



# Guidelines for: Rapid Employment Strategies Pilot on Natural Disasters (RESPOND)

**Effective: April 25, 2014**

**Revision History:** **01/24/2025** Summary: Revised definition of “natural disaster”  
**05/15/2020** Summary: Revised to simplify and clarify elements of RESPOND pilot program, expand pilot to all natural disasters, not only drought, and to specify the definition of a natural disaster. **02/22/2019** Summary: Revised guidelines to remove PL limitation on training hours. **02/19/2016** Clarifies that retrainees may exceed the 200-hour cap with an approved justification, for this and other programs. Also noted, for the Productive Laboratory delivery method the maximum training hours are capped at 60 (24 for Small Business).

## **BACKGROUND**

In April, 2014, Panel approved the Rapid Employment Strategies on Natural Disasters (RESPOND) Guidelines. These guidelines were originally designed to address the Governor declared State of Emergency, due to extreme drought conditions.

The RESPOND – Drought program utilized \$2 million in General Funds to create an alternatively funded ETP pilot program for companies that had been affected by the drought, which was split into two funding streams. \$1 million remained in ETP for use by companies that were in areas of the state designated in the State of Emergency as highly impacted by the drought. The remaining \$1 million was dedicated to reaching dislocated workers that had been affected by the drought through an inter-agency agreement with the California Community College’s Chancellor’s Office.

In addition to the \$1 million in alternative funds, ETP also opened the RESPOND – Drought program to companies in areas of the state that had not been listed in the original State of Emergency, but who were either impacted by the drought, or who were helping with the creation of technologies and services that helped to ease the negative effects of the drought (such as irrigation, water systems, agricultural support, etc). These projects were funded using ETP Core funds.

Due to the nature of California’s climate, geology, and other factors, droughts are not the only natural disasters we may face. Accordingly, at the May 15, 2020 Panel Meeting, the RESPOND program was clarified to ensure that the definition of “Natural Disaster” is not limited to only extreme drought conditions, but shall also include any natural occurring disaster as determined by the Executive Director, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **“NATURAL DISASTER” DEFINITION**

- A natural disaster is any natural event that causes widespread damage or loss of life. Examples include: drought, fire, earthquakes, floods, major storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, pandemics, etc.

For the purposes of the RESPOND program, natural disasters can be designated through:

- a. A declaration of a State of Emergency by the Governor due to the disaster; or,
- b. A determination by ETP’s Executive Director that the natural disaster has significantly effected the state’s economy, or the economy of a region of California to such an extent that use of the Critical Proposal designation is appropriate.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Employer/Contractor Eligibility**

- Both Single and Multiple Employers may participate in the RESPOND program
- Standard eligibility determination requirements apply

### **Critical Proposals**

- All projects eligible for funding will be deemed as “Critical Proposals” with maximum flexibility and an expedited development/approval process

### **Funding Source**

- ETP Core funds (both OSC and SET) will be used
- If/when alternative funds are received from the General Fund or elsewhere, alternative funding may apply. If alternative funds are utilized, additional program criteria may apply, depending upon the conditions of the funds use set by the Legislature or through an inter-agency agreement from the fund provider.

### **MEC Support Costs**

- Capped at 12%

### **Reimbursement Rate**

- RESPOND projects will receive the highest reimbursement rate, at whatever level the rates are currently set at in any given fiscal year. The only exception will be the rate for CBT training.
- CBT training will continue to receive the CBT reimbursement rate as set in any given fiscal year

### **Wage**

- Standard ETP Minimum Wage requirements
- It will be made a condition of ETP contracts that workers employed on public works projects must be paid the correct prevailing wage rate according to the type and

the location of the work; and all work shall be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and/or local prevailing wage requirements.

### **Retention**

- Standard 90 retention
- 500 hours within 272 days

### **Turnover Rate**

- Waived (but still must be reported)

### **Curriculum**

- In addition to standard curriculum requirements, RESPOND projects may:
  - Include OSHA 10/30
  - Include up to 50% Literacy Training
  - Allow occupation-specific Safety Training
  - Productive Lab ratio up to 1:10

### **Miscellaneous**

- If not otherwise specified in these guidelines, regular ETP program standards apply