

MEDIA RELEASE

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metroCASH
Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope.



National Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day Highlights United Way's Free Tax Preparation Program

13 Metrocash Free Tax Preparation Sites Span the Richmond & Petersburg Region

Richmond, VA [**January 29, 2016**] – Workers may get a larger tax refund this year because of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). But to get it, you must file a tax return and claim it. Today, January 29, 2016, marks the 10th anniversary of EITC Awareness Day, a nationwide effort to increase awareness about EITC and free tax preparation sites.

The EITC is the nation's largest anti-poverty program, lifting more than five million people over the poverty line annually. Nationwide, four out of five eligible tax payers claim this credit that may help them save money, pay off bills, fix their car to get to work, or make a down payment on a home.

Locally, United Way's Metrocash program volunteers, who are IRS Certified Tax Preparers and Cash Coaches, helped generate tax returns which garnered more than \$2.9 million in federal and state tax refunds for working adults in the Richmond region for the 2014 tax season. This year, 13 free tax preparation sites will be open.

"One of the goals of Metrocash is to help everyone who is eligible claim this credit," said Cara Cardotti, Program Director for United Way's Metrocash program. "Using this service will help individuals and families avoid costly tax preparation fees and can help determine whether they are eligible for other tax credits. On average, claiming the EITC adds \$2,400 to refunds but may result in a refund of up to \$6,269. The size of the refund is determined by family size and income," Cardotti stated.

For the 2015 tax season, families who earned less than \$54,000 can have their taxes prepared for free through the United Way Metrocash program.

"For more than a decade, our United Way community volunteers have helped residents of the Richmond region get EITC and the maximum refund they're due," said James L.M. Taylor, CEO of United Way. "We need to get the word out to those who are eligible to file a tax return because many workers miss out on the benefits of EITC each year either because they are newly qualified or don't otherwise need to file. When we help people achieve and maintain financial stability, our whole community prospers," Taylor added. "That is why this day is so important in reaching the eligible workers who could but do not claim the credit."

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Metrocash is a program of United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg comprised of social service, nonprofit, faith-based, business, and government organizations that serves the Greater Richmond region. Founded in 2002, the Metrocash mission is to strengthen the financial independence of working families to achieve greater financial independence by advocating for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), providing cost free tax preparation services, and promoting financial education.

Additional Information:

- For information on Metrocash, visit metrocash.org
- For a Metrocash flyer that includes a list of documents to bring to the tax preparation site and a list of site locations, dates and times of operation, see attached
- To speak to someone for a list of site locations, dial 2-1-1
- Filers with a household income less than \$62,000 can also use MyFreeTaxes.com to prepare their own federal and state tax return for free
- For more information about EITC day, visit EITC.IRS.gov