

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) Career 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 area of study linked to an occupation 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 participant's attainment of a certificate or degree or competencies needed for a specific job or occupational group at the conclusion of a course of study.
- 5) Economic Benefit per Placement: the return on investment per approved training program for each participant placed.
- 6) ITA (Individual Training Account): the scholarship to pay for enrolling in an approved training program.
- 7) ITA Limit/Maximum ITA Amount: a cap on the amount to be paid for each approved program.
- 8) 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.
- 9) Occupational Training Area: an approved training program linked to the occupations listed on Region 23's Targeted Occupations List.
- 10) Pell Grant: the federal grant that eligible participants apply for to assist in paying for the costs of a training program.
- 11) Performance measures/standards: a set of federal, state and local standards for determining a Training Vendor's compliance with completion and placement requirements.
- 12) Placement: the number of participants that obtain unsubsidized employment following completion of a training program.
- 13) Remedial Courses: a course taken to prepare for a required course in an approved training program.
- 14) Service Account Management System (SAMS): the system for tracking participants'

training-related information, i.e., expenditures and performance data.

- 15) Targeted Industries: industries determined by the SFWIB as a priority for occupational training; currently, those industries are Aviation, Healthcare Services, Life Sciences/Bio-Tech, Green Jobs, Information Technology and Waste Water Management.
- 16) Targeted Occupations List (TOL): a State-compiled list of occupations that Regional Workforce Boards may offer training in.
- 17) 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

Career 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 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 for the next PY to SFWIB staff. That information is used to update the program cost information seen on the SFWIB website and in SAMS. 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 SAMS and the participant must attend class for 14 consecutively scheduled classes. The 14-day period begins to run by entering participant information in SAMS, 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.

IX. Financial Aid

A. Pell Grants

All SFWIB participants requesting training using an ITA are required to apply for the Pell Grant (Title IV) by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

SFWIB participants pending PELL Grant approval/award may be enrolled in training through an ITA voucher. If subsequently awarded, the Pell Grant proceeds will be applied toward the tuition costs, with the ITA paying only for costs in excess of the Pell award. In the case that the Pell award covers the cost of the training, the Training Vendor will reimburse SFWIB the amount of tuition paid by SFWIB.

B. Other Financial Aid/Student Loans

If a SFWIB participant has another grant or scholarship, the ITA funds will be available only after the other grant or scholarship has been utilized.

SFWIB participants 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, if eligible for Pell, 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.

XI. Service Account Management System (SAMS)

Approved SFWIB Training Vendors shall utilize the SFWIB SAMS 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 SAMS.

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

XII. Performance Measures

Training Vendors that agree to accept ITAs from SFWIB will be required to meet a **minimum of two of the listed** SFWIB performance standards. The table below lays out the performance measures.

Performance Measure	Performance Standard
Completion Rate	70%
Placement After Training	70%
Training-Related Placement	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 completed training and obtained unsubsidized employment within **180** days of completion in a training-related occupation.

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 two of the performance measures. 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 Responsibilities

Training Vendors and Service Providers are required to input data relevant to each of the above measures into SAMS. Additionally, Vendors and Providers are required to input wage data per placement into SAMS. 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.