

TO: Workforce Investment Board

DATE: 07/09/09

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy Update

PROPOSED MOTION(S): That the Workforce Investment Board approve the updated Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy, increasing the ITA amount to \$4,500.

DISCUSSION: The Workforce Investment Board, through the Department of Workforce Investment, is providing training services to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligible participants. Since February 2, 2009, the ITA amount has been set at \$3,000. At that time, the training funds were limited, and the lower amount would provide more participants with training opportunities. Currently, the amount approved shall not exceed \$3,000 without a prior written approval process (exceptions to the ITA).

The number of exceptions to the ITA has increased significantly. Since February 2, 2009, the number of ITA exceptions has escalated to 49% (23/47 trainings). Additionally, not all training providers were able to provide the same level of training at the lower amount.

The intent of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is for training to be a particularly vital service during the economic recovery, with overall training enrollments expected to increase. The ARRA has made it possible to enroll more Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants into training.

Therefore, it is recommended that the ITA amount be increased to \$4,500 to: a) curtail the number of exceptions to the ITA, b) fulfill the intent of the ARRA, c) provide as many training opportunities (customer choice) to WIA-eligible participants, and d) align with neighboring ITA levels in other counties.

**ATTACHMENT(S):
Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy**



**DEPARTMENT OF
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT**

**Policy/Procedure
For**

Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy

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Policy: In order to provide customer choice in the selection of training providers, the Individual Training Account (ITA) system was established. Through this system, eligible Workforce Investment Act (WIA) participants are able to select their choice of training. The Merced County Workforce Investment Board, through the One-Stop Operator, 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 the Board. Occupational classroom training will be provided through training vendors that are evaluated, approved and placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

The Merced County Workforce Investment Board, 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 provide individuals with additional skills or competencies generally recognized by employers.

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

Procedures:

I. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) – General Provisions

- A. Except as provided in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 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 **four** thousand **five hundred** dollars (~~\$5,000~~**4,500**) without prior, written approval of the Assistant Director of the One-Stop Operator or in his/her absence, the Program Manager or Supervising Employment and Training Specialist of the Worknet Employment Resource Center.

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 to a participant within a two-year period provided the total cost of the ITA does not exceed ~~\$5,000~~**4,500**.
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), but will not include or consider the costs of supportive services. Supportive services, if appropriate, shall

be delivered pursuant to the Board's Supportive Services Policy.

- B. Both the student and a representative of WI will sign a completed ITA. Signatory authority of WI on the ITA is the Supervising Employment and Training Specialist responsible for Training Services at each of the Department's geographic locations (authorized by the Merced County Board of Supervisors on 7/25/00 and Department of Workforce Investment Director on 7/25/00). Once a completed ITA is signed by the student and WI representative, copies will be provided to the Accounting/MIS unit of WI, the school/provider, the case manager and the student. Each geographic location will use the same ITA form, but will utilize certificate numbers unique to their location to designate point of origin. Initially, Los Banos will issue sequentially ITA certificate numbers 1000-1999, and Merced will issue sequentially ITA certificate numbers 2000-2999.
- C. WI shall ensure that all training activities are provided in 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 Investment Act shall include:
 - 1. Occupational skills training as well as training for nontraditional employment, offered in a classroom environment; and
 - 2. Skill 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 instruction, such as customized training programs;
 - 2. On-the-job training;
 - 3. Work experience;
 - 4. Entrepreneurial training; and
 - 5. Adult education and literacy activities.

III. Eligibility for Training

WI shall make available WIA funds for the provision of occupational classroom training to eligible populations in accordance with Section 134(d)(4)(A) of the Act. Eligible populations shall include adults, dislocated workers, and incumbent workers 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 One-Stop operator 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 customer 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

WI shall provide priority services to veterans and their spouses for intensive and training services. If and when the Board declares that funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities under paragraph (2)(A) or (3) of section 133 (b) are limited, then WI shall provide priority services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals for intensive and training services. Low-income individuals are defined as:

1. Receives, or is a member of a family that receives, cash payments under a Federal, State or local income-based public assistance program;
2. Received an income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income, For the six-month period prior to application for the program involved (exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, payments described in subparagraph (A), old-age and survivors insurance benefits received under Section 202 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 402) that, in relation to family size, do not exceed the higher of:
 - a) the poverty line, for an equivalent period; or
 - b) 70% of the lower living standard income level, for an equivalent period;
3. Is a member of a household that receives (or has been determined within the six-month period prior to application for the program involved to be eligible to receive) food stamps pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.);
4. Qualifies as a homeless individual, as defined in subsections (a) and (c) of Section 103 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11302);
5. Is a foster child on behalf whom State or local government payments are made; or
6. In cases permitted by regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Labor, is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the requirements of a program described in subparagraph (a) or of subparagraph (b), but is a member of family whose income does not meet such requirements.

V. Limitations of Financial Support

- A. For those clients who elect to attend occupational classroom training within the local labor market area (defined as from Fresno County to the south to Stanislaus County to the

north), the maximum amount of funds available will be limited to the needs identified in the Individual Employment Plan.

- B. For those clients who elect to attend occupational classroom training outside of the defined labor market area, no supportive services will be made available to the client by the Department of Workforce Investment.
- C. For those clients 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 and present the file with all supporting documentation of need to the Supervising Employment and Training Specialist for review and concurrence. The Supervising Employment and Training Specialist will either return the file to the Employment and Training Specialist for additional required information, or will review and ensure that funds are available prior to approval.

Responsible Official: Assistant Director

Revised Date: February 2, 2009

Reviewed: February 2, 2009