

Responding2Redundancies

**Training initiative helps people find rewarding new work
and stimulates the local economy**

Summary

EEDA and the European Social Fund (ESF) provided £1.2 million funding for Responding2Redundancies (R2R), a scheme offering the most appropriate job advice and training for people facing redundancy. A new £2.2 million Response to Redundancy package, co-financed by ESF is now available as part of the Beyond 2010 programme, helping to identify appropriate training courses and offering employers subsidies to retrain staff who are to be made redundant.

County:	Norfolk
Programme area:	Business support
Date:	October 2008

Main messages

- EEDA funding helps people train for new careers after redundancy
- Improves skills and helps them find new jobs more quickly
- Assists with 'soft' skills, such as interview techniques and CV preparation
- Signposts people to training that can help them start a new business

Case study

Launch pad for a new career

“When you work in the food industry, you never really expect a job for life,” says Adrian Powell. All the same, he was stunned when he lost his job as human resources manager at a food company near Norwich. The cut came during a managerial reshuffle at the 300-strong firm. “When you’re made redundant, your first thought is that you need to go out and get a

job, but sometimes you need to take a backwards step and have a think.” EEDA’s R2R programme gave him the opportunity to do exactly that.

Adrian already knew about R2R because, as an HR manager, he had introduced other employees to it and seen how they had benefited. “I’d been with the company for some time, and leaving was a big step for me,’ he explains, “but I had some idea of what I might do. I really wanted to set up my own company, training migrant workers, and offering HR and health and safety advice to small businesses.”

Self-employment is an important aspect of the scheme, says David Wall, skills manager for EEDA: “Some people take redundancy as an opportunity to reassess their careers, and decide they want to work for themselves. At EEDA, we strongly support anyone who wants to go down the self-employment route.

“EEDA’s redundancy programme provides funding for the skills training for their chosen area, and it also points them towards business start-up courses. The idea is that we help people find new employment quickly, but it’s just as important that they find better work than they had before.”

Getting the right training

After discussing his options with Trevor Howard, an R2R contractor for Resurgam Business Services, Adrian decided he needed to do an NVQ level 4 in Advice and Guidance.

“It was really useful to talk my options over, and R2R gave me a lot of information,” says Adrian. “I knew I wanted to do the NVQ, but I wasn’t even sure who offered it.” The funding made a big difference, he says. “The programme helped me find the course at Norwich City College and then pay for it, and I’m very grateful to EEDA for the opportunity.”

R2R has enabled Adrian to make a positive impact on the local – and national – economy. He has set up Century Management Solutions Limited and written a self-study guide for migrant workers. This helps them understand British culture, leisure and work as they learn the English language. The guide is being translated into 10 languages, and Adrian is talking to several companies who want to buy it and export it for people to use at home, before they set out for Britain.

“R2R helped me start my business by helping me gain the qualification I need. If my idea gets taken up, it can potentially help thousands of people,” says Adrian.

Back to work with new skills

EEDA set up R2R in 2004, in conjunction with the European Social Fund (ESF), to support people whose jobs are at risk, or who are in the process of being made redundant. EEDA and ESF jointly invested £1.2 million in R2R over the past four years and over 1,500 people in the East of England benefited from the scheme. EEDA is now investing with ESF in a new Response to Redundancy package as part of a £6.2 million Beyond 2010 skills training programme.

Response to Redundancy focuses on providing funding for people to gain qualifications at NVQ levels 2, 3 or 4, so they can return to the labour market with something new to offer. It also covers key and basic skills, and runs group sessions on 'soft' skills, such as interview techniques and CV preparation. Response to Redundancy fits in with the Government's wider drive to raise skill levels, and coordinates with similar initiatives, such as the Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service.

Conclusion

Through Response to Redundancy, EEDA is helping hundreds of people like Adrian Powell learn new skills and move into rewarding new careers. With matched funding from other bodies, this is helping raise skill levels within the workforce in the east of England and is boosting the local and national economies.

Financial facts and figures

- EEDA and the European Social Fund jointly invested £1.2 million in R2R
- Beyond 2010 is a £6.2 million joint investment by EEDA and ESF. The Response to Redundancy element of Beyond 2010 is £2.2 million.

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