# SFWIB INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNT (ITA) POLICY

## I. OF INTEREST TO

The Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy should be of interest to members of the South Florida Workforce Investment Board (SFWIB), Region 23 (Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties) CareerSource center contractors (Service Providers), Training Vendors, Region 23 jobseekers, and SFWIB staff.

## II. DEFINITIONS

1. *Actual Start Date:* the date that the participant commences classes.

2. *Approved Training Program:* a SFWIB-Approved occupational training program, including online training linked to occupational and program titles seen on Region 23's current Targeted Occupations List.

3. *Assessment:* the process by which Career Center staff evaluates eligible participants before they enroll in a training program.

4. *Completion:* the total number of classroom hours or competencies required for a participant's attainment of a certificate or degree.

5. *Credential:* a formalized recognition (i.e., certificate, certification) of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an occupation, the technical or occupational skills being generally based on standards developed and /or endorsed by employers. A credential can be stacked with other credentials as part of a sequence to move an individual along a career pathway or up a career ladder. A "work readiness" certificate is not included in this definition as it does not document measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation.

6. *Credential Attainment:* participant's attainment of a certificate or degree issued by the State of Florida and/or competencies required for a specific job or occupational group at the conclusion of a course of study.

7. *Economic Benefit per Placement:* the return on investment per approved training program for each participant placed.

8. *Individual Employment Plan (IEP):* identifies the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services, or steps, for the participant to achieve the employment goals. This includes providing information on eligible providers of training services and career pathways to attain career objectives.

9. *Individual Training Account (ITA):* the scholarship to pay for enrolling in an approved training program.

10. *ITA Limit/Maximum ITA Amount:* a cap on the amount to be paid for each approved program.

11. *ITA Voucher:* the system-generated instrument used to pay for a training program; for the instrument to be valid, it must have all required signatures, i.e., participant, career advisor and supervisor signatures.

12. *Occupational Training Area:* program title linked to an occupational title seen on Region 23's Targeted Occupations List. SOC to CIP linkages.

13. *Pell Grant:* the federal grant that eligible participants apply for to assist in paying for the costs of a training program.

14. *Performance Measures/Standards:* a set of Federal, State and local standards for determining a Training Vendor's compliance with completion and placement requirements.

15. *Placements:* the number of participants that obtain unsubsidized employment following completion of a training program.

16. *Post-Secondary:* an award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the post-secondary level such as: Educational Diplomas and Certificates (typically for one academic year or less of study); Educational Degrees , such as an associate's (2-year) or bachelor's (4-year) degree; Registered Apprenticeship Certificate; Occupational Licenses (typically, but not always, awarded by state government agencies); and Industry-recognized r professional association certifications; also known as personnel certifications; and Other certificates of skills completion.

17. *Stackable:* a credential is considered stackable when it is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career path or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.

18. *Workforce Management System (WFMS) formerly the Service Account Management System (SAMS):* the system for tracking participants' training-related information, i.e., expenditures and performance data.

19. *Targeted Industries:* industries determined by the SFWIB as a priority for occupational training; currently, those industries are Aviation; Creative Design; Hospitality & Tourism; Information Technology Banking & Finance; Life Science & Healthcare; and Trade & Logistic.

20. *Targeted Occupations List (TOL):* a State-compiled list of occupations that Regional Workforce Boards may offer training in.

21. *Training-related placement*: the number of participants that obtain unsubsidized employment in an occupational area relevant to the training program completed.

## III. Subject

Training utilizing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

## IV. Purpose

The purpose of the ITA Policy is to provide all SFWIB stakeholders with uniform guidelines regarding the use of training funds to pay for approved training programs and to determine subsequent program eligibility.

## V. Background

An ITA is the vehicle through which SFWIB expends training dollars. ITAs may be used to pay for or help defray the cost of training at an approved SFWIB Training Vendor. ITAs may also be used to provide training in an occupation clearly linked to a priority industry that is in local demand or that appears on the Region's Targeted Occupations List (TOL). ITAs are available to customers eligible for WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Welfare Transition programs; however, note that an ITA is neither an entitlement nor a right.

## VI. Assessment

CareerSource center staff is required to individually assess eligible participants for training prior to the issuance of an ITA voucher. The assessment process consists of examining a participant's academic and employment background as well as developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)which includes short- and long-term career interests. The intent of this process is to assist the participant in selecting a training program he/she is likely to succeed in and ultimately contribute to the achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

## VII. Individual Training Account Fee Structure

*A. ITA Cost*

By May 15th of a Program Year (PY), Training Vendors are required to submit program cost modifications to include: cost of credentials and projected time frame of credential attainment for the next PY to SFWIB staff. That information is used to update the program cost information seen on the SFWIB website and in the WFMS. The maximum ITA amount for each PY is derived from the program cost information submitted by the public education Training Vendors.

Specifically, the ITA limit per public school training program is set at 100% of the public institutions' submitted cost information and 110% of the public institutions' cost information for private institutions' comparable programs. Where there is no comparable **regionally** approved public education institution program, the cost of the approved private Training Vendor's program will be based on occupational title, quadrant category and cost negotiation within the applicable quadrant category.

B. Individual Account Training Cap

The maximum cap for the Individual Training Account (ITA) is **$10,000.00**.

C. ITA Amount for Occupational Training Areas

The ITA amount for each occupational training area is based on if the occupation is identified as High Wage/High Growth, High Wage/Low Growth, Low Wage/High Growth, and Low Wage/Low Growth.

The maximum ITA amounts are as follows:

- Occupations identified as High Growth/High Wage **up to and including $10,000.00**
- Occupations identified as Low Growth/High Wage **up to and including $7,500.00**
- Occupations identified as High Growth/Low Wage **up to and including $5,000.00**
- Occupations identified as Low Growth/Low Wage **up to and including $2,500.00**

The formula to determine whether an occupation is high wage/high growth, low/wage growth, etc. is based on the State of Florida LMI data for the fastest growing occupations within Region 23 by growth rate and salary rate. Annually, the average growth rate and average salary rate will be determined for the identified occupations, sorted by growth rate and average salary, and then placed in the appropriate category.

D. ITA Voucher

A voucher will be issued covering up to and including 50 percent of the maximum approved ITA amount. In order for the voucher to be submitted for payment, the actual start date must be entered in WFMS and the participant must attend class for 14 days after the actual start date of training. The 14-day period begins to run by entering participant information in WFMS, such as actual start date and length of program.

Upon the participant's completion of up to and including 50 percent of the training program, a voucher will be issued for the remaining maximum ITA amount. **Note: The payment of the** remaining amount is contingent on the Training Vendor's submission to the applicable Service Provider of documentation evidencing the participant's attendance records.

All vouchers must be issued within the same Program Year in which service(s) was/were rendered.

Please refer to the SFWIB Performance Reporting Requirements Policy & Procedures for more information.

**VIII.** **Duration of Training for Individual Training Accounts**

Individual Training Accounts can only be used to cover the cost of **up to and including** one year of training. This is a lifetime limit.

**Exception:** Those programs that the SFWIB have identified as targeted industries are exempt from the one-year limitation.

If the SFWIB participant's training cost is covered by another funding source, for example, Pell Grants or scholarships, of the maximum ITA amount approved only **up to and including** $2,000 may be issued via voucher to offset the costs of books, certification examination/testing fees, etc., for **up to and including** one year of training. Note that this $2,000 sum is not separate from the approved maximum ITA amount.

SFWIB participants that elect a training program that is more than one year in length, i.e., an Associate in Science (A.S. Degree) program, will be responsible for all training costs beyond the one year covered by the ITA.

Associate of Arts (A.A. Degree) and Bachelor Degree programs are not covered by ITAs, except when the Board determines there is a training program that demonstrates effectiveness to serve targeted populations.

IX. **Financial Aid**

A. Pell Grants

All SFWIB participants requesting an ITA are required to apply for the Pell Grant (Title IV) prior to enrolling in training by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number and the Pell Award amount must be provided at time of enrollment.

In the case where the Pell award changes from the amount stipulated in the original award letter, the previously approved ITA amount paid by SFWIB cannot be adjusted.

In the case where the Pell award is in excess of the ITA voucher amount used when the SFWIB participant enrolled, the Training Vendor must reimburse SFWIB the difference.

B. Other Financial Aid/Student Loans

SFWIB participants who are eligible for a Pell Grant that elect to attend training programs may be required to obtain student loans and/or other grants to cover the cost of the program that they wish to enroll in if the ITA amount and the Pell Grant do not cover the full cost of the program.

If the SFWIB participant is not Pell eligible, or the school or program is not Title IV eligible, the SFWIB participant will be required to obtain student loans and/or other financial aid to cover the cost of the program not covered by the ITA amount. SFWIB will not be responsible for any debts that a SFWIB participant incurs.

X. **Limitations**

1) Only one training program per SFWIB participant can be paid through the ITA; participants are limited to one lifetime ITA.
2) The SFWIB participant must enroll in school half-time or full-time as defined by the Training Vendor.
3) The ITA can only be used for courses that are specifically required for the program of study.
4) SFWIB will only pay once for each required class in an approved training program. SFWIB will not pay for re-takes. This one-time payment includes remedial courses.
5) SFWIB will only pay once for each required certification examination.
6) In the case of those occupational training areas where the State licensing and/or certification examinations are offered only in the English language, SFWIB participants enrolled in such training shall be taught in English.

7) Associate of Arts (A.A. Degree) and Bachelor Degree programs are not covered by the Individual Training Account, unless as specified under Section VIII, Duration of Training for Individual Training Accounts: Exception.

8) Individual Training Account (ITA) funds may not be utilized to pay for Microsoft Office Suite (MOS) training; or other training programs that integrate 30 percent or more of MOS training as part of a program's course offerings.

XI.   **Workforce Management System (WFMS)**

Approved SFWIB Training Vendors shall utilize the SFWIB WFMS Training Vendor screen to submit information on training status (drop, withdrawals, Pell information, etc.), attendance, training progress, placement, credential attainment information and performance information on a regular basis. The Training Vendor will provide credential information to the Service Provider and any follow-up data required.

Service Provider case managers shall track SFWIB participants' training performance through WFMS.

Please refer to the SFWIB Performance Reporting Requirements Policy & Procedures for more information on the responsibilities of Training Vendors and Service Providers relevant to WFMS data reconciliation.

XII.   **Performance Measures**

Training Vendors that agree to accept ITAs from SFWIB will be required to meet a minimum of three of the following five SFWIB performance measures relevant to each training program offered. Two of the three performance measures must be the Placement after Training and Post-Secondary Credential Attainment Rate standard. The table below lays out the performance measures.

| Performance Measure | Performance Standard |
|---|---|
| Completion Rate | 70% |
| Placement After Training | 70% |
| Training-Related Placement | 70% |
| Post-Secondary Credential Attainment | 70% |
| Economic Benefit Per Placement | Quadrant Benchmark |
| **Low Growth / Low Wage** | **$14,785** |
| **High Growth / Low Wage** | **$12,493** |
| **Low Growth / High Wage** | **$31,542** |
| **High Growth / High Wage** | **$29,201** |

A.   *Completion Rate*

This measure examines the percentage of participants who successfully complete training in an approved SFWIB program.

B.   *Placement after Training*

This measure examines those SFWIB participants who completed training and have been placed in unsubsidized employment within **180** days of training completion.

C. *Training-Related Placements*

This measure examines those SFWIB participants who have a training outcome and obtained unsubsidized employment in a training-related occupation within **180** days of the outcome. All Training Related Placements must have a wage rate at or above the training program's Quadrant Benchmark.

D. *Economic Benefit per Placement*

This measure examines the percentage of the return on investment per approved training program for each participant placed. **The approved program must meet and/or exceed the standard economic benefit per placement by quadrant.**

E. *Subsequent Eligibility*

For an approved training program to be considered for renewal, the program must meet or exceed a minimum of three of the performance measures, of which, two must be the Placement After Training and Post-Secondary Credential Attainment Rate. A training program must have performance to review for a 12 months reporting period; otherwise the program will be removed. The program will not be considered for renewal until a year from the date of removal.

Programs neither meeting nor exceeding a minimum of two of the measures will be removed from SFWIB's approved offerings list. For a removed program to return to the approved offerings list, that program must be resubmitted for a programmatic review and Board-approval a year from the date of removal.

XIII. **Roles and Responsibility**

Training Vendors and Service Providers are required to input data relevant to each of the above measures into WFMS. Additionally, Vendors and Providers are required to input wage data per placement into WFMS. Note that supporting documentation for each system entry must be readily available for review. Please refer to the SFWIB Performance Reporting Requirements Policy and Procedures for more information.

XIV. **Exceptions**

Exceptions to this policy, or any part thereof, must be approved in writing by the SFWIB Executive Director.