Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Microsoft e-Learning through WorkSource

UPDATED April 29, 2011

Summary

The Washington State Employment Security Department has contracted with Microsoft to offer more than 1,000 online courses to WorkSource customers so that they can increase their computer skills and be more competitive in today's job market. As a result, WorkSource customers have unlimited access to Microsoft's comprehensive e-Learning library.

The e-Learning library includes a broad array of classes, including basic computer skills, Microsoft Office software and advanced technical courses, ensuring that there is something for everyone regardless of current computer skill level.

After successfully completing the coursework, job seekers have the option to earn certifications that will demonstrate to employers that they have achieved a high proficiency in the specified program and that they are ready to apply those new skills.

How it works

Six learning plans to choose from

While WorkSource customers have unlimited access to the complete Microsoft e-Learning library, browsing through thousands of classes can be overwhelming. So, Employment Security has elected to offer six standard learning plans for people to choose from.

The plans cover all Office Microsoft operating systems in all languages offered, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. A higher level technical training plan for IT professionals is available, and a digital literacy plan for those needing to learn computer basics.

Certification

Proctored tests are available through Certiport sites across the state, including WorkSource offices in Auburn, Bremerton, Everett, Kennewick, Mount Vernon, Spokane, Thurston County, Vancouver, Walla Walla and Yakima. Due to technical requirements, these sites offer free certification exams in Microsoft Office 2007 only. People who are interested in being certified in other Microsoft learning plans can find testing sites online at www.certiport.com.

For WorkSource customers who are interested in earning certification in Microsoft IT Professional courses, there are 50 IT Professional vouchers available. People who have successfully completed technical courses, either through e-Learning or the classroom, can apply at their local WorkSource office.

Registration options

People who are interested in participating in an e-learning module and/or earning certification can access the service in two ways:

1. Visit the local WorkSource office to register and get instructions.

2. Register online through Go2WorkSource.com and receive an access code and instructions via email within five business days.

How it helps Washington businesses

Increased availability of skill development opportunities also benefits businesses in Washington State. As more WorkSource customers successfully complete courses and earn certifications, employers can be confident that the workers they recruit through WorkSource have the skills to meet their business needs.

Businesses can also look to WorkSource to help upgrade the skills of their current workforce, creating a win-win for them and their employees. It allows employers to maintain valued workers while ensuring they have skills to meet evolving business needs, and it allows workers to gain new skills and promote into better jobs.

Status and results

Microsoft e-Learning was made available through six WorkSource offices beginning September 15, 2010 and launched statewide on October 1. Certiport certification sites launched in ten WorkSource offices in January.

As of April 25, 2011:

- More than 24,000 people had requested and been given access to the e-Learning library; more than 4,000 of them are new WorkSource customers.
- 19,300 courses have been started by 8,990 people. Each course contains individual topics which on their own may meet that person's unique needs or interests.
- More than 2,100 people had completed at least one course; approximately 5,500 have completed more than 75% of a course.
- 52 Microsoft certification exams have been administered and WorkSource has issued 30 Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications, including Expert certifications

To learn more about how people heard about this e-Learning opportunity and why some who registered had not yet started a course, the department recently conducted a survey of WorkSource customers who had requested access. Of the more than 1,000 people who responded, most were interested in increasing their skills by taking courses.

Half of the respondents reported technical challenges to starting the training or completing a course. The Employment Security Department is in currently talking with Microsoft to increase participation in the e-Learning courses through increased marketing and assistance to customers from WorkSource staff.

Contact

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