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Pre-Proposal Conference Questions and Answers

RFP 04-01-2022-YPS

RFP 04-01-2022-WFS

RFP 04-01-2022-CCS

April 29, 2022

10:00 AM

1. The Child Care Services RFP, Provider Management, question a indicates that we are to attach a Needs Assessment. The online forms do not provide a spot to attach it; please provide guidance on how to proceed.
 - a. The Proposal Submission Form will be updated to include a spot to attach a Needs Assessment.
2. In the budget documents, the Proposed Budget tab list management costs and operation costs. What is the difference?
 - a. Operations cost are for the operations of direct delivery services. Management costs would be management fees indirect and other costs not directly related to program operations in the center.
3. Can you share current caseloads by program and center?
 - a. Please see the information attached below.
4. What is the Board's current maximum ITA amount?
 - a. Please see the Board's policy attached below.
5. What is the Board's average ITA amount for Adult/DW, OSY and ISY?
 - a. The Board will not provide that information.
6. Is the Board's mobile unit operated by the contractor or Board?
 - a. The contractor.
7. Will the Q&A be published on the website?
 - a. Yes.

South Plains Current Caseloads Per Actives List

Program and Office	Total Caseload
Choices Program	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	0
Lubbock	7
Muleshoe	0
Plainview	1
SNAP Gen Pop and ABAWD	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	21
Lubbock	16
Muleshoe	0
Plainview	4
NCP	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	4
Lubbock	9
Muleshoe	0
Plainview	2
WIOA Adult	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	0
Lubbock	1
Muleshoe	1
Plainview	0
WIOA DW	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	0
Lubbock	1
Muleshoe	1
Plainview	0
WIOA ISY	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	5
Lubbock	9
Muleshoe	0
Plainview	1
WIOA OSY	
Brownfield	0
Levelland	1
Lubbock	2
Muleshoe	0
Plainview	1
TAA	0



Policy Number:	B.D.06.16.WIOA Adult.DW.OSY.001 Change 2
Date Filed:	June 7, 2016
Subject:	WIOA ITA Policy and Procedures
Date Adopted by Board:	July 28, 2016
Effective Date:	October 18, 2019
To:	Workforce System Contractor
From:	Workforce Solutions Board Administration

PURPOSE

The Contractor will utilize Individual Training Accounts (ITA) to provide occupational skills training. Occupational skills training will be provided in areas identified as targeted occupations based upon criteria such as volume of openings, competitiveness, average entry level wage, potential for stable employment, and general suitability for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) applicants. Occupational skills training may be provided in a classroom, laboratory, work area, and/or other appropriate setting.

Provisions of WIOA promote individual responsibility and personal decision-making through the use of ITAs which allow adult customers to “purchase” the training they determine best for them. This market-driven system will enable customers to obtain the skills and credentials they need to succeed in the local labor market. Good customer choice requires quality information. The Workforce Solutions Centers will provide customers with the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and information relating to performance and cost. Additionally, the Contractor must provide information on available local work-based training providers, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, internships, registered apprenticeships, or incumbent worker training that meets the performance standards (for example, entered employment and retention) for that occupation.

WIOA reflects a strong commitment to empowering individuals with the information and resources they need to manage their own careers through ITAs and better statistics on the performance of service providers, as well as on the skills demanded by employers. The legislation also stresses increased accountability of the delivery system to achieve improved results in job placement, earnings, retention in unsubsidized employment, skill gains, and occupational/academic credentials earned.

The ITA is an account established and approved by the Center on behalf of an eligible participant. It will be the primary method for providing training services for participants. Through ITAs, adult, dislocated worker and older/out-of-school youth funds will be used to make payment for purchasing training services from eligible providers selected by the participant in consultation with the career counselor.

POLICY

Individuals must meet the basic eligibility requirements and any service priority criteria to receiving training services. The case file, which includes the individual employment plan, is the required documentation for this decision. The case file will include a description of how the determination was made and that the training selected is directly linked to the Board’s Target Occupations List or are on the Target Occupations List in another workforce development area to which the trainee is willing to commute or relocate. The case file will also include documentation of the determination that the individual has the skills and qualifications to allow successful participation in the selected training program. (A program of training services is defined as one or more courses or classes that, upon successful completion, leads to a certificate, an associate degree, or baccalaureate degree, or a competency or skill recognized by employers or a training regimen that provides individuals with additional skills or competencies generally recognized by employers.)

Eligible Center participants will select training that best meets their needs from the training provider that has the best outcomes. Individuals may choose any of the appropriate eligible providers on the ETPL. It is envisioned that participants will be able to use any service provider on the list maintained and provided by the State.

Eligibility to receive adult and dislocated worker funds requires a provider to be certified under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), the National Apprenticeship Act, or an alternative procedure established by the Governor. An ITA must be established on behalf of a WIOA adult or dislocated worker participant eligible for training services, funded with WIOA adult or dislocated worker funds, and used by participants for training services.

Training Programs Outside of the South Plains but within Texas:

The Board recognizes that some clients' training needs may require them to attend training programs located outside of the South Plains Workforce Development Area. Therefore, the South Plains Workforce Centers may approve training that is outside of the South Plains but within Texas if the training program is included on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL); the training program is aligned with the South Plains Targeted Occupations List or target occupations in an area to which the participant is willing to commute or relocate; and all other ITA policies and procedures are complied with. This exception will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Center Director and must be documented in the case file.

Training Programs Outside of Texas

Because of the South Plains location within driving distance of New Mexico and Oklahoma the Board recognizes that some clients' training needs may require them to attend training programs located outside of Texas. Therefore, the South Plains Workforce Centers may approve training that is outside of Texas if the training program is listed on the statewide ETPL in the state where the provider is located; Workforce Center staff documents out-of-state ETPL listing in participant case file prior to requesting or approving the use of an ITA; the training program is aligned with South Plains Targeted Occupations List or target occupations in an area to which the participant is willing to commute or relocate; and all other ITA policies and procedures are complied with. This exception will be approved on case -by-case basis by the Center Director and must be documented in the case file.

Supportive services are those which are necessary to enable an eligible individual to participate in approved training. The Center is responsible for the identification of and the coordination of referral for a customer's supportive services needs. The provision of these types of services will either eliminate or reduce the barriers to employment that customers encounter. By addressing their supportive services needs, customers are afforded the opportunity to achieve their employment goals. Funds for Supportive Services will be made available to participants in training that prepare individuals to work one of the board's targeted occupation and can only be provided if funds are not available from other sources. Documentation to support that there is not another provider of the supportive service(s) being funded with WIOA funds will be maintained in the participant case files. These services include but are not limited to: child care, transportation, temporary housing or shelter, utility assistance, clothing, etc. These services are to be provided for those who cannot afford to pay for such services.

The Workforce Solutions Centers assure that:

- ❖ All testing and interest assessment levels will be adequate to ensure success in the chosen program and career field. There are minimum math and reading and vocational assessment requirements that a customer must meet before being referred to a training provider. Generally, the minimum math comprehension and reading level of a customer being considered for training must be at a 9th Grade Level (9.0). If conducted in-house, the assessment tool to be used is the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). This includes the locator and the Survey level 9 for pre-test and level 10 for post-test, if necessary.
- ❖ The Center may accept the results of other nationally recognized, standardized tests if taken by the customer within 6 months of the comprehensive assessment. In addition, the Center may accept the results of prior TABE test scores for an individual if the levels are documented and the test was taken within 6 months of the

comprehensive assessment. If the customer being considered for training does not meet the minimum reading and math levels for that particular training provider or program, the customer must be referred to basic skills/remediation to increase the math and reading skills to an appropriate level. Exceptions to the reading level and math comprehension minimum requirements may be made by the Program Manager. Special consideration should be provided for those individuals with limited English skills if the training provider can provide instruction in the customer's native language and it can be demonstrated that sufficient employment opportunities are available to help make the customer economically self-sufficient. The justification for exceptions must be noted in the TWIST counselor notes. Assessment may be waived based on requirements of program/funding source and must be clearly documented in the TWIST counselor notes.

- ❖ A checklist will be utilized to ensure that required entrance exams or pre-requisite classes are met. For WIOA Youth participants who have been deemed basic skills deficient, pre-requisite courses may be included in the ITA total cost and timeframe.
- ❖ The customer will be required to demonstrate that they have the adequate resources to sustain themselves and/or their family during the period they are in training. Counseling will address the role that federal grants and student loans play during the training period and customers must be informed that they are not required to acquire debt as a result of participating in workforce development activities.
- ❖ The training program selected by the customer will be directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local areas or in another area to which the trainee is willing to locate.
- ❖ The customer will enter into a training agreement with the expressed intentions of going to work as soon as the program is completed. Personal responsibility to self and family will be emphasized during training and career counseling. If training is determined to be appropriate for a WIOA adult or dislocated worker, OSY participant, staff must develop an Employment Plan (EP) with the participant before enrolling him or her in training. Consideration must be given to a participant's work experience, skill set, barriers to employment, etc. The EP must identify the participant's employment goals and the appropriate combination of services to assist the participant in achieving the goals. The EP must be designed with the level of detail best suited to each participant and data entered in TWIST.
- ❖ Funds established for ITAs may not be used for any other purpose except tuition, fees, and supplies (including books). In some cases, an ITA will cover uniforms and certain tools used in various programs. Staff must determine and document a participant's overall need for financial assistance and the use of WIOA funds based on the results of an assessment. WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who are unable to obtain sufficient grant assistance from other sources to pay the full costs of training. Supportive services will be tracked and expensed separately.
- ❖ Participants will be required to apply for other sources of funding (i.e., other agencies, Pell grants, scholarships etc.) *before* applying and being approved for an ITA. WIOA funds are not to be used to pay training costs for any portion or term of training for which the participant has signed a loan as part of financial aid or that were paid by the participant (or other source) prior to WIOA program registration. The Center will consider all available sources of funds in determining an individual's overall need for WIOA funds. Scholarship funds/awards are to be expended on behalf of the assessed need before any funds available from WIOA are used, in accordance with established Board policy.
- ❖ The amount of funds authorized for an ITA will be commensurate with the service provider's cost (tuition, books, and fees) at that current program year. **The SPRWDB has imposed a maximum cap of seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7500) on the cost of an ITA for each program and a time limit of three (3) years assigned to each program. There are no exceptions to the ITA cap amount.**

- ❖ Once issued, an ITA voucher or purchase order (PO) must be redeemed with the service provider within 30 days. If not used during this 30-day period, the voucher or PO is deemed null and void.
- ❖ Only training providers that are on the ETPL are able to redeem ITAs for payment. These providers will bill the Center for payment. Providers will be reimbursed for ITA expenses no later than 30 days after billing per semester or as required by the providers.
- ❖ For case management activities during training, the goal shall be to guide and support customers in training to assure successful and timely completion of the training activities. Monthly contact shall be maintained with the customer for the purpose of providing a service, specifically maintaining at least monthly contact with the customer to ensure attendance and grades are being maintained. Strategies that will be utilized to continue to ensure accurate and timely data entry during case management and before exit of the designated areas include: quarterly review of the data during the completion of the WIOA Training, report by the Performance Analyst, utilization of the WIOA Data Validation Tool by Program Leads including at exit of training prior to entry into follow up services, and internal monitoring by Internal Monitor.
- ❖ The Center Program Director will have the right to cancel an ITA for customer's failure to participate or for violation of the ITA Agreement. Upon cancellation of an ITA, the customer will be notified of the termination date and reasons for cancellation, and will be counseled on existing employment alternatives, if any. The Center Program Director or career counselor will also be responsible for notifying the Contractor's Accounting Department and the applicable Service Provider.
- ❖ If the career counselor has developed a rapport with the customer by assisting him/her with the array of services available at the Center, the customer will gladly volunteer employment information so that the customer can be excited successfully. If the customer does not cooperate or cannot be contacted, Center staff must conduct follow-up activities such as telephone call of the friends and relatives, mailings, (with offers of incentives if necessary), review of UI wage data, and home visits. The Center will continue necessary and appropriate contact with the customer for up to 12 months to ensure performance and/or other requirements are met.
- ❖ Center staff will begin to assist customers at least two months before planned completion of training in their job search efforts by providing current and up-to-date Labor Market Information (LMI). By providing up-to-date and current LMI information, the job seeker will be able to have a realistic understanding of the economy and the workforce upon seeking employment after the completion of training. Staff will provide information on available jobs in the area to the job seeker in the field that their training is in. Information will also be provided to the customer on available job readiness workshops offered in the Career Centers.

ACTIONS REQUIRED:

The revised ITA cap, time frame for training, and other bolded and highlighted procedures are effective immediately. The referenced TWC WD Letters below contain No Local Flexibility (NLF) procedures that must be followed accordingly; the changes in this Policy are according to the Local Flexibility (LF) procedures. The Contractor should assure that appropriate Center staff are apprised of and comply with the requirements of this Board Policy as well as the TWC rules and regulations. This document rescinds any previous Board Policy regarding Dollar Ceilings for ITAs under WIOA.

REFERENCES:

- Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Final Rules, 20 CFR 680.200
 - Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Guide
 - WD Letter 35-10
 - WD Letter 14-19 Chg1
 - WD Letter 17-19
 - WD Letter 05-19
 - Training and Employment Guidance Letter 19-16
 - Section 134 (2)(II)
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INQUIRIES:

All comments and inquiries pertaining to this policy should be forwarded to:

Program Manager

1500 Broadway, Ste. 800

Lubbock, Tx 79401

(806)744-1987

Resends: B.D.06.16.WIOA Adult.DW.OSY.001 Change 1