UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANT PROMISING PRACTICES SERIES:

PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED IN DISASTER GRANTS

PREPARED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR BY:

ABT ASSOCIATES INC.
55 WHEELER STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

WORKFORCE LEARNING STRATEGIES
5 TENNEY STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140

About the National Emergency Grant Promising Practices Series

States and local areas that administer National Emergency Grants (NEGs) have developed a growing body of expertise in the effective management of these grants. The *National Emergency Grant Promising Practices Series* is a compilation of ten documents whose purpose is to highlight and share some exemplary approaches that were instrumental in preparing for, planning, and implementing a NEG. The intent of disseminating these effective methodologies on a broad, national level is to facilitate the continuous improvement of NEG project operations and to promote peer-to-peer information-sharing among practitioners.

The information presented in the *NEG Promising Practices Series* was gleaned from a study, which focused on the in-depth review of fifteen NEG projects that varied in type, size, and scope. Collectively, these projects represent an investment of $282,377,589 made by the Department of Labor (DOL) that helped states assist dislocated workers obtain reemployment in the aftermath of a large layoff or disaster-related event. The insights shared by these grantees were synthesized for dissemination, resulting in a set of promising practices that build upon four broad themes:

- *Infrastructure and Readiness.* How grantees have organized state and local delivery systems to ensure effective and efficient use of NEG resources;
- *Planning and Start-Up.* How grantees have mobilized key resources and stakeholders to facilitate effective grant planning and implementation;
- *Program Design and Implementation.* What specific interventions and services have been implemented to support the unique reemployment needs of dislocated workers; and
- *Institutional Results.* How NEG investments have directly or indirectly resulted in an enhanced capacity to respond to unexpected economic events.

Listed below are the ten documents, which comprise the *National Emergency Grant Promising Practices Series*. Each review addresses a specific area of NEG management and has been written to emphasize the specific planning, design, and operational decisions that contributed to successful retraining and reemployment strategies.

- *Working Across Boundaries in Planning a Regional NEG Response*
- *Expanding NEG Training Capacity Through Partnerships with Community Colleges*
- *Aligning NEG Strategies with High Growth Sectors and Occupations*
- *Peer Support Systems that Strengthen Outreach and Participation*
- *Preparing for the Unexpected in Disaster Grants*
- *Establishing and Managing a Temporary Jobs Program*
- *Implementing Transition Teams to Lead the Dislocation Response*
- *Partnering with Organized Labor to Support Reemployment*
- *Coordinating Resources to Meet the Reemployment Challenge*
- *Using Data Strategically to Align Job Seekers and Occupational Demand*

PREVIEW

Disaster-related events can cause sudden job loss, while simultaneously undermining the ability of the workforce system to quickly respond with reemployment assistance. The primary purpose of a NEG awarded in the aftermath of a natural disaster is to create temporary employment to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts as well as to help with humanitarian assistance for disaster victims. This type of NEG is available to regions that have been declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as eligible for public assistance and is generally issued for a six month duration. The grants highlighted demonstrate how some States have used their past experience from exemplary NEG disaster projects to better prepare for future events. The promising practices surrounding this preparation can ultimately enhance the overall effectiveness of a NEG project, contributing to these broad dimensions:

- *Infrastructure and Readiness.* Institutionalized practices will ensure that previously tested strategies are used and readily available for future disaster events. Additionally, the collaboration among workforce system partners that is central to disaster planning can broaden the network of stakeholders and strengthen system-wide readiness.
- *Planning and Start-up.* Policies in place should support rapid and efficient mobilization of response resources. This will result in increased efficiencies in the provision of services to dislocated workers, access to and use of available resources, and improved coordination among stakeholders for planning a disaster response.
- *Program Design and Implementation.* Disaster preparation will aid states and local areas in providing the appropriate level of response, targeted strategies, and opportunities for employment and training while assisting in the recovery of the area.

Learning from NEG Grantees: Given the complexity of the effort involved in implementing and managing a disaster NEG as well as the importance of an immediate response, workforce system practitioners can benefit from the experience and insight of those who have faced similar challenges. This blueprint will highlight the promising practices of the following grantees:

Florida. The **2004 hurricane season** saw five significant storms affect all regions of the State, with some locations affected on more than one occasion. State leadership in Florida has created exemplary systems to prepare for the inevitable seasonal hurricanes and storms based on many of the experiences derived from this project.

Additionally, it has shared its expertise, tools, and systems with other States. NEG Award Amount: $69,266,299.

*Mississippi***.** The impact of **Hurricane Katrina** was felt throughout Mississippi with the southern coastal counties experiencing the most damage to its economy and infrastructure. In preparing its response, Mississippi was actively aided by representatives from the State of Florida and other States who provided resources such as staff time, expertise, and tools. Based on its experience with Hurricane Katrina, the Mississippi workforce system has also created emergency preparation procedures and now provides assistance to other States and regions experiencing disasters. NEG Award Amount: $95,000,000.

Pennsylvania. In 2004, seven Pennsylvania workforce areas experienced extensive flooding, with most of the damage concentrated in three rural areas. One affected region, which was serviced by the TriCounty Workforce Investment Board (TCWIB), collaborated with State officials to create a disaster preparedness manual based in part on its experiences in designing and implementing this NEG, which served twenty-five counties in Pennsylvania. The manual provided the foundation for technical assistance (e.g., workshops, ongoing mentoring) to other regions subsequently affected by major **flooding in 2006**. NEG Award Amount: $4,835,970.

The experiences of these grantees, highlighted in depth below, focuses on disaster preparedness planning, the critical nature of human capital and leadership, and effective mobilization of resources.

Preparedness Tools

Although it is clear that a state or region can never be fully prepared for an unexpected disaster, grantees can invest time in planning and preparing. For example, the grantees below took on tasks such as creating emergency Web sites to communicate needed information; developing emergency response manuals, contingency operations plans, policies, and procedures; and securing access to mobile One-Stop Career Centers that are ready to be deployed when needed. These preparations, combined with flexibility and creativity in responding to the truly unexpected events of a disaster, allow grantees to quickly and effectively respond to major events.

Florida—Lessons from Hurricanes-Storms 2004: The ability to quickly access information and communicate can be major contributors to the success of a disaster NEG. Preparedness and communication tools enable workforce staff to better assess the needs of the affected workforce, bring supportive services to bear where needed, and harness resources that reach workers at a time when training and reemployment are needed. Staff members from the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) in Florida had developed a practice of leasing

satellite phones at the start of the hurricane season. This became important when the 2004 storms destroyed cell phone towers and land lines in many regions. Using this alternate technology, AWI staff were able to maintain contact with local workforce areas in order to coordinate damage assessments and identify immediate resource needs. This expedited the availability of key planning inputs that in turn allowed for more efficient preparation to apply for and implement a NEG. In addition, staff had created an Emergency Web site that is activated at the beginning of every hurricane season (http://www.awiemergency.com/). The site has information for businesses, impacted individuals, and workforce professionals and was utilized in the 2004 tropical storms NEG to provide:

- Forms and documents that helped workforce staff implement temporary jobs programs;
- Workforce service links that allowed dislocated workers to identify where to receive workforce services in regions where the One-Stop Career Centers were damaged or temporarily inaccessible;
- A brochure on disaster unemployment insurance assistance for workers temporarily unable to return to previous employment;
- Emergency hotlines and disaster recovery links;
- Information on and links to services from the Red Cross and FEMA that may be critical in stabilizing workers' lives and ultimately allow a return to work; and
- Governor's public service announcements and AWI news releases.

Additionally, legislation was passed in Florida that requires every State agency to participate in an emergency response. This broadens the system-wide infrastructure and resource base available to craft a rapid and coordinated response. As a part of this directive, AWI staff created an **Emergency Management and Safety Plan (EMSP)** outlining the policies and responsibilities of all Workforce One offices that comprise the State's network of One-Stop Career Centers. The plan includes measures to be taken prior to an emergency or disaster situation as well as during the response and recovery phases supporting disaster NEG activities. One of the overriding priorities of the EMSP is to maintain or quickly restart services to meet the needs of its core customers when communications are interrupted or offices are damaged. For local WIBs this may mean, for instance, working with the local power company in advance to be placed on the priority restoration list as well as making arrangements to out-station staff at local Disaster Relief Centers. These efforts to maintain or restore services are essential to ensuring immediate access to unemployment insurance and other dislocated worker services.

Mississippi—Lessons from Hurricane Katrina: In Mississippi, Hurricane Katrina also damaged or destroyed workforce offices as well as roads, phone and electrical lines, and water supplies. In some cases communities were isolated for weeks. The State and local workforce staff worked hard and worked creatively under extremely trying circumstances to respond to the immediate needs of dislocated workers. For instance, the Twin Districts WIB staff even created "temporary offices" in parking lots to distribute unemployment checks and implement temporary jobs programs providing basic humanitarian relief. As a result of their experience with Hurricane Katrina, staff from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) analyzed what they had learned about the impacts of a large disaster and the implications of those lessons for preparedness. These lessons helped to influence the development of a **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)** for the agency and its statewide network of Workforce Investment Network (WIN) job centers. The COOP supports workforce staff in resuming operations, planning a disaster response, and implementing a NEG project task plan. For instance, the COOP lays out a plan for acquiring and scheduling Mobile Units that can provide reemployment assistance in the event of a disaster. This information helps workforce staff quickly resume operations if a workforce office is damaged or destroyed.

Pennsylvania—Lessons from Flood 2004: Pennsylvania officials have also created disaster preparation and response resources. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan reached Pennsylvania and caused severe flooding across Armstrong, Butler, and Indiana Counties. The TCWIB applied to the State and received funding from a disaster NEG, which allowed it to develop and implement a temporary jobs program for dislocated workers designed to clean up flood debris and damage. In the process, WIB staff developed numerous new procedures to support their disaster response.

Staff at TCWIB and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industries took all that they had developed, used, and learned from the 2004 flood response and created a **Disaster Response Guide** to enhance their preparedness for future flood disasters. They systematically assembled and organized various forms, guidance documents, and policies. They then brought in crew leaders and others who had been involved in the temporary jobs program to review the effort and help identify other resources that needed to be included in the manual. State officials also reviewed the document and contributed information on relevant State policies and procedures. The resulting manual, entitled *A Disaster Relief Training Manual* (the table of contents of which is included as an appendix to this document), addresses such topics as:

> *"We had accumulated so many forms we decided we just have to put this all together so that next time something like this happens, we will have everything we need."*
> *– TriCounty WIB Staff, Pennsylvania*

- First Steps in Disaster Relief;
- Supervisor Information;
- Tools and Equipment;
- Worksite Information;
- Participants: Recruitment, Eligibility, and Case Management;
- Payroll Information;
- Monitoring;
- Safety;
- Harassment Training; and
- Drug Free Workplace.

In 2006, major floods again hit counties across Pennsylvania. Staff from TCWIB and State officials copied the manual, organized a presentation, and held a meeting in a central location with representatives from all of the affected WIB areas. The manual had detailed steps for response and forms that could be easily adapted in other areas. For instance, WIB staff members at the meeting were provided with an absentee policy, a list of all the equipment needed for site clean-up, and worksite agreements. According to one WIB Director affected by the 2006 storms, "TCWIB saved [his county] six months' work," which is critical time given the immediate need for relief as well as the duration of these types of NEGs.

> *"TriCounty saved us six months of work. Eventually we would have figured these things out, but there would have been some growing pains associated with it."*
> *– Northern Tier WIB Director, Pennsylvania*

Dedicated Staffing

Assigning dedicated staff with experience in emergency management experience has been shown to be effective in efficiently mobilizing the necessary resources and designing a response strategy. For instance, in Florida, one AWI staff person has dedicated responsibility for taking the lead in responding to all emergencies whether natural disasters or plant closings. When the 2004 tropical storms struck, this lead person immediately traveled to each affected site, made an assessment of need, and assisted the local WIBs in developing response plans. These plans identified existing resources available for implementing needed reemployment assistance, resource gaps that were able to be filled with State Rapid Response funds, and resources needed for the disaster NEG implementing a temporary jobs program. In

> ***What is a Disaster?***
>
> *A disaster is any natural, technological or civic emergency that causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to result in a declaration of a state of emergency by a county, the Governor, or the President of the United States.*

addition, the lead responder is active in the State's emergency preparedness and response team. This gives him a broad understanding of the scope of the disaster across the State as well as insight into the resources and expertise that are available to be used. While the disaster response was built largely upon Florida's Rapid Response procedures, it was shaped to reflect the unique needs of a natural disaster. For instance, the dedicated staff person could bring information to local WIBs on how to apply for FEMA resources, access emergency equipment (e.g., mobile jobs centers and generators); and identify safety supplies needed at the clean-up sites employing temporary workers (e.g., sun screen bug repellant, hats, and water).

Pennsylvania officials also cited the importance of having dedicated staff in place. In 2004, the TCWIB had a full-time safety person on staff. After TCWIB received NEG funds and began implementing its temporary jobs program, this person was immediately available to establish safety protocols, organize safety training, and monitor the local worksites. Additionally, WIB administrative staff members were able to quickly establish payroll systems and other personnel systems for the temporary workers. This was based on their prior disaster NEG experience as well as their foresight in creating documentation outlining the tasks and procedures needed for implementing a temporary jobs program. For instance their experience allowed them to quickly identify the qualifications needed for crew supervisors, determine the supervisor to crew ratio, and establish appropriate wage rates. They also showed leadership in helping to organize and provide training for representatives from other areas of the State who did not have prior experience in implementing a disaster NEG.

FACILITATING DISASTER NEG PREPARATION

Having administrative procedures in place can greatly facilitate access to resources that will aid in disaster response. Simple solutions such as routinizing "up front" steps can greatly impact the speed in which resources reach affected workers. The practices noted below highlight the importance of continuing to streamline the process of reacting to a natural disaster and mobilizing resources and information in support of a NEG application.

> *"Grant applications should be an outgrowth of an effective early intervention process."*
> *– Florida Agency for Workforce Intervention Guidance*

- *Florida's REACT Team.* Official AWI guidance on disaster grants states that requests should be the result of a planning process activated through the State Rapid Response system, the Reemployment and Emergency Assistance Coordination Team (REACT). This ensures that the responsibility for immediate response is already determined prior to any potential disaster. The NEG application process is further facilitated by the deployment of the State's disaster response

representative to assist local areas in fully and efficiently using on-line documents available on the AWI Web site. This includes documents specifying eligibility requirements for NEGs, FAQs on current NEGs including any special requirements and/or waiver provisions, and tools for the Regional Workforce Boards to provide to their customers in emergencies, such as formats for emergency alerts and creating office closure maps.

- *Pennsylvania's Standardized Templates.* To facilitate the planning process, Pennsylvania officials created an electronic planning template by adapting the NEG application form. This template was used by local WIBs in providing information to be used in submitting the disaster NEG proposal. Each local area was required to submit a plan consisting of the following:
    - Information on the staffing and worksite plans for each targeted clean-up project;
    - A line-item budget; and
    - A Temporary Job Creation Form describing the job responsibilities, the wage, and the expected end date of each temporary position under the NEG.

Pennsylvania staff then utilized these plans to submit a full disaster NEG proposal through the NEG e-application system. Upon notification of the award, staff members were able to quickly implement recruitment and start-up activities. WIB staff said that this helped because, "Everyone knew what was required right off the bat." In particular, local areas appreciated the guidance provided on features specific to a disaster NEG application including definitions of eligibility, regulations on temporary jobs programs, and expectations for coordination with FEMA and environmental agencies. Additionally, local area staff completed and submitted quarterly reports utilizing the planning format. In addition to readily meeting reporting requirement this format helped project teams more carefully monitor enrollment and progression of grant activities.

REEMPLOYMENT THROUGH NEG PROMISING PRACTICES

Effective preparation can neither prevent a disaster nor anticipate all of its impacts. However, **developing preparedness resources** can support a more effective response and ultimately better outcomes for the community and workforce. These practices allow for a more efficient start-up and engagement of key resources by drawing on existing knowledge and past experience dealing with disasters. This allows for increased opportunities for temporary work as well as increased support for individual participants. Ultimately, being better prepared for a disaster can support a faster recovery for the community and the increased likelihood of a return to employment for dislocated workers.

APPENDIX

DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING MANUAL: TABLE OF CONTENTS
Originally produced by the TriCounty Workforce Investment Board, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

First Steps

- First steps for a Disaster Recovery Program 1-1
- Flood Project Plan 1-5
- Budget 1-9

Supervisor Information

- Crew Leader Notes 2-1
- Supervisor Responsibilities 2-3
- Do's and Don'ts 2-4
- Accident Reporting 2-5
- Cell Phone Use 2-6
- Cell Phone Policy 2-7
- Employee Warning Notice 2-9
- Participant Disciplinary Code 2-10
- Absenteeism Policy 2-12
- Inclement Weather Policy 2-13

Tools and Equipment

- Tool and PPE List 3-1
- Clothing List 3-2
- Equipment Sign Out Form 3-4
- Supply List 3-5

Worksite Information

- Worksite Agreement 4-1
- Property Owner Authorization and Release 4-3
- Worksite Summary 4-4

Participants: Recruitment, Eligibility, and Case Management

- Overview 5-1
- Follow-up form 5-3
- Exit Interview Form 5-4
- Participant Folders Outline 5-6
- Participant File Contact Form 5-7
- Orientation Checklist 5-8
- W-4 5-9
- Employment Eligibility Verification I-9 5-11
- Emergency Information Form 5-14
- Workers Compensation Notification 5-15
- Statement of Receipt Form 5-16
- Drug Free Workplace Policy 5-17
- Photo Release Form 5-18
- Participant Handbook 5-19

- Civil Rights 5-29
- Complaint and Hearing Procedure 5-31
- Sexual Harassment Policy 5-33
- Policy on Infectious Diseases 5-35
- Medical History Questionnaire 5-37

Payroll Information

- Payroll Tips 6-1
- New Hire Form 6-2
- Time Sheets 6-3
- Payroll Worksheet 6-7
- Termination Form 6-8
- Hours Worked Data Sheet 6-9

Monitoring

- Monitoring Policy and Procedures 7-1
- Worksite Review 7-2
- Eligibility Form 7-5
- Site Review 7-6
- Supervisor Interview Guide 7-8
- Crew Member Survey 7-10

Safety

- Overview 8-1
- What to Expect 8-2
- Accident Report / Charts 8-3
- Summary of Safety Training 8-6
- Construction Pre-Test 8-7
- Construction Post-Test 8-8
- Chain Saw Safety Outline 8-10
- Chain Saw Safety Checklist 8-11
- Weekly Safety Meeting Form 8-12
- Daily Site Safety Checklist 8-13
- PPE Needs Assessment Form 8-15
- Site Safety Checklist 8-17
- Workers Comp Telephonic Reporting Questionnaire 8-19
- Workers Comp Health Care Providers List 8-20
- Intro to OSHA Training 8-21
- Personal Protective Equipment Training 8-26
- Tool Safety Training 8-37
- Fire Safety Training 8-43
- Electrical Safety Training 8-50
- Fall Protection Training 8-60
- Scaffolds Training 8-63

Harassment Training

- Grievance and Complaints Overview 9-1
- Anti-Harassment Training Presentation 9-2

Drug Free Workplace

- USDOL Drug Free Workplace Training 10-1

Peer Contacts

Florida

Alecia Shally, Title
Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation
(850) 245-7476
alecia.shally@flaawi.com

Susan Nelms, Executive Director
Workforce Escarosa, Inc., Pensacola, Florida
(850) 473-0930 x205
snelms@escarosa.org

Mississippi

Jeanine Lilly, Director
Office of Grants Management
Mississippi Department of Employment Security
(601) 321-6050
jlilly@mdes.ms.gov

Yolanda Boone, NEG Grant Administrator
Mississippi Department of Employment Security
(601) 321-6000
yboone@mdes.ms.gov

Gary Lukens, Deputy Director
Twin Districts Workforce Investment Board, Hattiesburg
(601) 545-2137
glukens@smpdd.com

Pennsylvania

Dan Kuba, Deputy Director
Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry
(717) 717-705-8821
dkuba@state.pa.us

Frank Thompson, Deputy Director
Northern Tier Workforce Investment Board
Towanda, Pennsylvania
(570) 265-9103
thompson@northerntier.org

Fred Fornataro, Executive Director
TriCounty Workforce Investment Board
Butler, Pennsylvania
(724) 282-9341 x11
tcwib@tcwib.net