

 MARICOPA COUNTY Workforce Development Board	SECTION/REFERENCE DES Section 500 Training Services; TEGL 15-10; WIOA Law 134 (c)(3)(D)	POLICY NUMBER 25-03
	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE August 2025	REVISION DATE August 2025
	AUTHORIZED BY: Maricopa County Workforce Development Board	
SUBJECT: Occupational Skills Training		ADDENDA:

**Purpose:** Occupational skills training (OST) assists participants in acquiring and demonstrating the essential occupational competencies and skills that will qualify them for employment and establish the first step on a career path toward self-sufficiency.

**Responsibility of:** Career Advisor, WIOA Participant, Program Supervisor, ETPL Training Provider

**Definition(s): Occupational Skills Training** is an organized program of study providing specific vocational skills that lead to a proficiency in the performance of actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate or advanced levels.

**Individual Training Account (ITA)** is an expenditure account established on behalf of an eligible participant to purchase training services from eligible training providers they select in consultation with the career advisor. Individuals may be attending school when they become a WIOA Title IB participant; however, reimbursement of training costs is not allowed for payments made prior to WIOA Title I-B program participation.

**Description:** WIOA funds used for training must be used for high demand occupations that result in an industry-recognized credential, apprenticeship certificate, or license issued by the state or federal government. Training funded will be limited to programs in the targeted industry sectors referenced in the Maricopa Workforce Development Board’s Training Service Limits Policy. As a non-entitlement program, WIOA services and funds are not guaranteed to all WIOA participants. Each participant’s eligibility, priority of service (see priority of service policy), suitability, and needs are assessed individually to ensure that services align with program’s objectives and funding levels. Occupational Skills Training is intended to help individuals with obtaining full-time employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

Career Advisors should work with the participants on their approach to employment prior to discussing approval for Occupational Skills Training. Activities to focus on employability include:

- Career exploration and planning
- Identifying industries and occupations that align with a participant's skills and interests
- Resume preparation
- Job search support
- Interview coaching
- Researching apprenticeship opportunities
- Assessments

If it is determined that a participant needs additional skills to obtain employment, Occupational Skills Training can be considered. Career Advisors (CA) should consider the following items for placing a participant in Occupational Skills Training:

- Ensure that the training program correlates with the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) / Individual Service Strategy (ISS).
- Review labor market information for availability of jobs in the chosen career.
- Participant's ability to perform and progress at a reasonable pace, i.e., TABE scores and educational background meet required/appropriate levels for the OST selected.
- Acquires the minimum job specific skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to perform related jobs adequately and competitively.
- Selection of a training program may be based upon the following criteria: quality of training, cost of training, length of training, competencies expected to be achieved, and accessibility of training site to participant
- Ensure training provider and program are on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) in AJC.

**Training Length:** Training is intended to provide individuals with the skills needed to obtain employment as quickly as possible. Training programs must have a definitive start and end date and must not be longer than one year (this excludes externships).

**Customer Choice:** Training services provided through an Individual Training Account (ITA), or contract must be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in selecting a training provider. A participant who has been determined eligible for WIOA Title 1-B training services may select an eligible (WIOA-approved) training program listed on Arizona's ETPL after consultation with their Career Advisor.

**Pell Grants:**

LWDBs must ensure that WIOA Title I-B training funds are awarded only when no other sources of funding are available or when the amount available is insufficient in covering the participant's training costs.

CAs must leverage available training funds, to include Pell Grant and scholarships, to ensure that the costs of training and support services are fully paid for participants and to reduce the likelihood of duplicate payments for such services. CAs shall assist each participant in

establishing Pell Grant eligibility, if applicable, before a participant enrolls in a particular school or training program. A WIOA participant may enroll in WIOA-funded training while his/her application for a Pell Grant is pending as long as pre-arrangements have been made with the training provider and the WIOA participant regarding allocation of the Pell Grant, if it is subsequently awarded. In the case of approval of the Pell Grant, the training provider must reimburse ARIZONA@WORK Maricopa County the WIOA funds used to underwrite the training for the amount the Pell Grant covers. Reimbursement is not required from the portion of the Pell Grant assistance disbursed to the WIOA participant for education-related expenses, only tuition.

The Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA), which is used to establish Pell Grant eligibility, is readily available on-line at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. When a participant completes a FAFSA online, it is electronically submitted immediately to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) for processing. Generally, the DOE makes a determination of Pell eligibility and notifies an application within 30 days of FAFSA submittal.

All WIOA Title I-B program participants pursuing training at a Pell Grant eligible institution must apply for a Federal Pell Grant, unless the training program is not Pell eligible, or the participant provides documentation to indicate they are not eligible for the Pell Grant.

ARIZONA@WORK Maricopa County has established ITA limits for its Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, which can be referenced in the Training Service Limits policy. In the event that training exceeds the WIOA ITA limit, and the remaining balance becomes the responsibility of the participant, the participant must demonstrate ability to cover any additional costs required for training. This is to ensure that the training plan is viable and will not create undue financial stress for the participant. Career Advisors are expected to work closely with participants to review financial readiness and to explore alternative funding sources to support training goals.

**Individual Training Accounts:** The training voucher (Individual Training Account) must include the following items:

- Training start and end dates
- Total tuition costs (amount of WIOA funds obligated for the training program)
- Appropriate ancillary costs such as books, uniforms, tools, equipment, testing/licensing fees, etc. (community college bookstore costs require an additional training voucher)
- Information noting potential Pell Grant fund amount applied to training costs

### **Returning Occupational Skills Training Requests**

To ensure that WIOA funds are able to assist as many county residents as possible, individuals returning to WIOA program seeking additional training funds will not receive priority for Occupational Skills Training funds. Occupational Skills Training can be considered in the following circumstances:

- Individual successfully completed Occupational Skills Training during previous program participation

- Individual meets eligibility
- Individual demonstrates necessity for training
- Training request builds upon previous training
- Funding is available

Individuals that previously had an unsuccessful training completion, seeking career change (excluding individuals who lost employment and qualify as a dislocated worker) or who were exited due to behavior will not be considered for additional training for 24 months from exit date.