

# **PASSAIC COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Subject: WIOA Title I Individual Training Account Services**

**Effective Date:** 05/08/26

## **PURPOSE**

This policy governs the provision of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for participants in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, including Out-of-School Youth aged 16–24.

## **BACKGROUND**

Under WIOA Title I, Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are the primary mechanism for providing training services to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth. These accounts function as vouchers that allow participants to "purchase" training from approved providers of their choice. WIOA Title I-funded training services are delivered through ITAs to eligible participants. With ITA funds, participants may purchase training services from eligible providers of their choice, in consultation with a Career Training Services Provider. Participants use resources such as skills assessments, labor market data, and training provider performance to actively shape their career paths through ITAs.

## **POLICY**

The WDB adopts and implements in the local area federal and NJDOL policies. The local area partners are required to comply with the policy.

### Federal WIOA Framework

The WDB adopts the federal regulations to provide the broad structure for ITAs and mandates partners to implement the following NJDOL requirements:

- **Customer Choice:** Participants must be allowed to choose their training provider from the NJDOL list, in consultation with a career counselor.
- **Funding Limits:** While federal law does not set a specific dollar cap, the NJDOL and WDB establish limits on the amount and duration of ITAs.
- **Priority of Service:** Statutory priority for training must be given to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient.

- Coordination of Funds: ITAs should supplement, not replace, other grant assistance such as Pell Grants.

## NJDOL Policy

The New Jersey Department of Labor NJWIN WD-PY25-6.1 provides specific guidance regarding ITA management:

- Recommended Funding Limit: NJDOL recommends a limit of up to \$7,500 per ITA.
- Local Flexibility: Local WDB may set higher or lower limits with clear justification and will notify partners.
- Use of the NJ Eligible Training Provider List (NJETPL): Programs must be listed on the NJETPL and directly linked to an in-demand occupation to receive funding. The NJ Eligible Training Provider List (NJETPL) still officially exists as the legal name for the state's list of approved schools and programs. However, it is now primarily accessed and known to the public through the NJ Training Explorer. It is the new, user-friendly interactive tool that replaces the public-facing side of the NJETPL. It is the main search engine within the My Career NJ portal for finding WIOA-eligible programs.
- Replacement of NJTOPPS: The Training Explorer and the IGX system (IntelliGrants, the backend management tool) have officially replaced the legacy NJ Training Opportunities website (NJTOPPS).
- IGX (IntelliGrants) Use: The new system used by training providers to apply for or maintain their status on the ETPL.
- Duration of Training: Training is generally expected to be short-term. The WDB policy is a recommendation of programs of 12 months or less, with a maximum cap of 24 months.
- Eligibility Documentation Completed by Partners: Participants must have a completed Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that justifies the need for training to achieve self-sufficiency.

## Requirements for NJ Participants

WDB partners must comply with the following requirements:

- Employment Status: Participant must be eligible to work in the U.S. and provide valid I-9 documentation to the WDB partner.

- **Assessment:** Participant undergo a comprehensive assessment, provided by the WDB partner, to prove they have the skills/qualifications necessary to succeed in the training.
- **Satisfactory Progress:** Participants must maintain a minimum GPA (often a 2.0 or "C" average) to continue receiving funding and the WDB partner must document compliance.

### Funding Caps

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) in New Jersey are governed by a statewide framework that sets recommended limits, while the Workforce Development Board holds the authority to adjust these caps based on regional economic needs.

The New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOLE) establishes the baseline, adopted by the WDB, of a \$7,500 tuition limit for its residents. The award of WIOA funds is dependent on the availability of funding.

- **Exceeding the Cap:** The WDB may approve amounts above these limits if the training is justified in the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and aligns with the standard cost of high-demand training.
- **Coordination:** The WDB encourages the use of ITA funds to bridge the gap after other applicable financial resources, like Pell Grants, are exhausted.

### Eligible Occupations (Demand List)

NJDOLE maintains a Labor Demand Occupations List (LDOL) is a specialized dataset used by state and regional workforce agencies to identify jobs with high growth potential and significant annual openings. These lists are primary tools for administering federal WIOA funds, ensuring that training and educational resources are directed toward occupations critical to the local economy.

### Key Criteria for Inclusion

To be included on the list an occupation typically must meet specific thresholds determined by state labor market statistics:

- **Job Growth:** A positive or above-average growth rate over a 10-year projection period.
- **Volume of Openings:** A high number of annual job openings resulting from both industry growth and replacement needs.

- Self-Sustaining Wages: Most lists prioritize "High Skill/High Wage" (HSHW) occupations that offer a living wage for the specific region.

The WDB supports ITA funding only if the chosen training program leads to an occupation on the NJ Training Explorer or receives a "local waiver" as a high-demand job in the local area. The My Career NJ platform, operated by the State of New Jersey, provides a centralized hub for partners and residents to access the Labor Demand Occupations List (LDOL) and related career services. The local area partner and residents applying for support are mandated to use the tool to research training programs, get information on tuition assistance, and gain valuable insight into programs that meet skill-building needs to make data-informed choices.

Steps for residents interested in an ITA

- Must apply at the One-Stop Career Center in the county of residency and complete the required assessment and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) development.
- Use the Demand List to ensure the target job is eligible for funding.

Local ITA Operating Procedure for Eligible Participants and Training Providers

Documentation Requirements

The following items must be documented in case notes and reflected in the participant's training record: Assessed results showing the training is needed, including evidence that the participant has the skills and qualifications to complete the training successfully, and the participant is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain self-sustaining employment or higher wages through career services alone.

Evidence that the chosen program will lead to employment with economic self-sufficiency or wages equal to or higher than prior earnings. Proof that the selected training is directly linked to an in-demand industry sector or occupations with strong growth or sustained demand in the local area.

Completed IEP (Adult and Dislocated Worker) or ISS (Out-of-School Youth, ages 16–24) documenting the chosen program, expected and actual study start/end dates, and training outcomes. Evidence that the participant cannot obtain grant funding from other sources to cover training costs, or requires assistance beyond available external grants.

Verification of FAFSA or other financial aid status, if applicable. Authorization of the Individual Training Account (ITA) and any approved modifications. Copies of transcripts, grades, progress reports, or other documents showing satisfactory training progress.

The documentation of these requirements must be in the participant's AOSOS record.

Eligible participants in Passaic County must:

- Attend Passaic County One-Stop Career Center, complete the initial intake, and meet with a Career Services Counselor to discuss available programs, needs, and goals. Individuals must be authorized to work in the United States. Be funded by ITAs only after: Completing an assessment that shows a training need leading to self-sufficiency or wages at or above the participant's prior earnings and demonstrates the ability to successfully complete the chosen program. The customer will be provided all available provider cost and performance information to make an informed choice of training.
- Complete an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that specifies the selected training program along with anticipated start and end dates.
- Demonstrate that grant assistance from other sources is unavailable or insufficient to cover training costs, or that additional support beyond what is available from other sources is needed to achieve training goals.
- Select training programs that are on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations with strong potential for sustained demand and growth in the WDB local area.
- Maintain satisfactory progress and academic performance.

Training Providers must:

- Coordinate WIOA Funds and Other Federal Assistance. WIOA Training Providers should look for other grant sources to cover training costs, so WIOA funds add to, not replace, them. WIOA funding is for participants who cannot get other grant support to cover training costs, or who need more help than those grants provide. When deciding, consider the total cost of participating in training, including supportive services and related expenses. Other potential sources of grant assistance include: TANF-WorkFirst, Title IV programs (Pell Grants, Academic Competitiveness Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work-Study) and State-funded grants. Veterans and spouses are not required to use VA education benefits before being considered for WIOA-funded training, and VA benefits do not need to be weighed in the eligibility decision. Training Providers must document in the participant file the availability of other grant sources (excluding loans) to pay training costs, ensuring WIOA funds supplement rather than supplant. It is not allowed for WIOA funds to pay down a participant's personal loan. However, the existence of a federal loan, regardless of

status, must not affect ITA eligibility decisions. Training Service Providers should collaborate with participants to identify opportunities to braid funding sources as appropriate, and they must record the availability and coordination of other training funds in the participant's file.

- Receive ITA Authorization. An ITA must be approved by a WIOA Training Service Provider authorized representative before it is issued. The authorization must be documented in the participant's record. ITAs may only be issued for training programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), in accordance with WIOA Section 134(C)(F)(iii). ITAs may be used for pre-apprenticeship programs, but only if the program is ETPL-listed. ITAs may also be authorized for online training programs if the program is ETPL-listed.

### ITA Funding Limit

The ITA limit is \$7,500 for tuition. The ITA isn't guaranteed money; the award amount and duration are decided case by case. Funding amount will take into account the total cost of the chosen program, any other financial help the participant has, and available WIOA funding. If other funds exist (Pell Grants, scholarships, severance pay, etc.), a program that costs more than the limit can still be funded. ITA funds cover training-related costs only, such as instructor pay and benefits, classroom space, materials, fees, testing and certification, tuition, books, and supplies or equipment listed on the ETPL.

### ITA Continued Funding and Progress

Continued ITA funding depends on the availability of WIOA funds and the participant making satisfactory progress in their program.

Training Service Providers must:

- Report progress of the participant and expenses every quarter.
- Complete training progress reports in time to process payments. Any progress reports, transcripts, or other training updates should be part of the participant's file.
- Create a service strategy with the participant to address barriers that hinder progress for those not achieving satisfactory progress in coursework. "Good cause" means any factors that would cause a reasonable person in similar circumstances to fail to make satisfactory progress (as determined by the program).

### ITA Modifications

An ITA can be adjusted to help the participant reach their educational goals and subsequent employment. In certain situations (e.g., when a program is removed from the

ETPL, when extraordinary training costs arise, or during state/national emergencies), the participant and the career counselor must decide whether to complete the plan with the current provider, find a similar program, or discontinue training. If a program is removed from the ETPL, participants in that program may complete their training. An ITA should not be modified or extended beyond the original plan approval for that former program. Training Service Providers must use discretion in implementing these changes to ensure alignment with the participant's goals and funding rules.

### Training Not Eligible for ITAs

ITAs aren't available for individualized short-term prevocational training. These activities may cover skills like learning strategies, communication, interviewing, punctuality, personal upkeep, professional behavior, or other non-occupation-specific topics that prepare people for unsubsidized work or further training. See 20 FR 680.320 for guidance on ITA exceptions. Funding options for training services that are not formal occupational skills training, including individualized services like workforce preparation activities or short-term pre-vocational services. These fall under WIOA Sections 134(d)(3)(C) and 134(d)(3)(C)(vi). Individualized services can include literacy support, internships, work experience, and other activities that may not provide formal occupational skills training and may not be appropriate for an ITA. Short-term prevocational services help prepare someone for work but don't teach formal occupational skills.

### **POLICY REVISION**

The WDB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) policies are reviewed amended annually by the WDB to remain in compliance with all federal mandates and state-level policy changes issued by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Partners will be notified of any revisions to the policy.