COVID-19 Virtual Rapid Response

The workplace as we know it has changed. As the Rural North State adapts to the “new normal,” Alliance for Workforce Development’s essential services are a lifeline to regional businesses and workers struggling to find footing in an uncertain labor market. Among these critical services is the Rapid Response program.

Rapid Response is a proactive, business-focused program to assist companies and workers facing potential layoffs or plant closures. Rapid Response teams provide early intervention assistance to avert potential layoffs, and immediate on-site services to assist workers facing job losses. This process is normally triggered when a business issues a WARN (Workforce Adjustment and Retraining Notification) notice. The California WARN Act is a regulation that requires employers to provide workers and local government officials with at least 60 days notice before a mass layoff, plant closure or a major relocation. Normally, this notice gives our Rapid Response team time to conduct an on-site visit to assist both the business and employees. However, due to the unprecedented scale of the lay-offs, and the prohibitions of the isolation order, AFWD management sought a solution that was both virtually accessible and broadly available.

AFWD staff developed a virtual presentation to provide affected workers information and guidance on navigating a lay-off. We leveraged our relationships with county Social Service providers and the EDD, to provide information on resources and programs available in each of the counties we serve. In an effort to reach as many people as possible, invitations were sent to local employers, emailed to all job seekers in our applicant pool and advertised on all of our social media channels.

In addition to providing information on AFWD services and current job leads, the Virtual Rapid Response webinars included an overview of the Unemployment Benefits Application process, and information on county assistance programs such as CalFresh, CalWorks, MediCal, and General Relief. AFWD staff also provided information on various local resources for housing, utility payments and food assistance. All attendees were provided with a list of local resources complete with phone numbers and websites. The webinars for each of our service counties are now posted to our website, as are the links to state, county, and nonprofit assistance programs at [www.afwd.org](http://www.afwd.org).

“Thank you AFWD for this webinar and for answering my questions. The information was very helpful.” – David, webinar attendee.
AFWD Responds to Community Needs

Across the nation, service providers in the public and nonprofit sectors are working to help communities weather the social, economic, and public health impacts of COVID-19. In Nevada County, Alliance for Workforce Development is proud to assist this effort by providing labor to local government agencies and nonprofits in their pandemic mitigation efforts.

At the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, AFWD applied for a regional grant from the $17.8 million in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds authorized by Governor Newsom for COVID-19 workforce recovery purposes. This Additional Assistance funding allows AFWD to support Dislocated Workers in gaining temporary wages and work experience in jobs that serve the added function of benefitting the community response to the pandemic. As a requirement of the grant, the placements were to be limited to jobs that aided the community response to the pandemic, and were within a governmental agency or registered nonprofit.

In April, AFWD Business Service Staff began reaching out to local government agencies and nonprofits, to develop worksites for our enrolled Work Experience participants. Using our strong network of government and nonprofit partners, we were able to identify worksites with the County of Nevada Facilities, Public Health, Public Works, and the Foothill House of Hospitality. At these sites, workers enrolled in our COVID-19 Additional Assistance Work Experience (WEX) Program will be providing a variety of services including sanitation of public spaces and government buildings, reorganizing public spaces to allow for social distancing guidelines, providing food and other resources in a drive up distribution center, and assisting medical staff in a COVID-19 Testing Site. In addition to providing these invaluable services to their communities; the participants will be earning a sustainable wage for the duration of the placement, and gaining valuable work experience that will help them transition to their next job.

Steven Rose, County of Nevada Director of Human Resources, and Danny Newlon, County of Nevada Intern Coordinator, described how the WEX Program has benefited Nevada County. Director Rose stated, “Your (AFWD) team has been crucial to providing critical services to Nevada County residents and employees.”

Mr. Newlon, who as Intern Coordinator works directly with the participants, orienting them to the various worksites; had this to say: “During this COVID-19 Pandemic the County of Nevada has appreciated the Temporary Job Program. Alliance for Workforce Development staff have helped us navigate through unforeseen needs. From filling our critical requirements at our testing site to allow essential testing services, to assisting us with the continued need of our grounds and facilities by providing competent and capable workers to do the required maintenance. We would like to thank all the stakeholders, the board, and community at large for helping us through this difficult time. These funds have not only helped us to maintain certain levels of necessity, but has provided opportunity to our community who have been out of work due to this economic stress placed upon us by this pandemic.”
In April and May, Alliance for Workforce Development, in partnership with Chabin Concepts, hosted Robert Eyler, Ph.D., for a series of webinars to help businesses, local officials, and community members gain an understanding of the local and regional economy in light of the global pandemic.

Dr. Eyler is an Economist and Director of the Center for Regional Analysis at CSU, Sonoma and President of Economic Forensics & Analytics, Inc. in Petaluma, CA. Dr. Eyler previously assisted our region with economic analysis of the Camp Fire and Carr Fire, and as a featured speaker at the CSU Chico Center for Economic Development (CED) North State Economic Forecasts Conferences for the past several years.

While Dr. Eyler pointed to the social and financial policies developed by Federal, State, and Local governments as both timely and at least marginally effective, he also offered several warnings for the short- and long-term future:

- Municipal revenue losses from hotel occupancy and sales tax will likely have long-term impacts on budgets for development projects and local services.
- Micro businesses, especially those that cannot pivot to an online platform will likely not be able to weather continued or renewed isolation orders.
- Inability to produce a vaccine, or unwillingness of the public to comply with measures to curb contagion, will lengthen the economic downturn or recession.

Dr. Eyler expressed three possible scenarios for economic recovery:

- A reduction in new cases by vaccine or social policy leads to a quick recovery, with signs of recovery visible as early as 2021.
- A “deeper dive” brought about by renewed rise in COVID-19 cases that slows any real recovery to 2022.
- A long-term recession caused by widespread business closure, unemployment, and spread of disease, that takes years to rebound from.

Dr. Eyler warns businesses and local governments to prepare for a lean few years and encouraged businesses to explore funding from the Small Business Administration to keep afloat until the pandemic subsides. “Please talk to your banker about a U.S. Small Business Administration loan. Some are forgivable, some not, but make sure they’re good plans for you. Know that the money is there.”

As North State communities, businesses, and local governments try to weather the next uncertain months and years, AFWD will continue to bring expertise like that of Dr. Eyler, to help us make informed decisions as a community. AFWD Business Service Representatives can be reached any time for assistance with HR consultation, financial incentives to hire local workers, and...
A Secure Future

Marty came to Alliance for Workforce Development in the Truckee office. He had been laid off from his job of over 10 years as a wine consultant, and was ready to change career paths. With this in mind he started to research fields of employment that he was interested in, and had been referred to the AFWD Business and Career Network to inquire about any available assistance with training funding.

Marty is a veteran of the United States Navy and wanted a career where he could apply some of the training and skills gained from his time in service. Marty had been interested in becoming an armed security guard, as he was offered a well-paying position if he were to complete the training. Upon this offer he researched available training academy’s in the surrounding areas. Security and Firearms Training Academy was a perfect choice for him as they are owned and operated by veterans. As Marty was not employed, achieving this goal was out of reach for him financially. Knowing this, Security and Firearms Training Academy referred Marty to AFWD to see if there was any available assistance for funding.

With the assistance that Marty was able to receive from the WIOA program, he was able to pursue the Security and Firearms Training Academy. Marty has successfully completed the training and received his certificate and license as an Armed Security Officer. The instructors with the academy stated that Marty was an attentive and active student and felt that he will be a professional and reliable source of security for any private sector business. He was hired upon completion of his training and is currently employed with GCTR LLC.
Delivering Success

Jessie Cammarota came to the Alliance for Workforce Development, Business and Career Network (BCN), to utilize the resource center and was referred to speak with a CCA (Career Center Advisor) about job search assistance. Jesse worked for Nevada Irrigation District for several seasons, in a temporary position as a maintenance worker. At the end of the summer season Jesse was laid off and was back to job search. He was hoping to find work that could lead to a stable career pathway and be able to gain further skills and career advancement, while he earned a livable wage.

Jesse was interested in a position with the United States Postal Services, as a rural route delivery driver. Jesse had a strong desire to work for the agency and was excited when the CCA provided him with information on the position with them. A CCA worked closely with the client on developing a relevant resume, as well as honing his interview skills by providing mock interviews assistance. Jesse was enrolled as a Dislocated Worker to participate in job search, and within one month was hired on full time with the United States Postal Service, where he is happily on a stable career path.
AFWD America’s Job Center of California
PY 2019-2020

Nevada County

One-Stop Visitors: 6,676
Businesses Served: 216
Business Services: 1,317

AFWD
Clients Enrolled: 1,900

Unemployment Rate
(As of: May 2020) 14.2%

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(530) 265-7088

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