

THE WORKFORCE BOARD OF NORTHERN COOK COUNTY

LOCAL AREA WIA Policy 2009 – ITA Policy

TO: ALL WIA CONTRACTORS

FROM: _____
Jennifer Stasch
Executive Director

SUBJECT: ITA Voucher Completion Procedures

DATE: January 26, 2009

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to update and clarify the policy associated with authorization to issue ITAs to eligible individuals.

References: WIA Legislation and Rules and Regulations
Workforce Board WIA Job Training Plan
Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Illinois Workforce Development System Tracking

Background: The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County is releasing the ITA Policy in order to ensure accountability and compliance that aligns with the Contractor’s Agreement with the Workforce Board, DOL and DCEO policy, and other applicable rules and regulations.

Policy

Statement: The Contractor authorized to issue ITAs will comply with all Workforce Board policies and requirements and other processes and procedures in place, for authorizing ITAs to eligible individuals.

I. Funding Amount

- A. The fund amount per ITA will be determined during the annual budget process conducted by the Workforce Board and will be noted as a budget assumption.
 - 1. The funding cap is \$3,000.
 - 2. If the customer is participating in a high wage, high growth training in a critical skills shortage occupational field, they can receive up to \$6,000.
 - 3. If the customer is participating in the equivalent of a two year program, the amount cannot exceed \$10,000.

- B. ITA dollar limitations will include:
 - 1. Tuition,
 - 2. Required books,
 - 3. Published fees;
 - 4. Required supplies as outlined in the institution’s course catalog/syllabus;

5. Exam fees.

- C. Coursework costs charged by an institution may not exceed the price charged to the general public but a reduced price may be negotiated with the institution.
- D. During the fiscal year, the Workforce Board's chief executive will be authorized to adjust the ITA amount if fund availability decreases or increases or for targeted occupations or special grant funds. These changes will be noted as an Exception.

II. Eligibility for ITAs

- A. The ITA funds of LWIA 08 will be targeted to residents of the north and northwest suburbs or individuals who were laid off from a company located in this area. If funds are limited, individuals residing in other geographic areas will be referred to that Workforce Area if an ITA is requested or may seem suitable.
- B. WIA eligible adults, dislocated workers and older youth (18-21) are eligible to receive an ITA.
- C. Individuals who are delinquent in repaying a student loan will not be automatically disqualified from being considered for an ITA but must develop and implement a repayment plan with the respective career advisor.
- D. ITAs can only be written for training programs certified by The Workforce Board and captured on IWDS.

III. Financial Aid Requirements

- A. Individuals will be required to apply for financial aid but Workforce Area funds will not be withheld while the individual is awaiting determination of other financial aid eligibility.
- B. The individual may be allowed to use other financial aid resources such as Pell grants to assist with living expenses while using the ITA for tuition and fees.
- C. The Workforce Board's chief executive will be authorized to change this policy in the event of ITA fund shortages.

IV. Lifetime Amounts

- A. Unless noted through an exception, each individual will be limited to a maximum of two training opportunities or ITAs through WIA funds during a ten-year period. Multiple vouchers may be approved during the two ITA opportunities.

V. ITA Denial

An ITA or voucher may be denied if:

- A. Funds are limited;
- B. Training funds are exhausted;
- C. The individual's "cap" has been reached;
- D. The prospective trainee does not fit the priorities established in the Workforce Area's plan;
- E. The individual resides outside the geographic area of north and northwest Cook County and was not laid off from a company in that area;

- F. The prospective trainee is not likely to succeed in training, based upon an in-depth or objective assessment by the training review board;
- G. The training course or program is not likely to result in employment in the geographic area the prospective trainee intends to reside upon training completion;
- H. The course or program, even though on the statewide list, does not meet the Workforce Board's performance standards and additional criteria;
- I. The service provider does not accept the trainee;
- J. The trainee attempts to make changes to the voucher without the signature of the appropriate career advisor; or,
- K. The vendor or trainee refuses to comply with reasonable Workforce Board and/or WIA service provider requirements and conditions.

VI. Changes to Employment Status

- A. Economically disadvantaged individuals who become employed but continue to earn wages under the Workforce Board's definition of "self-sufficiency" may be eligible for an ITA if their Assessment Plan indicates a training need or such need is subsequently identified by the individual and/or the employer. In the event of fund shortages, the Workforce Board authorizes the Board's chief executive to deny these ITAs.
- B. Dislocated workers who become employed may be eligible to receive an ITA if they are employed in an occupation that pays less than 85% of their previous earnings prior to their layoff and if their Assessment Plan indicates a training need or such need is subsequently identified by the individual and/or the employer. In the event of fund shortages, the Workforce Board authorizes the chief executive to deny ITAs for all dislocated workers who are re-employed.

VII. Incumbent Worker

- A. ITA funds may be set aside for the development of individuals who are underemployed but were not previous participants of the Workforce Area. These "incumbent workers" must be determined not to have met the Workforce Board's self-sufficiency definition. They also may be identified as previous welfare recipients, as members of target populations such as legal immigrants, or other target underemployed individuals. ITA funds will not be used as an economic development tool unless these requirements are met.

Action

Required: This information should be disseminated to Contractor career advisors.

Inquiries: Questions regarding any aspect of this policy should be directed to the Workforce Board's Executive Director.

Effective

Date: Immediately