

Northwest Workforce Council

PO Box 2009 (101 Prospect Street), Bellingham, WA 98227 - 360.676.3209 • 2005 E. College Way, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 - 360.416.3600
265 NE Kettle St., Ste. 102, Oak Harbor, WA 98277 - 360.675.5966 • PO Box 1696 (540 Guard Street #210), Friday Harbor, WA 98250 - 360.378.4662
- www.nwboard.org -

Alcoa Intalco Works Facility Curtailment **Activity Summary – June 5, 2020**

Alcoa Corporation announced (on 4/22/20) it will close its Intalco Works aluminum smelter near Ferndale amid declining market conditions, laying off around 700 employees. The curtailment is expected to be completed by the end of July 2020. Alcoa Intalco Works and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) are working with the Northwest Workforce Council (NWC) to bring resources to the Intalco employees facing layoff in late June and late July 2020.

This layoff of 700+ workers is a curtailment and not a permanent closure meaning that there will be no production at the facility, but equipment and permitting will be maintained in the event that a restart is possible. A small crew will remain onsite until all equipment is properly idled. Then, there will be a further reduction of personnel with those remaining tasked with maintaining the equipment during the curtailment status. Alcoa and the IAMAW reached an agreement on May 8, 2020 outlining options for Union employees.

The Northwest Workforce Council (NWC) is responsible for the local Rapid Response (RR) efforts by coordinating the provision of rapid response services at the local level. RR encompasses the strategies and activities necessary to respond to announcements of a business closure, layoff or mass dislocation and to deliver services to enable workers access to available resources to meet short and long-term assistance needs of displaced, laid-off workers. RR is the primary gateway to the workforce system for the workers and the company.

NWC is coordinating access for both hourly and salaried employees to a range of support resources including: assistance in applying for unemployment; identification of training opportunities and funding; job search coaching; advice on continuation of health insurance; and other community support resources. The IAMAW has filed a Trade Act petition to the US Department of Labor. The application has been accepted and is currently in review for determination of eligibility. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) provided by the Trade Act is intended for employees who have lost their jobs due to foreign trade.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Northwest Workforce Council (NWC) is supporting a Labor Management Committee made up of two (2) representatives from Alcoa Intalco Works (Business), two (2) representatives from the International Association of Machinist International Association of Machinists and Aerospace (IAMAW) (Labor). Support to this committee is also provided by members of the State Central Labor Council, the NW Central Labor Council, and the central Employment Security Department Rapid Response.

OVERVIEW OF RAPID RESPONSE SERVICES: CONNECTING WORKERS TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

The many state and local organizations that comprise the WorkSource (workforce system) partnership are each contributing to the dissemination of information to Intalco workers and assisting them in managing their transition to new employment. While all WorkSource partners are ready to assist, the following organizations are taking a participating role:

- Northwest Workforce Council
- Employment Security Department, Unemployment Division
- Whatcom Community College
- Bellingham Technical College
- Skagit Valley College
- Washington Health Benefits Exchange
- Washington Healthcare Authority
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Washington State Labor Council

COORDINATION

- Alcoa Intalco Works Curtailment Response Update group convened by Mayor Hansen. Group includes Local Elected Officials, Alcoa Intalco Works, Labor, Congressional Delegation, Governor’s Office, Chamber of Commerce, Port of Bellingham, Northwest Workforce Development Council, and Employment Security Department. Group meets bi-weekly.
- Communication and coordination are ongoing with interested parties including Northwest WDC, Employment Security Department, Local Elected Officials, Washington State Labor Council and the Union locals, and other local workforce system partners.

RAPID RESPONSE ACTIONS TAKEN

Following is a list of activities underway. Due to the COVID-19 issues, all services have been re-worked to be provided virtually.

Employee Survey: ongoing

An online survey was conducted among workers to identify their support needs and interest in the available programs and services. 223 responses to date .

General Information Sessions

WorkSource partners (see above list) are presenting a series of general information sessions including an overview of the various programs and services available to support transitioning workers; sessions held as online webinars; scheduled to accommodate shifts and spouses attending; eight (8) sessions completed to date.

RR Information packets, with comprehensive overview material, are also being disseminated by Union Shop Stewards, Peer Workers and email.

Facilitated Enrollment May 21

Packets with necessary enrollment documentation have been prepared and made available for distribution onsite at Alcoa Intalco Works. Workers can begin the enrollment process to access workforce/WorkSource services and to get a head start on planning for their transition before exiting their current employment. Dissemination of packets is via Union Shop Steward, Peer Workers and email.

Unemployment Insurance Claim Support: ongoing

- NWC staff are fielding inquiries from workers regarding eligibility and the application process for unemployment benefits, providing guidance on where and how to access information, and referral to official ESD UI information sites
- Unemployment Insurance eligibility was clarified for those who accept the “Voluntary Quit” package. Workers must decide by June 5.

Peer Support for impacted workers

- Peer Support Workers have been identified to aid impacted workers with accessing needed services.
- Peer Workers are co-workers at Intalco who have been trained by the WSLC.
- Nine (9) Peer Workers are being funded by Alcoa Intalco Works.

Deep-dive Follow Up Sessions

Online interactive sessions led by the RR team on topics of expressed interest identified by workers are being conducted. Topics include: Unemployment Insurance; Trade Act program; Worker retraining options; Health Insurance continuation options; Financial planning; and Stress management.

ESD Unemployment Insurance Division is preparing for customized mass application webinars and frequently asked questions. Sessions are expected to be held Tuesday, June 9 at 2:00 PM and Thursday, June 11 at 7:00 pm, coordinating with shift changes.

Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)

Provides a variety of re-employment services and benefits to displaced workers. The benefits are intended to assist individuals in returning to suitable employment. TAA is a WIOA required partner in the integrated one-stop system.

- Trade Petition for this layoff was completed and submitted to Dept. of Labor via email on May 12.
- Alcoa completed and returned information to DOL to support the petition.
- ESD Trade Act Program Operator is preparing for staffing needs, anticipating TAA petition approval