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# Rapid Response

Helping businesses and workers during and after a layoff

## The Rapid Response Program

Rapid Response is a program to assist workers facing job loss due to downsizing or closures. Rapid Response can assist in a layoff of any size business or any number of employees. When an employer must lay off workers, there are several steps to take in order to address the needs of the affected workers and the community.

The Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) can advise and assist employers with information about their rights, responsibilities and obligations during such an event. The goal of the program is to safeguard the economic stability of workers and the surrounding community.

The MDOL Bureaus of Labor Standards, Employment Services, and Unemployment Compensation will work together to provide the support and information necessary for employers to act promptly and with confidence. Visit [www.doleta.gov/layoff/rapid.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/layoff/rapid.cfm) for more information.

## WorkShare

**Considering a layoff?** The WorkShare program helps businesses keep trained workers during a temporary downturn, and helps workers stay connected to jobs and maintain their skills. Employees of the business collect a partial unemployment benefit to offset the loss of income. Applications for WorkShare must be filed by the employer.

Visit [www.maine.gov/labor/unemployment/workshare/](http://www.maine.gov/labor/unemployment/workshare/) for more information.

## Community Assistance

A sudden downsizing or closure of a business can be a devastating blow to the affected community and surrounding regions. Many communities in Maine have faced such a situation. Those who have managed the crisis with the most success are those who respond early and pull together as a community.

Forming a local Community Transition Team has been an extremely helpful step in some communities. The activities of this team can complement the services and activities available from the State of Maine.

## COBRA

Workers who lose their health insurance when they are laid off are usually entitled to continue their coverage for up to 18 months at their own expense. The employer should notify workers of their option of COBRA within two weeks of the termination of their employer-paid coverage. The employee has 60 days to decide whether or not he/she wants continued coverage, and another 45 days to begin making payments.

For additional Health Insurance options, contact Consumers for Affordable Health Care at: [www.mainecahc.org](http://www.mainecahc.org)

## Unemployment Compensation

An individual, including a corporate officer, is considered unemployed in any week that wages are not payable and during which the individual does not perform services. Reduced unemployment benefits may be paid if the individual is working less than full-time.

For more information on unemployment benefits in Maine, visit: [www.maine.gov/unemployment/claimants/](http://www.maine.gov/unemployment/claimants/)

Employers can use the department's no-cost, easy and fast online reporting service to respond to requests for separation information regarding your layoffs or business closure by opening an online account. For more information visit: [www.maine.gov/unemployment/employers/](http://www.maine.gov/unemployment/employers/)



## For more information

Rapid Response Statewide Coordinator  
RapidResponse.DOL@maine.gov  
207-215-6677 | 207-623-7981  
TTY users call Maine Relay 711



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

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.