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Gov. Pritzker and Coursea Launch New Workforce Recovery Initiative Offering Virtual Career Training for Unemployed Illinois Residents

Free courses offered via Get Hired Illinois portal to help upskill Illinoisans impacted by COVID-19

SPRINGFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker today announced the launch of free online career training geared toward helping Illinoisans who have lost their jobs due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a partnership with online learning platform Coursera, Illinois residents now have the opportunity to enroll in free virtual training courses to provide training and credentialing that will help ready dislocated workers for jobs in Information Technology (IT) and other marketable fields.

"With our state and our nation facing record unemployment as a result of COVID-19, it is imperative that we broaden access to affordable and high quality education that will help return out of work Illinoisans to the workplace as quickly as possible," **said Governor Pritzker.** "Thanks to this new partnership with Coursera, we will support thousands of Illinois workers who have lost their jobs and livelihoods due to the ongoing pandemic by helping them build the skills to attain jobs in the post-COVID-19 economy."

Through Coursera's Workforce Recovery Initiative, impacted workers in the state of Illinois will be able to access online Information Technology (IT) business and job readiness courses that will credential and prepare them for new jobs and careers. This new partnership with Coursera makes Illinois one of the first states in the nation to make free courses available to unemployed workers through the program.

"Coursera is honored to partner with the state of Illinois to serve workers whose jobs have been affected by the pandemic," **said Jeff Maggioncalda, CEO of Coursera.** "Along with our community of partners that includes the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago, we are proud to deliver job-relevant online learning that will prepare unemployed workers for new jobs and careers."

Job seekers across Illinois will have access to high-quality online workforce development and IT courses offered by accredited institutions. The initiative makes certifications available for job seekers of all levels – including the Google IT Support Professional Certificate, designed specifically to train people without college experience for high demand IT jobs. Instructors fron[illegible]orthwestern University and the University of Illinois –[illegible]splaced workers.

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Registration for the Coursera Workforce Recovery Initiative will be made available to Illinois residents from now through September, and all courses must be completed by December 31, 2020. Upon completion of the program, participants may earn an industry-recognized credential as well as information about continuing building upon their new skilled through continued education at their local community college.

Expanding access to education and training opportunities has been a critical component of the state's response to unemployment from day one of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to Coursera, the State of Illinois is partnering with P33 and Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) to bring forward another tech-focused training program – TechReady Illinois. To help unemployed as well as furloughed and underutilized Illinoisans compete for jobs of the future – TechReady Illinois will provide training courses for high-demand fields of computer science, data and engineering programs.

Upon completion of the program, participants will receive a certi?cate in one of four fields: data and analytics; cloud computing; cybersecurity; or software development. DPI and partner organizations are working to ensure courses can be priced at steep discounts. Over the coming weeks, the teams at P33 and DPI will continue to work with Illinois employers and higher education institutions to build out the TechReady Illinois program.

"These new virtual training programs build on work Governor Pritzker and DCEO have done from the outset of COVID-19 to connect dislocated workers with employment and other support in light of the economic crisis," **said Assistant Director of DCEO, Michael Negron.** "While the unemployment rate is climbing across the country, jobs in IT remain in high demand by businesses in Illinois. Together, these initiatives will help prepare Illinoisans with computer science and IT skills so that they have a leg up on the high-paying, high-demand jobs of the future."

More than 1 million Illinoisans filed for unemployment in the first nine weeks of the COVID-19 crisis, more than five times the same period of the Great Recession.

Last month, Governor Pritzker announced the launch of Get Hired Illinois – a state web portal designed to connect workers with available job and career training opportunities across the state of Illinois. The page is designed to be user-friendly for job seekers of all levels and backgrounds and allows employers to upload jobs, virtual career fairs and training opportunities. Get Hired currently features nearly 60,000 available job opportunities in a variety of industries, with new jobs and employers added to the portal every day.

Additionally unemployed workers can go
(https://www.illinoisworknet.com/servic
training and credentials, how to prepare

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(https://optimalresume.com/)), information about job openings, ways to find employment and training services in your area, and layoff assistance resources as well as connect you to your local workforce centers throughout the state.

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