



# Surviving Layoff

*working* ★ FOR  
**America**  
AFL-CIO INSTITUTE

# Surviving Layoff

# 1 – Don't Blame Yourself

# 2 – Take Back Control

# 3 – Have a Plan

Finding a new job.

Updating your skills

Claiming unemployment benefits

Staying afloat financially



# *Some Tips to Surviving* **Layoff**

## # 1 – Don't Blame Yourself

Some people believe that it's their fault when they get laid-off. Layoffs aren't new to the American workforce. But in the recent past, new technologies, corporate restructuring, changing markets, and increased global competition have vastly increased the possibility that American workers will change jobs several times during their working lives. These are things over which individual workers have no control over.

***AFL-CIO Community Services Representatives are an excellent resource in time of crisis. Call the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council to locate the Community Services representatives in your area.***

It's perfectly normal to feel angry, depressed or abandoned when you've been laid-off. But you do not have to deal with unemployment

alone. Organized labor, a variety of community groups, and public agencies stand ready to help you.

If you are a union member, you are likely to have protections not usually available to laid-off workers. Check with your union; your bargaining agreement could include protections like severance pay, health insurance, pension guarantees, and Union Privilege coverage as well as options for retraining.

This booklet provides an overview of some of the other resources available to you.

## # 2 – Take Back Control

A job transition often involves a lot of changes. As you face the process of starting over to find a new job or a new career, talking with people can help you figure out what your options are. Talk with family, friends, and co-workers as well as AFL-CIO Community Service representatives, and people in job placement and training programs about your long-term and short-term plans.

## #3 Have a Plan

A key to taking back control of your life is planning. A good plan will help you find a new job, get retrained, or build a new career. Components of a good plan might include:

### Finding a new job.

- **Analyze your skills.** Make a list of the skills you've acquired over the years. Do you have additional skills you've gained through a hobby or other jobs?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Perhaps you like to repair cars, cook, or work with numbers.

***The Unemployment Office is often part of your local One-Stop Career Center. The staff will have information on the length of your benefits and how much you will get.***

Don't overlook anything that could lead to a new career or revive an old one.

- **Identify demand occupations.** Find out what skills are in short supply in the area where you wish to work. Talk to someone at your local One-Stop Center about which jobs are more plentiful. Check the employment listings and the newspaper's help wanted ads.
- **Determine your options.** The One-Stop Center can give you skills assessment tests, career counseling, and references to suitable jobs. Other more intensive reemployment services, as well as training options, may be available. You'll most likely find the number for your local One-Stop Center in the phone directory under Government Agencies.  
Again, it is important to remember that talking to people can help, because many jobs are filled by word of mouth.
- **Market yourself.** Prepare an attractive resume. Be sure to include information on past jobs, training, and other qualifications.

## Updating your skills

- You may decide to get more education or training to qualify for another job. Need your high school diploma? Talk with your local adult education provider about adult education classes. Thinking about higher education? Ask the com-

***Talk to someone at your local One-Stop Center about which jobs are more plentiful.***

munity college about low-cost programs. Want a new skill? Check with local job

training agencies, area vocational and technical schools, community colleges, and apprenticeship programs.

## Claiming unemployment benefits

- To file your claim for Unemployment Insurance benefits, contact your local Unemployment Insurance office. The UI office is often a part of your local One-Stop Career Center. The staff will have information on when your benefits start and how long you can receive them, as well as how much you will get.

## Staying afloat financially

- As soon as you know you will be laid-off, prepare a budget. Calculate your combined savings and Unemployment Insurance. Then set priorities, putting first the basic necessities like shelter, food, and health care. If you can't pay your bills, talk to your creditors and arrange for reduced or no payments until you are back on your feet. Do this before your payments are delinquent — your creditors will be more understanding.

***You do not have to deal with unemployment alone.***

AFL-CIO Community Services representatives are an excellent resource in time of crisis. They can arrange for credit counseling, social services, health care, and other aid. Call the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council to locate the Community Services representatives in your area or call (703) 836-7112,

extension 466 for the AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison\*. You can also go directly to the agencies that offer these services in your local area.

***\*Ask about  
When the Paycheck Stops  
An AFL-CIO Publication***

**Other reference websites include:**

*www.workers.gov*

*www.doleta.gov/individ.asp*

*http://www.doleta.gov/layoff/workers01.asp*



**815 16th Street, NW**

**Washington, DC 20006**

**800-842-4234 • 202-466-8010**

**fax: 202-466-6146**

**E-mail: [info@workingforamerica.org](mailto:info@workingforamerica.org)**

**[www.workingforamerica.org](http://www.workingforamerica.org)**

*The AFL-CIO Working for America Institute works with unions and their allies to create and retain good jobs and build strong communities through promoting high road economic strategies for individuals; employers and industrial sectors; and public economic and workforce development systems.*

This brochure was prepared under Grant No. G-7615-9-00-87-60 from the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. Grantees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to freely express their judgment. Therefore, points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policy of the Department of Labor.

*April 2001*

*This brochure is also available in Spanish.*

*Este folleto también está disponible en Español.*