

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2009**

**H**

**1**

**HOUSE BILL 1278**

Short Title: High Unemployment Triggers State Response. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Pierce; Bryant, Faison, Parmon, Randleman, Tolson, West, and Wray.

Referred to: State Government/State Personnel, if favorable, Appropriations.

April 9, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A STATE GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO  
HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IN A COUNTY WHENEVER THE COUNTY'S  
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE EXCEEDS FIFTEEN AND FIVE-TENTHS PERCENT FOR  
TWO CONSECUTIVE MONTHS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Response Team. – There is established the Interagency Emergency Response Team for High Unemployment Areas (Response Team). The State entities on the Response Team, whose missions span the areas of economic development, job creation, workforce training and development, employment services, public assistance, education, public health, and public safety, shall make an emergency response in any county in the State whenever a local area unemployment statistic for a county (based on unadjusted data) exceeds fifteen and five-tenths percent (15.5%) for two consecutive months.

The participating State entities on the Response Team include:

- (1) Department of Administration.
- (2) Department of Commerce.
- (3) Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.
- (4) Department of Health and Human Services.
- (5) Department of Insurance.
- (6) Department of Labor.
- (7) Department of Public Instruction.
- (8) Department of Transportation.
- (9) Employment Security Commission.
- (10) The University of North Carolina.
- (11) North Carolina Community College System.

The Commissioner of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Chief Deputy Commissioner of the Employment Security Commission shall act cooperatively as the Executive Committee leading the Response Team. All policy, strategic, and tactical decisions of the Executive Committee shall be made by majority vote. Each participating State entity shall be represented by at least two high-level employees designated by the head of the entity, each of whom must have the authority to activate and coordinate the entity's high unemployment emergency response pursuant to this act. With the approval of the Governor, the Executive Committee has the power to request, and shall receive immediately, from all officers, agents, and departments of the executive branch of State government any information ascertainable, or within their possession, and any assistance within their power.



\* H 1 2 7 8 - V - 1 \*

1 The Executive Committee shall consult with the Governor to provide  
2 recommendations concerning the issuance of Executive Orders by the Governor, as requested.  
3 The Department of Administration shall provide lead support assistance to the Response Team  
4 as requested by the Executive Committee.

5 **SECTION 2.** High unemployment trigger/action. – The Chief Deputy  
6 Commissioner of the Employment Security Commission shall monitor continually the  
7 unemployment rates throughout the State and shall notify the other members of the Executive  
8 Committee whenever a local area unemployment statistic for a county (based on unadjusted  
9 data) exceeds fifteen and five-tenths percent (15.5%) for two consecutive months so that the  
10 Response Team may be activated immediately.

11 At the direction of the Executive Committee, the Response Team shall take all  
12 coordinated actions within the power of the respective participating State entities necessary to:

- 13 (1) Alleviate the extraordinary burden of high unemployment by simplifying  
14 and expediting, to the fullest extent allowed by law, applications for  
15 unemployment compensation, public assistance, and other needed services.
- 16 (2) Intensify economic development and job creation activities in the county and  
17 the surrounding area.
- 18 (3) Educate the citizens of the county about available retraining and educational  
19 opportunities in the region and simplify access to those resources.
- 20 (4) Obtain the assistance of available federal government resources for the  
21 benefit of the affected citizens of the county.
- 22 (5) Open additional, temporary offices of the participating entities in the county,  
23 as needed.
- 24 (6) Offer additional education and training opportunities in the county, as  
25 appropriate.
- 26 (7) Provide assistance to local law enforcement and crime prevention agencies  
27 as requested by those local agencies having jurisdiction.
- 28 (8) Provide assistance to municipal and county governments, as appropriate.
- 29 (9) Engage in any other lawful activity that lessens the adverse effect of, or  
30 enhances the State's response to, a high unemployment emergency.

31 **SECTION 3.** Suspending the response. – When local area unemployment statistic  
32 for the county (based on unadjusted data) drops to or below fifteen and five-tenths percent  
33 (15.5%), and remains at or below that level for three consecutive months, then the Response  
34 Team shall suspend its response in the county unless the Executive Committee determines, with  
35 the approval of the Governor, that a continued post-emergency response is warranted. In that  
36 case, the Executive Committee may continue with an appropriate post-emergency response in  
37 that county for up to six months.

38 **SECTION 4.** Reporting. – Beginning January 1, 2010, and annually thereafter, the  
39 Executive Committee shall report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on Response  
40 Team actions during the previous year and may recommend legislative proposals related to  
41 State and local government responses to high unemployment emergencies.

42 **SECTION 5.** Effective date. – This act is effective when it becomes law.