Microsoft offers computer training to unemployed

April 14 2009

(AP) -- Microsoft Corp. announced Monday it would be giving away more than 30,000 vouchers over the next 90 days to help unemployed people in Washington state get new computer skills.

The vouchers will entitle them to take computer classes for free - either in person or online - and take [Microsoft](#) certification exams at no or low cost.

At a news conference in Seattle, Gov. Chris Gregoire commended Microsoft for stepping up to the challenge of helping the nation come out of the recession stronger.

"When this downturn ends, we will need more skilled workers ready to enter the job market. Microsoft's generosity will provide thousands of men and women the skills they need to work with the software that runs our businesses," Gregoire said.

Washington's WorkSource job centers across Washington started giving out the vouchers on Monday. Washington state had the 17th highest unemployment rate in the country last month with a jobless rate of 8.4 percent.

The vouchers are part of a new national program Microsoft announced at the National Governors Conference in February. Elevate America hopes to offer job training to as many as 2 million Americans over the next three years.

Sue T. Carter of Bellevue picked up one of the first vouchers. She said she has been working part time for more than two years and really needs to find a job that will help her pay her rent, because she is less than a month away from eviction.

Carter earned several college degrees years ago and has picked up most of her computer skills on her own, but she knows companies seek employees with professional training.

"Knowledge is power and I'm willing to do anything to make myself a more viable candidate in the workplace," Carter said. "It always makes you more viable if you've got more skills to offer."

She expressed enthusiasm that the training program is not costing taxpayers anything.

Brad Smith, Microsoft senior vice president and general counsel, said the company also is excited about the public-private partnership because it will help both people and businesses.

"This program is all about equipping people with the new skills they'll need to get a job in the changing economy," Smith said.

The free training will be for Microsoft software, from basic technology literacy to intermediate-level courses on programs such as Excel and PowerPoint.

On the Net:

Elevate America: http://www.microsoft.com/ElevateAmerica

WorkSource: http://www.go2worksource.com

Citation: Microsoft offers computer training to unemployed (2009, April 14) retrieved 20 June 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2009-04-microsoft-unemployed.html