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## **Businesses get free access to more than 1,400 online courses**

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SPOKANE, Wash. - Small businesses and entrepreneurs in Washington state have free access to online courses and video tutorials for a limited time, thanks to a partnership including Washington State University and Microsoft Corporation.

“These online courses will allow people to get the business skills or information they need, when they need it; it’s an incredible value,” said Terry Chambers, interim associate state director of the Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Part of the national America’s SBDC eLearning Center, the cloud-based online course delivery and management platform allows 24/7 access to hundreds of online courses. They cover business leadership, sales and marketing, information technology, human resources, communications, business innovation, decision-making strategies, problem solving, new employees, critical thinking, management essentials and more.

Current users will be able to access the courses at no cost for the next three months. New users will be able to access the courses at no cost for three months from the date of registration. Courses normally cost \$40-\$240.

Following the free, three-month introduction, the eLearning Center is available for \$24.95 per month per enrollee/employee or for \$249.50 per year per enrollee. Subscriptions can be canceled at any time.

Go to <http://wasbdc.globalclassroomportal.com/> to register and begin learning.

“This is an opportunity to support small business and get connected to the Internet generation of entrepreneurs using technology, online learning and social media in every community supported by an SBDC,” said C.E. “Tee” Rowe, president and CEO of America’s SBDC.

More than 1,400 courses are available through 967 SBDCs and 63 state and territorial small business development programs.

Participants can earn certificates of achievement and, in some cases, continuing education units (CEUs) for completing courses. These become part of a personal education portfolio, a permanent record of education and skills that can be shared online or with an employer.

Course content has been created by Global Classroom, an online business education provider, as well as industry leaders such as Microsoft Corporation, Franklin Covey and Emily Post. Microsoft sponsors the cloud e-learning program across the United States to empower small businesses with affordable education delivered in this custom training portal.

The Washington SBDC is supported by WSU, the U.S. Small Business Administration and other institutions of higher education and economic development.

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