



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

BUREAU OF WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP AND OPERATIONS

*Pennsylvania*

***RAPID  
RESPONSE***

*Information Guide*





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## Rapid Response Assistance

Rapid response is an early-intervention business service that helps workers and employers throughout the business cycle. Rapid response coordinates layoff aversion and outplacement services for employers and workers affected by layoffs, plant closures or natural disasters. While not always event-driven, rapid response is a forward-looking approach to planning and managing economic transitions. Rapid response helps employers by coordinating pre-layoff outplacement services and supporting businesses by working with other state and local stakeholders catalyzing job expansion.

Rapid response introduces parties to Pennsylvania's workforce and economic development systems by helping workers and employers navigate the information and resources and expedite their transition into reemployment.

The sooner employers, their workers and the community come together to manage change, the better the outcome for everyone.

- The community retains its tax base.
- Businesses are better able to manage their human resource needs, unemployment insurance costs and worker compensation costs during the transition.
- Negative effects on families' quality of life are minimized.

The Rapid Response Services program, or RRS, was developed to help dislocated workers who are part of a large layoff; however, our coordinators can respond to any size layoff. Its primary objective is to provide workers with the resources and services they need to allow them to find new jobs or get the training and education needed for new careers so that they can get back to work quickly.

RRS activities are triggered when the Department of Labor & Industry learns of a planned closing or layoff by receiving a notice required by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, or WARN, through the media or by local contacts. Services may also be offered when Pennsylvania experiences mass job dislocation caused by a disaster. These are state and federally funded services, and there is no additional charge to employers or employees for these services. They are provided regardless of the reason for the layoff; however, employer participation is vital to the services' success.

Pennsylvania's RRS coordinators meet with employers and when appropriate, employees' representatives, to discuss services available through the program. The RRS coordinator will build a team of experts to provide workers with information about and access to services in a centralized and convenient location before or right after the layoff or closing happens.



- Unemployment Insurance
- Health and pension benefits
- Job-search activities
- Education services
- Training Programs
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and NAFTA/TAA programs
- Social Services programs
- Financial Credit counseling
- Community and economic development activities
- Emergency assistance
- Crisis counseling

RRS also offers help to communities designing a strategic and coordinated response to the dislocation event. Also, access to economic development resources is available. Economic development assistance programs help businesses at risk of closing to keep their doors open. Additionally, these programs can help businesses reduce a layoff's size.



## Community Benefits

Community relationships and structure are the basis for some of the most dynamic and effective transition services available. Community institutions bonding together have a greater effect on marketing the community and its workforce to prospective companies. A community's attitude is often the best marketing for selling a community to new employers and industries.

When laid off, not only are workers negatively affected, but also their family members and the larger community. RRS activities empower the community to be part of the solution. Community involvement may be emotional support, financial support or resources, but always in the role of advocacy or support to affected workers.

Rapid response benefits communities.

- Works closely with local and state elected officials
- Helps save a community's tax base by keeping workers employed
- Lessens the economic effect on other businesses in the community
- Responds to job and business loss when a natural disaster occurs
- Coordinates available resources by tapping into the community's service providers
- Reduce emotional and financial stress on the community by organizing workshops for unemployed workers
- Coordinates support groups for unemployed workers



## Employer Benefits

When companies must lay off workers, employers and employees face traumatic upheaval. The economic consequences may be widespread.

The earlier RRS begins, the more time is available for workers to overcome their fears and begin workforce reentry. Early intervention helps employers and employees communicate their concerns to RRS specialists and to employment and training experts who will customize services for affected workers. They also work with businesses, assessing the supply chain to learn how and if it may also be affected. They then reach out to those businesses and offer rapid response services.

For companies, the effect of laying off workers can be significant. A number of studies found that the way a company handles a layoff might affect its image, reputation and productivity. According to this research, when a layoff occurs, it is likely to lead to a demoralized workforce which in turn can result in decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, lost loyalty, and reduced customer service. Rapid response services help mitigate layoffs' negative consequences by helping the company in several ways.

- Better manage human resource needs, unemployment insurance costs, and worker compensation costs during the transition
- Help affected workers return to work and maintain their standard of living
- Maintain good corporate citizenship in the community
- Improve worker morale by showing a good-faith effort in providing all available assistance
- Maintain or increase productivity during the transition period and beyond

Employers contacting Pennsylvania's RRS can expect help in many forms.

- Confidentiality concerning their business decisions
- A quick response to their transition planning needs
- Help understanding available government regulations and services
- Information about alternatives that may reduce or avoid layoffs
- Help conducting an orderly shutdown
- Pre-layoff outplacement services that help workers shorten their transition time.



## Worker Benefits

Some people view being laid off as a crisis, while others may view the situation as an opportunity to find a better or more enjoyable job. The Rapid Response program helps laid-off workers turn the challenge of a layoff into an opportunity by providing information about, and access to, the services that will help put workers back to work. Most of the services are available through PA CareerLink®.

PA CareerLink® services include:

- Career counseling
- Job search assistance
- Information about education and training opportunities
- Use of computers, telephones, and fax machines for a job search
- Financial support for training
- Local supportive services
- Special services for adults with disabilities and veterans
- Creates an avenue for layoff aversion, keeping workers in their present or new jobs, possibly avoiding a dislocation event and/or an unemployment claim
- Offers the first step in connecting workers to the workforce investment system
- Access income support if a job was lost to foreign trade

For more information, contact the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations toll-free at **1-866-858-2753**.





## Rapid Response Talking Points

Rapid response helps businesses avert layoffs whenever possible. When it isn't, RRS helps businesses and local communities cope with the effects.

- Rapid response adds value throughout the business cycle.
- RRS provides strategic planning, data gathering and analysis that helps anticipate, prepare for and manage economic transition.
- RRS helps businesses rebuild in the wake of natural disasters.
- RRS coordinates activities among Pennsylvania's local workforce development boards and PA CareerLink® in cases of insufficient funding to serve a large number of affected workers.
- RRS can submit Trade Adjustment Assistance petitions when downsizing events are related to foreign trade.
- RRS helps workers and employers navigate the workforce system by convening, facilitating and brokering connections, networks, and partners.
- RRS delivers services to affected workers before their layoff dates, at the company location and preferably on company time – any time, day or night.

### National Dislocated Worker Grants

- National Dislocated Worker Grants have helped thousands of Pennsylvania's workers affected by layoffs who otherwise would not have had access to services because of insufficient state or local funds.
- Dedicated emergency centers through local workforce development boards are set up with National Dislocated Worker Grant funds to help employees laid off from specific companies or industries.

### Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations

- PA CareerLink®, state agencies and local partners provide program support to enhance economic growth and employment opportunities.

### Proven Benefits of Rapid Response Services

- Higher productivity and lower absenteeism among workers during a layoff
- Lower unemployment insurance costs as workers can be reemployed more quickly when services are begun before a layoff
- Potentially higher morale thanks to reduced stress employees knowing their employer worked to help them through a difficult time
- Sensitivity to confidentiality during layoffs
- Better public and employee relations, including when unions are involved
- Access to information regarding any state or federal requirements or notification laws, including the United States Department of Labor's administration of the WARN Act.





# Section I

## **Rapid Response Resources**



## Layoffs, Plant Closings, and Natural Disasters

Who should you contact if you hear about a plant layoff or closing, or national disaster affecting businesses?

1. Call or email your local RRS coordinator. If you cannot reach your local coordinator, contact the RRS local-contact supervisor (see Section II of this guide for coordinator and supervisor contact information).
2. If you cannot reach the coordinator or supervisor, call Steven Wolf at 717-787-6874 (office). You can also email Steven at: [stewolf@pa.gov](mailto:stewolf@pa.gov).
3. Ask if the coordinator, supervisor or chief already has information about the event. If not, provide any information you have.
4. If this is a new event, the coordinator, supervisor or chief will investigate the situation, coordinate and provide services to help the business and affected workers.

Services are always coordinated in conjunction with PA CareerLink®.

## Union Involvement

Workers, whether unionized or not, are essential partners in developing and delivering rapid response and dislocated-worker services. The underlying premise of worker and union involvement is that those directly affected by the workforce reduction are best equipped to handle worker-adjustment assistance.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, requires states and local entities to consult with labor-union officials representing workers being laid off. Often, it is helpful for the union to be involved in rapid response processes from the first on-site contact through the planning and implementation stages. If there is a union presence, contact would have already been made with the union representative as part of planning any on-site intervention.

As with worker orientation, processes should be customized to accommodate worker and employer needs such as production, shift times, plant security and availability of meeting space.



## **Rapid Response Process**

### **Rapid Response Process**

1. Initial call, Public Notice or WARN notification is received by the RRS coordinator, supervisor or chief.
2. The RR supervisor or chief contacts the RR coordinator for the affected region.
3. The RR coordinator calls the company to schedule a time to meet and outline services RR can provide.
4. The RR coordinator provides the agreed-upon, customized and on-site services.
5. When rapid response services are complete, affected employees are referred to PA CareerLink® for post-layoff services.

### **Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds Process**

Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds are federal funds held at the state level and used during emergency layoffs and plant closings.

1. RRS responds to a layoff or closing event that will need a set-aside grant due to the size of the event and number of affected employees.
2. The RRS coordinator meets with the local workforce development board and one-stop career center staff to plan services and prepare a set-aside funding request.
3. The local workforce development board's fiscal agent submits the proposal to the Bureau of Workforce Administration, and a copy to the rapid response chief.
4. The Bureau of Workforce Administration reviews with RRS chief and supervisors and either approves or denies the request within two weeks.
5. Funds are allocated to the local area where counseling, training and job-search services are provided to affected employees.

## Dislocated Worker Transition Teams

WIOA requires states to promote forming labor-management committees that strategically respond to workers' reemployment needs in the event of a permanent closure, mass layoff or a natural or other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation. Pennsylvania uses the term "Dislocated Worker Transition Team" (DWTT) rather than "Labor-Management Committee" to ensure all parties understand that teams have no collective-bargaining role.

DWTTs are groups of workers and managers, organized on behalf of the entire affected workforce, to advocate for access to services and to reduce the effects of worker dislocation. Ideally, a DWTT includes a cross-section of all affected employees selected by their coworkers. They work as ombudsmen to coordinate outreach and service delivery.

Teams join with service providers and other stakeholders to develop and implement transition plans for affected workers. The intent is that individuals facing layoffs are informed of available federal, state and local public resources, and any contributions from employers, organized labor and other community organizations to transition more easily into reemployment.

DWTTs have been successful informing and encouraging workers to use agency services. DWTTs have also been instrumental helping create or revise services to meet specific workforce needs. Access to information about these resources helps dislocated workers move to new and self-sustaining jobs.



## Layoff Scenario

SONY Corporation, in Southwestern Pennsylvania, was experiencing rolling layoffs. Over a period of six years, approximately 6,500 workers (including workers from staffing agencies) were laid off. Rapid Response Services, along with other stakeholders, presented multiple informational meetings over an extended period.

The RRS team was instrumental in helping the company, and various temporary contactors, file Trade Act petitions: 19 over a three-year period. By the third year, the plant-closing announcement arrived. Several Trade Benefits Rights Information sessions were held onsite, on company time and before the layoffs.

The RRS coordinator was instrumental in implementing a DWTT chaired by a local United Way representative. The DWTT used the local Westmoreland/Fayette WIB as its fiscal agent. The RRS team met with company officials, the workforce investment board director, Title I provider, local PA CareerLink® administrators and with key staff to devise a service plan delivery model. This meeting resulted in the creation of a dislocated worker transition center, or DWTC, at the company. The workers were encouraged to go to the transition center, before their shift, after their shift or during lunches, to sign up for various services. The DWTC was staffed daily by a WIB staff member, and several state and Title I staff members worked non-traditional hours to make themselves available to affected workers during all shifts. The company provided two computer labs and office space for the transition center. The services available to the potentially dislocated workers included: resume preparation, career counseling, job-search assistance, assessment testing, basic computer classes (taught by a Westmoreland County Community College staff member) and veteran's services. More than 900 workers used the transition center.

Customized job fairs were held onsite, with more than 30 companies directly accepting workers' resumes. The workforce also had other job fairs at area PA CareerLink® locations. This included a job fair at Westmoreland County Community College to accommodate workers already laid off and not permitted back onto SONY property. Workers were encouraged to attend the job fairs and submit resumes. SONY Corporation was TAA certified, which qualified employees for additional Trade Act-related services. Specialized meetings were held to ensure all affected workers received Trade Benefit Rights Interviews. The workforce used the Trade Act opportunities, including intensive case management that lead to direct job placement, training opportunities, travel and relocation benefits afforded by the Trade Act certifications.



## Trade-Related Layoffs and Plant Closings

### Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)/Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)

Trade Act benefits are federal funds used to help individuals who become unemployed as a result of foreign trade entering U.S. markets or production being shifted to foreign countries. Benefits are intended to help individuals return to suitable employment. Some benefits available to qualified individuals are: training, job-search allowances, relocation allowances and Trade Readjustment Allowances (income support while in training).

Petitions for Trade Adjustment Assistance should be filed any time after worker separations or a threat of separations begins, but not later than one year after the earliest date workers lost their jobs with the employer. The Trade Act provides that a certification for TAA does not apply to any worker separated from the firm more than one year before the date the petition was filed.

Petitions for TAA are filed with the help of RRS staff or by visiting the U.S. DOL website and filing a petition online. A completed petition enables U.S. DOL to begin an investigation without additional delay.

### Trade Adjustment Assistance Process

1. When responding to company closings or layoffs, the RRS coordinator inquires whether the event is the result of foreign competition. The coordinator investigates the primary employer to see if any of its supply chain companies are also affected.
2. If the company indicates that the event's cause was due to foreign competition, the RRS coordinator will suggest and help initiate a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.
3. Once completed by the company, employees, union or workforce development staff, the petition is sent to the U.S. Department of Labor.
4. The U.S Department of Labor has 40 business days to respond to Trade Adjustment Assistance petitions.
5. Once a petition is approved, local legislators are given 48 hours to respond before public notice is made. After which, all interested parties are notified, including affected employees, local and state workforce development staff and union officials.
6. RRS coordinators then schedule a Trade Benefits Rights Interview (Trade BRI) meeting to discuss the program with affected employees.
7. Affected workers who are Trade certified may receive enhanced services including re-training, continuation of their unemployment benefits if in approved training, financial assistance for job-search expenses, relocation, health care tax credits and more at PA CareerLink®.

## **National Dislocated Worker Grants**

### **National Dislocated Worker Grants**

National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWG) are discretionary awards issued by the U.S. Secretary of Labor that temporarily expand service capacity at the state and local levels through time-limited funding in response to significant dislocation events. Significant events are those that create a sudden need for help, and cannot reasonably be expected to be accommodated within the ongoing operations of the formula-funded Dislocated Worker Title I program, including the discretionary resources reserved at the state level.

### **National Dislocated Worker Grants Process**

1. RRS, assessing a company closure or layoff, identifies a possible need for additional funding.
2. The Bureau of Workforce Administration is contacted and informed of the situation.
3. The RRS coordinator notifies the affected PA CareerLink® of the situation or event.
4. If a National Dislocated Worker Grant is needed, the local area and the National Dislocated Worker Grant staff will collaborate to develop a National Dislocated Worker Grant proposal.
5. Once completed, the proposal is sent to the U.S. Department of Labor for approval.
6. The U.S. Department of Labor tries to commit to a 30-day turn-around policy on National Dislocated Worker Grant applications.
7. After receiving the grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, PA CareerLink® and the local area plan and establish services for affected workers.

## **Worker Adjustment Re-Training Notification Act (WARN)**

The Worker Adjustment Re-Training Notification Act, or WARN, is federal legislation offering protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide notice 60 days before a covered-business closing and covered-business mass layoff. Enforcement of the WARN Act falls under U.S. Department of Labor jurisdiction. Pennsylvania initiates rapid response as soon as information is received that a mass dislocation or plant closure will take place.

Rapid response is triggered by a variety of information sources, such as notices issued under WARN 20 CFR Part 639, April 20, 1989, public announcements or press releases by the employer, employer representatives and other less formal information developed by early-warning networks, individual phone calls or other sources.

A "Public Notice" is a closing or layoff confirmed through a RRS contact. Every effort is made to identify a creditable source of information or confirmation from the employer or other clearly credible evidence of an imminent dislocation event before listing it as a public notification of layoff.

### **For more information or to submit a warn notice:**

Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership & Operations  
Rapid Response Services  
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry  
651 Boas Street, Room 1220  
Harrisburg, PA 17121  
Voice: Toll Free 866-858-2753  
Fax: 717-772-5478



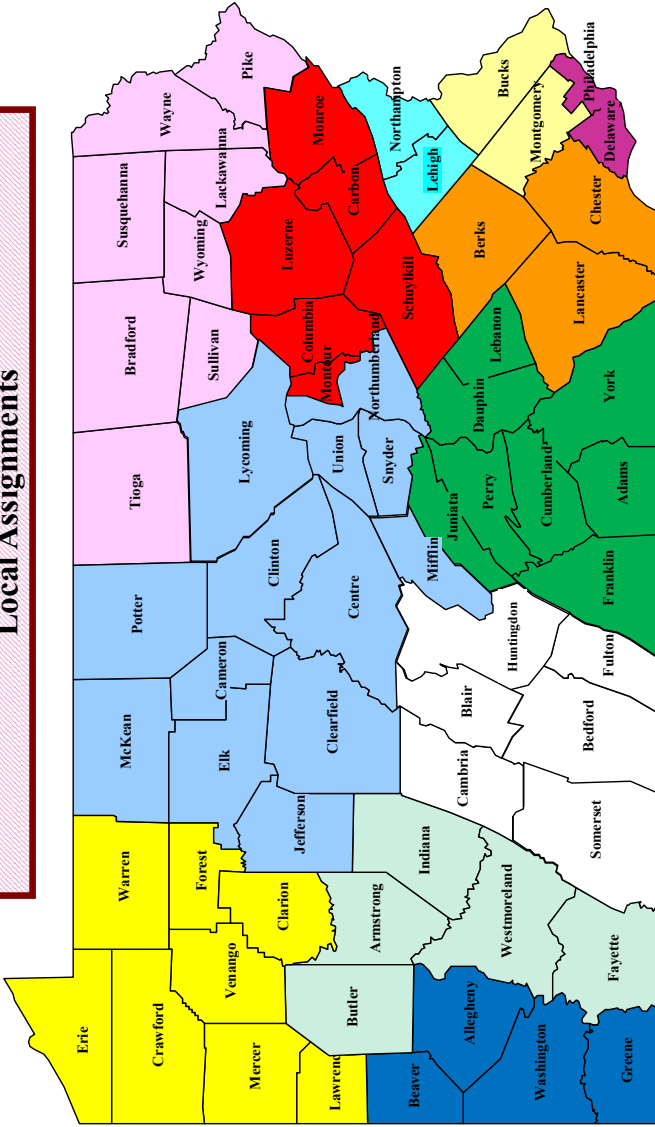


# Section II

## **Rapid Response Regional Contacts**



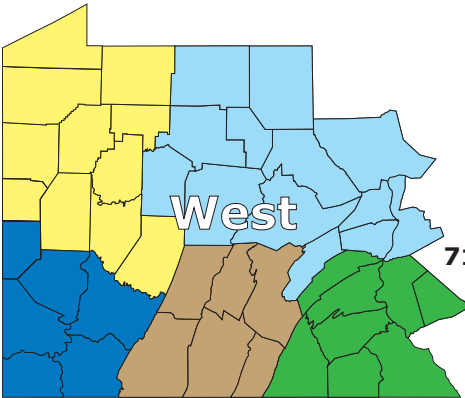
**Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations  
Rapid Response Services  
Local Assignments**



- |                |                 |                 |              |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>RAPP</b>    | <b>DOLGAS</b>   | <b>Bushmire</b> | <b>VOGEL</b> | <b>ANDREWS</b> | <b>ESPINOSA</b> |
| <b>LAMPMAN</b> | <b>WERSTLER</b> | <b>DUCK</b>     | <b>PARRY</b> | <b>SERRANO</b> | <b>FRENCH</b>   |

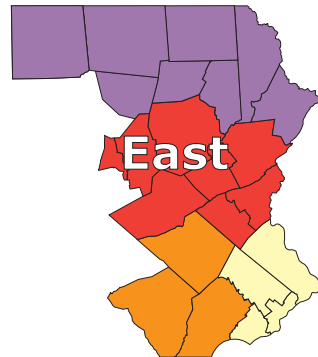
# Pennsylvania Rapid Response Regions

Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations  
Rapid Response Services Local Assignments



## Western Region

Supervisor • Ruben Pachay  
717-215-5322 • [rpachay@pa.gov](mailto:rpachay@pa.gov)



## Eastern Region

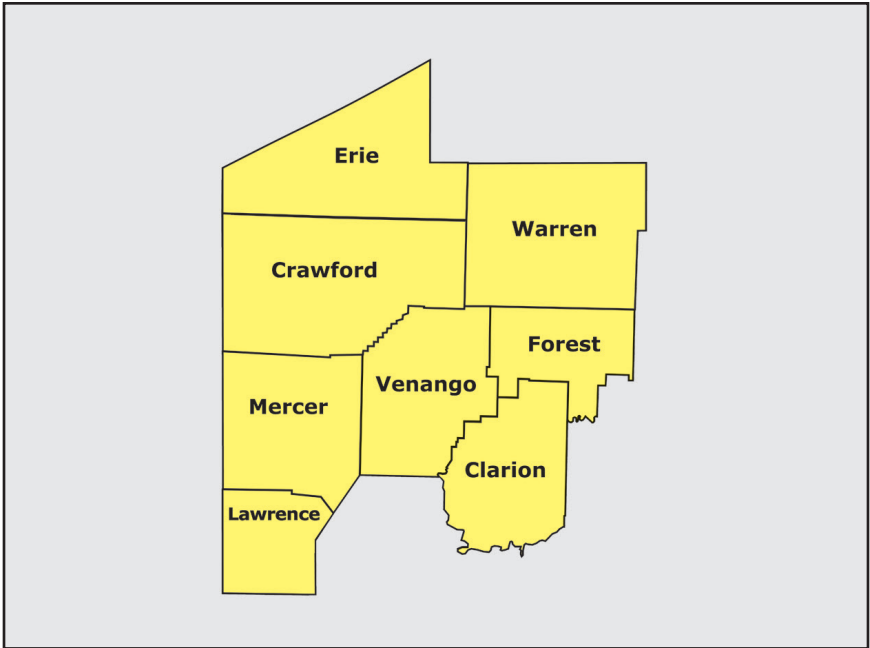
Supervisor • Nelson Diaz  
610-751-8478 • [ndiaz@pa.gov](mailto:ndiaz@pa.gov)



## Western Region

Regional Contact • Beverly Rapp

814-455-9966, ext. 560 • Mobile: 717-503-7901 • [berapp@pa.gov](mailto:berapp@pa.gov)



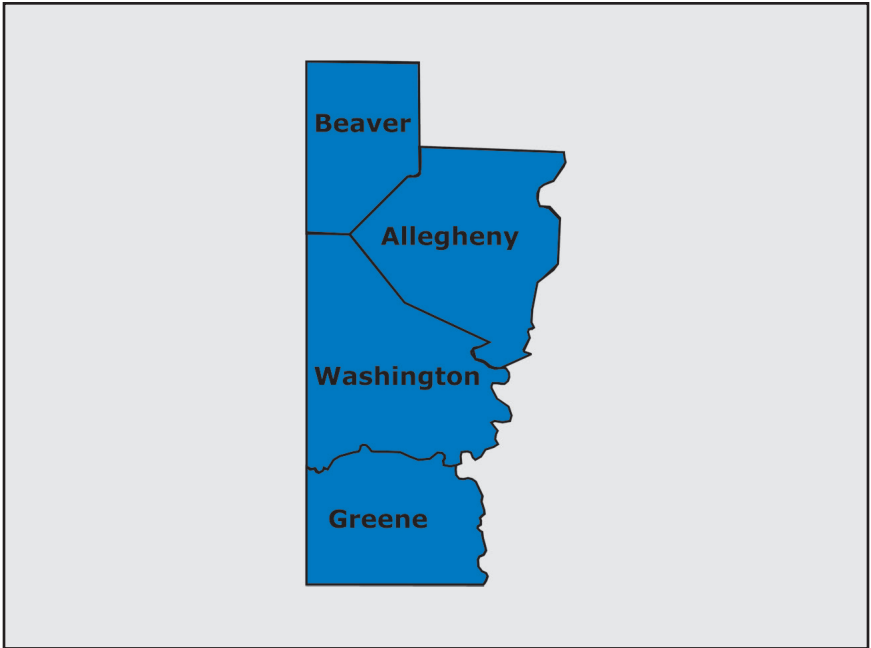
**Counties of:**

**Clarion**  
**Crawford**  
**Erie**  
**Forest**  
**Lawrence**  
**Mercer**  
**Venango**  
**Warren**

## Western Region

Regional Contact • Chester Lampman

724-728-4860, ext. 206 • Mobile: 412-298-7307 • [clampman@pa.gov](mailto:clampman@pa.gov)



Counties of:

**Allegheny**

**Beaver**

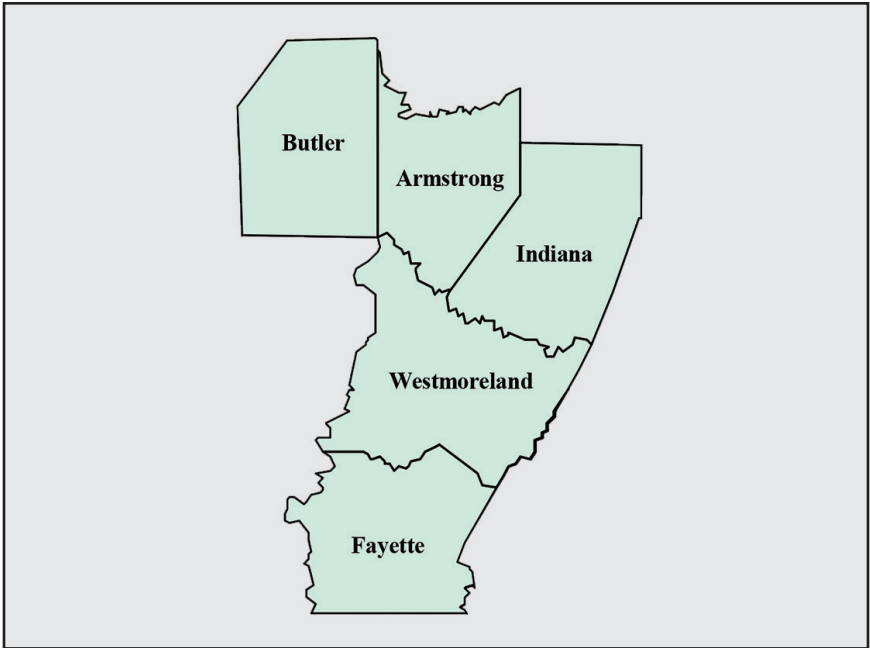
**Greene**

**Washington**

## Western Region

Regional Contact • Michelle Bushmire

724-755-2330, ext. 102 • Mobile: 724-557-3827 • [mbushmire@pa.gov](mailto:mbushmire@pa.gov)



**Counties of:**

**Armstrong**

**Butler**

**Fayette**

**Indiana**

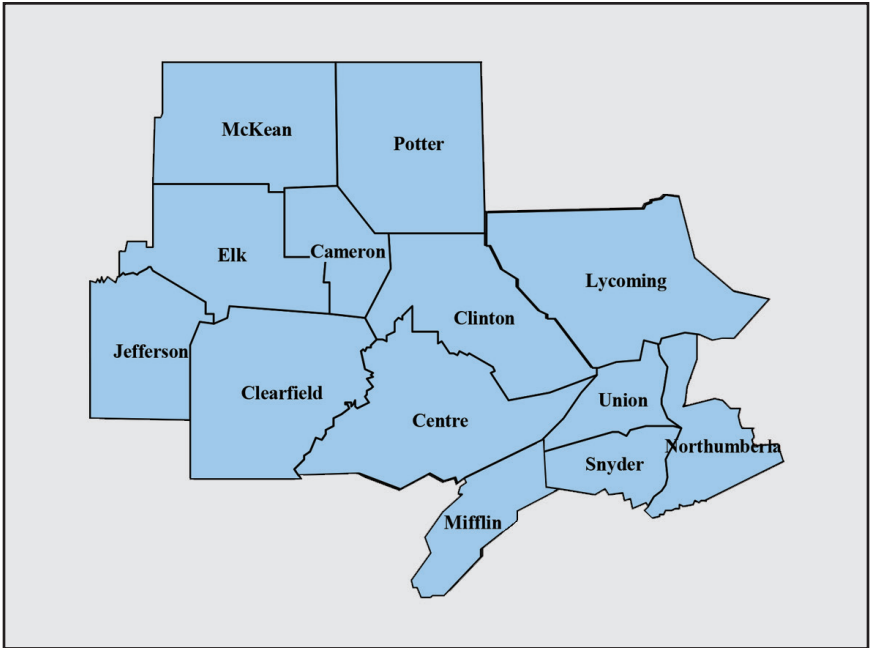
**Westmoreland**



## Western Region

Regional Contact • Thomas Werstler

814-274-9330, ext. 17 • Mobile: 717-877-3688 • [twerstler@pa.gov](mailto:twerstler@pa.gov)



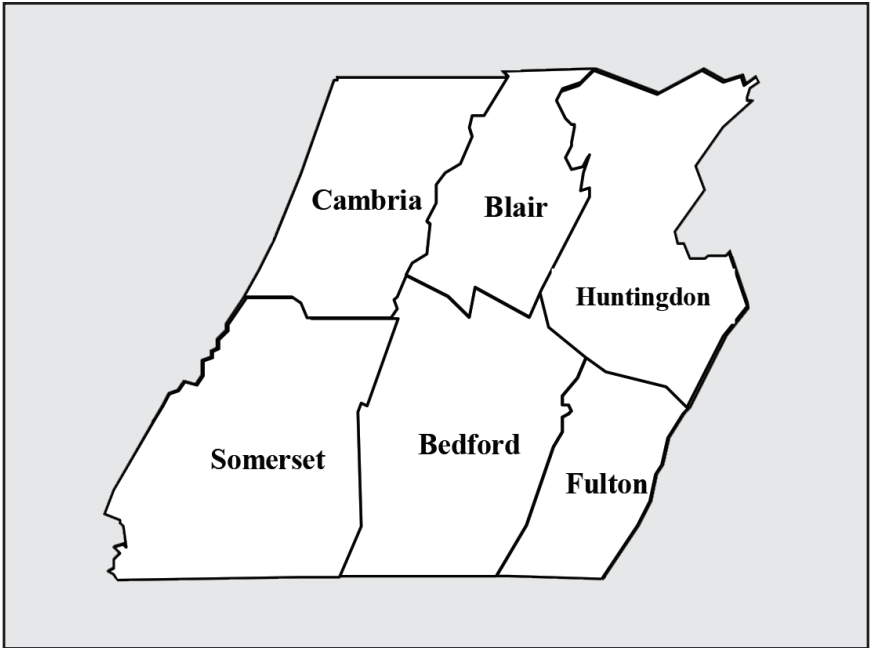
### Counties of:

**Cameron**  
**Centre**  
**Clearfield**  
**Clinton**  
**Elk**  
**Jefferson**  
**Lycoming**  
**McKean**  
**Mifflin**  
**Northumberland**  
**Potter**  
**Snyder**  
**Union**

## Western Region

Regional Contact • Apryl Dolgas

814-534-2500 • Mobile: 814- 659-2142 • [adolgas@pa.gov](mailto:adolgas@pa.gov)



Counties of:

**Bedford**

**Blair**

**Cambria**

**Fulton**

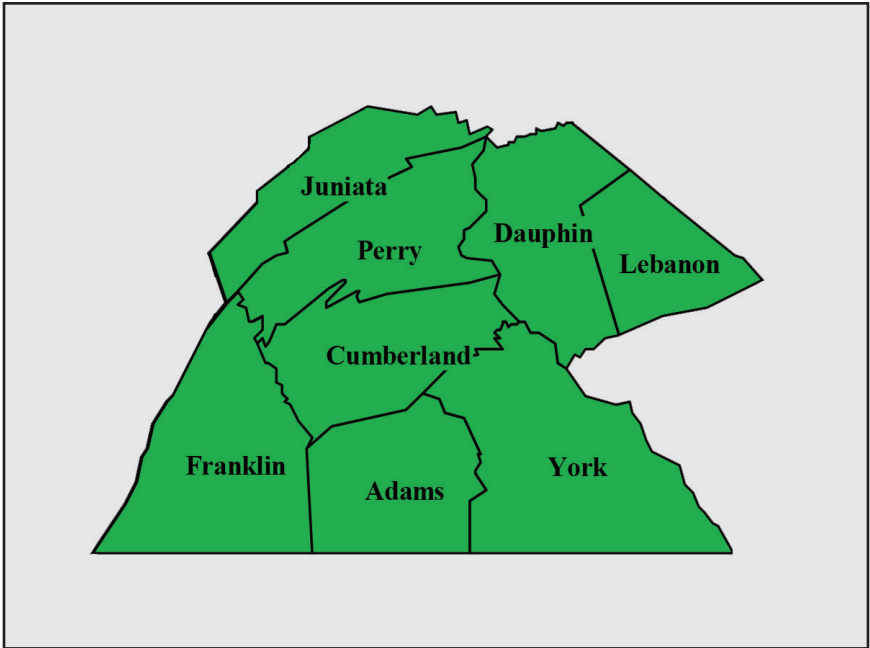
**Huntingdon**

**Somerset**

## Western Region

Regional Contact • Robert Duck

717-334-1173, ext. 282 • Mobile: 717-839-8517 • [rduck@pa.gov](mailto:rduck@pa.gov)



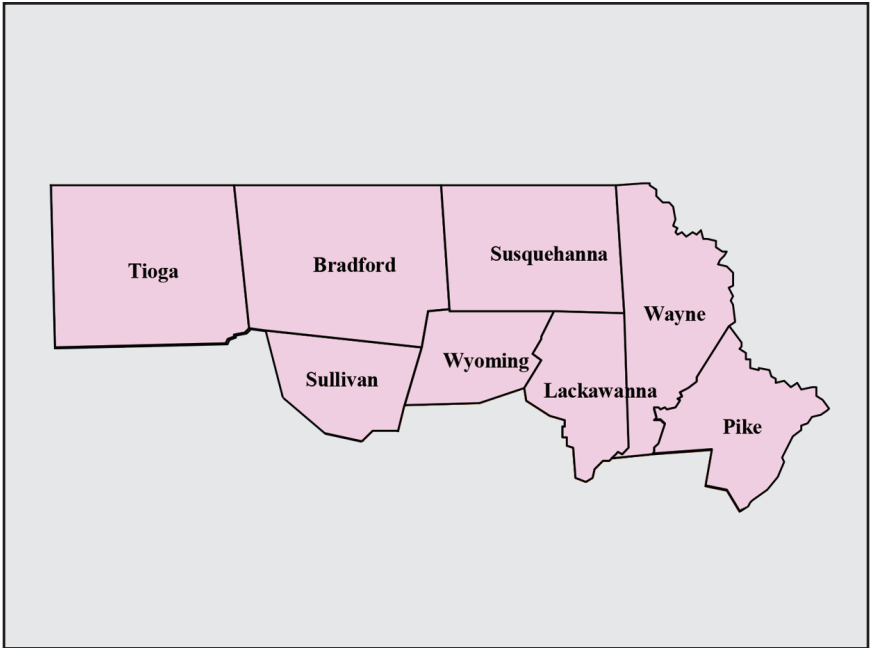
**Counties of:**

**Adams  
Cumberland  
Dauphin  
Franklin  
Juniata  
Lebanon  
Perry  
York**

## Eastern Region

Regional Contact • Ron Vogel

570-614-5994 • Mobile: 570-780-2546 • [ronvogel@pa.gov](mailto:ronvogel@pa.gov)



Counties of:

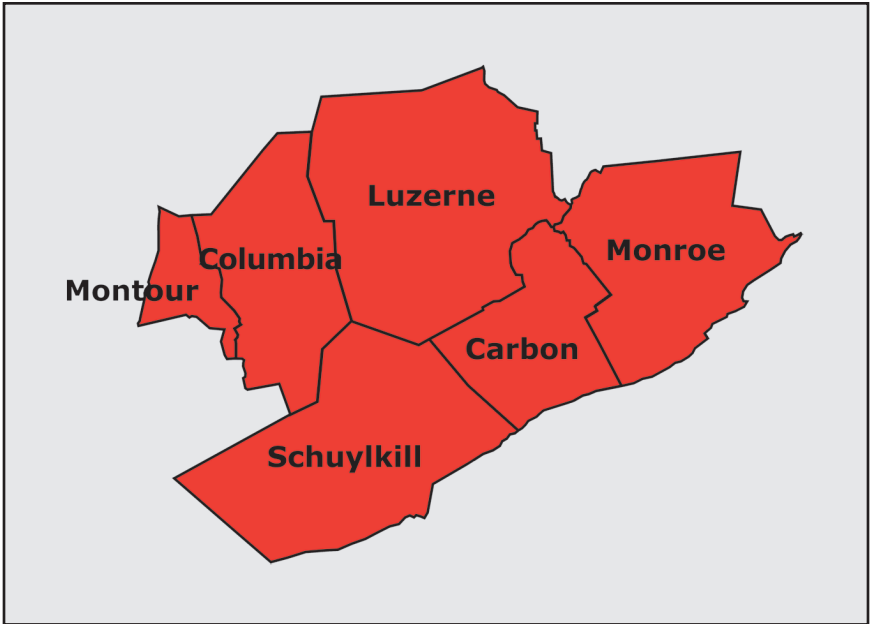
- Bradford
- Lackawanna
- Pike
- Sullivan
- Susquehanna
- Tioga
- Wayne
- Wyoming



## Eastern Region

Regional Contact • Richard Parry

570-826-2379 • Mobile: 717-877-3564 • [riparry@pa.gov](mailto:riparry@pa.gov)



Counties of:

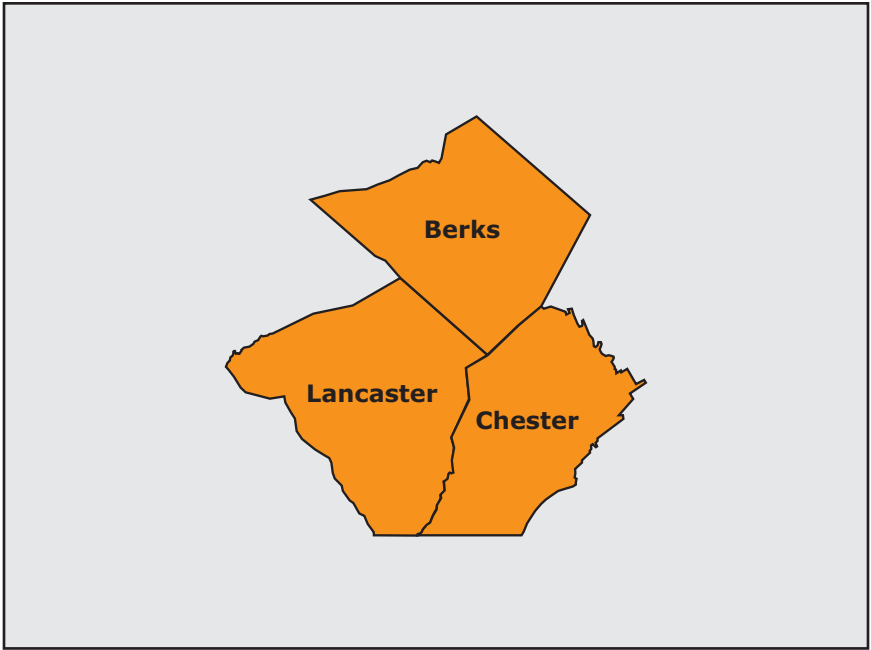
Carbon  
Columbia  
Luzerne  
Monroe  
Montour  
Schuylkill



## Eastern Region

Regional Contact • Yanimer Serrano

717-606-1291 • Mobile: 717-877-3552 • [yserrano@pa.gov](mailto:yserrano@pa.gov)



Counties of:

**Berks**

**Chester**

**Lancaster**

## Eastern Region

Regional Contact • Jean Andrews

610-270-3429, ext. 211 • Mobile: 484-366-4793 • [jeandrews@pa.gov](mailto:jeandrews@pa.gov)



Counties of:

**Bucks**

**Montgomery**

## Eastern Region

Regional Contact • Damaris Espinosa

610-270-3429, ext. 211 • Mobile: 484-366-4793 • [despinosa@pa.gov](mailto:despinosa@pa.gov)



Counties of:

**Delaware**

**Philadelphia**

## Eastern Region

Regional Contact • Scott French

610-841-8324 • Mobile: 717-877-3551 • [scfrench@pa.gov](mailto:scfrench@pa.gov)



Counties of:

**Lehigh**

**Northampton**

# Section III

## **Workforce Development Board Contacts**



## Workforce Development Boards (WDB)

The commonwealth strives to consistently provide excellent service to workforce development customers, both individuals and businesses, in the 23 workforce development areas across the state. The following are the 22 local workforce development boards:

WDB	Contact	Address
<b>Berks</b>	Daniel Fogarty Director of Workforce Development & COO	Berks County WDB 1920 Kutztown Rd, Ste G Reading, PA 19604
<b>Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
610-988-1363	610-988-1301	dfogarty@bccl.org
WDB	Contact	Address
<b>Bucks</b>	Billie Barnes Director	Bucks County WDB 1260 Almshouse Road Doylestown, PA 18901
<b>Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
215-345-3484	215-837-9110	bfbarnes@buckscounty.org
WDB	Contact	Address
<b>Central</b>	Erica Mulberger Executive Director	Central PA Workforce Development Corp 130 Kelly Square, Ste 1 Lewisburg, PA 17837
<b>Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
570-568-6868 x225	570-568-6867	emulberger@cpwdc.org
WDB	Contact	Address
<b>Chester</b>	Patrick Bokovitz Executive Director	Chester Co. Dept. of Community Development 601 Westtown Rd, Ste 365 West Chester, PA 19380
<b>Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
610-344-6900	610-344-6925	pbokovitz@chesco.org

<b>WDB</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Delaware</b>	Kate McGreever Executive Director	Delaware County WDB 1570 Garrett Road, Ste A Upper Darby, PA 19082
<b>Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
610-713-2238	484-745-7636	mcgreeverk@co.delaware.pa.us
<b>WDB</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Lackawanna</b>	Virginia Turano Executive Director	Lackawanna County WDB Scranton Enterprise Center 201 Lackawanna Ave, Ste 215 Scranton, PA 18503
<b>Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
570-342-3649	570-346-7014	vturano@wiblackawanna.org
<b>WDB</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Lancaster</b>	Cathy Rychalsky Executive Director	Lancaster County WDB 313 West Liberty St, Ste 114 Lancaster, PA 17603
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