

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), Workforce Development Area (WDA) 23 (Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties) CareerSource center contractors (Service Providers), Training Vendors, WDA 23 jobseekers, and SFWIB staff.

II. **Subject**

Training utilizing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

III. **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.

IV. **Background**

An ITA is the vehicle through which the SFWIB expends training dollars. An ITA may be used to pay for or help defray the cost of training by an approved SFWIB Training Vendor. An ITA may also be used to provide training in an occupation clearly linked to a priority industry that is in local demand or appears on the WDA 23 Targeted Occupations List (TOL). Individual training accounts are available to customers eligible for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Welfare Transition programs; however, it should be noted that an ITA is neither an entitlement nor a right.

V. **STATUTORY AUTHORITIES**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, Public Law 113-128

Florida Statutes, Title XXXI, Chapter 445 – Workforce Services, State of Florida Workforce Innovation Act of 2000

VI. **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 WDA 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. Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code: designed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the 10-digit CIP code provides a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking, assessment and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity.

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5. Completion: the total number of classroom hours or competencies required for a participant's attainment of a certificate or degree.
6. Credential: a formalized recognition (i.e., certificate, certification, degree) 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 are 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.
7. Credential Attainment: a 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.
8. Economic Benefit per Placement: the return on investment per approved training program for each participant placed.
9. Employ Florida (EF): the State of Florida's system for tracking Federal performance on participants enrolled in an Individual Training Account. The tool is another component of the Employ Florida network of workforce services and resources. It is a powerful online tool specifically designed to help connect employers and job seekers.
10. Individual Employment Plan (IEP): is an individualized career service under the WIOA that is developed jointly by the participant and career planner when determined appropriate by the career center or career center operator. The plan is an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals. As part of the IEP process, participants are provided with information regarding eligible providers of training services and career pathways to attain career objectives.
11. Individual Training Account (ITA): is a scholarship in the form of a voucher that covers training costs (i.e., tuition, fees, books, required materials and supplies) for eligible adult or dislocated workers in need of training services in order to secure employment. The scholarship pays for enrollment in an SFWIB approved training program.
12. ITA Maximum Amount: the maximum dollar amount that can be paid for each SFWIB approved program.
13. ITA Voucher: the system-generated instrument used to pay for SFWIB approved training programs. The instrument is only valid if it contains all required signatures (i.e., participant, career advisor and supervisor).
14. Labor Market Information (LMI): the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Labor Market Statistics Center produces, analyzes, and delivers timely and reliable labor statistics information to improve economic decision-making. Information regarding economic indicators, salaries, high and low demand occupations, occupational and

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demographic data, and more on Florida and more specifically local areas may be obtained. Additional information may be accessed through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

15. Occupational Information Network (O*NET): is a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) based system, accessed as a free online database that contains hundreds of occupational definitions to help students, job seekers, workforce development and human resources professionals, researchers, and others to understand today's world of work in the United States.
16. Occupational Training Area: program titles linked to occupational titles below Bachelor's Degree level listed on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) to Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Crosswalk.
17. Pell Grant: the federal grant available to eligible participants for training program costs, in whole or part.
18. Performance Measures/Standards: a set of Federal, State and local standards for determining a Training Vendor's compliance with completion and placement requirements.
19. Placements: the number of participants that obtain unsubsidized employment following completion of a training program.
20. Quadrant Benchmark: the linkage of an educational program to one of four quadrant categories: High Growth/High Wage (HG/HW), Low Growth/High Wage (LG/HW), High Growth/Low Wage (HG/LW), and Low Growth/Low Wage (LG/LW). The maximum dollar amount allocated for each occupational training area is a direct correlation of the four listed categories.
21. Recognized Postsecondary Credential: an award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the post-secondary level bestowed by an accredited educational institution, an industry recognized association, or an occupational association or professional society. The credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. The types of credentials includes educational diploma, certificate or certification (typically for one academic year or less of study); an associate (2-year) or baccalaureate (4-year) degree; registered apprenticeship certificate of completion; a license (typically awarded/recognized by the State involved or Federal Government); and industry-recognized or professional association certificate or certification (also known as personnel certifications); and other skill certificates for specific skill sets or competencies within one or more industries or occupations. Work readiness certificates or those awarded by workforce development boards are not part of this definition because neither type of certificate documents the measureable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. Similarly, such certificates must recognize technology or

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industry/occupational skills for the specific industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., even if such general skills certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment.

22. Stackable Credential: a credential that is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build an individual's qualifications and help them move along a career path or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.
23. Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System: a system used by Federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, or disseminating data. This system of occupational code assignments assists users of the information relate a job title or occupational specialty to a six-digit Occupational Information Network (O*NET) SOC occupation.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Targeted Occupations List (TOL): a State-compiled list of occupations that Local Workforce Development Boards may offer training in.
27. Training-Related Placement: the number of participants that obtain unsubsidized employment in an occupational area relevant to the training program completed.

VII. 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 in which he/she is likely to succeed, and ultimately contribute to the achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

VIII. Individual Training Account Fee Structure

A. ITA Cost

Training Vendors are required to submit program cost modifications with supporting documentation to SFWIB staff, **no later than April 1st** of the current Program Year (PY) for the next PY. Program cost modifications may include, but are not limited to tuition, the cost of the credential(s) and the projected time frame of credential attainment. The information is used to update the program cost seen on the SFWIB website and in the WFMS. The maximum ITA amount for each program year is derived from the program cost information submitted by public education training vendors.

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Specifically, the ITA limit per public school training program is set at 100% of the public institutions' submitted cost information. Where there is no approved public education institution comparable program, the cost of the approved private training vendor's program will be based on the previous program year's maximum ITA amount, a Florida public education institution's comparable program, and within the applicable quadrant benchmark category.

B. Individual Training Account Cap

The maximum cap for the ITA is **\$10,000**.

C. ITA Amount for Occupational Training Areas

The ITA amount for each occupational training area is based on whether 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 divided into the four/quadrant categories as follows:

- Occupations identified as High Growth/High Wage **up to and including \$10,000**.
- Occupations identified as Low Growth/High Wage **up to and including \$7,500**.
- Occupations identified as High Growth/Low Wage **up to and including \$5,000**.
- Occupations identified as Low Growth/Low Wage **up to and including \$2,500**.

The formula to determine an occupation's quadrant category is based on the State of Florida's LMI data for the fastest growing occupations within WDA 23 by the growth and salary rates. Annually, the average growth and average salary rates are determined for the identified occupations, sorted by the growth rate and average salary, and 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. The actual start date must be entered in the WFMS and the participant must attend class for 14 days after the actual start date of training before the voucher can be submitted for payment. The 14-day period begins when the participant's information is entered in the 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:** payment of the remaining amount is contingent upon the training provider's submission of documentation evidencing the participant's attendance records to the applicable service provider.

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

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

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IX. 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: Programs identified by the SFWIB 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: the \$2,000 is included within the approved maximum ITA amount.

SFWIB participants who elect a training program that is longer than one year (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 SFWIB determines there is a training program that demonstrates effectiveness to serve targeted populations.

X. Financial Aid

A. Pell Grants

All SFWIB participants requesting an ITA are required to apply for the Pell Grant (Pell or 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. Documentation evidencing the participant applied for the PELL grant must be obtained by the training vendor and a copy provided to the service provider to be maintained in the participant's file.

In the case where the Pell award changes from the amount stipulated in the original award letter, the previously approved ITA amount paid by the 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 the SFWIB the difference within 10 days of the occurrence.

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, grants and/or other financial aid to cover the cost of the program in which they wish to enroll if the ITA amount and the Pell Grant do not cover the full cost of the program. An acknowledgement form stating the same must be signed by the participant and maintained in their file.

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If the SFWIB participant is not Pell eligible, or the school or program is not Title IV eligible, the SFWIB participant is required to obtain student loans, grants and/or other financial aid to cover the cost of the program not covered by the ITA amount. The SFWIB will not be responsible for any debts incurred by an SFWIB participant. Any outstanding balances for training not covered by the ITA shall be the sole responsibility of the participant.

The Training Vendor must provide the SFWIB or the SFWIB authorized representative with written documentation regarding other financial aid received by each participant. The documentation shall include, at a minimum, the notice of award with the participant's name, the last four digits of the social security number, student identification number that lists each type of financial aid received, the amounts (if known), and the source of the funds.

XI. Duplication of Payment

The Training Vendor shall reimburse the SFWIB for any duplicate payments. Additionally, the SFWIB reserves the right to withhold payments requested by the Training Vendor to offset duplicate payments.

XII. Limitations

- 1) Only one training program per SFWIB participant can be paid through the ITA; participants are limited to one lifetime ITA. **Exception:** Programs identified by the SFWIB as targeted industries are exempt from the one-year limitation.
- 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) The SFWIB will only pay once for each required class in an approved training program. The SFWIB will not pay for re-takes. This one-time payment includes remedial courses.
- 5) The SFWIB will only pay once for each required certification examination.
- 6) The Training Vendor is required to conduct all training in the English language in those occupations/programs where licensing and certification examinations are only offered in the English language. This requirement seeks to ensure that SFWIB participants are trained in the same language that they will be tested and able to comprehend the licensing and certification examinations. Associate of Arts (A.A. Degree) and Bachelor Degree programs are not covered by the Individual Training Account, unless as specified under Section IX, Duration of Training for Individual Training Accounts: Exception.
- 7) 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.

XIII. Workforce Management System (WFMS)

Approved SFWIB Training Vendors shall utilize the SFWIB WFMS Training Reconciliation module to submit information on training status (drop, withdrawals, Pell information, etc.), attendance, training progress, placement, credential attainment information, and performance data on a

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regular basis. The Training Vendor is required to provide credential information to the Service Provider and any follow-up data.

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.

XIV. Performance Measures

Training Vendors who agree to accept an ITA from the SFWIB are 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 Postsecondary Credential Attainment Rate standard. The table below outlines the performance measure requirements.

Performance Measure	Performance Standard
Completion Rate	70%
Placement After Training	70%
Training-Related Placement	70%
Postsecondary Credential Attainment Rate	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. Postsecondary Credential Attainment Rate

A measure that examines SFWIB participants who, during a program year, obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from a training program; or who are in an education

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or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment within one year after exit from the program.

E. *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.**

F. *Subsequent Eligibility*

Training vendors seeking to have an approved training program considered for renewal, 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 12 months of continuous performance to review for a reporting period; otherwise the program will be removed. The program will not be considered for renewal for a minimum of one year from the date of removal.

Programs neither meeting nor exceeding a minimum of two of the required measures will be removed from the list of SFWIB approved offerings. Training vendors must resubmit the removed program for programmatic review and SFWIB approval a minimum of one year from the date of removal in order to have the program returned to the list of approved offerings.

XV. Roles and Responsibility

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

XVI. Exceptions

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