

Minutes of July 28, 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 (Department of Small Business Services)
Stacie Hochstadt (Workforce Investment Board)
Laurie Gross (DSBS)
David Margalit (DSBS)
Myat Oo (DSBS)

The meeting was held in the offices of GHI, at 441 Ninth Avenue. Donna Lynne, Committee Chair, convened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

1. Minutes. The committee approved the minutes of the June 3, 2003 ITA committee meeting.
2. Review of ITA funding. Stacie Hochstadt reviewed the changes in ITA voucher amounts due to the projected level of ITA funding for FY 2004. The \$4000 cap previously established for ITAs had been reduced to \$2500 by the WIB. However, DSBS decided to put in a moratorium for a brief period of time to allow for operational and performance guidelines to be established.
3. Review of ITA Issuance Policy Options: front end limits. Suri Duitch reviewed the ITA Issuance Policy Options Paper. Committee members agreed that the proposal of a point system required further discussion, and that means testing was a possibility especially since other localities are doing this for adults (not for dislocated workers), but concern was expressed regarding how to do this. Suri agreed that she would do a more comprehensive analysis of what other cities were doing. Suri also reviewed that the ITA program should be redefined so that ITAs would no longer be considered an entitlement. On the issue of “first come, first served”, committee members agreed this was not the best way to allocate money, however, some localities release monies at various points during the year. Concern was also expressed that this may be difficult for vendors to administer. Suri also presented a suggestion that those with the fewest skills have priority for ITAs; but acknowledged that this is not only hard to define but may limit the success of the program in achieving placement rates. Regarding the proposal to allocate ITAs to those out of work the longest period of time, committee members agreed that this is very problematic, as this may not mean the right people are being trained for vacancies in the labor market. The DSBS staff rejected an ITA lottery suggestion and no other cities currently have such a system.
4. Review of ITA Issuance Policy Option: back end limits. The proposal to train for jobs in growth occupations was acceptable to the committee. John Mogulescu suggested that we find out who has been using ITAs in the past. The option of narrowing the pool of training providers was discussed as a likely outcome, and it was noted that placement is an important outcome to narrowing this list. Focusing on growth industries was also discussed, and Suri stated that several localities have done such targeting.

It was agreed that staff should circulate a list of recommended actions by September.

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