

The Workforce Connection Board

Policy Title: Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Reference Number: 2016-500-03

Approved: 10/03/2000

Effective: 06/07/2016

Status: Active

**Modifications: 06/06/2017
2-04/03/2018**

Purpose:

To provide information regarding Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enrollment and funding requirements for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to be used to refer individuals to eligible providers of training services, and as the method of payment for such training services.

References:

WIOA epolicy Chapter 7 Section 2 – Training

WIOA epolicy Chapter 7 Section 2.1 – Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

WIOA epolicy Chapter 8 Section 4.1 – Allowable Costs Towards Training Expenditure

20 CFR 680.230

20 CFR 679.380

Background:

To be eligible for an ITA and other training services, an eligible adult or dislocated worker participant must:

- Have been determined in need of training services as specified in WIOA Sec. 134 (c) (3) to become employed or retain employment;
- Must have a high school diploma or HSE; unless the program of study does not require a high school diploma and results in an industry recognized credential (i.e. truck driving CDL) or the individual is concurrently enrolled and attending a HSE program;
- Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected training program (as determined by program staff after participant interview, assessment or evaluation, and case management);
- Select a program directly linked to employment opportunities within targeted sectors with in-demand occupations in the local area or another area where the individual is willing to relocate;
- When Pell is not applicable and other forms of financial aid are not available; or requires assistance beyond other grant funds (including Pell) and other applicable forms of financial aid at the federal, state, or local level.

Responsible Party:

WIOA funded programs must deliver individualized career services and access to training services based on WIOA eligibility requirements for training funds.

Definitions:

- High-Growth or In-Demand Occupation – identified through verified data provided by TWC annually that an occupation has reasonable growth, full-time employment opportunities, and pays a living wage.
- Targeted Industries – identified through verified data provided by TWC annually, clusters of industries such as Healthcare, Manufacturing, Information Technology, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, with substantial job openings, long-term growth.

- TAA – The Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Program benefits US workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade by providing opportunities to obtain skills, resources and support they need to become reemployed.

Policy/Procedures:

A. Individual Training Accounts:

1. ITAs will be used only for funding vocational (occupational skills) training programs.
2. All participants must apply for Pell, FASFA and any other appropriate grant assistance, and provide proof of application for this aid. The Pell grant funding received by a participant must be applied toward the participant's tuition and other education-related expenses. If funding is required beyond available grant funds (i.e., PELL grants, WIOA funds, etc.), participants are required to arrange other means of financial aid; or they have the option of choosing a less expensive training program.
3. Programs and training providers must coordinate funds available to pay for training. Staff administering ITAs from WIOA funds may take into account the full cost of participating in training services, including the cost of supportive services and other appropriate costs, approved by WIOA Program Director.
4. WIOA Program Director must coordinate training funds available and make funding arrangements with one-stop partners and other entities. All staff must consider the availability of other sources of grants to pay for training costs including Federal PELL Grants, so that WIOA funds supplement other sources of training grants.
5. For WIOA approved programs, ITA will cover the cost of participants' required books and reasonable cost of special supplies, including uniforms and tools required for the WIOA approved course or program.
- 6. Supportive Services for participants in ITA eligible training programs will be determined on an individual basis and based on participants' needs.
7. Supportive Services (e.g., transportation, child care, emergency housing) will not be available to participants choosing to attend ITA eligible training programs beyond 100 miles from their homes. *(This policy does not apply to TAA participants.)*
8. The participant and his/her WIOA career planner must jointly develop a plan for a participant to complete the training (including pre-requisite courses) preferably within two years.
9. If more than 1 (one) Eligible Training Provider offers the appropriate course work/training program identified for an ITA, the participant will research at least 2 Eligible Training Providers which may include an interview and/or a site visit. The participant will complete and sign the Institutional Preference Attestation document stating this was an informed decision.
10. To continue to receive ITA funding, participants must:
 - a. Maintain an overall C or equivalent average*;
 - b. Bring/send their grade or progress records to their WIOA Career planner prior to the start of a new semester/quarter to prove they maintained a C or equivalent average; and
 - c. Report their progress in training to their WIOA Career planner at least once each month.

**A participant may request a review of special circumstances(s) affecting the first semester/quarter grades by:*

- *Submitting a written request for review of the special circumstances affecting grades and class standing to the program's supervisor. The written request will*

- *summarize the “special circumstances” why the appeal is sought.*
- *Submitting the request within one week of receipt of grades and prior to the start of the next semester.*
- *Submitting proof of attendance in all classes.*

The supervisor and participant’s career planner will review the appeal and schedule a meeting with the participant.

If, after meeting with the participant, the supervisor determines the appeal is valid, he/she may waive the policy by approving the special circumstance and continue future ITA funding for the participant. The waiver must be signed by the Supervisor and the participant.

11 WIOA Title I-B funds may not be used for participants to retake classes.

12. A per participant Individual Training Account cap of \$13,000 applies to the total Training and Training-related costs for approved Eligible Training programs, pre-requisite courses, and other courses (excluding Basic Skills Upgrading/HSE Preparation course, English as a Second Language upgrading courses, Employment Transitions course, and transportation/child care costs). The Training and Training-related costs covered under the \$13,000 ITA cap include:

- Tuition
- Fees
- Books
- Supplies
- Tools
- Uniforms
- Anything necessary for the training that is on the class syllabus
- Credentialing exam fees and license fees

No exceptions to the \$13,000 ITA cap policy will be granted.

TAA Customer Exception to \$13,000 Cap Policy

If an individual is TAA eligible and must begin or continue training under WIOA funding because TAA funds have been exhausted or are not available, the amount of ITA training assistance that the participant receives may exceed the \$13,000 cap. ITA training for WIOA/TAA participants will be paid from WIOA funds only in instances when TAA funds are exhausted or unavailable.

Initial Enrollment for Individual Training Account (ITA)

An in-depth assessment of an individual participant’s training needs must be made to determine what is best for the participant and best for the overall program. The filters that will be applied during the individual’s assessment and program selection process include the following:

1. The individual has a high school diploma or HSE; unless the program of study does not require a high school diploma and results in an industry recognized credential (i.e. truck driving CDL) or the individual is concurrently enrolled and attending a HSE program;
2. The individual is in need of training;
3. The individual has the skills and qualifications to complete successfully the selected training program;
4. The individual is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of

- selected training;
5. The selected training program is directly linked to employment opportunities in the area (or another area to which the individual is willing to relocate);
 6. Training will lead to the individual's self-sufficiency.

Re-enrollment in ITA Training

If a program participant has received funding under an ITA previously, re-enrollment will be considered only if:

- The completion of the previous WIOA training program occurred at least 24 months prior to the re-enrollment date; and
- The credential received from the previous training program is no longer in demand based upon industry and labor market data for the northern Illinois region. All decisions to re-enroll participants into additional ITA funded training, even after the 24 month wait period, must have WIOA Program Director's approval and such approval must be documented in the participant's case file.

Participants' Appeal Process

Participants may appeal the training decisions of counseling staff directly to the administrator of the WIOA funded Programs.

Participants may appeal the decisions of the WIOA funded programs administrator to The Workforce Connection Board's Operations Management Council. The Committee will either uphold the administrator's decision or render a new decision. The decision of the Committee is final.

B. Skill Upgrading and Retraining – Individual Courses or Short-Term Certification Programs

Participants who are determined to be in need of short-term training services (skill upgrading or retraining) in order to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency may be enrolled in individual credit or non-credit courses that do not lead to certification or short-term certification programs. [Note: A- Referral & Recruitment form must have been distributed specifically listing the course as *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* course before an ITA voucher is completed.]

1. Courses must be directed toward growth and in-demand occupational employment;
2. Courses must be specifically approved by The Workforce Connection Board (initially approved by the One-Stop Operations Management Council) as *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* or be included in an ITA eligible program certified by The Workforce Connection Board (initially approved by the One-Stop Operations Management Council);
3. Individuals must be unable to obtain other funding sources to cover the cost to the *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* courses;

4. In all cases, a participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) must include a detailed career plan that shows how the *Skill Upgrading and Retraining course(s)* will enhance the participant's ability to be employed/reemployed. The career plan must be based on an assessment of the participant's skills and abilities.

C. Internal Procedures Related to ITAs

Participants may receive ITAs only for programs that are on the Illinois state-approved list (or other state approved list).

1. There must be a *Master ITA-Vendor Agreement* completed and on file at TWC with the program provider before a participant may begin attending an approved program.
2. A *Referral & Recruitment* form listing the programs that The Workforce Connection Board has approved as Eligible Training Provider Programs and *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* must be issued (posted on TWC's website) before ITA vouchers may be issued for a participants' enrollment in a program.
3. ITA Vouchers will be used for tuition, fees, and books.

Action Required:

This information should be disseminated to all The Workforce Connection WIOA Title IB program directors/staff to assure compliance with requirements for training programs supported with WIOA funds.

Inquiries:

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to The Workforce Connection Executive Director

Effective Date:

Immediately