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## Settlement OK'd in Microsoft class action case in California

The settlement, approved Friday, is worth \$1.1B

News Story by Joris Evers, IDG News Service

JULY 21, 2003

California software buyers can start sending in claims to get a piece of the \$1.1 billion settlement Microsoft Corp. agreed to in January, now that a judge has signed off on the deal.

San Francisco Superior Court Judge Paul Alvarado gave the settlement preliminary approval on Friday, allowing notices inviting claims to be sent out. Lawyers representing groups of California consumers will advertise, send out e-mail and regular mail, and set up a Web site so eligible software buyers can get a claim form and file claims, they said in a statement. They have also set up a toll-free phone number, (800) 203-9995, for consumers to call.

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The preliminary approval was delayed about a month because the parties couldn't agree on the notices that will appear in the media, in the mail and online. Those issues were resolved last week.

Under the settlement, individuals and businesses that bought Microsoft's operating system or productivity software for use in California between Feb. 18, 1995, and Dec. 15, 2001, can get vouchers worth between \$5 and \$29, depending on the product they bought. Claims up to \$100 in value or for up to five product licenses can be made without any documentation.

The vouchers can be used to buy computer hardware or software from any vendor. Vouchers up to \$650 in value may also be sold to third parties.

Two-thirds of any unclaimed settlement vouchers will be donated to those California public schools that serve children from the poorest families, according to the statement from the lawyers.

The California settlement is the largest of five class action cases Microsoft has settled so far. In each of the cases the plaintiffs allege Microsoft overcharged for its software. The vendor hasn't admitted guilt.

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