

For Immediate Release
January 27, 2012

KC CASH and United Way Opening 20 Tax Assistance Sites to Help Low and Middle Income Kansas City Area Taxpayers Claim EITC Tax Credit and File Their Taxes for Free

(Greater Kansas City)----Ask any family struggling to pay rent, buy groceries and pay utility bills: every penny counts, especially in today's economy. Yet many working people are overlooking an important tax credit that could help them keep as much as \$5,751 in their pockets. KC CASH Coalition and United Way want to help those taxpayers and others who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) claim the credit this year and increase the size of their tax refunds. KC CASH and United Way are sponsoring 20 free tax assistance sites around the Kansas City metro area this year, designed to help people with household incomes of \$50,000 or less prepare and electronically file their taxes for free.

The free tax assistance sites began opening this week and will be staffed by IRS-certified tax preparation volunteers. The sites will be located at 20 local nonprofit agencies, churches, community colleges and UMKC. The tax assistance site at the Full Employment Council, 1720 Paseo Blvd., Kansas City, MO, will once again become a tax assistance "Super Site" and will be open five days a week and every other Saturday. The easiest way to find a tax assistance location near you is by visiting www.unitedwaygkc.org/tax or by dialing 2-1-1 or (816) 474-5112. United Way 2-1-1 call specialists are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week and have a listing of tax assistance site locations, along with their hours of operation.

The IRS estimates that four out of five taxpayers who were eligible to claim the tax credit claimed it last year, but that still means that 20% of those who qualified for EITC tax refunds let Uncle Sam keep the money that was rightfully theirs. This year, the EITC can put up to \$5,751 in the pockets of low-income families with three or more qualifying children, \$5,112 for families with two children, and \$3,094 for a family with one qualifying child. An individual or family with no children may be eligible for up to a \$464 EITC tax refund.

Jason Wood, president of KC CASH Coalition, says, "The EITC tax credit can provide a huge financial boost for families impacted by the economy. A lot of workers will qualify for EITC for the first time this year because of changes in their employment, marital status or because they had another child. But the only way they can claim the tax credit is by filing a federal income tax return, even if they aren't legally required to do so because their income was low. We want to help them file their taxes for free and claim the tax credit, if they qualify. It can literally put thousands of extra dollars into their pockets."

Kate Lett-Deathe, Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) Territory Manager for the IRS in Kansas City says, "EITC is one of the nation's largest anti-poverty programs, annually lifting 6.6 million people out of poverty; half of these are children. EITC is for people who work, but don't earn a lot of money. The IRS wants to see working taxpayers who qualify for EITC claim the tax credit they deserve." In order to qualify for at least some EITC, a taxpayer's adjusted gross income cannot exceed:

- \$43,998 (\$49,078 if married filing jointly) with three or more qualifying children
- \$40,964 (\$46,044 if married filing jointly) with two qualifying children

- \$36,052 (\$41,132 if married filing jointly) with one qualifying child
- \$13,660 (\$18,740 if married filing jointly) with no qualifying children

Households with investment income of more than \$3,150 aren't eligible to claim EITC.

To electronically file your taxes and get the fastest refunds, both spouses must be present to sign a joint tax return.

This year, three of the 20 free tax assistance sites will be assisted self-preparation sites, meaning they will have multiple computers loaded with tax preparation software that individuals who have a household income of \$57,000 or less can use to electronically file their taxes for free, with the assistance of a "tax coach." The tax coaches will be IRS-certified tax volunteers who are trained to help people who are interested in doing their taxes themselves, which could significantly reduce their waiting time. The three assisted self-preparation sites will be located at Independence Center (2035 Independence Center Dr., Independence, MO), the Housing Authority of Kansas City Missouri (299 Paseo, KCMO), and Metropolitan Community College's Pioneer Campus (2700 E. 18th St., KCMO). Funding for the extra computers and training of tax coaches comes from a grant provided by Wal-Mart.

Last year, tax preparation volunteers helped 5,980 people prepare and file their taxes at KC CASH/ United Way tax assistance sites across the metro area, claiming \$2.1 million in EITC credits and helping taxpayers get more than \$7.2 million in federal tax refunds.

IRS-certified tax preparation volunteers at the free KC CASH/United Way tax assistance sites will help people determine their eligibility for EITC while preparing and filing their tax returns. Taxpayers should bring the following items with them:

- Photo identification
- Valid Social Security cards for the taxpayer, spouse and dependents
- Birth dates for all people listed on the tax return
- Current year's tax package if received
- Wage and earnings statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Form 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit of refunds
- Other relevant information about income and expenses
- Amounts paid to child care provider and the provider's identifying number

The KC CASH Coalition is a group of Kansas City area businesses, educational institutions, government entities, financial institutions and nonprofit agencies, dedicated to helping families create savings and build their financial stability.

For additional information, contact:

Ron Howard
United Way
(816) 559-4644

Jason Wood
KC CASH Coalition
(816) 651-8235