

HEART OF TEXAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD POLICY

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 PROGRAM:	 WIOA	 KEYWORD:	 WIOA, Training

Subject: Individual Training Accounts

Discussion: The policy is being updated to address the changes in WD Letter 12-19, Change 1, to allow customers to participate training located outside of the WDA.

SUMMARY

Training services authorized under this policy shall be provided using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to eligible individuals through the workforce center delivery system.

The ITA is an account established by the workforce center operator on behalf of an eligible individual. ITAs are funded with adult, dislocated worker and older youth funds authorized under Title 1 of WIOA. Individuals may use ITAs in exchange for training services for skills in targeted occupations from programs certified as Eligible Training Providers and found on the Statewide List maintained by the Texas Workforce Commission.

POLICY

The Individual Training Account is an account established by the Workforce Center and approved by the Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board on behalf of an eligible participant. It is the only method for providing classroom skill training services for WIOA program participants. Through ITAs, funds under WIOA Title 1 are used to make payment for purchasing training services from eligible providers selected by the participant in consultation with the case manager based on the plan developed after objective assessment.

Individuals must meet eligibility requirements for, and receive, Individualized Career Services prior to referral to training services. The decision to provide additional Individualized Career Services will be made on a case-by-case basis by Center staff, depending upon the needs of the participant.

In addition to meeting all eligibility requirements of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, to receive assistance for the cost of training, the following residency requirement is effective beginning October 21, 2010.

Permanent residents of the six county Heart of Texas Workforce Investment Area (Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone or McLennan) are given priority status to receive funding for training.

Individuals may transition from career services to training services upon being found both eligible AND suitable for job skill training. The case file, which includes the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), is the required documentation for this decision. The case file must document the assessment data indicating the potential for the individual's success in the training and the occupation, and that the training is directly linked to a locally targeted occupation. The case file must include documentation of the determination that the individual

1. has explored multiple career options,
2. has the necessary basic skills and pre-requisite qualifications required by the training provider to enter the program of training, and
3. has been assessed as to their fit for the occupation's work environment and demands.

Eligible participants may select a program of training that best meets their needs from among any of the appropriate eligible providers on the Statewide Training Provider List no matter the location; however, ITA and Supportive Services policy limitations apply no matter the location of the trainer. A program of training is defined as one or a sequence of courses that, upon successful completion, leads to a certificate, an associate degree, or a competency or skill recognized by employers.

ITA Process

Individuals entering the Workforce Center initially access Basic Career Services to aid them in searching for suitable employment. If an individual is unable to obtain employment through the use of the Center's Basic Career Services and is determined eligible under a WIOA program, they may receive Individualized Career services. Individualized Career services are warranted when center staff makes the determination that an individual requires additional services above and beyond Basic Career Services to obtain or retain appropriate employment.

In Individualized Career Services, a participant will undergo an objective, comprehensive assessment based on specialized testing, in-depth interviewing and evaluation of barriers to employment, and in consultation with the case manager/career counselor, will develop an Individual Employability Plan. It is during this case management phase that a participant and the

case manager establish short-term and long-term goals and evaluate whether enrollment in a training program is merited and a viable option for the participant.

Determining Suitability for Training and Developing the Individual Employability Plan

Customers must show they have utilized the Basic and Individualized Career Services prior to being considered for Training Services. If through Individualized Career Services and the development of the Individual Employment Plan, it is determined that the client is unable to obtain employment that will adequately support themselves and their dependents, that the client is in need of skills most appropriately developed in a classroom training, and has the literacy skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the demands of the training program, then a program of training may be considered. Financial capabilities, all testing, and interest assessment levels must be adequate to ensure success in the chosen training program and occupation.

The approach taken to participants shall be one of individual empowerment with coaching, advising, and guidance from case managers. Participants must 'own' or feel fully responsible for the choices made about their occupational future.

Because WIOA is intended to be a customer-driven system, the training services phase will be information-rich environment for the participant. The client will be given a training packet containing a list of eligible providers located in the Heart of Texas, the Heart of Texas Targeted Occupation List, information on the approved training programs offered by area providers, program cost information, pre-requisites required, ITA procedures, personal responsibility for attendance and active engagement in the training program.

They must also be informed of required communication with their case manager/career counselor throughout the training and upon employment. Based on the information contained in the training packet, the participant's testing and interest evaluation and the determination made during the counseling session the participant should be able to make an informed choice as to the training program and the service provider that best meets their needs and to understand their obligations to Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas for the financial assistance.

(Change 3) When determining whether a participant requires training to attain or retain employment, contractors must ensure that consideration is given to a participant's:

1. work experience;
2. skill set;
3. education (including previous training);
4. abilities;
5. barriers to employment; and
6. employment goals.

Contractors must be aware that an Individual Employability Plan (EP) provides:

1. a strategy jointly developed by the participant and a Workforce Solutions Center staff member that identifies the participant's employment goals and the appropriate combination of services to assist the participant in achieving the goals;
2. an outline of the participant's responsibilities in completing the employment goals, with any associated time frames for completion; and
3. a crucial, ongoing service planning tool updated and modified as needed to reflect the services a participant is currently receiving.

Contractors must ensure that IEPs are designed with the level of detail best suited to each participant.

Contractors may develop an IEP using any of the following:
The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST),
A local client management system,
A hard-copy form,

And must inform the Board of their selection and any changes implemented to the document.

Contractors must ensure that, at a minimum, IEPs include:

1. a specific employment goal;
2. a strategy to address barriers to employment;
3. detailed step-by-step activities and training the participant will perform and or participate in;
4. time frames for the start and completion of each activity;
5. a list of requirements that the participant must meet in order for the Board to continue to fund training and support services; and
6. specific dates on which Texas Workforce Center staff will follow up to evaluate each activity, provide additional assistance, and make any necessary adjustments.

Contractors must ensure that each IEP service is entered into TWIST using TWIST service code *68-Employability Development Plan*. Contractors must ensure that for every EP service entered, there is an EP available for monitoring review.

Priority Use of WIOA for Individual Training Accounts

The WIOA funds must be used for payment of tuition, books, fees and ancillary costs required by the training institution for enrollment in the program of training.

Clients are required to apply for other sources of funding (i.e. other agencies, Pell grants, scholarships, etc) to support themselves throughout the program of training. The Workforce Solutions Center will consider all financial support in the development of a financial plan and budget for the client's participation in the program of training. The client is required to demonstrate that they have the adequate resources to sustain themselves and/or their family during the time they are in training.

WIOA funding for supportive services may be provided only to trainees for whom an ITA is in place, and only when the need is exhibited in the financial plan and budget, or when an extraordinary circumstance occurs which jeopardizes the trainee's ability to complete the program of training and receive the degree or certificate which makes them employable.

ITA Enrollment Process

Once a determination of training is made, and the client demonstrates a high degree of interest in the training program, a commitment to completing the training, knowledge of job requirements, and probability of success, then the ITA is requested by the participant, approved by the counselor and must be approved by the Workforce Center Manager. Once awarded, the participant is given an ITA certificate. This certificate will note such criteria as the start and finish date, chosen program and institution, cost cap by semester and in total, a brief description of the items to be purchase (i.e. tuition, books, fees, uniforms, etc.) and outcome (degree, certificate, etc). A copy of this certificate will also go into the client's status file and accounting file.

The rights and responsibilities of the ITA will be explained to the client in both verbal and in written form. The participant will be given a copy of the ITA "Agreement" and will understand the importance of this training, sponsorship, the requirement for monthly contact, weekly attendance information, and grade requirements while enrolled. The client will enter into a training agreement with the expressed intentions of going to work as soon as the program is completed.

ITA Methodology

The Heart of Texas Workforce Board requires the Workforce Center contractor to obligate the total cost of an individual's approved training through an Individual Training Account (ITA). To fund the ITA, the Board requires the Workforce Center contractor to utilize an accountable voucher system in which the individual customer obtains a voucher for each semester, quarter or other segment for a sequence of courses to cover tuition, books, fees, uniforms, tools, etc. necessary for participating in the training program. ITAs may be fully funded in a single voucher if the training is conducted as a single classroom experience completed in six months or less, rather than a sequence of courses.

All approved training must be a Training Program on the Statewide Training Provider Certification System listing and the ITA should conform to the costs provided by the institution on that system.

As long as the training is being provided by a local community college, the training costs listed in ETPS can be used for the ITA. ITAs used to pay for training provided by proprietary schools or community colleges located outside of the WDA will be limited by the following chart.

Contractors may use ITAs for training programs located outside the Heart of Texas they meet the following requirements:

1. The training program is listed on the statewide ETPL in Texas.
2. The training program aligns with local target occupations or target occupations in an area to which the participant is willing to commute or relocate.
3. The ITA is used in accordance with other existing TWC guidance.

Any deviation from the cost in the ETPS must be noted and approved not only through the Center process, but also by the HOTWDB *Contract Manager*.

Contact Hours	College Credit Hours	Earned Credential	Maximum Value of ITA
Less than 200	0	None	\$3,200
200 - 250	0	Meets Licensure Requirements or Industry Recognized Certification	\$4,500
200 – 1000	1 - 40	Meets Licensure Requirements or Industry Recognized Certification	\$6,500
1001-1999	41-59	Meets Licensure Requirements or Industry Recognized Certification	\$9,000
2000+	60+	Associate Degree (non-healthcare related)	\$13,500
2000+	60+	Associate Degree (healthcare related)	\$17,500

Registered Apprenticeship

Contractors can use an ITA to cover the initial expenses required for first-year students of a registered apprenticeship program that supports a targeted occupation. These initial expenses are defined as books, tools, supplies, gloves, boots, etc. that are needed to begin classes and/or on the job training.

Items Covered	Maximum Value of ITA
Books, tools, equipment, supplies, boots, gloves, etc., needed to begin apprenticeship training.	Up to \$1,000

The Board may grant a waiver to these ITA maximums if both of the following conditions exist:

- 1) The published entry level wage for the occupation is at least five times the cost of the training (e.g. \$6,500 x 5 = \$32,500);

AND

- 2) No other program for training in the selected occupation is available on the Statewide Certified Training Provider System within a reasonable commuting distance for the maximum or less as provided in the above chart.

ITA Assurances

1. Funds established for ITAs may not be used for any other purpose except tuition, fees, supplies, uniforms, and tools required by the course or program.
2. Funds will be utilized to pay for each course only one time. If the student retakes a course from which he/she withdrew, or he/she did not pass, the student must bear the expense.
3. The amount of funds authorized for an Individual Training Account will be commensurate with the service provider’s cost (tuition, books, and fees) at the time of enrollment into the program of training.
4. A client is allowed a maximum of two years (six trimesters, or four semesters and up to four summer sessions) for a training program to be completed.
5. Only training providers that are on the list of eligible providers may redeem ITAs for payment. Providers will be reimbursed for ITA expenses no later than 30 days after receipt of the bill.
6. The Workforce Center Manager has the right to cancel an ITA for a participant’s failure to participate, make acceptable progress toward completion, or for violation of the ITA agreement. Upon cancellation of an ITA, the client will be notified of the termination date and reason/s for cancellation, and will be counseled on existing employment

alternatives, if any. The Workforce Center Manager or case manager will also be responsible for notifying the Board staff and the applicable Service Provider of the action.

7. The student must supply a copy of his/her financial aid package prior to approval and issuance of an ITA to demonstrate their ability to support themselves and their dependents while in the program of training.
8. WIOA funds are not used to pay training costs:
 - for any portion or term of training for which the participant has signed a loan as part of financial aid; or
 - that were paid by the participant (or another source) before WIOA program registration.

EFFECTIVE DATE for Change 11: 3/18/20