

NORTHWEST GEORGIA - WIOA Disaster Response Plan

Northwest Georgia may sometimes be vulnerable to natural disasters such as tornadoes and flooding. However, there are other forms of disasters like drought, fire or a national pandemic that could have a profound effect on the region's economy. A major disaster or emergency can also cause the loss of an individual's livelihood and impact the local economic infrastructure. Although major natural disasters do not occur every day the workforce system should be prepared to meet the responsibility when they do. Rapid Response funds may be used to plan for disaster response before a disaster strikes.

This plan establishes a process and structure for the systematic, coordinated, and effective delivery of our local and State assistance in response to a major disaster or emergency as required in 20 CFR § 682.330.

A. Disaster Response Agencies

Emergency situations can come in numerous forms and vary greatly in their magnitude. Different types of disasters require a different response. Northwest Georgia's disaster response partners consist of government and non-government agencies and organizations.

Some external agencies include Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMHSA), Chief Elected Officials (CEO), U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL), Chambers of Commerce and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Internal agencies consist of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development (OWD), Workforce Development Boards (WDB), Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA), and WorkSource Georgia offices.

Other partnerships include non-profit and private agencies such as labor and industry organizations, United Way, Goodwill, American Red Cross, Salvation Army and other appropriate organizations.

B. Connectivity and Mobility

Northwest Georgia – WIOA shall maintain an updated list of local contacts, telephone numbers, emails and locations for relief/resource and remedial locations on our website that will allow team member access if the agency servers are down. This list shall be stored at www.careerdepot.org.

C. Communication

In the aftermath of a disaster or emergency situation, the State Rapid Response Team (RRT) and Northwest Georgia - WIOA will reach out to the local jurisdiction to ascertain the impact to the affected area and to determine how the State and Northwest Georgia - WIOA can leverage resources.

Northwest Georgia - WIOA will have at least one cell phone, printer and laptop dedicated to Rapid Response activities which will be housed at the Rome office for any upcoming events. If there is power loss, internet connectivity loss, or damage of cell phone towers, staff shall be prepared to manually register or assist individuals with paper forms if needed. WIOA applications and forms are accessible on the WorkSource Northwest Georgia website at www.careerdepot.org.

Northwest Georgia - WIOA may utilize the existing mobile unit to accommodate customers or for continuation of services in a non-declared disaster event or after GEMHSA is no longer needed. The mobile unit is housed at the Dalton office and is equipped with a generator if electricity is not available. The mobile unit is handicapped accessible.

The State Rapid Response Coordinator (RRC) will work with Northwest Georgia - WIOA to organize meetings to assess the needs and plan appropriate Rapid Response activities and recovery efforts. Additional meetings may be planned to ensure progress and to identify other needs, as appropriate.

As with Rapid Response services in general, coordinated services for an emergency or disaster situation will be customized to meet the specific needs of the affected individuals. In addition, enrolled participants are eligible to receive the full array of workforce development services. Our local area shall plan and facilitate these services.

The disaster response plan shall be disseminated to all team members and partner agencies for review of roles, responsibilities, tasks and reference information when the team is activated.

D. Recovery Assistance

If needed, a coordinated response may include the completion and submission of an application for National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) for discretionary funds. The application must demonstrate that Rapid Response activities have been or are in the process of being carried out, state and local funds have been used to initiate appropriate services to eligible workers and there is a need for additional funds to effectively respond to the needs of affected workers.

Additionally, the application must show that if there has been a declared emergency or natural disaster, the community has demonstrated a need and an application has been developed in conjunction with the CEO in the area of which the proposed project will take place. These grants temporarily expand training and employment services to dislocated workers impacted by unexpected economic events or a natural disaster with the objective to employ laid-off workers and enhance their employability and earning. The objective is to create temporary job opportunities to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts of the affected community. The State or Northwest Georgia - WIOA can apply for NDWG as outlined in TEGl 12-19: *Operational Guidance for National Dislocated Workers Grant*, and Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 32-10: *Revised National Emergency Grant Application Submission and Review Process*.

E. Finance and Grant Administration

Dislocated Worker funds may be used as a gap filler for a NDWG. Activities can be expended as a one hundred per cent (100%) programmatic cost. Funds can also be utilized for additional assistance for events that substantially increase the number of unemployed individuals.

F. Budget Allocations

The Local Workforce Development Area may request Rapid Response funding, if needed, in a separate grant. Separate drawdowns and financial tracking must be completed for these awards. These funds can be used for expenses such as printing of materials to be shared at Rapid Response events, payment of employee time directly related to Rapid Response events, establishment of a transition center with prior WDB approval, employee time dedicated to

collaborating with business and industry to identify potential layoffs and provide information about layoff aversion opportunities, and travel incurred while traveling to and from Rapid Response events. Rapid Response administration funds should not be expended to cover the cost of subsidizing Dislocated Worker events that are already occurring, or to subsidize the other operational duties that staff would generally incur should no Rapid Response event be present within WorkSource Northwest Georgia area.

G. Allowable Costs

Activities provided in response to disaster situations are considered normal Rapid Response activities and should follow the same guidelines for the use of Rapid Response funds.

In the event of a disaster or emergency situation, all items under the normal supportive services are an allowable expense. Some supportive services expenses incurred during previous disasters are safety equipment worn by workers (gloves, steel-toed boots, hard hats, protective goggles, reflective vests and protective overalls), participant wages, case management salaries of staff who performed intake, assessment and placement in addition to other programmatic costs.

Additionally, other allowable expenses have included the salaries of financial services staff, grant management staff and fringe benefits and other costs associated with the day to day operations of the grant and supplies.

H. Emergency Procurement

In the event of an emergency, Northwest Georgia – WIOA may engage in sole source procurement in accordance with OCGA § 50-5-71. Northwest Georgia – WIOA follows all emergency sole source procurement procedures found in the DOAS Georgia Procurement Manual which may be reviewed here:

http://pur.doas.ga.gov/gpm/MyWebHelp/GPM_Main_File.htm.

If WorkSource Northwest Georgia is engaging in sole source procurement in the event of an emergency, then we must follow all applicable emergency procurement guidelines found in 2 CFR 200.320(f) as well as any local procurement procedures applicable to sole source procurement. Northwest Georgia - WIOA should ensure that appropriate documentation is maintained to support the emergency need for the purchase. Documentation should be attached to the receipt/purchase order when submitted for payment. A copy of all purchases should be kept in a file labeled with the grant information number for easy access for future audits along with documentation of need for the purchase.

In the event of a State or FEMA declared emergency, Northwest Georgia - WIOA must confer with the State in order to expedite procurement and expenditure requests which are made in response to identified disaster response activities, if needed.

I. Monitoring

All costs and activities associated with the declared emergency will be monitored by Northwest Georgia – WIOA during the grant period. A temporary case manager will be placed in the county to oversee the applicants and participants and work closely with the WIOA staff. The case manager will take applications, review applications for completeness, schedule appointments for the Intake Worker to interview and approve applicants for work. The case manager will also maintain all applicant/participant files in a secure location. Participants and employers at

temporary worksites will be interviewed by NWGRC workforce staff or a temporary case manager. The employer and the participant will be interviewed by an assigned monitor from NWGRC. The participant's file will be reviewed for accuracy in regard to eligibility being correctly determined. Participant time sheets will be reviewed by the onsite case manager then submitted to NWGRC staff to review and approve for payment. An excel spreadsheet will be kept by NWGRC staff of all expenditures as they occur for future monitoring.

Referrals will be made to colleges for post-secondary training and/or to GDOL for employment assistance prior to the participant's work experience ending.

J. Monitoring

All costs and activities associated with Rapid Response will be monitored by WorkSource Northwest Georgia during the grant period and during the annual on-site monitoring process. WIOA staff, as necessary, will be assigned in the region to oversee the applicants and participants. The staff will provide services through the Northwest Georgia One Stop delivery system. The staff will take applications, review applications for completeness, schedule appointments and approve applicants for services. All participants will be enrolled in WorkSource Georgia Portal. Staff will maintain all applicant/participant files in a secure location.

In the case of a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG), planned fiscal and program monitoring will be conducted by the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development (OWD) accordingly to ensure services and related activities are consistent with the provisions of applicable federal statues, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the grant award letter.