# Minutes of June 3, 2003 Individual Training Account (ITA) Committee

Committee Member Attendees:      Rocco Damato
                                      Donna Lynne
                                      John Mogulescu
                                      Howard Van Jones
Committee Member Absent:      Amy Betanzos
Staff Attendees:                    Suri Duitch (DOE)
                                        Stacie Hochstadt (WIB)

The meeting was held in the offices of GHI, at 441 Ninth Avenue.  Donna Lynne, Committee Chair, convened the meeting at 8:30 AM.

1. <u>Minutes</u>. The committee approved the minutes of the March 5th ITA committee meeting.

2. <u>ITA Budget</u>. Suri Duitch and Stacie Hochstadt advised the committee that the FY 2004 allocation for ITAs was likely to be substantially less than the FY 2003 allocation.  HRA and DOE spent over $44 million in the first eleven months of FY 2003, due to FY 2003 containing two years worth of allocations and due to supplemental monies that were available during the year.  The projected FY 2004 allocation is $5.5 million.  Due to this reduction, a recommendation to lower the ITA cap was considered.  The current cap is $4,000, but the average ITA issued in the first five months of 2003 was $3,557 and the average price of all courses <u>available</u> in 2003 (but not necessarily taken) is $2,243.  Prior to considering a reduction in the cap, the committee discussed a number of other concerns, including the need to set pricing guidelines and the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the courses in terms of student satisfaction and job placement success.  DOE and WIB staff indicated that such evaluations have been ongoing, but completion during the past few months has been difficult as the agency is in transition.  Howard Van Jones recommended a new cap of $2,500. After discussion, the committee voted to recommend this level cap for FY 2004 to the Workforce Investment Board.  The committee also recommended that staff evaluate means testing as a way to provide the ITAs to those most in need and that One-Stop staff be even more vigilant about steering ITA users to courses that provide placement in fields where there are job opportunities.  Suri agreed to look at means testing, but stated that there may be some implementation issues in doing so.  Staff also agreed that they would revisit the pricing guidelines work and the link between job placement and courses.  HRA has guidelines on their non-ITA vouchers that will be distributed to the committee for their consideration.

3. <u>Information Validated for ITA Program</u>. Staff provided the committee members with the types of information currently validated for ITAs.  Validated items include EIN, provider name, non-profit status, course attendance, course completion and payment.  The key items not validated are placement services and performance outcomes.  Some providers provide this information on a voluntary basis, but there is no systematic collection and validation of such information.

4. <u>ITA Training Program Monitoring Plan</u>. Staff has proposed to develop a monitoring process for ITA providers that involves having independent review of course evaluations. One to two staff are requested for this function. Committee members felt that although this proposal was better than not having an evaluation tool, that more work needed to be done. Staff stated that the goal of this tool is primarily to weed out very poor performers, and not necessarily to be a state of the art measurement tool. ITA committee members suggested a more intensive monitoring program for the key vendors, so as to optimize the efforts of the staff. Committee members agreed that more study in this area is needed.

The next meeting of the committee will be held in July.