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**Workforce Development Council Snohomish County
Receives Grant from Microsoft**
New IT skills training courses begin October 15, 2007

Everett, August 7, 2007 -- Workforce Development Council Snohomish County (WDCSC) announced today that it has received a grant of \$84,000 from Microsoft to provide basic IT (information technology) skills training in Lynnwood, Edmonds, and Everett. This grant was received in partnership with Center for Career Alternatives, Edmonds Community College, Immigrant and Refugee Services Northwest, and Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Courses will begin October 15, 2007.

“Basic IT skills training can change lives and communities through educational and economic advancement,” says Amy Persell of WDCSC. “These skills increase employability and retention and are highly transferable between jobs.”

The grant received by WDCSC was provided through Microsoft’s Unlimited Potential – Community Technology Skills Program, an initiative dedicated to increasing basic IT skills training in the workforce. This program is providing five grants totaling over \$435,000 to WDCSC and four other workforce development organizations in Washington State.

“Employment in some of Washington’s fastest growing industries increasingly requires an understanding of basic IT skills,” said Pamela Passman, head of Microsoft Corporate Affairs. “Learning these skills can provide job seekers and workers with increased economic opportunities, while ensuring that Washington State remains competitive in the global knowledge economy.”

WDCSC’s program will add IT training to existing workforce development programs. The augmented programs will be offered at Alderwood Community Service Office, WorkSource Lynnwood, Edmonds Community College, and Center for Career Alternatives in Everett. The target enrollment population includes the following job candidates: food stamp and cash public assistance recipients, individuals with limited English proficiency, low-income adults, dislocated workers, and at-risk youth.

“This type of basic skills training is extremely efficient and effective for our participants, because it is crucial for nearly every job or training program they might pursue next,” explains Debbie Corn of the Alderwood Community Service Office.

The Snohomish County Blueprint 2010 survey by Godbe Research revealed that employers rate technical competence as the most important skills for workers to possess. The same survey also found that employers felt that workers were most deficient in these skills. The Washington Workforce Board, the statewide workforce development umbrella organization, found that 48 percent of non-supervisory employees use computers at their jobs.

Workforce Development Council Snohomish County

WDCSC invests government and private funding to continuously increase the global competitiveness and prosperity of county workforce and businesses, fill current and emerging jobs, and provide full employment. Investments are made through effective business, labor, community-based, educational, and service provider organizations for the opportunity, economic well-being, and benefit of our entire community.

The WDC has identified four goals for the Snohomish County workforce development system: 100% global competitiveness, 100% jobs filled, 100% employment, and a 100% productive and financially secure workforce. The specific objectives and strategies that have been developed to achieve those goals are outlined in our two-year strategic plan which is available at <http://www.worksourceonline.com/w/documents/Two-YearStrategicPlanFINAL.pdf>.

Microsoft Unlimited Potential – Community Technology Skills Program

The Community Technology Skills Program helps workforce development organizations offer new training programs and expand existing curriculum. Microsoft expanded this program earlier this year. As part of that expansion, Microsoft gave grants to five workforce development organizations in Washington State.

Unlimited Potential is one of the key components of Microsoft Corporation’s philanthropic activities. For more information about Unlimited Potential or other corporate philanthropy, such as the Microsoft Math Partnership, Visit <http://www.microsoft.com/giving>

To register for basic IT skills training or for more information, please contact: Terri Thompson at 425.673.3300.

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