

URBAN VOICE

Vocational Opportunities In Computer Employment
501(c)(3) California Private Postsecondary Vocational Education

For Immediate Release

Fighting for Women's Equalities Through Job Training

A unique civil rights program for women's equality in the workplace is about to find out whether it's practical and workable or just an illusion.

Urban VOICE, a technology job training program in West Oakland, is recruiting women from east and west Oakland to take part in an 18-week, 240-hour pilot project entitled WOMEN, an acronym for West Oakland Matrix for Empowerment Now. The purpose behind WOMEN is to train women from low income communities for positions requiring computer skills leading to work in business applications and/or technology.

The idea behind an all-women's technically-g geared class is to provide a nurturing environment where women can build community, self confidence and support for each other.

While WOMEN will serve to introduce computers skills to those with little or no experience, it will be complemented by three major components: 1) support services such as on-site childcare, bus stipends and counseling, 2) practical training in workplace skills, personal relationship skills and personal success strategies including financial independence, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, team building and leadership and 3) mentoring and actual work experience.

"This is a holistic program that takes into consideration that a woman has many roles in her day-to-day life, and that each role is interconnected for her success," explained Jean Kaiser, the WOMEN's project coordinator.

Within the technology to be taught, the students will learn to keyboard up to 40 words per minute, develop proficiency in Microsoft Office, the Windows operating system and Internet navigation. Students will also experience technical work by opening computer systems and learning to configure the hardware and software.

"This is an opportunity for women to enjoy a supportive environment while receiving an education in some of the most important skills for work and home," Kaiser said. "We wanted this program to break down the barriers that women have in attending classes like ours by incorporating on-site childcare and transportation. We know the benefits from this training can last a life time."

The development of this program was made possible through a grant from the Walter and Elise Haas Senior Fund, the Oakland Private Industry Council and BayTEC, the Bay Area Technology Education Collaborative.

Classes will be held in the mornings, Monday through Thursday from 9am to 12:30pm from August 18th to December 18th at the school, 2239 Poplar Street in west Oakland.

Informational orientations will be held every Friday afternoon at 2pm beginning June 6th at the school. Enrollment will be limited to 20 students and will be based on first-come, first qualified. For more information, call (510) 208-7360.

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