

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

January 31, 2010

Programs provide funds for education, job training

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The Spokesman-Review

Tags: College economy education retraining unemployment worksource



Patricia Cleveland, left, prepares to take a blood glucose reading from Pamela Eden on Jan. 21 at Spokane Community College, where both are in the medical assistant program.

Dana Moosman never saw unemployment on the horizon.

With a master's degree in education and five years in the mortgage insurance business, she figured the outlook was promising, or at least steady. But the economy hit harder than she imagined.

It's clear – with a national unemployment rate of 10 percent and a Washington state rate of 9.5 percent – that the Spokane Valley woman's situation is familiar to many.

As Moosman discovered, though, it's not hopeless.

Community colleges throughout the state offer a variety of state- and federally funded programs that essentially provide a free college education or job training for in-demand fields to qualified applicants.

The Workforce Investment Act, for example, is paid for through federal stimulus money and funds worker education in fields such as health care, software development, network design and administration and aircraft maintenance. With President Barack Obama proclaiming jobs a priority in last week's State of the Union address, more funding is likely to come.

Moosman was thrilled when she learned about the program, which started in Spokane at the beginning of the year.

"I went to WorkSource to ask what the job opportunities were around Spokane," Moosman said. They pointed her toward health care and told her that money was available to pay for her tuition, books and fees. "A yearlong program, almost a guaranteed job – my

Deadline approaching

The deadline for enrollment is Feb. 22 for all the programs, with the exception of the federal Washington Investment Act, which allows enrollment up to the first day of classes.

For more information about the free or low-cost tuition programs, call (509) 533-8906.

Program details

•Opportunity Grant: [Spokane Community College](http://www.scc.spokane.edu/?success) (<http://www.scc.spokane.edu/?success>) or [Spokane Falls Community College](http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/FinancialAid/Grants.aspx) (<http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/FinancialAid/Grants.aspx>)

•Worker Retraining: [SCC](http://www.scc.spokane.edu/?ccesworkerretrain) (<http://www.scc.spokane.edu/?ccesworkerretrain>) or [SFCC](http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/FinancialAid/OtherWorkPrograms.aspx) (<http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/FinancialAid/OtherWorkPrograms.aspx>)

•WorkFirst: [SCC](http://www.scc.spokane.edu/?ccesworkfirst) (<http://www.scc.spokane.edu/?ccesworkfirst>) or [SFCC](http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/FinancialAid/WorkFirst.aspx) (<http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/FinancialAid/WorkFirst.aspx>)

husband said, 'Why not do it?' "

Now, at age 57, Moosman is embarking on her third career: medical assistant.

While her program will take 12 months, others are shorter. Project management, for example, is only one quarter; those three months alone can make a person more marketable, college officials say. Aircraft maintenance takes about six months.