



## Microsoft® Elevate America in Action Rural Northeastern Washington State

Elevate America online E-Learning is having a Positive Effect in Rural America

### Situation:

Shamra Coy, Resource Development Coordinator, Rural Resource Community Action gains valuable skills using Microsoft Elevate America online training.

### Results:

Within minutes of meeting Shamra Coy you discover this single mother of five is full of determination and drive. 17 years ago, while living in Southern California, Shamra and her husband traveled to northeastern Washington to visit friends and fell in love with the area. They made a bold decision to move their then small family to rural Stevens County, hoping it would be a healthy place to raise children, explore their love of the outdoors, and get involved in the social fiber of what the US government labels the “frontier rural.”

Years later, following a divorce, Shamra found herself in the role of single parent and sole provider to five children. While working full time as a bookkeeper, she decided to rekindle an interest in law she’d gained years prior as a paralegal and enrolled in an online bachelor’s degree program. In 2006 Shamra earned a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice through a distant learning program at Washington State University.

In a characteristic display of passion that demands she give back to others, four years ago Shamra became a dedicated volunteer at the local Rural Resource Community Action Center (Rural Resources). Her background in criminal justice qualified her to work in the area of family services as a medical advocate and a resource for victims of crime. Not surprisingly, Shamra’s volunteer efforts also fueled her appetite to continue advancing her career.

### Rural Resource Community Action

Rural Resource Community Action in Colville, Washington is a non-profit corporation that provides comprehensive social services to people in need. Rural Resources offers support for a wide range of services, including employment training, housing assistance, independent senior living, crime victim services, transportation, and winter fuel assistance. *“Our primary focus is on providing services that have tangible, personal impact”,* says Barry Lamont, Executive Director of the Center. *“We touch the lives of over ten thousand of the sixty thousand residents of the rural Washington state counties of Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens.”*



Barry Lamont, Executive Director, Rural Resource Community Action



Shamra Coy, Resource Development Coordinator

After three years of watching Shamra thrive and grow as a volunteer, Lamont hired her full-time as a Resource Development Coordinator in the Family Support Division. Today Shamra provides training and day-to-day oversight for a staff of 50 volunteers.

### Software Training in a Rural Setting

The Rural Resources Center in Colville is also a WorkSource affiliate that provides employment services to surrounding counties. Sara Bussell coordinates technology training at the Center, working with residents looking to gain basic computer skills. Sara explains, *"I work with adults from 18 to 82 years of age. Mainly our focus is on adults that don't have computer skills, many of whom have been working at the local lumber mills. Now with the recession a lot of the people here in Stevens County are looking to re-educate themselves with software skills to find new work."*

In a classroom setting Sara provides basic computer instructions and introductions to Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. *"People need to be able to electronically fill out time sheets, mileage forms and many other documents. Even people with no need to work in an office still need basic software skills."*

### Additional Training through Microsoft® Elevate America

The Microsoft Elevate America program is a partnership between Microsoft and states across the country as part of an overall Microsoft effort to help train 2 million people over the next three years. The goal of Elevate America is to improve access to education and workforce-readiness skills required for twenty-first-century jobs. The program provides basic technology literacy and skills training through online eLearning courses.

*"The Elevate America program was such a wonderful tool for us because it took my clients from the basic level to the intermediate level and even to certification,"* says Sara. *"People used their free Elevate America vouchers to access online learning opportunity on home computers and even at the local libraries. Elevate America has been huge even in rural communities."*



Sara Bussell, Trainer

In the spring of 2009, Sara shared with Shamra and other staff members in the Family Services Center the details of the Elevate America Program. Four of them signed up and started working on the online training.

*"When Sara shared the information about the Elevate America program I got excited. I really wanted to get more familiar with Microsoft Office 2007,"* noted Shamra, *"And, I especially wanted to really master Microsoft Word."* She immediately became very interested in pursuing the online training.

With Lamont's support, she and others took the online business training during work hours and also at home in the evening. *"I value the technical skills in my staff, and anytime I can get free training for my people it allows me to spend my limited dollars on direct services to the people we serve."* shared Mr. Lamont.

As a result of the Microsoft Word E-Learning training Shamra gained new insight into how to better modify existing documents shared by others to make them work better for our communication and training needs.

Shamra shares, *"I feel better about how I can work with Word to create documents that I use in training of my volunteers. This task requires me to download Word documents and various legal documents and to Cut & Paste them into a master document that clearly communicates the law and the approaches we use to protect and support our clients in family services."*

In working with 1:1 with a number of her volunteers Shamra also is able to share her more advanced knowledge of Microsoft Word with them. *"Shamra has been a great resource for me. Using what she learned from Microsoft Word she has been able to teach me how to use the program more efficiently."*, says Jean Congor, one of the newly trained volunteers.

## Microsoft® Elevate America Program

Microsoft is committed to strengthening the U.S. economy and increasing global competitiveness by improving access to education and workforce readiness skills required for twenty-first century jobs. To support this commitment, we launched Elevate America, an initiative designed to provide one million vouchers for Microsoft E-Learning courses and select certification exams at no cost to recipients. Elevate America will be implemented in cooperation with states across the country as part of our overall effort to help train two million people over the next three years.

### Each State Determines Which Training Benefits To Offer

As resources become available in a state, the designated agency selects from one or more of the following:

- Expanded access to basic technology literacy and skills training
  - Foundational level skills through Microsoft Unlimited Potential and Digital Literacy curricula and Windows and Microsoft Office Basics e-learning
- Intermediate level technology skills training courses plus selected certification exams
  - Vouchers for e-learning (online) courses offered by Microsoft
  - Vouchers for certification exams leading to Microsoft Business Certification
- Advanced level technical professional skills training courses
  - Vouchers for e-learning (online) courses offered by Microsoft
- Discounted Microsoft IT Academy membership rates for academic institutions

### Elevate America Also Includes the Following Resources

Available today at no cost:

- Tools to find the technology skills needed for a wide range of jobs
- Access to basic IT skills training through the Microsoft Digital Literacy Curriculum
- Career resources for students
- Information about internships and entry-level jobs for students
- Free tutorials to learn modern web design

Available today at low cost:

Access to discounted e-learning, certification exams and other offers

Visit <http://www.microsoft.com/elevateamerica> to learn more.