



**State of Georgia
Individual Training Account (ITA)**

**Training Provider
Information Guide**

2011-2012



**MARK BUTLER
COMMISSIONER**

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ITA Training Provider Information Guide

This information guide developed by the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) describes two key features of Georgia's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) system -- the Individual Training Account (ITA) and the Eligible Provider/Program List (EPL).

***I.* The Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**

The 1998 federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) mandated significant changes in the delivery of employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs. The WIA represents the first major reform of the nation's job training system since 1982, replacing the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

WIA is designed to assist youth and adult job seekers in becoming employable in a self-sufficient demand occupation of their interest. A network of "one-stop centers" has been created where various human service organizations are represented and available to assist all Georgians. Services that are available at no cost to individuals include career counseling, exploration of training/ education offerings, job search, financial aid applications, etc. In some instances, occupational classroom training, on-the-job training, customized training, etc., may also be available at no cost to customers.

Georgia is divided into 20 local Workforce Investment Areas, each governed by a local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and each offering the services mentioned above. A listing of their administrative offices can be found at http://www/pdf/wia/wia_administrators.pdf.

***II.* Georgia's ITA Eligible Provider List (EPL)**

The Eligible Provider List represents a fundamental change in our workforce investment system that promotes customer self-reliance and initiative, coupled with a market and performance driven slate of training programs. The system is based on the WIA principles of streamlined services via physical and electronic one-stop centers, universal access for all Georgians, empowered customers through informed decision making, increased accountability of providers and customers, and state and local flexibility in implementing the legislation.

Mandated by the WIA, the Eligible Provider List is a publicly available statewide list of training providers who qualify to receive Individual Training Account funds for their approved programs. (An Individual Training Account is essentially a voucher given to adult customers who need occupational skills training to become gainfully employed or re-employed). To be listed on the Eligible Provider List, the training provider's program must be evaluated and approved by a local Workforce Investment Board.

Through GDOL, the Eligible Provider List is hosted by Georgia State University and is accessible at <http://www.gcic.edu/gawia/>. The automated Eligible Provider List currently lists approximately 220 training providers and 5,800 approved programs of study statewide. Each of the State's 12 planning regions and 20 local workforce areas have multiple approved programs of study listed from their area. There are sorting functions available by program of study, institution name, geographical area, and keyword search. Hyperlinks are also available, through the website, to local workforce area home pages/contacts, Georgia Labor Market Explorer, training institution websites, etc.

III. EPL/WIA Benefits to Training Providers

Through the Eligible Provider List, providers have an opportunity at no cost, to expand their statewide outreach to individuals who are currently employed and seeking to upgrade skills, job seekers attempting to enter the workforce, exiting high school students, etc. Approved programs are publicly displayed on the State's automated Eligible Provider List, with an opportunity to be marketed at career one-stop centers, community partner agencies, etc., providing an advantage over "unlisted" competitors.

The GDOL and local WIA one-stop centers statewide welcome the opportunity to display any acceptable training provider promotional material in their resource rooms for customer browsing, as space permits. Please contact these sites for marketing approval. To view a list of one-stop service locations, access www.dol.state.ga.us/wp/wia_contact_info.htm, then choose "Local Workforce Area Service Locations".

Additional benefits include an opportunity to share "bragging rights" by including program performance data on the Eligible Provider list, allowing career advisors to "share your story" with potential WIA funded customers, and seizing the attention of employers seeking training for their own employees. The market driven nature of the Individual Training Account system allows eligible programs to compete against each other to attract customers. There is no guarantee a customer will ever select a particular provider and thus training programs in demand occupations with successful results may attract more customers.

IV. Key Principles of the ITA/EPL System

1. Philosophy of "Informed Customer Choice"

A key philosophical foundation of the WIA is "informed customer choice". Shifting to an approved Individual Training Account program/provider system requires WIA career advisors to assist customers to make informed decisions regarding career paths and training. Staff may inform customers and facilitate career decisions; however, the ultimate decision rests with the customer within defined local policies and parameters. The primary goal is to provide customers with guidance and feedback from assessment(s) that can help them understand their needs and choices prior to selection of a training program/provider.

An Individual Training Account may be provided after an assessment of customer needs, demand occupations, local Workforce Investment Board policies, selection of a training program, and after consultation with a career advisor. Depending upon local policy, the Individual Training Account may be approved by a customer's career advisor, a committee, a representative of a local board, or other mechanisms. This process will reflect what is determined locally to provide the appropriate balance between accountability for training funds and effective customer service.

Each WIB will define local criteria and the process by which individuals can access an Individual Training Account. Criteria for issuing Individual Training Accounts is based on critical local workforce needs (e.g., economic development priorities, occupations in demand in the area, expected wage levels, funds available, performance parameters, etc.), so long as criteria are reasonable and uniformly applied. Even if it is determined that WIA Individual Training Account funding is not appropriate for a customer, local one-stop centers will still assist customers with financial aid applications (i.e., Pell, HOPE, etc.) and other services.

Please note that when a training provider refers a customer to a local workforce area, that area will work with the customer on career and training decisions. As such, the customer will make an informed choice regarding returning to the referring provider, or choosing a different provider and/or program.

2. The Individual Training Account (ITA)

Individual Training Accounts are supported by assessment and informed decision-making. Customers may use their WIA-funded Individual Training Accounts to attend training for any program on the Eligible Provider List. Local Workforce Investment Boards may establish monetary and time limits for Individual Training Accounts. Additionally, local Workforce Investment Boards will identify local training needs identified by area businesses, as will be noted in their respective local WIA plans.

When customer training is funded through an Individual Training Account voucher, the voucher is considered the local Workforce Investment Board's "promise to pay". The amount the local area has agreed to pay is verified from the Individual Training Account. Please note that Individual Training Account payments are based on local workforce area policies, and upon receipt of the training provider's invoice.

3. Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Local Policy

Georgia's 20 Workforce Investment Boards are statutorily allowed to set local policy regarding which customers and programs they prioritize when expending limited WIA training funds, monetary and time limits for participation in programs, Individual Training Accounts issued, payment schedules for training invoices, etc. Therefore, customers will have the opportunity to choose any of the eligible programs/providers from the Eligible Provider List, pursuant to local funding requirements and/or policies.

A local Workforce Investment Board may choose not to pay for an Eligible Provider List-approved training program with WIA Individual Training Account funds based on its locally determined need for that training, labor market information, cost and performance limits, etc. These local policies vary for each workforce area and providers are encouraged to contact the area(s) of their choice to explore these policies.

4. What is a “Program”

Based on WIA regulations, a “program” is defined as:

- 1) One or more courses or classes that, upon successful completion, leads to:
 - A certificate, diploma, associate degree, bachelors degree; or,
 - A competency or skill recognized by employers,
- 2) A training regimen that provides individuals with additional skills or competencies generally recognized by employers.

If any version of a program subsequently differs from its approved form in terms of its objectives, geographic location, curriculum, or mode of delivery (e.g. classroom, Internet, correspondence), that version is considered sufficiently different and requires separate approval.

5. What is a “Consumer Report Card”

The consumer report card (CRC) system contains information necessary for eligible adults 18 and older to choose a training program. Determining factors may include, but are not limited to, overall performance of the program, placement wage expectations, program duration, location or cost, etc.

The consumer report card data base has direct electronic hyperlink access to the provider institution (if available), program descriptions, program entry criteria, provider credentials, costs, etc. These profiles detail information about the training institution and will assist customers and career advisors with making informed choices.

6. Updating “Consumer Report Card” Information

Any substantial changes to a program must be submitted to the local Workforce Investment Board first approving the program. Substantial changes may include program objectives, geographic locations, curriculum, mode of delivery, program duration, cost, entry requisites, etc. After local Workforce Investment Board consideration and approval, information will be electronically transmitted to the GDOL for approval consideration and Eligible Provider List updating which will occur bi-weekly, at a minimum.

7. The “Initial Eligibility” Application Process (Local and State)

[Note: Only for programs not currently approved on the State’s approved Eligible Provider List]

For providers wishing to have an occupational skills training program “initially” (i.e., for the first time) approved for Individual Training Account funds, the WIA requires applications be first submitted to and evaluated by a local Workforce Investment Board of their choice. If approved, the Workforce Investment Board then recommends the program(s) to the GDOL for statewide review and approval. Applications need only be made with one local Workforce Investment Board for possible inclusion on the statewide Eligible Provider List. Once approved on the statewide Eligible Provider List, an approved program is available to all Georgia Workforce Investment Boards and cooperative states.

A generic application and instructions can be accessed on our website at <http://www.gcic.edu/gawia/> . The website at http://www/pdf/wia/wia_administrators.pdf identifies the local Workforce Investment Boards with whom providers may apply. In most cases, providers are able to transmit the application electronically.

Although a training program may be included on the statewide Eligible Provider List, due to local Workforce Investment Board Individual Training Account policy, customers may not be able to choose a provider's program for funding. To ensure that customers will be able to attend your program, it is necessary to contact the local Workforce Investment Board from which potential customers might come, to complete any additional required documentation.

To streamline services, two metropolitan Workforce Investment Boards (DeKalb County and Fulton County) have contracted with the Atlanta Regional Commission to handle the Individual Training Account provider application process. If applying there, providers may access their application format at: <http://www.atlantaregional.com> [Choose "Workforce Solutions", then "Training & Youth Provider Resources", and "Training Providers" at the left hand menu].

Remember that the WIA requires that programs, not providers, be approved for Individual Training Accounts. Therefore, prospective training providers must submit an application for each program of study. The application will request descriptive information on programs, including cost and past performance.

8. Maintaining Subsequent Eligibility (SE)

The WIA requires an annual re-determination of ITA program eligibility through a Subsequent Eligibility (SE) process. For a program to remain eligible to receive Individual Training Account funds for new enrollments after October 15th of each year, the State is required to compare program-level performance outcomes against established minimum standards (see the table on Attachment I).

Separate Subsequent Eligibility applications and instructions are forwarded to providers of currently approved Individual Training Account programs each August.

[Please note important Federal “all student” reporting requirements described in Attachment II.] Providers are asked to complete a Subsequent Eligibility application with attention given to each proposed program. These Subsequent Eligibility applications only address programs currently approved on the Eligible Provider List that are seeking reapproval. Providers of currently approved Individual Training Account programs interested in proposing new training programs should refer to the “initial eligibility” requirements described in this information guide.

If reapproved, a program’s Subsequent Eligibility will extend through October 15th of each year.

The GDOL is responsible for the development, operation and maintenance of the statewide Eligible Provider List. The Eligible Provider List contains specific consumer information for each eligible program. Providers may be removed under the following conditions:

- ❑ If inaccurate information regarding a program is intentionally supplied to the local Workforce Investment Board or GDOL, a termination of eligibility may occur. The termination will remain in effect for a minimum of one (1) year;
- ❑ If the local Workforce Investment Board or GDOL determines that an eligible provider has violated any requirements under the WIA, or other State or Federal laws, regulations or requirements, the provider must commence corrective action as deemed appropriate or risk program removal;
- ❑ If a provider does not respond to Subsequent Eligibility, the programs undergoing Subsequent Eligibility will be removed from the Eligible Provider List. If the provider wishes to have those programs reapproved in the future, they will need to reapply through a local Workforce Investment Board after a six-month period; or
- ❑ If a provider’s program fails to meet or exceed minimum established local and State performance levels, the provider’s eligibility to receive funds for that program may be suspended by the local Workforce Investment Board, or GDOL, as applicable, for a minimum of one (1) year.

Aggrieved providers will always have access to local and State appeals processes in such instances.

9. Training Provider Liability

If it is deemed by a Workforce Investment Board that training received by a WIA customer did not adhere to course information as marketed by the training provider and/or the performance data was overstated by the provider, consequences levied upon the training provider could include:

- ❑ additional training to the aggrieved customer at no cost; and/or
- ❑ refund to the fiscal agent of amounts paid; and/or
- ❑ debarment from the Eligible Provider List.

Aggrieved providers will always have access to local and State appeals processes in such instances.

V. Non-ITA Activities Statewide

The GDOL is a close and vital partner to those entities who provide non-Individual Training Account activities to adults and youths. In fact, GDOL oversees the administration of WIA activities throughout the State. These activities are delivered through the 20 local Workforce Investment Boards across Georgia.

Each Workforce Investment Board receives federal funding through the GDOL and procures non-Individual Training Account service providers separately. Often, this procurement is required to be competitive, and the processes and timetables they utilize differ between Workforce Investment Boards. The best way to determine the specifics about each is to contact them directly.

Access http://www/pdf/wia/wia_administrators.pdf to view a grid identifying the key contacts for the 20 Workforce Investment Boards. When contacting local Workforce Investment Boards, prospective providers should establish they are interested in being placed on their local bidders list and would like to be notified of any WIA procurement actions.

VI. Contact Person

Please forward any Individual Training Account-related questions to the Employment Services Division, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd., Suite 422, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 or via phone at (404) 232 - 3505.

Attachment I
2011-2012 Subsequent Eligibility (SE) Standards

ALL STUDENTS - Past Performance Information From xx/xx Through xx/xx (The most recent 12 month period for which data is available, but start date of period cannot be earlier than April 1, 2009, and no later than June 30, 2009) [Must pass at least 2 of the 3 measures below]		
Measure	Minimum Performance Level	Definition
Unsubsidized Employment Rate	55%	Number and Percent of Completers exiting the program during the applicable period who obtained employment
Completion Rate	55%	Number and Percent of total students exiting or scheduled to exit the program during the applicable period who met the training program's completion requirements
Average Weekly Earning at Placement	\$254/wk	Average weekly earnings at placement of completers obtaining employment during the applicable period

WIA STUDENTS - Past Performance Information From xx/xx Through xx/xx (The most recent 12 month period for which data is available, but start date of period cannot be earlier than April 1, 2009, and no later than June 30, 2009) [Must pass at least 2 of the 4 measures below]		
Measure	Minimum Performance Level	Definition
Unsubsidized Employment Rate	60%	Number and Percent of WIA Completers exiting the program during the applicable period who obtained employment
Six Month Retention Rate of Completers in Employment	60%	Number and Percent of WIA Completers exiting the program during the applicable period who remained employed six months after training program completion
Average Weekly Earnings of Completers 6 Months After 1 st Day of Employment	\$254/wk	Average weekly earnings, six months after the first day of employment, of WIA completers
Diploma, Graduate, Certification, Licensure, etc. Rates	60%	Number and percent of WIA students exiting or scheduled to exit the training program during the applicable period who met the training program's completion requirements

Attachment II
Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage File Verifications

The Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires States to use student social security numbers and Unemployment Insurance Wage File matching data to verify employment and wage rate outcomes of all programs seeking subsequent (i.e., renewed) ITA eligibility.

The GDOL hereby assures proposing training providers, the student social security numbers transmitted and resulting Unemployment Insurance Wage File matching data will:

- (1) only be used to prepare aggregate program performance reports as required under section 122 of WIA;***
- (2) not be redisclosed in any personally identifiable form;***
- (3) be safe guarded while GDOL is in possession of the same; and***
- (4) be destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes of complying with the WIA.***

Per the ITA Subsequent Eligibility application issued each year and in accordance with WIA requisites and GDOL assurance, training providers **MUST** report the social security numbers [no names], award level and award date of ALL (not just WIA-funded) student completers from the performance period reported for each proposed program of study.

Therefore, it is important that providers initiate a process to capture the above student data for ALL students once programs are initially approved, if subsequent eligibility is to be considered the following year.