

OhioMeansJobs - Lorain County
Workforce Area 4
Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

Background:

Program training services are a structured regimen leading to recognized post-secondary credentials, industry-recognized credentials, employment and measurable skill gains toward credentials and employment.

To be eligible for training services, the local area must determine whether or not adult or dislocated worker participants, or eligible youth participants ages 18-24 are appropriate for training services.

An ITA is one of the primary methods through which training is financed and provided for unemployed or underemployed participants. ITA's are established on behalf of the WIOA participant to purchase a program of training services from eligible providers selected in consultation with the case manager. Additionally, the cost of training, time commitment of the participant, fees and books, tuition, and other associated costs should be considered when conducting a cost benefit analysis for the ITA.

Policy Statement:

An ITA is not an entitlement. Every request for an ITA will be assessed on an individual basis to determine if the training investment will produce the desired results. All other funding sources will be examined prior to recommending an ITA.

The following ITA guidelines will be applied:

- Individuals can be awarded up to \$7,000 for a training program that is one (1) year or less, and up to \$14,000 for a program that goes up to two (2) years. Incremental ITA's may be awarded if the individual is pursuing stackable credentials and/or pathways to occupations and careers that would require the individual to complete modules or certifications over an extended period of time.
- The maximum duration of an ITA for an individual participating in an area of training to prepare them for a Critical Job, as identified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, may be approved up to a four (4) year period. Individuals pursuing training for a Critical Job may be awarded up to \$7,000 per year, with a total cap of \$28,000.
- It is the intent that the WIOA funding is the payer of last resort. A comprehensive assessment of the cost of the ITA, which involves accessing other grants, or funding, including Federal Pell Grants, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and scholarships must be conducted to ensure best utilization of WIOA funds.

OhioMeansJobs staff are responsible for coordinating all funding sources to support an individual's training and submitting this information with the entire training request to the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency (LCWDA) Director, or their designee. Upon approval, OhioMeansJobs staff will issue the ITA voucher with the signatures of the LCWDA, or their designee, the LCWDA Fiscal Officer and the customer.

- There may be instances where a participant is unable to complete the training program within the time frame outlined in the ITA, and the ITA may be extended. These circumstances include, but are not limited to:
 - Military service or leave time;
 - Lack of availability of classes;
 - Cancellation of classes;
 - Unforeseen illness of the participant or an immediate family member of the participant

OhioMeansJobs staff are responsible for submitting a Change of Authorization form to the LCWDA Director, or their designee, and the LCWDA, Fiscal Officer for any amendments to the ITA, including change in costs, time frames, etc....

- The funding caps will include the costs required by the training institution to complete the training. ITA costs may include, but are not limited to:
 - Tuition and fees;
 - Books;
 - Tools;
 - Uniforms;
 - Tests;
 - Medical immunizations/tests

The amount of the ITA voucher will include an estimate of the total cost of training to be purchased based upon information provided by the customer/ training institution.

- An individual will have up to six (6) months to begin training after an ITA voucher has been issued.
- Individuals seeking to obtain funding through an ITA must;
 - Possess a High School Diploma or GED, or be eligible to receive a High School Diploma upon completion of a program recognized by the Ohio Department of Education.
 - Reside in Lorain County;
 - Select a training that falls under an approved career under the Demand Occupation List, or within the Critical Jobs that are both maintained by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, or in a local field/occupation as identified by the Lorain County Workforce Development Board as being in demand.

Exceptions to the Demand and Critical Job requirements may be considered by the Director of the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency, or their designee if the following guidelines are met:

- Completion of a Commitment to Hire form from an employer seeking the training requested by the individual for a position that is:
 - Full-time employment (40 hours per week)

- Medical Benefits
 - Hourly rate of at least \$15.00/hour
- Ensure that they have reviewed the training and education provider information provided through the Workforce Inventory of Education and Training (WIET) website that is maintained by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services with the assistance of the OhioMeansJobs staff they are working with if needed;

Education and Training providers must also be recognized on the local approved list by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency which stipulates the expectations and reporting and performance requirements they must satisfy for students being approved for their programs.

- Maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale;
- Agree to meet and update the OhioMeansJobs staff they are assigned to at least once per month to ensure short and long term career goals are attained;
- Will be required to maintain the accumulative grade point average (GPA) identified for each respective curriculum or meet those standards imposed by the institution. Final grades will be provided by individuals upon completion of their respective courses of study. Progress must be documented and/or monitored on a regular basis.

OhioMeansJobs staff will maintain regular contact with the individual and training institution. Eligible training providers are required to provide information regarding the individual's status, progress, job placement and any other pertinent information as requested as outlined in the MOU.

- During a program year, no single Demand Occupation shall account for more than 20% of the total training funds available, nor 20% of the number of individual ITA's awarded; exceptions to this rule would be in response to a business expansion, customized training, a layoff aversion, or completion of a Commitment to Hire form from an employer seeking the training requested by the individual for a position that is full time, with medical benefits and at an hourly rate of at least \$15.00/hour.
- Due to limited funds and the need for cost effective training, the first preference of training providers will be training opportunities available at the lowest-cost option locally for the selected career, and according to the following hierarchy:
 - Lorain County publicly supported institutions
 - Publicly supported institutions beyond Lorain County
 - Private/proprietary institutions

Registered Apprenticeship Programs and ITA's

Registered apprenticeship is a proven model of job preparation that combines paid on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction to progressively increase a workers' skill levels and wages. Registered apprenticeship is also a proven business-driven model that provides an effective way for employers to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. Graduates of registered apprenticeship programs receive nationally recognized, portable credentials, and in some instances their training may be applied toward further postsecondary education.

Only registered apprenticeship programs that have been approved by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) as recognized State apprenticeship programs, will be permitted to enter into ITAs with local areas to fund the educational portion of the registered apprenticeship for eligible apprentices.

All registered apprenticeship programs approved by ODJFS are automatically approved as eligible training providers and included on Ohio's eligible training provider list contained on WIET.

ITAs may also be used to finance State-recognized pre-apprenticeship training in preparation for the formal registered apprenticeship training if the pre-apprenticeship program training provider has been approved as an Ohio eligible training provider and is listed on WIET.

Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs and ITA's

Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs) are high-quality apprenticeship programs recognized as such by a Standards Recognition Entity (SRE) pursuant to the DOL's standards. These programs provide individuals with opportunities to obtain workplace-relevant knowledge and progressively higher skills. IRAPs include a paid-work component and an educational component and result in an industry-recognized credential. An IRAP is developed or delivered by entities such as trade and industry groups, corporations, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, unions, and joint labor-management organizations.

IRAPs fall under the umbrella of training services under WIOA section 134(c)(3)(D). ITAs may be used to finance the training component of IRAPs if the program and training provider has been approved as an Ohio eligible training provider and is listed on WIET.

Approved by WIB - July 1, 2009

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Amended by WDB – August 31, 2017

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Amended by WDB – August 27, 2020

Amended by WDB – November 18, 2021

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