

Microsoft gives \$1M for women in tech

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Microsoft Corp. Friday announced a \$1 million grant and four-year commitment to the National Center for Women and Information Technology.

Both Microsoft and NCWIT hope to address shortages of women in the science and technology arena and attract more women to pursue careers in IT.

The announcement was made at the Future Potential in IT seminar at Seattle University.

"We are delighted with this gift and this alliance," said Bradley Feld, NCWIT board chairman and managing director of Mobius Venture Capital Inc. "We believe that only by working together with corporations such as Microsoft will we be able to address the need for a greater

diversity in the sciences."

According to the NCWIT, although the female workforce is growing at a faster pace than the male workforce, the tech industry has yet to capitalize on hiring or retaining women in technical fields.

"It is a virtual certainty that all workers will have some sort of IT function as part of their job duties, and yet IT enrollment at local colleges is down as much as 60 percent, with enrollment numbers for women lower than in 1971," Jon Roskill, Microsoft's vice president of U.S. marketing, said during the seminar. "The need is greater than ever to find the most talented people to fill key jobs within the tech industry."

"This is an exciting industry, and we are passionate about meeting the challenges our business faces around pipeline issues," he added.

"Together with NCWIT, we will help ensure that women have an equal chance for success in this lucrative field."

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