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# Best Practice Fact Sheet – Workforce Development

## PEER TO PEER PROGRAM - Michigan

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### Program

- Description:** Ongoing Informational services offered to employees who are laid off or who have received notice of layoff to help them understand the process. Services are provided by a peer who is paid by the Peer to Peer program.
- Target Population:** Employees who have received a notice of imminent layoff or possible layoff
- Goal:** Help employees understand the process of layoff, access community resources and link to training services or dislocated worker programs through the use of a peer who has also been laid off, understands the process, and is paid to help through the Peer to Peer Program. The Program goal is to link 80% of workers with assistance.
- Cost:** Budget for fiscal year 2010-\$430,000; Budget for fiscal year 2009 (\$1,000,000)-all WIA funds
- Evidence:** Descriptive Material (Internet Research)-per contact, results of participation not tracked
- Caseload Data:** Ratio of 1 Peer to 150 dislocated workers
- Assessment:** No assessment or screening conducted since this program is voluntary for laid off/dislocated workers
- Services Overview:**
- The Peer to Peer program is operated by the private non-profit organization Michigan State AFL-CIO Human Resources Development, Inc. This corporation also operates other programs that provide employment and training services to unemployed state residents.
  - Federal rules require large companies (100+ employees) to issue a WARN Notice when it is planning to lay off more than 50 workers in a 30-day period. The WARN notice provides 60-day advance notice of covered plant closings and layoffs to workers and communities.
  - When a WARN notice goes out, the Michigan state government pulls together a Rapid Response Team. Members include the Rapid Response Workforce Consultant and representatives from the local Michigan Works Agency offices (e.g. WorkSource), Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, HRDI and other community partners. The Rapid Response Team meets with the company heads and union representatives to gather basic facts about the demographics and skills of the workers who are facing layoff.
  - A company facing the imminent layoff of workers may opt to participate in the Peer to Peer program. If so, it will recommend representatives from those who are being laid off and refer them to the Peer to Peer program to act as trained peers for their fellow employees. (Management representatives for management being laid off and union representative for union members being laid off.) The Peer to Peer program pays these individuals and will provide training for them at no cost to the employer.
  - Under the Peer to Peer program, trained peers (fellow employees who are also being laid off) provide orientation on layoff procedures and help dislocated workers who are ending a job obtain resources including: employment services, WIA funded dislocated worker services, Trade Adjustment Assistance (if applicable), Layoff aversion services (if applicable), community resources and other government benefits.
  - Training lasts about 1 day, and once the Peer is trained, they begin organizing informational workshops for individuals pending job loss. Individuals interested in working with the Peer will set up a one on one meeting to work with the Peer to help with the accessing of services.

- The individual can schedule as many meetings as necessary with the peer and follow up until all questions are answered and issues are resolved. (HRDI typically writes contracts for 160 hours per site, but has when necessary extended the Peer contract up to 320 hours).
- Throughout the contract period, a Peer will work with a HRDI Peer Supervisor should a more complex issue arise that the Peer is not trained for or more comprehensive assistance is needed navigating programs and resources available.
- Initially, the Peer to Peer program primarily served manufacturing businesses. The program is now primarily working with public sector layoffs.

#### **Eligibility:**

- Participant must be a dislocated worker who has received notice of layoff or pending unemployment.
- No minimum requirement of staff layoff (can be 10 people or 1000), any company can request Peer to Peer assistance.
- No means tested eligibility.

#### **Findings:**

Data available through internet research and contact w/ HRDI Peer to Peer Administrator descriptive statements

- From January 2007 to January 2008 37 companies participated in the Peer to Peer training program; 15,526 workers were affected by the 63 state Rapid Responses and 11,710 workers were served by the Peer to Peer program

#### **Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:**

- No studies research data available tracking the implementation and success of peer to peer employment programs
- The Peer to Peer program works best when the workers have a representative they can relate to that is typically going through or has already gone through the process. It lends to the credibility of the information source, workers don't feel that someone is feeding them a line.
- Workers who worked with the Peer to Peer program were more likely to get engaged in services than those who did not participate in the program.

#### **References:**

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[www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov)

[www.hrdi.org](http://www.hrdi.org)

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