



PRESS RELEASE

December 21, 2005

Katrina Evacuee Empowerment Program Now Offers FREE WorkKeys® Skills Assessment Service

Evacuees seeking employment in the Birmingham region have a new set of tools available in their effort to obtain employment. Jefferson County's Center for Workforce Development has partnered with Empowerment Inc. to offer job skill assessments to all Katrina evacuees residing in the Birmingham metro area. The program was kicked off earlier this month with a job fair for entry-level positions at the Davis Center near downtown Birmingham. Now the program kicks into high gear with the introduction of the WorkKeys Skills Assessment service.

The **FREE assessment service is available beginning Tuesday, December 27** at three locations:

East Lake TechVillage: East Lake Technology Center, 7728 2nd Ave South, Birmingham, AL 35206

HOURS: Weekdays, 9am to 2pm INFORMATION LINE: 205.276.6513

West End TechVillage: Greater Shiloh Baptist Church, 1661 18th Place SW, Birmingham, AL 35211

HOURS: Weekdays, 9am to 2pm INFORMATION LINE: 205.925.5972

Brighton TechVillage: Brighton Senior Citizen Center, 4100 Main Street, Brighton, AL 35020

HOURS: Weekdays, 9am to 2pm INFORMATION LINE: 205.901.6263

Many potential workers may not be able to substantiate their skills because their prior employers are also likely displaced. Because of this, Empowerment Inc. will provide employment assessment via the WorkKeys computer-based testing system to evacuees from Hurricane Katrina who are currently remaining in the Birmingham region pending their decision to return to the affected areas of the Gulf region. *Evacuees wishing to make use of this free service should bring identification that will substantiate the displacement.*

TechVillages were originally established to allow Birmingham-area Katrina evacuees to obtain free access to the www.BirminghamOpenArms.com job website created as a partnership between the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson County Center for Workforce Development, and TechBirmingham. At its peak, the website contained over 2,200 job openings. Many of those positions have been filled, yet the website still lists around 700 positions available for Katrina evacuees.

About WorkKeys

WorkKeys assessments give applicants reliable, relevant information about their workplace skill levels. States and communities nationwide are using WorkKeys to create portable credentials that help applicants show employers they have the skills needed for jobs. These credentials are usually in the areas of Applied Mathematics, Locating Information and Reading for Information.

The WorkKeys system is the most efficient assessment process available. Using a unique job profiling component along with assessments by trained staff, a person's skills can be compared to specific job requirements - providing a targeted solution that saves time and money in the job search.

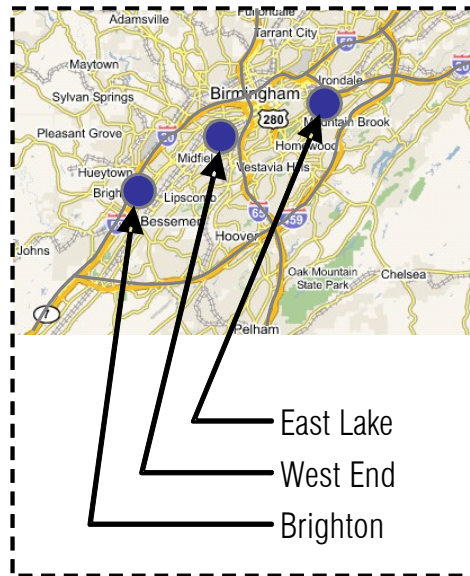
Contacts for Media Inquiries:

Cedric Allen, Empowerment Inc. – (205) 901-6263

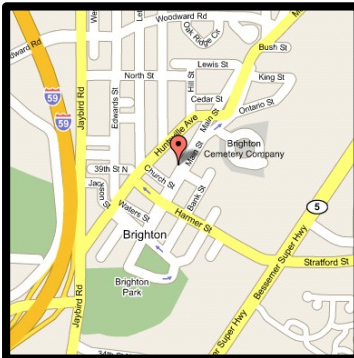
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Phone (205) 901-6263 • Fax (205) 328-7398 • Email: bossota@aol.com

TechVillage Locations:

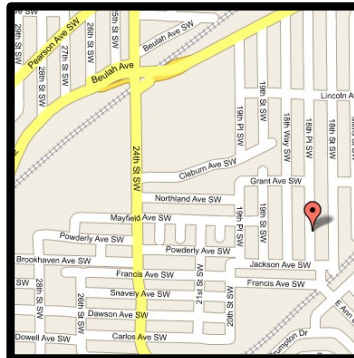


Brighton TechVillage



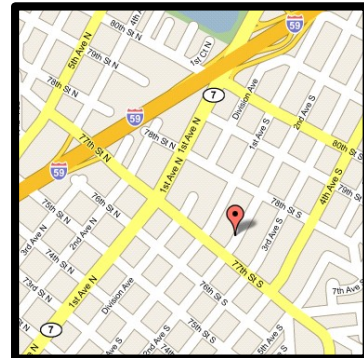
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