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## **Iowa's Layoff Aversion Project...**

### ***A Getting Ahead of the Curve Demonstration Project***

**What is layoff aversion?** The United States Department of Labor's Dislocated Worker Initiative believes in the principle of "prevention of layoffs whenever possible".

The Layoff Aversion Guide developed as a project of the Pennsylvania Steel Valley Authority and sponsored by the United States Department of Labor defines layoff aversion as: **working with employers to avert or minimize layoffs by assisting them in accessing funding, services and other appropriate resources through public agencies which affect business operations.**

Layoff Aversion involves a continuum of services: 1) assisting communities in better assisting employers in preventing layoffs and enhancing the value of workers in their current jobs; 2) working with employers to avert or minimize layoffs by assisting them in accessing funding, services and other appropriate resources through public agencies; and 3) assisting those workers who have been laid off by *shortening* the length of time before they start working their next job.

Iowa is one of two states in the country to receive funding for a new demonstration project from the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration in July 2008. The project is for approximately \$1.99 million and extends through June 30, 2011.

The grant project has three main goals:

1. To develop an "early warning system" for tracking declining industries and businesses in Iowa that is replicable in other workforce agencies and is sustainable beyond the grant funding of 2011.
2. To enhance the value of Iowa's workers in their current jobs while positioning them to acquire the skills upgrading necessary for global competitiveness of Iowa's businesses and industries.
3. To develop a regional system of community partners including state and local government, economic development and businesses, community health and social service organizations and faith-based communities to strategically deploy regional assets to support industry transformation and workers to ensure successful transitions into new occupations and industries.

The ***reverse side of this fact sheet*** outlines how Iowa Workforce Development is moving toward meeting the second goal of the project. For additional information regarding the project contact:

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## **Iowa's Business Engagement and Worker Training Requirement Strategies**

**The purpose** of the Business Engagement Strategy and Worker Training Requirement:

- Support the development of partnerships and business engagement strategies that ultimately result in these workers receiving competency-based training
- This will allow individuals to quickly adapt to changes in their current occupation or industry
- Or move to new industries should their current environment no longer present viable career options

**Iowa's strategies** for business engagement and subsequent worker training opportunities should include:

- Collaborating to develop strategies to raise the education and skill levels of the current workforce
- Outreach to affected businesses and industries
- Layoff aversion
- Increasing worker productivity
- Positioning workers to advance in their current careers
- **Must** also include training to support a worker's potential need to transition to other occupations if the industry or business is no longer viable (e.g., John Deere's willingness to train temporary laid off workers in welding in anticipation of a potential need to transition to a welding position within John Deere in the future)

**Iowa's training strategies** employed to upgrade worker's skills should be designed to:

- Meet employers' critical skill needs
- Enhance the employers' ability to avoid layoffs
- Position workers to advance in their current careers while increasing worker productivity
- Support workers potential need to transition to other occupations if their job is no longer viable
- Provide workers with updated transferable skills to enhance their ability to transition to other occupations and/or careers
- Solution: Explore career lattices based on competencies

**Training efforts should be concentrated to:**

- Include those industries that have been in decline for the past decade:
  - Traditional manufacturing
  - Textiles
  - Furniture production
  - Tobacco
- Transforming industries that require new skill sets such as
  - information technology
  - advanced manufacturing
- Can also make the case in Iowa's project for non-traditional industries that are in decline or transforming that are specific to our state:
  - Bio-engineering
  - Wind energy
  - Other alternative forms of energy

**Who is eligible for training under this project? Incumbent Workers are the eligible participants for training under this project.** Incumbent workers are those individuals who are currently-employed *whose employers have determined* that the workers require training in order to help keep their firms competitive and the subject workers employed, avert layoffs, upgrade workers' skills, increase wages earned by employees and/or keep workers' skills competitive. Incumbent workers also include those workers in a layoff with recall rights when an employer has provided a date for anticipating when workers will be recalled to work.