aversion plan, timeline, and need for funds;
- The amount of funds requested and a brief budget description;
- A commitment of the employer to adhere to the required certifications; and
- Any additional information related to the proposed project, as applicable.

Application Review

A team from the Office of Employment and Training will review the applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all the available funds have been committed. Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Regional and Local Need;
- Impact of the Project; and
 - Number of Dislocated Workers served
 - Number of layoffs avoided
 - Number of Incumbent Workers served
 - The number of businesses assisted
 - Targeted industries and occupations as outlined in the regional plan
 - The economic impact on the community
- Geographic Distribution of Awards.

Reporting Requirements

The outcome measures for these grants include the number of dislocated workers served, jobs saved, estimated annual wages saved, businesses assisted, and other relevant project-specific results. LWIBs will be requested to report program activity and outcomes with the quarterly reports for this grant. Projects that provide incumbent worker training must follow the *State Incumbent Worker Training Policy*, including the *Incumbent Worker Tracking System (IWTS)* reporting requirements.

Fiscal Management and Monitoring

The DOL funds this program, so grantees must follow all applicable WIOA regulations. The funding for this grant will be provided on a reimbursement basis, and pre-award costs will be allowed. All costs must be associated with allowable, eligible layoff aversion activities and must be documented in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards located at 2 CFR Part 200. This grant will be included in the annual monitoring of the Local Workforce Areas by the Office of Employment and Training, as appropriate.

VI. ACTION REQUIRED

Local Workforce Innovation Boards, Local Workforce Area Directors, and Business Service Teams are requested to review this notice, identify layoff aversion projects promptly, with an open willingness to consider and explore innovative approaches to meeting your communities' needs, and submit an application, as appropriate.

VII. INQUIRIES

Inquiries related to this application should be directed to the Office of Employment and Training Regional Managers, Kristen Chevali for the Northern Region at Kristen.I.Chevali@illinois.gov, Ruth Whitis for the Central Region at Ruth.Whitis@illinois.gov, or Bryan Ellis for the Southern Region at Bryan.Ellis@illinois.gov.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This notice is effective upon release.

IX. EXPIRATION DATE

This notice will remain in effect until June 30, 2027.

Sincerely,

Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director
Office of Employment and Training

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Attachment(s): A – PY'26 Rapid Response (1E) Grant Funds Application
 B – PY'26-SFY'27 WIOA 651 Uniform Budget Template
 C – 1E Rapid Response Work Plan Template
 D – PY'26-SFY'27 WIOA 651 Uniform Budget Modification Template