

TO: Workforce Development Board

DATE: 04/13/17

FROM: WDB Staff

For Discussion

For Action

For Information

SUBJECT: Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Approve the updated Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy

DISCUSSION: The Workforce Development Board, through the Department of Workforce Investment, is providing training services that lead to a certificate, license, credential, or degree. The document used most frequently that facilitates this process and communicates/consummates these training transactions is known as the Individual Training Account.

The WDB last approved the ITA Policy on 2/16/2017. That update was largely guided by U.S. Department of Labor Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 13-5. Since the WDB's approval of the ITA Policy, new guidance has been issued which further clarifies the explanations in TEGL 13-5. As TEGL 13-5 is no longer active, the policy has been updated to reflect the most up-to-date active TEGL, which is TEGL 19-16.

ATTACHMENT(S): Updated ITA Policy



Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) Policy

In order to provide participant choice in the selection of training providers, the Individual Training Account (ITA) system was established. Through this system, eligible Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants are able to choose their training. The Merced County Workforce Development Board (WDB), through the Career Services Operator and the Merced County Department of Workforce Investment (WI), shall make available classroom training in occupations that are directly connected to occupations in demand, as established by WDB. Occupational classroom training, as well as certain web-based training, will be provided through training vendors that are evaluated, approved and placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

The WDB through WI, shall provide training services that lead to a certificate/license/credential/degree, a competency or skill recognized by employers, or a training regimen that provides individuals with additional skills or competencies generally recognized by employers.

The WDB, through WI, reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy, on a case-by-case basis, should individual circumstances warrant exception.

I. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) – General Provisions

- A. Except as provided in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of July 2014 and associated regulations, training services provided to eligible participants shall employ Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) issued through the One-Stop Delivery System.

The “Maximum Training Funds Available” on any individual ITA shall not exceed six thousand hundred dollars (\$6,000) without prior, written approval of the Director of Workforce Investment or his/her designee.

1. In no event shall an ITA carry a time or dollar balance after the program of training is either completed or terminated.
2. The maximum length of training under a single ITA shall be two years.
3. More than one ITA may be issued for a participant within a two-year period provided the total cost of all ITAs combined does not exceed \$10,000.
4. An ITA shall cover the cost of training, including tuition and other training-related items supplied by the training provider (e.g., books, license fees, training materials, registration fees, supplies, uniforms, DMV printouts, physical examinations, immunizations, health fees and insurance).
5. The ITA shall be signed by the participant, the Supervisor and Manager.

- B. WI shall ensure that all training activities are provided at sites that are accessible to individuals with disabilities, and that all reasonable accommodations are made to provide services to this population.

II. Training Activities

- A. The types of training services made available through WI under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act shall include :
 - 1. Occupational skills training as well as training for nontraditional employment, offered in a classroom environment or web-based training; and
 - 2. Skills upgrading and retraining, including training courses that build upon the individual's existing skills
- B. Additional training services not covered by this policy include:
 - 1. Programs that combine workplace training with related instructions, such as customized training programs;
 - 2. On-the-job training;
 - 3. Entrepreneurial training; and
 - 4. Adult education and literacy activities.

III. Eligibility for Training

WI shall make available WIOA funds for the provision of occupational classroom training to eligible populations in accordance with Section 134(d)(3) of WIOA. Eligible populations shall include adults, dislocated workers, and incumbent workers (in accordance with the most recent regulations and waivers) who:

- A. Are unable to obtain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency through core and intensive services.
- B. After an interview, evaluation or assessment and case management, have been determined by a Career Services Provider to:
 - 1. Be in need of training services;
 - 2. Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program;
 - 3. Have selected programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the Merced County area, central San Joaquin Valley or in another area in which the participant is willing to relocate;
 - 4. Are unable to obtain sufficient grant assistance, including PELL grants; and
 - 5. Require support beyond the assistance made available under other grant assistance programs.

IV. Training Priority System

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL

19-16, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described herein, priority must be provided in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
2. Individuals who are the recipient of public assistance, other low income individuals or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups
4. Other individuals not included in WIOA's priority groups.

(Reference TEGL 19-16 *Guidance on Services Provided through the Adult and Dislocated under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner Peyser, as Amended by WIOA*).

For additional guidance on providing priority of service to veterans through the one-stop system, refer to the Workforce Services Directive WSD08-10.

Local Workforce Development Boards (WDB) may establish additional priority groups for their Local Area (e.g., residents of the Local Area, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, etc.). If any additional priority groups are established they should be identified in the local policy.

Definitions

For purposes of this directive, the following definitions apply:

Basic Skills Deficient – An individual that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. (WIOA Section 3(5)) The term "basic skills deficient" means, with respect to an individual-

- Who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- Who is a youth or adult that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Low-Income – An individual that meets one of the four criteria below:

1. Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), program supplemental security income program, or state or local income based public assistance.
2. In a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of the following:
 - a. The poverty line.
 - b. 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level.
3. A homeless individual.

4. An individual with a disability whose own income does not exceed the income requirement, but is a member of a family whose total income does. (Reference WIOA Section 3 (36))

Public Assistance Requirement – An individual that receives federal, state or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test (WIOA Section 3(50)).

Self-Attestation – Self-attestation should be used when other acceptable documentation is unattainable and there is compelling reason to believe the criteria in question would have been met had other acceptable source documentation been attainable. Staff must document the reason for using self-attestation in case notes. Staff are required to use the self-attestation form as directed by management.

V. Limitations of Financial Support

- A. For those participants who elect to attend occupational skills training within the local labor market area (defined as from Fresno County to the South, Stanislaus County to the North, and other areas deemed appropriate by WI Director or Deputy Director, the maximum amount of funds available will be limited by the defined needs identified in the Individual Employment Plan, and be consistent with the criteria put forth in this policy.
- B. For those participants who must attend occupational classroom training outside of the defined local labor market area because there are no providers of the training within the area, the provisions for electing to attend within the local labor market area will apply.

VI. Procedure for Approving Exceptions to Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Employment and Training Specialists will prepare the file to request an exception to the ITA (or supportive services limits according to the Supportive Services Policy if applying for exceptions to both policies) and present the file with all supporting documentation of need to the Supervisor and Program Manager for review and concurrence. If the Supervisor and Program Manager concur, the request will be submitted to the Director or Deputy Director to approve or deny.

Responsible Official: Operations Officer

Revised Date: April 13, 2017

Reviewed: April 13, 2017