

## DRAFT

| District of Columbia Department of Employment Services<br>Program Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| DOES-Policy No.  | Subject        | Date           |
| XXXX-2012  | ITA Processing | September 2012 |

### SCOPE

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Title I-B, Individual Training Accounts (ITA) shall be provided to eligible customers in need of required skills and qualifications to become gainfully employed or re-employed at a self-sufficient level.

### PURPOSE

This policy is intended to define and establish parameters for utilizing ITAs for career development while assisting with training expenditures. The execution of the ITA procedures shall be the responsibility of the American Job Center (AJC) and the Office of Program Performance Monitoring (OPPM).

### REFERENCES

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Act of 1998 - Title I
- Federal Register Part Two; WIA Final Rules – Subpart D, Individual Training Accounts

### PROGRAM PROCEDURES/IMPLEMENTATION

A WIA-eligible registrant shall be enrolled in a training program(s) if a customer has received core services, has been unable to obtain/maintain employment through those services consequently requiring Intensive and/or Training Services, and the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) supports the training required to transition the customer into the labor force. The training must support the stated purpose and be in accordance with the description of training as contained within WIA.

### **Eligibility**

All recipients of training funds must be eligible based upon criteria established under WIA. The Act requires the coordination of training costs with funds available under other grants assistance (Section 134(d)(4)(B)). WIA funding for training is limited to customers who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources, including PELL Grants/HOPE Scholarship program, to pay the costs of such training. To avoid duplicate cost payments that a customer is eligible for both WIA and other assistance, Employment Specialists shall consider all available sources of funds. In determining the customer's overall need for WIA funds, loans are excluded. Customers must maintain an active application status for PELL Grant/HOPE Scholarship assistance. The exact combination of funds shall be determined based on funding availability for either training costs or supportive services, with the goal of ensuring the customer's selected training program cost are completely paid. The training provider is required to supply information about total training costs and total financial aid available. Further, the training provider shall complete all essential

ITA forms documenting the total cost of training, financial aid available and sources of aid, and the unmet financial obligation of the customer. *District law restricts the provision of training services, including ITAs, to District of Columbia residents.*

### **Occupational Areas of Training**

The training services provided through ITAs facilitate a customer's transition to the labor force with increased marketability. All training services shall be for high demand occupations within the local/regional labor markets as determined by DOES and the District of Columbia Workforce Investment Council (WIC). Those approved industry sectors/occupational positions have been selected based on current and future labor market information: *current & projected occupational employment, associated wages, emerging industries, position replacement rate, population growth/migration, and educational/training requirements.* To ensure training remains pertinent to the demands of the local/regional labor markets, occupations approved for training will be evaluated annually by DOES and WIC.

### **Training Selection**

Customers will work with their Employment Specialists to select three training provider(s) certified by the WIC to provide training within high demand occupations. This selection process shall include reviewing course materials and site visits. Also, this process shall include ISS/IEP development based on the customer's assessments, skill level, interest, work history, and barriers. If the ISS/IEP determines training services necessary to enter/re-enter the local/regional labor market and the customer has been unable to obtain/maintain employment through provided staff-assisted core services, the customer should be eligible to receive additional intensive services supporting the requirement of training services with the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training courses and/or program. Furthermore, the agency's case management system – DCNetworks.org system provides a consumer self-reporting system with information necessary to choose a training provider(s) or program(s) of official training services. These profiles detail information about the character of the institution and provide a wide variety of career education and training options.

### **Length of Training**

Training length will vary according to the type of training and the requirements outlined in the training provider's course description(s). The maximum time allowed for training under WIA shall not exceed more than 52 weeks from the start date of training. Once a customer has been approved and started training, regardless of the training outcome, the customer is not eligible to apply for ITA training until a two-year period has lapsed – based on the training start date. Customers may not change their curriculum or training length unless documentation is presented with granted approval from DOES.

### **Cost Limitation**

The agency limits training costs to no more than \$4,000 per customer within a twenty-four month period. Allowance for books, testing fees, and instructional supplies are included in the aggregate tuition amount of \$4,000. All customers shall be made aware of any excess cost of training not covered by their program of choice. The Employment Specialist should work closely with their customers to determine the individual's ability to contribute to the cost of training and discuss a funding plan that will adequately cover the entire cost of the training program.

Moreover, customers must demonstrate financial resources to participate in long-term training. *(Greater than six months)*

### **American Job Centers**

- a. The Employment Specialist shall forward the completed ITA package with all required documents including customer/Employment Specialist "Justification Letters" to the Center Manager.
- b. The Employment Specialist enters a case note indicating that the customer's ITA package status has been forwarded to Center Manager.
- c. The Center Manager shall review the ITA package for completeness and accuracy, if approved; enter code WIA 227 code "Referred to Training." The Center Manager shall sign and transmit ITA to Deputy Director.
- b. During this entire process, Employment Specialists are responsible to maintain "continuous contact" with the customer every 30 days.

### **Office of Program Performance Monitoring**

- a. OPPM shall conduct a third-level review of the ITA package. If OPPM discovers any discrepancies, the entire ITA package shall be returned to the AJC Center Manager for correction(s). All discrepancies shall be corrected within three (3) business days and returned back to OPPM. This is to ensure the potential training start date can be still achieved for the customer
- b. When OPPM contacts the customer and he/she does not want to attend training, OPPM shall execute the following actions:
  - i. Advise the customer to contact his/her Employment Specialist to assess if future assistance is required;
  - ii. Contact the training provider to notify them of the customer's decision not to attend training;
  - iii. Return the ITA package back to the AJC Center Manager with a transmittal for records and dissemination;
  - iv. The Center Manager enters an actual date end for the activity code 227 with a status of "Unsuccessful Completion";
  - v. Contact the Employment Specialist of the customer's decision not to participate in training; and
  - vi. The Employment Specialist enters a case note updating the customer's training status with possible future services within three (3) days.
- c. When OPPM contacts the customer and he/she wants to attend training, OPPM shall execute the following actions:
  - i. Verify training provider's name, selected training program, and associated cost;
  - ii. Determine the training period with the projected start date; and
  - iii. Enter into DCNetworks.org the activity code 300 to indicate the customer's projected training start date.

After reviewing the ITA package, the training request shall be entered into the District's Procurement Automated Support System (PASS) for financial approval. PASS generates a requisition number for tracking for OPPM to monitor this process. Upon receiving the financial approval (Purchase Order), the OPPM representative will perform the following:

- a. Contact the training provider to reconfirm the customer's training, the training period, and schedule, and
- b. Contact the customer to ensure the training period and schedule is feasible.

The OPPM Associate Director shall provide a final review of the ITA package. If approved, the DOES Expense Authorization Form will be signed and copies will be transmitted to the AJC Center Manager and Employment Specialist. The Employment Specialist contacts the customer within three (3) business days and enters a case note providing ITA package status, simultaneously.

If not approved, ITA package shall be transmitted to the Center Manager for resolution. A case note shall be entered by AJC detailing the problem(s) and resolution. All ITA package corrections will have a maximum of three (3) business days to be returned to OPPM. Again, this is to ensure the potential training start date can be achieved for the customer. Once this activity occurs, the aforementioned approved process is reengaged. A new IT referral code (227) must be reestablished at that time.

Once the customer has commenced training (*actual start date*) and has completed five (5) consecutive days with the training provider, OPPM shall contact the training provider and ensure the customer has enrolled and attended for those days.

- a. If enrollment occurred, OPPM shall transmit information to the AJC Center Manager for dissemination to Employment Specialist. The OPPM shall enter the activity code 300 with the actual start date for training into DCNetworks.org with a supporting case note;
- b. If enrollment did not occur, OPPM shall transmit ITA package to the Center Manager for dissemination to the Employment Specialist. The Employment Specialist shall contact the customer and enter a case note detailing the customer's reason(s) not to attend training. The activity code 300 shall be closed with a status of "No Show" by OPPM; and
- c. If an enrollment extension is required, OPPM shall update the customer's projected start date within DCNetworks.org. The activity code 300 shall have the "new" projected training date, which shall correspond with the training provider's extension letter. Furthermore, OPPM shall transmit this letter to the Center Manager within three (3) business days for distribution to the Employment Specialist. The Employment Specialist shall contact the customer and enter a case note.

During the customer's training period, the Employment Specialist shall have "continuous contact" with the customer every 20 days supported with a case note, once the customer is within 60 days of training completion. Additionally, the Employment Specialist shall engage the customer in job search activities. If there is any planned/unplanned gap in training services, all parties shall execute the appropriate course of action(s) to document and resolve all situations. When, the customer has completed training, the training provider shall forward copies of the completion certificates(s) and/or credential(s) to OPPM and update the activity code 300 with an actual end date and a "Successful Completion" status into DCNetworks.org. Also, OPPM shall forward copies or a transmittal letter identifying the customer, training area, and certificate/credential to Center Manager for distribution to the Employment Specialist. The Employment Specialist shall enter into DCNetworks.org a case note detailing training completion and updating job search activities within three (3) business days of receipt.

**ACTION:** This is the official District policy and should be kept in your permanent policy issuance file. Share this information with your staff and anyone else who would benefit from these policies.

**APPROVAL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa María Mallory, Director

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Date

Remove & Destroy:     None  
Effective Date:         Date of Signature  
Review Date:            Two-Year Anniversary of Signature  
Distribution:            All DOES American Job Center Employees, Office of Program Performance  
                              Monitoring Employees, and the District’s Eligible Training Provider List  
Point-of-Contact:       Office of Program Performance Monitoring, 202-698-5160