



Technical Assistance Guide
For
Establishing
Adjustment Committees



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PREFACE

Fluctuating economic conditions often result in job loss. Technological innovation and changing markets lead to the termination of products and production lines. Global competition demands greater productivity and profitability. This demand is forcing the businesses to close or restructure as companies raise their performance levels. American jobs are lost as companies aim to be competitive.

As a result, company closings and mass layoffs have become everyday occurrences in the labor market. Industrial changes and innovations mean that workers must acquire new skills, new jobs, and new employers. This cycle of job loss will continue to create challenges for the workforce development system for years. The workforce development system addresses this challenge. This system and the affected workers need advance notice to best meet this challenge.

Advance Notice

The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) generally requires that a company employing 100 or more people give at least 60 days advance notice of a closing or mass layoff. This notice is provided to the affected employees, any union representing the affected employee, the appropriate unit of local government and the State. Smaller employers, although not required, are also encouraged to comply with these requirements.

The 60 day advance notice provides the workers and the workforce development system with time. The workforce development system can use this time to plan services for address the closing or layoff. The workers have time to access services and hopefully become re-employed faster.

The Workforce Investment Act

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires a Rapid Response process. This process sponsors activities to assist dislocated workers in obtaining re-employment as soon as possible after job loss. One method of accomplishing this mission is to create a Labor Management Adjustment Committee. With the assistance of the Rapid Response specialist, such a Committee can support and guide re-employment services on behalf of their fellow workers.

Three premises underlie the WIA Rapid Response legislation:

- Prompt intervention is an important factor in helping workers cope with job loss.
- Adjustment services are more beneficial if they are available to workers before rather than after dislocation.
- Worker adjustment plans are best designed and coordinated with the active involvement of workers directly affected by the job reduction.

This handbook provides the Rapid Response specialist with technical advice on forming and supporting such Committees. These recommendations derive primarily from the results of the Canadian-American plant closing demonstration project conducted from 1986 through 1989 in the United States. These recommendations are amplified with practical information provided by Rapid Response specialists already operating Adjustment Committees.

It should be noted that the recommendations are guidelines only. These guidelines need to be adjusted to accommodate local workforce policy, the skills of the Rapid Response specialist and the circumstances surrounding each closing or mass layoff.

THE COMMITTEE CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION, LEGISLATION AND FUNDING

The Rapid Response system works to promote labor-management cooperation with employers, employees, union and other community partners. This cooperation will help achieve the community goals of securing new jobs quickly for workers.

What is a Committee?

Legal Definition of a committee

A labor-management Committee, voluntarily agreed to by labor and management and has the ability to devise and implement a strategy for assessing the employment and training needs of dislocated workers and obtaining services to meet such needs.

Committees are known by a number of different names. They are commonly referred to as:

- Labor Management Adjustment Committees
- Workforce Reduction Committees
- Workforce Transition Committees
- Transition Teams
- Community Response Teams
- Community Workforce Adjustment Committee
- Joint Workforce Committees

There are three general approaches to establishing Committees. These approaches which are addressed in this Guide have been named Labor Management Adjustment Committees, Community Workforce Adjustment Committees or other names.

For this training manual, the word “Committee” shall be used generically for all of the above referenced terms.

What is the Committee history?

The Canadian Industrial Adjustment Service originally pioneered this concept in Canada. During the late 1980's, this concept was tested at nine sites in the United States. This model worked in union, multi-union, and non-union environments. This process not only helped dislocated workers enter new, productive careers, but also benefits the employer, the union, the community and the state.

One of the strongest benefits noted during the initial exploration was that placement rates could double by using this process. On a US national average, about 30% of the workforce have found new jobs at 6 months after layoff. Using the Committee model, these placement numbers can double with over 60% of the workforce employed 6 months post layoff. One Ohio pilot sight noted an 87% placement rate.

With this data in hand, the committee concept became part of the dislocated worker law and subsequently, is now part of the Workforce Investment Act.

Are Committees supported by legislation?

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) encourages the use of a Labor Management Committee under Title I – Workforce Investment Systems, Subtitle A – Workforce Investment Definitions, Section 101 (38)(C).

The use of Labor Management Committees is not required but is considered a best practice that has been successful in both union and non-union layoff situations. Normally, larger closings (over 50 employees) are likely candidates for a Committee.

Is funding available for Committees?

Committee funding is authorized under WIA Title I in Section 134(a) (2) (A). Ohio uses Rapid Response funds to support the costs of Committee activities. Other sources of financial support for the Committee can include direct funding and/or in-kind services from companies, agencies, organizations and labor unions. In most cases, Committee chairs have been compensated for their work. Committee members usually serve on a voluntary basis, with leave time authorized by the company or in conjunction with the union. Committee members who are laid off may be reimbursed for their incidental costs of transportation etc. for authorized Committee activities.

In some cases, nonprofit organizations or corporations will donate services, underwrite a Committee-sponsored job fair, open house, or luncheon for potential employers, or pick up printing or postage costs. Most employers offer space at the office or plant site where the Committee can meet and worker adjustment services can be provided.

Access to some financial support is an important ingredient for success. Regardless of the amount, funding helps to preserve Committee independence

What does a Committee do?

The Committee guides and develops a comprehensive plan of services for individuals facing layoffs. The Committees introduce resources available from local, State and federal resources to the workers. The workers, company, union and the community all benefit by working cooperatively to plan a comprehensive program. This cooperation maximizes resources available to reduce the layoff effects. Committees also stimulate worker participation in available activities and services. The Committee helps displaced workers make a successful transition to a satisfactory job in the shortest possible time.

Committee Subcommittees

When a worker loses a job, their life is affected in many ways. The worker loses income. This loss prompts the worker to look at their job prospects. As they focus on their job prospects, they must identify how their current education level and skills fit into new jobs. These losses are compounded by the emotional roller coaster for them and their families. Harsh rumors add to this roller coaster experience. Six different factors are impacting the worker transition. These six factors may be summarized into the following areas:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication |

The Committee can bring greater service to these critical areas by establishing subcommittees. Each subcommittee is lead by a Committee member and schedules a series of activities helping to provide information and answers to workers. (See Appendix 21: Suggested Subcommittees)

Employee Surveys

The Committee surveys at-risk or impacted workers (see Appendix 13: Sample Employee Needs Survey). The Committee uses the results of these surveys to prioritize the services. With this information, the Committee works to develop a comprehensive list of activities. Communication with and motivation of the workforce is a vital responsibility of the Committee.

Committee Activities and Goals

Committee activities may include on-site transition centers, job search preparation, job fairs, educational fairs, financial seminars, stress management seminars and assistance. Typically, Committee goals include:

- Define a mission and purpose.
- Provide a mechanism for disseminating factual information and minimizing rumors.
- Collect information on the needs of fellow workers.
- Identify community and financial resources.
- Establish a comprehensive activity plan.
- Sponsor activities.
- Recruit fellow workers to access activities and services.
- Gather feedback on completed activities.
- Provide social support for the workers.
- Track the progress of each affected worker in terms of education, training and new employment.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE?

Over the years, many States and communities have established adjustment Committees. They have identified a number of benefits to establishing adjustment Committees. Some of these benefits include:

- Positive community impact
- More effective use of resources
- Earlier reemployment
- Workers helping workers
- Coordination of services
- Improved labor-management relations
- Increased motivation
- Productivity and morale remain higher

Positive community impact

The drama of major layoffs and plant closings always attracts public attention. The way in which these events are handled will determine if the attention reflects positively on the company, union, community and its elected officials.

A communication plan that includes structured, organized information about the company, union and community resources and benefit packages reduces the disruptions of misunderstandings and rumors.

More effective use of resources

Companies frequently offer severance packages and collective bargaining agreements, which may include training and adjustment assistance resources. Most communities have existing resources for employment and economic development that can be mobilized to attract replacement jobs. Joint planning can help communities bring all of the available resources together to minimize the negative economic impact of plant closings and mass layoffs.

Earlier reemployment

Workers can take advantage of job openings sooner when Committees start reemployment activities quickly. Potentially, workers can also upgrade skills prior to layoff. This fast start may result in greater access to job opportunities.

Workers helping workers

Workers helping workers in planning transition services helps build program acceptance. The Committee members can also discuss service needs with the workers.

Coordination of services

The Committee coordinates resources and activities to ensure the right services are available. An already stressful situation is reduced because workers and community members do not receive confusing and conflicting information about services and activities.

Improved labor-management relations

Working together to solve problems in a positive way reduces labor/management tension. Involvement of affected unions also helps build worker acceptance of programs

Increased motivation

Motivated workers are more likely to participate when they see the company, fellow employees and their community working together to help find new jobs opportunities. This often leads to higher participation rates in projects designed to serve these workers.

Productivity and morale

Affected or impacted companies routinely experience higher absenteeism and decreases in productivity. These conditions can be avoided when Committees sponsor transitional assistance. Higher morale and productivity can also have a direct bearing on workers who remain after a layoff event.

ROLE OF THE RAPID RESPONSE SPECIALIST

The Rapid Response specialist essentially functions as a broker between two parties: 1) the workers and management at the affected organization; and 2) the employment and training system, made up of the public and private service providers who can serve these customers. The challenge is to guide the overall worker adjustment effort in a direction that satisfies the customer while using resources wisely and efficiently.

How do I set up a Committee?

There are resources available to assist in establishing Committees. These resources may be financial or technical assistance. At the State level, the Rapid Response Section can assist you in establishing a Committee. The Rapid Response Section can provide you with the technical assistance and may have financial resources to commit. At the

local level, assistance can be obtained through the Workforce Development Board (WDB) or Workforce Policy Board (WPD).

When does a Committee start and end?

The shorter the time between the announcing of an impending layoff and the last workday, the more critical the need for a Rapid Response. Prolonged unemployment not only reduces a worker's chances of finding a new job; it could also increase anxiety, depression, physical ailments, alcoholism, and family strife. The Committee groundwork must be started long before the dislocation is to take place.

Ideally, the Committee is established as soon as possible after announcement of the impending layoff or closing. The Committee ends when the members agree that the needs of the workers have been met.

NOTE: To be effective, Committees usually require 60-90 days notice prior to the actual layoff.

When do you discuss a Committee?

Committee formation information is presented at the initial meeting with employer and employee representatives. If labor-management relations are unstable (extremely poor, a strike, work slow down, etc.), a Committee would be clearly be counterproductive.

Other factors affecting the Committee!

The Rapid Response specialist should be fully aware of any ongoing collective bargaining negotiations related to the plant closing or layoff. Rapid Response services and resources may have an impact on the negotiation process. This impact may be greater when financial arrangements are related to severance benefits. Wherever possible, Rapid Response staff should be cautious and avoid actions that may influence this negotiation process.

Rapid Response staff are expected to promote the formation of Committees. Staff may provide immediate assistance (including financial assistance) in the establishment of the Committee, a list of potential chairpersons, assistance in the selection of worker representatives where there is no union present, and orientation to Committee members, including group interaction skills training.

Once a Committee has been established, the state may continue to provide technical assistance on the identification of needed services. This assistance may focus on potential service providers, employment and training opportunities and access to other state and local programs. The Committee itself could provide some of the necessary services if it has the capability and resources.

The chief purpose of a Committee is to provide a mechanism for worker input and participation in the design of the services to be delivered. The specialist should be prepared to develop alternative mechanisms for accomplishing the goal of smooth worker transition where a Committee is not appropriate or possible. If a Committee is not formed, another coordination and oversight body could be established by such institutions as the union, the company, or a local community based organization.

Time is another import factor. The most productive Committees have 6 or more months before a layoff or closure. Committees that only have 60 days advance notice must operate quickly and efficiently in order to be meaningful to the workers.

Specific Duties as described in WIA, Rapid Response specialist:

Initial activities include:

- Make the initial contacts with employers and unions or employee associations.
- Explain the services available through the Rapid Response Section.

- ❑ Try to gain agreement on forming a labor-management adjustment committee.
- ❑ Provide specialized expertise on how to form and run a Committee.

Once the principal players in the organization facing a mass layoff or closing agree to form a Committee, the Rapid Response specialist provides technical assistance needed to:

- ❑ Organize the Committee including size and membership and the method for selecting members.
- ❑ Help to identify neutral chair candidates.
- ❑ Orient Committee members to their basic duties and the employment, training, and other social services available from the public and private sectors.
- ❑ Train Committee members in techniques for successful Committee operation, including:
 - Holding employee information meetings.
 - Assessing employee needs.
 - Identifying available services.

Training may also encompass guidance in brainstorming, consensus decision making and other group processes as the Committee starts operating.

Rapid Response Skills

Because the Rapid Response specialist performs varied functions, the person who holds this job must be an expert communicator and network builder. Indeed, the clarity with which the specialist explains a Committee's advantages may determine whether a Committee will be formed at all.

For the Committee effort to be comprehensive in scope, the Rapid Response specialist must also start communicating with key people in the business and labor community and with community leaders even before the need for a Committee arises. In this way, the Rapid Response Section can put together a wide base of support for the Committee. This network can also result in tangible, hands-on support from an array of contributors once the Committees are formed.

The Rapid Response specialist should also have a general understanding of the training and employment services already in place. Knowledge of these services helps the specialist anticipate the services it is feasible for a Committee to offer.

A basic understanding of labor-management relations is also essential. This is especially important at locations where a history of labor-management dispute, or an ongoing negotiation can affect the worker adjustment effort.

The Committee effort will, of course, bring together organizations and individuals with various perspectives on how best to deliver services to dislocated workers. It falls to the Rapid Response specialist, therefore, to take the lead in working out satisfactory arrangements despite turf battles. Finally, the Rapid Response specialist will spend time making certain that the worker readjustment process is meeting Committee goals. Thus, the Rapid Response specialist must also be a good manager, psychologist and diplomat.

What are the challenges of establishing a Committee?

Committee benefits are substantial, proven and well documented. However, these benefits do not come without challenges. Establishing and maintaining a Committee can be both labor and time intensive. Time and resources will be needed for:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ❑ Recruiting and retaining Committee members | ❑ Training on available resources and programs |
| ❑ Finding a neutral chair | ❑ Developing communication mechanisms |
| ❑ Training the Committee in teamwork | ❑ Holding productive Committee meetings |

These challenges can all be overcome through effective communication of the Committee role and knowledge of the benefits gained through having an active Committee.

PREPARE FOR COMPANY CONTACT

Establish a Strategic Plan

The first task facing the Rapid Response specialist is to establish a strategic plan. The plan should identify fiscal and staff resources at the state and local levels. Additionally, the plan must consider both the need and availability of training and education facilities. The plan should outline the circumstances under which the services will be offered and the extent of those services. In this way, the Committee concept can be marketed to specific closing or layoff events.

Assess the Rapid Response Section Resources

Establishing a Committee is typically a relatively intense activity at the front end, which winds down as the worker adjustment effort runs its course. Therefore, in addition to state funds, the full- and part-time staff available to the Rapid Response specialist and their periods of availability will help determine selling a Committee. Other factors, such as travel distances to work sites and meetings with service providers and community leaders, must be considered when determining what assistance the Rapid Response system can offer.

Assess Local Resources

Look at the available social services and funding that might be pulled together on behalf of the Committee mission. Fund and service availability is essential to a Committee's operation.

Availability of a comprehensive job adjustment package including:

- Skill testing and skill assessment
- Career counseling
- Developing job search skills
- Job placement
- Continuing education (such as literacy, GED, and remedial classes)
- Financial management
- Stress management
- Retraining (vocational, technical, on-the-job)

Even before WARN, many agencies (i.e. United Way, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) served dislocated workers and built longstanding relationships in the community. These experienced people can provide the Rapid Response specialist with access to local business, labor leaders, and identify local service providers. They can also provide leadership and financial resources to complement the Committee operation.

Conduct Preliminary Marketing

With the strategic plan in place and state and local resources identified, the Rapid Response specialist can launch a campaign to market Rapid Response services. Such a campaign has three primary components.

1. Identify Key Audiences

Presenting informal presentations to key leaders in the business community can help market the Committee concept. These key people can provide feedback on where the jobs are and suggest available adjustment services. Many of the

organizations they represent also have newsletters through which timely information can flow to and from their members. The Rapid Response Specialist can make luncheon speeches to keep businesses informed on the importance of management involvement in worker adjustment programs and solicit participation in the program.

Among the Audiences to Reach are:

- ❑ Area labor-management Committees, which have direct ties to companies and unions in the community.
- ❑ Labor organizations at the national, state, and local levels, which can reach workers at specific sites and be particularly effective at identifying jobs that match the skills and experience of specific groups of workers.
- ❑ Trade and civic organizations with business members. The local Chamber of Commerce is probably the most important business representative in the community. Many business people are also individual members of such service organizations as the rotary and Kiwanis clubs.
- ❑ Community organizations like the United Way will be interested to learn how they might work with a Committee to keep a major worker dislocation from threatening community infrastructure.
- ❑ Professional associations, which keep members abreast of developments in their fields. The Society for Human Resource Management, for example, can provide information on Committees to experts in the areas related to worker dislocation, retraining, and outplacement.
- ❑ Educational institutions, particularly community colleges, which must keep a finger on the economics pulse of the community so their curricula can respond to local needs. These institutions can advise on the kinds of classes needed by new employers and then set up appropriate programs.
- ❑ The local workforce board and Governor's Workforce Policy Board, which can get the Committee message out to their constituents - the business, labor, employment and training communities.
- ❑ State and local economic development agencies, which work to attract new businesses to the area and have a grasp of the job opportunities on the horizon.

2. Sell the Committee to the Company and Workers

The Committee process, of course, should be tailored to the specific audience being addressed. For example, in some cases it may be necessary to reassure an audience that the Committee will not only complement their work but also further their organizations' objectives. One vital ingredient – the Rapid Response specialist must present only services that the Rapid Response system can realistically deliver. This information should be presented persuasively, fairly, clearly, and above all consistently. In this way, the Rapid Response Section can build trust, credibility, and understanding between employers and workers and within the community.

3. Selling Points for the Employer and Union

Building on success is a time-honored marketing technique. The Rapid Response specialist can provide assurance about the ultimate results of the Committee. Employer and union selling points include:

- ❑ **The Committee expedites basic worker readjustment services.** Through in-plant oversight and personal involvement, the Committee speeds outplacement, reduces time lost from work, and minimizes income loss. By reducing the length of time that workers need to receive unemployment benefits, the Committee also benefits the employer. Employers pay taxes pegged to these benefits. Additionally, the state and federal governments are the beneficiaries of income and other taxes paid by a working population. The community also benefits when workers spend money in the local economy.

- ❑ **The Committee organizes the outplacement activity.** By overseeing and managing outplacement and readjustment, the Committee permits managers and workers to concentrate on the other activities that have to be handled when mass layoffs take place or offices and plants close down.
- ❑ **The Committee promotes a healthy employee-employer environment.** By fostering cooperation during a closing or mass layoff, the Committee becomes a hallmark of the way a community's business, labor, and community organizations can pull together in a crisis. Such a symbol of local responsibility and cooperation is attractive to prospective businesses and investors.
- ❑ **The Committee helps maintain productivity.** Productivity and quality can drop when morale drops. As a visible expression of commitment to the future of affected workers, the Committee helps to sustain morale and reduces negative acts by discouraged workers.
- ❑ **The Committee serves as communication forum.** The Committee provides a forum for labor and management to discuss and develop outplacement strategies and reach consensus on the best approaches. The Committee also provides a central information source about jobs, training opportunities and related concerns and a source of reliable information to dispel rumors and provide answers to individual questions.
- ❑ **The Committee coordinates service to the worker.** The Committee can establish partnerships with local organizations and marshal resources in a comprehensive worker adjustment response. It can also serve as liaison between workers and service providers and as a focal point for planning the next step and keeping workers informed of services.
- ❑ **The Committee personalizes services.** The Committee provides a case management approach to retraining and outplacement. Each worker's needs and interests are assessed. The worker then selects services to meet those needs. Assistance is thus tailored to individual circumstances.
- ❑ **The Committee is the right thing to do.** Plant and office closings and mass layoffs pose a great hardship to both labor and management. A cooperative effort to relieve the effects of dislocation is a positive and responsible approach to share adversity.

STARTING THE COMMITTEE

The WARN notification is the formal notice that a company or organization is planning a mass layoff or closing. However, the Rapid Response Section should not rely exclusively on the WARN system. Experience shows that efficient readjustment of large numbers of workers requires more than the 60-day notice called for in the WARN act. If the Rapid Response specialist has carefully built the information network, news of impending worker displaced can reach the Rapid Response Section before the formal WARN notice is in the mail.

Once the Rapid Response specialist gets word, whether officially or by keeping an ear to the ground, that a layoff or closing is being considered, a number of preliminary steps should be taken prior to making a personal visit to the plant or office.

Verify the Job Loss

Every hint that a closing or layoff is possible should be verified. Some firms file notices "just to be on the safe side" and then modify or even withdraw them. A telephone call to the employer will help clarify the situation. Where a rumor or unofficial notice has come to the Rapid Response Section's attention, the Rapid Response specialist can turn to a number of excellent sources of information. In addition to the rumor mill and the newspapers, the Rapid Response specialist will find that the following sources can usually provide a good idea of what is in the wind:

- ❑ Chamber of commerce
- ❑ Unemployment Benefit and Labor Exchange Representatives

Workforce boards (State and Local)

State and local union officials and employee associations

Local government officials

In verifying the loss of jobs, several facts should be clarified:

1. How serious is the rumor or notice?
2. How imminent is the closing?
3. How many workers are affected?
4. Who are the key people -including managers and union or other employee leaders?
5. Who should be contacted about forming a Committee if dislocation does take place?
6. What are the workforce characteristics?

Re-evaluate Resources

Since overall resources may vary from one time to the next, each closing or mass layoff should spark a reevaluation of local resources currently available. This second determination of available support should also take into account the amount of time before final layoff. Some organizations have employee severance packages that include severance pay plus training. Many labor unions also make training and referral services available to members who are losing their jobs.

Evaluate the Labor-Management Environment

Committees sell in environments where labor and management have a history of cooperation and mutual respect. Before introducing a Committee into a layoff situation, the Rapid Response specialist should find out:

1. Is the organization involved in collective bargaining negotiations?
2. If a union is present, has the relationship between union and management been cooperative?
3. If there is no union, are there established employee organizations that have worked cooperatively with management?

Each organization has its own corporate culture, that is, a set of standards, beliefs, and relationships that exist outside the official organizational structure. This unique culture governs the way the organization “really works.” Aware that organizations have this dual both formal and informal structure, the Rapid Response specialist will want to have several questions answered before going on-site:

1. Who are the key officials in the organization? What do they know about labor-management relations? What are their basic attitudes toward such relations?
2. What do the key officials believe to be the respective employer and union responsibilities for employee outplacement?
3. Who are the real opinion leaders, whether official or unofficial, within the organization?
4. What is the best approach to take when trying to sell the idea of a Committee in this particular environment?
5. Are there pitfalls to avoid when selling the Committee idea to this organization?
6. Are there key people in the organization who should be involved in accepting the Committee concept?

MAKE THE INITIAL CONTACT & PRESENTATION

Once a plant or office has been selected as a potential Committee site, the Rapid Response specialist will prepare to make a presentation to the employer on the benefits of a Committee. The interested employer may then bring in worker representatives to meet, where they can learn about the type of services that the Rapid Response Section can make available during the dislocation and the type of assistance the Committee can offer.

In deciding whom to contact and when, the Rapid Response specialist should be guided by the attitudes or advice of the managers and labor representatives at the affected worksite. For example, the Rapid Response specialist may learn that the manager at a local plant is not the final decision-maker. Only after consultation with local management officials, the specialist would make contact with either the chief corporate official at company headquarters or the person designated in the WARN notice.

A similar approach should be made to the local union leadership. If it becomes necessary to get in touch with higher officials in the union structure at the state or national level, such contacts should be made after consultation with the local community.

The marketing approach must be adjusted for a meeting of the employer and employee representatives. In preparing for this presentation, the Rapid Response specialist must be particularly sensitive to the pressures on everyone. In many cases, the entire workforce is being laid off including the Chief Executive Officer, managers and workers. Even while experiencing the personal trauma of dislocation, everyone will continue to fill work orders while preparing for shutdown or cutback. In general, the Committee benefits will be attractive to employees and management alike:

The Committee can help reduce administrative burdens. Frequently organizations do not have personnel who can be assigned to manage the dislocation while carrying on normal operations. Even those firms with a large human resources staff may lack the expertise to handle a dislocation effort. The Committee, however, can assume the administrative and management functions associated with retraining and outplacement.

The Committee can help maintain productivity. Maintaining productivity is in the interest of both management and workers. As communication forum and rumor control, the Committee can address directly and immediately employee concerns. The Committee also stands for a corporate commitment to workers - a commitment that can help sustain morale. Both factors improve productivity, reduce absenteeism, minimize employee errors and reduce deliberate acts of sabotage.

The Committee can help preserve corporate and union images. A cooperative employer-employee response tailored to the needs of workers projects a responsible image that organizations need to retain and attract employees for the remaining operation and that unions need to maintain their strength.

The Committee can help reduce worker's compensation claims. Maintaining worker morale reduces the incidence of on-the-job accidents, in turn reducing worker compensation claims.

GAIN AGREEMENT FOR A COMMITTEE

At the initial meeting, management and labor representatives should enter into a simple, written agreement that sets forth the Committee duties and responsibilities, as well as those of the employer, employee representatives, and Rapid Response Section to the Committee mission. The purpose is to establish a climate of understanding, trust, and consensus. A speedy decision is particularly critical when the lead-time is compressed.

Appendix 3 sample: Agreement to establish a Committee. At a minimum, the agreement should specify the goals of the Committee and obligations of each party. The following elements should be incorporated.

Financial support: The agreement should establish the mix and level of financial support that will be made available to the Committee by the parties and the state Rapid Response Section. The amount will be determined in large part by decisions on whether the chair will be paid and the scope of the chair duties. Some agreements also spell out the other resources -such as equipment, facilities, and staff the employer, employee representatives, and Rapid Response system will make available to the Committee.

Status of the Committee: The agreement should include the understanding that the Committee will represent both labor and management. To underscore the Committee's independence from conflicting pressures, the agreement should also state unequivocally that the Committee will not participate in or be the subject of collective bargaining and that it will cease operations during any collective bargaining negotiations.

Neutral chair: To avoid the possibility or appearance of a conflict of interest, the agreement should specify that the chair will not be affiliated with the company or union. In some minor cases, retired managers or union officials may become applicants with full Committee agreement.

Using a neutral chairperson has proved the most effective way for establishing Committee independence and ensuring impartiality in meetings. This neutral role is especially helpful where the labor-management relationship has not been harmonious or substantial distrust between workers and management exists.

ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE

Once an agreement has been reached to form a Committee, the Rapid Response specialist, in consultation with both management and worker representatives, begins the task of organizing the Committee. The first decisions to be made are determining the size of the Committee, the method for selecting members, the Committee structure, setting goals and selecting the chair.

DETERMINE COMMITTEE SIZE AND MEMBERSHIP

Two principles guide the size and balance of the Committee membership. First, the Committee should provide representation for all shifts and employee organizations. Second, any imbalance in membership that is deemed necessary should be in the direction of employee representation.

The Committee usually includes five employer and five union (employee) representatives plus one neutral chair. Alternates should be identified to back-up members who will locate employment, enter training or leave the Committee for other reasons.

How does the Committee select a neutral chair?

The method for selecting the chair and defining the chair's duties varies from Committee to Committee. The best practice is to allow Committees to recruit, screen and interview chair candidates (See Appendix 9: Sample Neutral Chair Interview Questions). This selection process affords the Committee an opportunity to select from a larger candidate pool. As with all WIA expenditures, services must be procured in accord with Federal requirements. This process meets any small purchase requirements, and local procurement requirements.

Who serves on the Committee?

A Committee typically has equal numbers of management (company) and labor (employee) representatives, chaired by a neutral third party. The Committee model is flexible and can be structured to meet local needs. Although equal representation is recommended, Committees have been successful with unequal representation. Management and labor representatives choose their individual Committee members. The whole Committee selects the neutral chair.

In a non-union company, workers should be involved in the process. In a non-union setting, management or workers may select Committee members. Employees may volunteer to be Committee members on behalf of their fellow employees. The company can usually identify the formal and informal leaders who can represent workers in such a situation. Selected employees are those who are generally involved in leadership or team building activities. As with other aspects of a Committee, processes may be adapted to suit local needs.

Ex officio status is usually accorded to a representative from the WIA administrative entity (the agency receives dislocated worker funds), Unemployment Insurance representative, labor exchange representative, the local workforce board and other local providers. There are no fixed rules, however.

Select Members

Labor and management each select their own representatives. Some union plants have an established process for electing representatives to labor-management Committees. If no union mechanism is available, an election may be appropriate. In some instances, it may be best for employees to ask their colleagues to volunteer for Committee service. Alternates should also be selected to replace Committee members who leave. The Rapid Response specialist is an ex-officio member of the Committee, serving as a staff support person and technical resource. As such, he or she should attend meetings.

The Rapid Response specialist can draw on the experience of other Committees to advise the Committee, on the type of people best suited for Committee service. It is most important, for example, that Committee members

come from the work site being affected and that they themselves be scheduled for layoff. Nobody has a greater interest in finding a job; indeed, the ability to mobilize that self-interest is a major reason for Committee effectiveness.

Train Committee Members

Orienting Committee members to their task can take many forms. Orientation tasks start with delivering basic information on Committee responsibilities and graduate to teambuilding skills. The nature and extent of the orientation will depend on the experience of the Committee members and the time available to both the Committee members and the Rapid Response specialist.

Nuts and Bolts: Members should be advised on the essential purpose of their work, the tasks to be performed, the support available from the Rapid Response Section, and the components of the local training and employment system.

The Committee members will speak with other workers. Therefore, they need to understand the requirements for receiving One Stop and WIA services, especially training requirements.

Specific Objectives: The Committee has a broadly defined mission and the labor-management agreement has set some Committee goals. Each Committee should further refine their mandate with objectives that reflect their particular situation. Defining specific Committee objectives also helps the Committee members understand their work better, gives them ownership over the worker adjustment process they are about to launch, and starts the team-building process.

Committee Structure: Committee members are themselves in the throes of job dislocation. Committee activities including developing worker adjustment procedures, keeping in touch with workers, and helping find new jobs are time-consuming activities. During orientation, the Committee decides on the best way to carry out its work in the face of all these obligations. Small Committees can usually be all-purpose in nature; larger Committees may decide to organize themselves into the suggested subcommittees that concentrate on specific tasks.

Qualifications for the Chair: During orientation, Committee members also develop a list of criteria for selecting a chair and another of the qualifications they would like the chair to bring to the task. Among the qualities to look for is proven business acumen, along with organizational, interpersonal and facilitating skills. The chair should also be able to work in a climate requiring consensus decision making. Many Committee members may be new to group decision making, so the chair should be skilled at drawing everyone into discussion and deliberation.

Familiarity with local employers and labor markets is highly desirable. And because many Committee members leave the Committee once they find work and therefore must be replaced, the chair must be prepared to stay the course.

The chair conducts the Committee meetings, provides leadership, serves as chief Committee spokesperson and otherwise conducts the business of the Committee. Meetings are held as often as needed, and the chair, in consultation with the Committee members, sets each meeting agenda and organizes meetings in response to the difficulty 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. (See Appendix:

Select a chair

The next order of Committee business is selecting the neutral chair. Numerous sources can be drawn upon. Sometimes the Rapid Response specialist does the legwork, advertising the job, screening applicants, and developing a list of candidates; the Committee then selects from this list for interviewing.

Local business organizations are sources for prospective Committee chairs. Such organizations include the Senior Core of Executives, Chamber of Commerce, Area Labor-Management Committees, and local chapters of

professional and trade associations. Local elected officials have also served as neutral Committee chairs. Similarity, retired union officials can suggest candidates themselves.

Committee members themselves may be valuable sources of information about potential candidates. Former members of other Committees have also proven to be valuable chairs, bringing to the job specific experience in the operation of a Committee and the worker adjustment process.

The local employment and training system can also be tapped for candidates. Of particular interest are members of the Governor's Workforce Policy Board and local workforce boards, provided they are not also affiliated with a service provider. Their knowledge of available job adjustment programs can be of special utility in the job of the chair.

EMPLOYEE CONTACT AND NEEDS SURVEY

Hold the first employee meeting

Once the Committee has completed its orientation, set out its goals and selected a neutral chair then a meeting with the affected employees is scheduled. The Committee may distribute a letter, which introduces the Committee and invites workers to attend the meeting. (See Appendix 11: Sample Model First Notice to Employees).

The meeting will inform employees of Committee goals, introduce the chair, and explain the survey (discussed below). All workers should leave the meeting aware of the advantages of a Committee.

The Rapid Response specialist helps the Committee organize and conduct the meeting. At the meeting, the Rapid Response specialist stands ready to provide attendees with technical information. This information may include an overview of WIA; eligibility for unemployment benefits, welfare payments, and food stamps; and services offered by such agencies as the Veterans Administration, the Small Business Administration, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The employee meeting should be held at a time and place convenient to employees. If several shifts are going to be affected by the dislocation, a number of meetings may be needed, preferably all held on the same day to reduce the possibility of misinterpretations being spread among shifts and proliferating.

Conduct the employee survey

One of a Committee advantages is the ability to provide services to each impacted employee. An employee survey can help lay the groundwork for this case management approach. Such a survey should, at a minimum, establish the skill and education levels of the workers; identify their concerns about the dislocation; their interests, and their plans for future employment; and ascertain the job adjustment services they want. (Appendix 13: Sample Survey).

The Committee should make every attempt to get every affected worker to complete a survey. Suggestions for gaining 100-percent participation include:

- Have workers hand in completed surveys when they pick up their paychecks.
- Ask workers to fill out and submit surveys at the employee meeting; this will allow the Committee to identify those who may have problems with reading and writing.
- Get the needed data by personally contacting anyone who does not return a survey.

PROVIDING WORKER READJUSTMENT SERVICES

Using the results of the employee survey, the Committee can lay out the number of workers who will need each kind of service.

As the Committee moves on to its primary purpose - providing readjustment services-the Rapid Response specialist remains personally available to provide expertise to the Committee.

The Committee usually needs assistance with customization of the survey, media relations, and newsletter development. Rapid Response specialist continuity supports the Committee's ongoing operations.

Identify available services.

The Rapid Response specialist can help Committee members identify the appropriate outplacement and training providers.

The Committee can then choose from among the interested providers, preferably selecting several vendors to get the mix of services workers want. For example, workers with less than a high school education may look forward to earning a high school diploma and thereby improving their job prospects. Other workers may choose to concentrate on sharpening job-seeking skills to find jobs as soon as possible.

Supplement the services.

Since the Committee is by and large a peer group, its members are in a particularly good position to be empathetic. They can also help affected workers cope with many of the problems triggered by job loss. Committee members frequently become involved in:

Job search: Frequently, Committee members will involve themselves actively in the job search effort. Members can scour the newspaper and also draw on their own business and union contacts to seek out jobs in both the visible and hidden labor markets.

Handing out brochures explaining the work of the Committee, getting media coverage of Committee progress and placing ads in local newspapers and magazines are also useful ways to uncover job sources. So are such special events as a job fair or open house where job seekers and potential employers can meet face to face.

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

Denial is the normal response of some workers to dislocation. Thus an important aspect of the counseling function is to continue to offer help to those who initially reject the program.

Information dissemination: A primary function of the Committee is to serve as a central point for worker information. Bulletin board notices, fliers, and special mailings are good ways to supplement personal outreach with written information. Many Committees use company and union newsletters to boost moral with reports of success stories and to provide information about job opportunities. Most Committees issue their own newsletters. Because job dislocation is a family problem, all communications should view the entire family, not just the worker, as the audience.

Meet to review the program

Each Committee should schedule meetings as needed. The primary focus at the meetings is determining just how well the program is going. The Rapid Response specialist goes to 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 and worker evaluation on each of the services provided. Ongoing review provides for timely correction of program deficiencies. One Committee, for example, sponsored a special "golden opportunities" seminar after noticing the low participation of older workers in its program. Appendix 26: Sample Employee Tracking Form.

At Committee meetings, subcommittees will make status reports, particularly on those actions specifically recommended at the prior meeting. The Committee will want to go on record with any changes needed in the services provided, including instructions to subcommittees.

Close out

The Committee nears the completion of its job when the members decide that as many affected workers as possible have been placed in jobs or retrained. In some instances, a Committee may cease operation when members agree that its effectiveness has been exhausted. If necessary, the Committee should remain in operation after the plant or office closing to continue to provide services.

The chair is responsible for the final tasks, including closing out the finances and filing a report with the state Rapid Response Section. Each state may specify the information to be provided in this final report, particularly for use in future Committee efforts, but at a minimum the report should be a complete summary of the worker adjustment process, including services provided problems encountered, and placement rates.