

Help is Here: SkillUp Citrus Levy Marion offers free online job training and certification

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, Communications Manager, CareerSource CLM



You've no doubt heard the expression that the time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining. For many, too many, it may seem like a long time since we've figuratively basked in the sunshine – and when we did, the last thing we likely planned on was spending time, effort, and resources repairing something that didn't require immediate attention.

Yes, I'm talking about 2020 BC – Before COVID. Most were gainfully employed, or working our way up a career ladder, and judging by the plunging unemployment rate and generally positive consumer confidence ratings, we were by and large content with the way things were.

But then those metaphorical storms came. As the coronavirus pandemic pummeled our region, the number of workers who lost their jobs skyrocketed to near-record highs. Likewise, the number of those filing for unemployment relief hit stratospheric heights.

Whether COVID-related or otherwise, it's fair to say that many of our residents now want to find a job or new career opportunity, but how do we find one when we're now not only dealing with a leaking roof but possibly rusty skills?

We can't make the rain go away, but we can offer a ray of sunshine: SkillUp Citrus Levy Marion.

SkillUp is a new initiative available to anyone in our three-county area. It is offered by CareerSource CLM as well as through community partners. SkillUp provides free access to Metrix Learning, a dynamic online training platform featuring more than 5,000 courses, accessible 24/7 by anyone with high-speed internet. Course topics include computers, management, math, leadership, finance, Microsoft Office, customer service, and more.

The program is flexible and helpful to job seekers and workers looking to improve skills, earn industry certificates, launch into new careers, or promote into new career

The advertisement features a large, vibrant image of a young woman with brown hair and glasses, smiling warmly. To her left, three large, stylized arrows in blue, green, and yellow point upwards and to the right. Below the woman's image, on a blue background, is the text 'SkillUp® Citrus Levy Marion' in large white font, followed by 'Register for free online courses' and 'Get started: Call 800.434.JOBS' in smaller white font. At the bottom left are the logos for CareerSource CITRUS | LEVY | MARION and Metrix Learning. At the bottom right, in small white text, is a disclaimer: 'SkillUp™ Citrus Levy Marion is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor as part of an award totaling \$8.7 million (revised annually) with no portion financed from non-governmental sources. CareerSource CLM is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids available upon request to persons with disabilities and in Spanish. A proud member of the American Job Center network.'

opportunities. The online courses lead to more than 180 in-demand industry certificates and offer coursework in everything from soft skills to project management. Moreover, it allows participants to learn at self-pace, receive clear training milestones, and achieve industry certificates upon completion through customized badges. The platform enables participants to take as many courses as desired for 180 days (six months).

The bottom line is, it's vital to stay prepared and build and sharpen skills that employers value, in order to be ready to jump back into the workforce when the time is right.

Did I mention that the Metrix Learning platform is available at no charge?

And speaking of free services, if you or someone you know is uncertain as to how to get started, or needs job-search guidance and referral, CareerSource CLM career coaches are also available to assess job seekers' interests and skills gaps and create individual training plans aligned with a targeted career pathway.

Right now, all CareerSource CLM services are offered virtually by phone, email, Live Chat, and video conferencing. Those interested in meeting in-person with staff at our career centers may do so by appointment only. The Citrus

County career center is located at 683 S. Adolph Point in Lecanto. You can make an appointment by calling 352-249-3278.

The SkillUp portal can be reached at citruslevymarion.skillupamerica.org. Once you sign up, you get instant access. For more information, call 1-800-434-JOBS or visit careersourceclm.com.

Community nonprofits interested in becoming a SkillUp partner should contact Dale French, CareerSource CLM's director of operations, at 352-873-7939, ext. 2204 or email dfrench@careersourceclm.com.

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