

**Introduction:** The Illinois-Microsoft Elevate America program is a public-private partnership between the State of Illinois and Microsoft. The purpose of the program is to provide a no-cost opportunity for individuals to increase their technology skills. This is a national program and, for our state, Microsoft is providing 51,000 vouchers to be redeemed by individuals to complete Microsoft online courses and Microsoft business certification exams.

**Timeline:** The distribution of vouchers takes place between July 31 - October 31, 2009. Individuals who are assigned online learning vouchers during that period must “redeem” their vouchers online before October 31, but have 12 months to complete the online learning courses. Individuals who are assigned certification exam vouchers during the distribution period must complete their exam by October 31, 2009.

**Courses and Exams:** Individuals will choose specific voucher types to either complete select Microsoft online courses in two categories or to take Microsoft business certification exams. In each category there are many courses to pick from. A voucher is good for one set of courses, called a course collection, for a selected Microsoft product. Individuals may wish to complete more than one course collection and, if so, will need a voucher for each collection. The estimated time to complete a course varies from a few hours to about five hours.

**Accessing Elevate America:** To access information about the program, online courses, and to find certification exam sites, go to: [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and click on Individuals.

- **Business Worker Voucher (category 1)**

These vouchers are used to complete online courses for Microsoft Windows XP, Office 2003, Windows Vista, or Office 2007 online courses. These courses are for individuals who use, or will use, these Microsoft products with their work. All of the courses are self paced, so individuals do not have to complete a course in one sitting. Upon completing a course, the individual may download and print a certificate of completion.

- **Technical Professional Voucher (category 2)**

These vouchers are used to complete online courses for individuals who use, or will use, Microsoft professional information technology applications including server administration, web and application programming, and other professional technical areas. This series of online courses is specifically designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to pass Microsoft Technical Certification exams. Each collection of courses is focused on a single Microsoft product, such as Windows Server, SQL Server, Share-Point, and Visual Studio. In this category there are many courses offered and organized in Learning Areas. Individuals may need to be issued several vouchers depending on how many courses in each learning area they want to complete. Upon completing a course, the individual may download and print a certificate of completion.

- **Microsoft Business Certification Exams**

These vouchers are used by individuals to redeem at locations offering Business Worker Certification exams. These exams may be prepared for by completing Business Worker courses. Technical Professional Certification exams are not part of this voucher program. A voucher can be used for one Business Certification exam attempt, and if needed, one retake. All vouchers issued to take Business Certification exams must be used before October 31, 2009.



TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

**Voucher Distribution Network:** The vouchers will be distributed for 90 days starting July 31, 2009. At that time, individuals who are receiving services or who are eligible or enrolled to receive services from one of these workforce networks can obtain a voucher:

- Illinois workNet Centers, including Mayor Daley's WorkNet System
- Digital Inclusion Community Technology Centers, including the Illinois and City of Chicago Digital Excellence Network and affiliated non-profit agencies
- High School Career and Technical Education programs approved by the Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Community College Career and Technical Education Network
- Illinois Community College Board Adult Education Network

More information about these networks is available on the Illinois workNet Portal.

**Allocating Vouchers to Individuals:** Workforce Professionals affiliated with a distribution network will be responsible for issuing vouchers to their enrolled or registered customers. All of the information needed by workforce professionals to implement this program and allocate vouchers is at the Illinois workNet Portal's Workforce Professionals Pathway. To enter this pathway, a login is required (and explained in the next section). To issue vouchers electronically from Illinois workNet, workforce professionals will log into their account and:

- Pull their customer's My Illinois workNet account to verify the account information is correct, then enter some additional information about the customer.
- Select the type and quantity of vouchers to be allocated.
- Print the vouchers and hand them to the customer.

**Accessing Elevate America:** Both workforce professionals and customers will access Elevate America via the Illinois workNet Portal:

- Workforce Professionals— To access the Illinois workNet Workforce Professionals Pathway, your organization must be identified as an Illinois workNet partner and a workforce professionals

account must be set up by staff affiliated with partner organizations. Instructions for identifying partner sites and the account registration are both available at [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com). Click on Workforce Professionals Pathway.

- Individuals— To access information about the program, online courses, and to find proctored test sites, Individuals will go to: [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and click on Individuals.

**Guidance and Training:** The primary location for both workforce professionals and individuals to learn more about the Elevate America program is the Illinois workNet Portal.

The best way for workforce professionals to stay current on this topic is to:

- Ensure your organization is set up as an Illinois workNet partner site. It is recommended that this occur immediately. Don't wait for the program to officially start. To learn more and to enter your site information, go to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and click on "Workforce Professionals Pathway."
- As soon as an organization is set up as a partner site, all workforce professional staff who will be working with their customers to issue vouchers should set up their workforce professionals account. To set up a workforce professionals account, go to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and click on "Workforce Professionals Pathway."
- Participate with training webinars to be scheduled ahead of the official start date. Information and registration will be emailed and available via the Workforce Professionals Pathway.
- Participate with an online question and answer forum. To participate with the forum, log into your workforce professionals account and go to "Resources/ Microsoft Elevate America."
- Log into your workforce professionals account often to watch for messages, training dates, and updates to the "Resources/Microsoft Elevate America" page.