

Microsoft to open doors in Vancouver

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U.S. technology giant Microsoft Corp. will skirt Washington's tough stance on immigration by opening a new software development centre in the Vancouver area this fall.

The Microsoft Canada Development Centre will serve as a base for the company's core business — software development. When the company initially opens its doors, likely in September, it plans to hire between 200 and 300 people from around the world. The facility could eventually employ as many as 1,000.

“It is about recruiting the best and brightest, and right now, the majority are coming from overseas,” Marc Seaman, a spokesman for Microsoft Canada, said in an interview.

“The U.S. has immigration quotas and some limitations for bringing in people from outside the country,” he said. “That challenge is an opportunity for Canada, in the sense that this will bring the top software developers to Canada.”



A group of performers unfurl the Microsoft logo against a seven-storey building as part of the Microsoft Windows Vista operating system launch in New York. (AFP/Getty Images)

Microsoft



Mr. Seaman noted, however, that Canada is the third-largest source of Microsoft recruits, after India and Japan.

Microsoft, founded by billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates, is the world's largest software company. The company is based in Redmond, Wash., outside of Seattle. The proximity to the Vancouver area is one reason why it was chosen, along with its reputation as global gateway, its diverse population, solid infrastructure and high quality of life, Mr. Seaman said.

The company is in the process of negotiating a lease for up to 100,000 square feet of space in Richmond, Burnaby or the city of Vancouver. “It will be in the multi-million per year range,” Mr. Seaman said.

Microsoft said the Vancouver area facility will be one of a handful of development centres outside the company's Redmond base. The others are in North Carolina, Ireland, Denmark and Israel. The company also has research and development centres in the United Kingdom, India, China and Silicon Valley.

The company's Canadian operations are headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, although it has eight regional offices scattered across the country.

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