

M\$ Settles Nebraska Lawsuit

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Microsoft announced Thursday it has settled a class action lawsuit that alleged the software company violated Nebraska's unfair competition and antitrust laws. Members of the class will receive vouchers to be used for software and hardware, with the total settlement amounting to \$22.6 million.

Nebraska residents who purchased Microsoft operating systems or Office between February 28, 1997 and December 31, 2002 are eligible to receive the vouchers. Those who submit claims for up to five licenses will not be required to show proof of their purchases.

If the vouchers do not total \$22.6 million, Microsoft will donate half of the difference to Nebraska schools for purchasing Microsoft and non-Microsoft software, as well as hardware products and professional development services.

"This settlement will help schools all across Nebraska get the computers and software they need," said Tom Burt, corporate vice president and deputy general counsel for Microsoft. "This settlement allows us to focus on the future and building great software, and avoids the cost and uncertainty of litigation."

Claim forms will be available in about two months, Microsoft says. The company will also setup a special Web site where consumers can find more information on the settlement.

Microsoft has reached similar settlements with numerous other states, many of which were filed after the U.S. Department of Justice settled its landmark antitrust case against Microsoft.

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