

Northwest Workforce Council

POLICY AND PROCEDURES DIRECTIVE

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 1, 2004 (Revision Date – October 11, 2007)

SUBJECT: Individual Training Account

REFERENCE: WIA 01-10 Revision 3

Background

Under the Workforce Investment Act, Title 1-B training services for adults and dislocated workers will be provided through Individual Training Accounts (*Reference—PL 105-220 Section 134 (d) (4) (G)*). An Individual Training Account is established for a participant who: (1) needs training, (2) is able to benefit from training and, (3) is capable of successful entry into the labor market in the selected occupation. WIA Title I-B adult and dislocated workers will be provided training services from a state's eligible training providers list that the participant selects in consultation with the Service Plan Manager. WIA training may be provided outside the ITA system as described below in Additional Training Methods. An Individual Training Account (ITA) will be awarded on the basis of a thorough assessment, with clear training objectives and only when all prerequisites are met. Participants must have successfully completed at least one core and one intensive service to be eligible for an ITA.

Prevocational Services (Reference - NWC Operations Plan)

Pre-vocational classes are those that are required as a knowledge and skill base before most people could either be admitted to, or progress satisfactorily in a vocational program which offers a degree or certificate; or are classes that are required to enter into and progress satisfactorily in a specific occupation or career path.

Short-term “prevocational services” are considered an intensive service and include short-term or low-cost preparatory training, usually lasting less than 40 instructional hours or at a cost of \$750 or less. Examples of pre-vocational classes include, but are not limited to:

- Mathematics or language skills at the 12th grade level or lower
- Occupational specific mathematics and language skills such as technical writing and pre-calculus even though they may be above the 12th grade level
- Communication skills
- Basic computer and software application skills
- Occupational specific baseline courses such as medical terminology for medical support occupations
- Classes which complete gaps in baseline knowledge for a given occupation as determined by assessment against industry standards

- Short term classes that enhance participants' employability across industries and occupations such as C-stop, First Aide, CPR, safety awareness, and Hazmat

Individual Training Account (ITA) Processes

All training services are provided only after an assessment of: abilities, aptitudes, interests, occupational skills, workforce skill standards, labor market demand for the occupation, self management skills and resources, program and provider research.

ITA's for Adults may only be issued for occupations within Washington State that are in demand. ITA's for Dislocated Workers maybe issued for occupations that can be demonstrated to be in demand in other states where it is feasible for the worker to relocate. A list of these occupations can be found in the Qualifying Occupations List published by Employment Security Department's Labor Market Economic Analysis unit and made available at <http://www.wilma.org/wdclists/wdaArea.asp?area=000003> . In order to have an exception approved, evidence must exist that the occupation for which the individual is seeking an ITA in is in sufficient demand and that the individual will make significant wage progress to warrant the investment of resources into the training activity.

Adult participants who have post Baccalaureate (Masters, Doctoral, etc.) degrees are not eligible for Occupational Training and may not be awarded an ITA. Adult participants who have a Bachelor's degree (undergraduate degree) from a four year institution will be reviewed on a case by case basis for their appropriateness to enter into occupational skills training. The review will be conducted by the Deputy Director or Operations Manager in conjunction with the individual's coordinator. These restrictions do not apply to Dislocated Workers.

WIA Title I-B funds cannot supplant financial aid available through the training institution. WIA funding for training is limited to customers who are unable to obtain other grant assistance for training or who have a financial need that exceeds the assistance available from other sources. Training providers must consider the availability of Pell Grants and other grant sources to pay for training costs, so that WIA funds supplement rather than replace the other available financial aid.

1. Short Term Classroom Training - Training that is considered less than full time status for one quarter or less (less than 12 credits or 120 hours) that is offered by an eligible training provider as determined by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. If the training is equal to, or exceeds 12 credits/120 hours, it must follow the Full ITA process with the exception of the Scholarship Committee process. The Short Term Training process is managed by the Service Plan Manager.

2. Occupational Skills Training - All training which is equal to full time student status (equal to or exceeding 12 credits or 120 hours). This process includes the completion of an Individual Training Account Proposal, and an appearance before and approval by, the "Scholarship Committee." After the ITA is awarded, an Individual Training Account Plan Authorization is established. The ITA Plan is signed by the participant, Service Plan Manager and the County Case Manager and forwarded to the training facility for signatures. Additionally, the participant signs the *Participant Responsibilities and*

Conditions While in Training. The availability and contribution of other training resources and financial aid grants, including Pell Grants will be documented through the Program Costs/Resources worksheet. When awarding an Individual Training Account, consideration will be given to labor market demand in the local area or the area to which the trainee intends to locate or relocate. The decision to award the ITA will be based on the above information and no denial will be based solely on the basis of which provider is selected from a state's Eligible Training Provider List.

3. Skill Upgrade (Short Term Classroom Training or Occupational Skills Training)- Training for those participants that have significant experience in an occupation and need additional training to obtain or maintain employment in this occupation or training for participants who have significant experience in an industry and require additional training to advance. This process is the same as the full ITA process with the exception of the Scholarship Committee process. Additionally, Service Plan Managers may waive some of the abilities and interests assessments required in the training proposal based on work history.

Eligible Training Providers

An ITA can only be issued for vocational training courses offered by an eligible training provider. Training Provider eligibility is determined by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board through procedures set out in Washington State Policy #3635. The Eligible Training Provider list can be accessed on the Internet at: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/etp> . Eligible WIA participants residing in Washington State will be able to purchase training from an out-of-state provider as long as the provider is included on its own home state's Eligible Training Provider list. Note that Eligible Training Provider policy will vary from state to state with regard to application procedures, required performance levels, measure definitions, and protocols. Additionally, an individual's willingness and financial ability to travel out-of-state must be documented.

Links to local Eligible Training Providers in the Northwest Area are listed below:

- <http://www.skagit.edu/>
- <http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu/>
- <http://www.btc.ctc.edu/>

Modifications and Revisions

Modified ITAs and subsequent ITAs may be awarded only for continuing classes in the educational or training institution initially attended and in the same occupational cluster, unless there is approval by NWDC that another venue and/or occupational training is necessary. Revisions to the ITA Plan are required due to an increase in cost or time of the original ITA Plan. Revisions require prior administrative approval.

When a program of training is removed from the state's Eligible Training Provider list, participants currently enrolled in the program with the support of an ITA may be allowed to complete their training. However, such ITAs will not be modified or revised for a participant beyond the original plan approval.

ITA Funding

- (1) *Funding levels:* ITAs shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and shall be limited to the needs identified for each participant. ITA funding for training is limited to participants who:
- (A) Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of their training; or
 - (B) Require assistance beyond available grant assistance from other sources.

The need and amount of the ITA will be determined after consideration of all other training resources and financial aid grants, including Pell Grants.

- (2) *Funding limits:* All Individual Training Accounts will be limited to a maximum (ceiling) amount of \$7,000 for a two-year training program offered by an eligible training provider as determined by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The maximum amount for a one year ITA is \$3,500. Administrative waivers may be considered under special circumstances by the Deputy Director or designee.

On-going training related support services (mileage and childcare) will also be included in the total amount. On-going support services will need to be identified on the Individual Training Account Plan. On-going Support Service identifies after the ITA Plan has started will require a Plan Revision.

- (3) *Payments:* payments for ITAs will be authorized by a fully signed Individual Training Account Plan to the selected approved training provider. Payments will be made incrementally, through payment of a portion of the costs at different points in the training course, e.g., each quarter's tuition at a community or technical college. Training Requests authorizing a voucher for items not provided by the training provider may be issued by the Service Plan Manager to the participant. Exceptions are made for training of short duration, or for service providers that do not allow for incremental payment.
- (4) *Allowable ITA costs:* Each individual participant's ITA will be limited to no more than the published cost of the selected training program, including tuition and fees, and required books, tools, clothing and equipment.
- (5) *Duration:* An ITA is limited in duration to 30 consecutive months and only one program may be funded. The NWC's Deputy Director can extend this duration limit if the participant's personal circumstances require additional training such as with some persons with physical or sensory disabilities or limited English language proficiency.
- (6) *Satisfactory Progress:* In order to receive continued funding, participants must make satisfactory progress. *Participant Responsibilities and Conditions While Training* defines satisfactory progress.
- (7) *Hold Status:* In some case participant may have to stop attending school for a quarter due to circumstances beyond their control (sick child, death in the family, etc). When this occurs, the participant should be taken out of Occupational Skills Training in SKIES for that quarter. When they return to school, they are placed back into Occupational Skills Training

with a new start and end date. Case notes should reflect the circumstance for the break in services. Additionally, their ITA Plan Authorization will need to be revised.

An individual who does not attend training for two consecutive quarters may not be placed back into Occupational Skills Training. Their ITA Plan Authorization should be canceled with the training facility and funds deobligated. A new Individual Training Account Proposal would need to be completed and a new ITA Plan Authorization completed for the above individual to return to training. Additionally, administrative pre-approval would need to be obtained before starting the above two processes. Exception may be granted to individuals called into reserve or active military duty for short periods of time.

Additional Training Methods

Participants may need to utilize additional training methods beyond ITAs. Contracts for services instead of ITAs may be used to provide training when one of the following three exceptions apply:

- 1) When the services are for on-the-job training or customized training.
- 2) When the NWC determines that there is an insufficient number of eligible providers to provide a selected training in a demand occupation and the labor market demand is strong enough to fully employ the group upon completion of the training. The selection must be through a procurement process with selection criteria that includes the financial stability of the bidder and the bidder's demonstrated performance in measures appropriate to the proposed training program. Any such proposed training will require a thirty-day public comment period.
- 3) When the NWC determines that there is a training program of demonstrated effectiveness, particularly as it applies to special participant population that face multiple barriers to employment such as offenders, homeless, or individuals with substantial language or cultural barriers. The criteria for demonstrated effectiveness include: program completion rate, skills attainment, certificate or degrees available, placement rate into unsubsidized employment and the retention rate in employment.

Reference Documents:

Individual Training Account Plan

Participant Responsibilities and Conditions While in Training