

PUBLIC POLICY FOR INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

WIOA #20-001

PURPOSE

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows granting Individual Training Accounts (ITA). An Individual Training Account is a payment agreement for training services, established with an eligible provider on behalf of a participant.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a guide for granting ITAs to participants who are eligible under WIOA Title I programs. Selecting clients for training is an essential element established by WIOA. Participants are expected to make an informed decision about their future at work and the training services necessary to achieve their goals.

To these effects, the Guaynabo-Toa Baja Local Area Workforce Development Local Board (GTB-WDLB) enacted the following public policy to establish the relevant criteria to grant Individual Training Accounts.

LEGAL BASE

- Section 108 and 134(c)(3) and 129(c)(2)(D) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- TEGL 19-16: Guidance on Services Provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (March 1, 2017)
- TEGL 21-16: Third Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance (March 1, 2017)
- 20 CFR 680.300-340, 20 CFR 681.550

PUBLIC POLICY

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the Workforce Development Local Board (WDB) to develop a policy regarding Individual Training Accounts (ITA). ITAs are funded by WIOA funds under Title 1 for adults and dislocated workers in accordance with 20 CFR 681.550 and will be equally allowed, when appropriate, for out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24.

According to WIOA regulations, the training services must be provided in a way that they maximize the participant's free selection when choosing an eligible provider. The *Centro of Gestión Única* and the Affiliates must make available to the clients the State List of Eligible Providers for Training Services. Eligible persons can select training services from the Registry of State Providers, consulting with a case

manager in order to maximize the information when the client is in the process of making a selection for their future work.

The ITA is a payment agreement established on behalf of a participant with an eligible training provider. Only those training providers who appear in the State List of Training Providers are approved by the State to use WIOA funds and accept ITA vouchers.

COSTS AND DURATION OF ITAs

Regulations under WIOA allow all Local Boards to impose limits on the amount and duration of the ITAs, as long as said limits are not implemented in a way that is detrimental to the requirements of the Law for providing training services maximizing the free selection of the client of an eligible provider. The possibilities of obtaining other funds, such as Pell Grants and other assistance, must be exhausted before approving them. Based on training cost experiences in the Local Area and Work Market the following applicable amounts are established for the ITAs.

- In long-term occupational trainings, of 600 hours or more, such as an Associate Degree or others, the maximum allocation amount could reach \$10,000.00.
- In short-term trainings, whose competencies or skills do not demand the levels of analysis and sophisticated thinking and use of high-technology tools and equipment, meaning trainings of up to a maximum of 500 hours, or less than the maximum allocation amount, could reach \$7,000.00.
- When the participant is not eligible due to *justified causes* to receive the Pell Grant benefits, the WDLA will work with an Individual Strategy Plan according to the requirements of the law and the participant's needs. This will in turn be presented to the Workforce Development Local Board, who will determine, subject to the availability of funds, the benefit to be offered.

The maximum duration of an ITA will be three (3) years.

Funds intended for an ITA may be used for one trimester / semester or for several trimesters / semesters, according to the needs of the participant. Once the voucher is approved, the participant must enroll within 60 days after the ITA has been granted.

Training costs covered through an ITA include:

- Tuition, registration fees and other fees, such as laboratory and tests required for the course;
- The text books required and other supplies/materials listed in the course study program; and
- The course pre-requisites of the selected program.

Support services, if applicable, will be granted according to the Support Services Public Policy, WIOA #16-07.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An ITA is a training service available for eligible clients when a case manager determines the only way

they will be able to obtain or maintain a job is through career services. To be eligible to receive an ITA, the participant must:

1. Be registered in the Adults, Workers Displaced or Out-of-School Youth program; and
2. Be evaluated by a Case Manager who determines they need training to obtain or maintain a job; and
3. Select an eligible training provider from the State List of Training Providers after consulting with a case manager; and
4. Have an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) in the participant's record that shows the need for an ITA and confirms that the training may lead to employment; and
5. Have the abilities and qualifications necessary to successfully complete the desired training program.
6. Have a GED or high school diploma and a reading comprehension and mathematics levels of at least tenth grade.
7. The participant has not been able to obtain other financial aid to cover the cost of the training, including Pell Grants.
8. If the participant is an eligible young person who does not attend school, s/he must ensure the training:
 - a) Is targeted and focused on an employment goal established in the ISS;
 - b) Is long enough to teach the necessary abilities to reach the occupational goal; and
 - c) Results in a certificate from a renowned post-secondary institution.

The ITA funds grant is limited to clients who cannot obtain grants for these trainings or who have a financial need that exceeds the financial aid available from other sources. Eligible training providers must first consider the availability of Pell Grants and other sources of grants to cover the training costs, so the funds available from WIOA supplement the costs instead of substituting the other sources of financial aid available for trainings.

INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN / INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

The participant's Individual Employment Plan must describe the training plan included before and after investing in an ITA. The plan must include the certificates / credentials / titles obtained or expected after the training and when the participant expects to obtain employment.

Also, the Counselor or Case Manager must support that the training the person will receive could result in an employment that leads to self-sufficiency or to a salary that is comparable or superior to the salary s/he received in his or her previous employment. It must also show that the person has the abilities and qualifications to successfully participate and complete the training.

A comprehensive evaluation must be performed of each client before the final approval of an ITA. The recommended evaluation criteria include:

- Educational level of the client;

- Previous trainings;
- Level of preparation for employment;
- Professional objectives;
- Aptitude of the client for the training selected;
- Availability;
- Cost of the professional training;
- Financial ability of the client to begin and complete the training; and
- Potential for a client to obtain an employment with a salary that leads to their self-sufficiency.

The participant must have shown the following:

- Commitment to complete the training program
- Knowledge of the occupations in demand in the Local Area
- Knowledge of the work requirements and conditions of the career selected
- Ability to meet the income requirements of the training provider
- Attendance to all the required appointments

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THE TRAINING

ITA participants are required to show satisfactory progress in their training to process all their ITA payments. Satisfactory progress is defined as:

- The grade point average of the participants is not below 2.0 for more than one consecutive trimester or semester;
- The student keeps a grade point average high enough to graduate or receive the certification in their field of study; and
- The student is completing enough credits to finish his or her training within the period of time established in their individual plan.

The participant must keep in touch with his or her counselor or case manager and present documentation of his or her academic progress, as a minimum, at the end of each trimester to ensure satisfactory progress in the training. If the participant does not show the documentation required within the period of time established by the counselor or case manager, the ITA may be suspended until such information is received.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ELIGIBLE PROVIDER

- Only contracts with the Institutions listed in the State List of Training Service Providers and that their occupations are in demand in the work market will be established.
- The institution will present evidence of academic achievement for each participant who has been granted an ITA.
- The provider will commit to placing 70% of the participants who successfully complete the training. If placement is not achieved, 30% of the total cost of enrollment will be retained.

VALIDITY

This public policy will be effective immediately after its approval.

In Guaynabo Puerto Rico, today December 18, 2019.



Oriel Ramírez Rodríguez
President
Workforce Development Local Board