

CONTACT: Angela Estell
213.744.9048

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MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT LAUNCH 2012 EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Last Year, Volunteers Helped 39,573 Low and Moderate-income Residents in the Greater LA Area Collect Over \$43.8 million in Total Tax Refunds



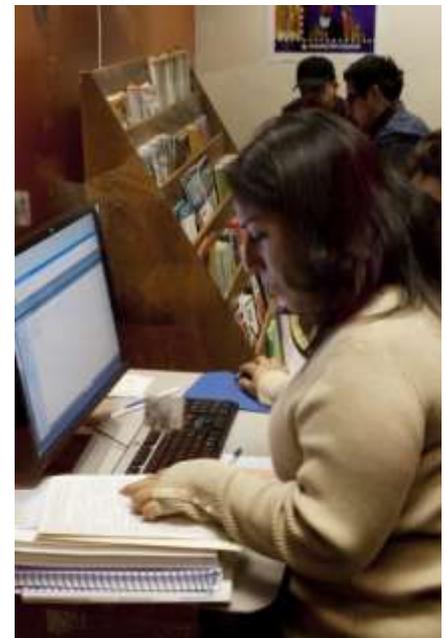
(LOS ANGELES – February 6, 2011) Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and the Community Development Department, along with community partners today launched the Greater Los Angeles Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Campaign Partnership, an annual effort to help qualified low- and moderate-income families claim the tax credits they deserve.

“In tough economic times we need to make sure hardworking Angelenos are getting all the help they need,” said Mayor Villaraigosa. “We want to ensure that all qualifying low and moderate-income households reap the benefits of the Earned Income Tax Credit and gain access to free tax assistance.”

The EITC is a vastly underutilized benefit. The IRS estimates that 21% of all eligible families that qualify for EITC do not file a federal tax return to claim the credit. That means residents are leaving behind at least \$300 million in EITC in Los Angeles County each year. This program can be considered an anti-poverty program in that it puts money into the hands of working poor families.

The City’s 21 FamilySource Centers, administered by the Community Development Department, provide a comprehensive array of social services to city residents that need them the most. Each center offers a variety of educational, family, child and youth services including counseling, cultural, recreational and after school activities onsite or nearby through referrals.

During tax season, each of the 21 FamilySource centers throughout the City are designated Volunteer Income Tax Assistance—or VITA—sites. Supported by the EITC partnership, VITA sites provide families with free tax assistance and help them apply for tax credits. These sites also offer asset-



Volunteers are available at the FamilySource Centers for free income tax preparation and filing.

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building programs that include financial education and resources to help families open low-cost bank accounts.



“Our FamilySource Centers have a goal of helping families become more self-sufficient by increasing income and education levels. The Earned Income Tax Credit is not an entitlement or a gift, this is a tax credit that will put money in the pockets of eligible families therefore increasing their overall income,” said Community Development Department General Manager Richard Benbow. (Pictured left).

Juan Diego, a hardworking single parent, spoke today about how FamilySource and VITA sites helped his family. Diego began going to the Central City Neighborhood Partners (CCNP) FamilySource Center in 2010 with his children for tutoring classes and to take English as a second language (ESL) and computer classes. Because of the VITA site at his FamilySource Center, Diego walked out with \$4,584 of in tax credits last year that he didn't know he could receive.

“I began going to the FamilySource Center to learn English and take my children to tutoring, but the Center also informed me about the EITC,” said Diego. “With EITC money, I was able to pay debts I had after my wife passed away and buy needed clothing for my children.”

Last year, the partnership aided 39,573 people like Diego throughout the Greater LA claim over \$43.8 million in total tax refunds. Individuals and families also saved approximately \$6 million in tax preparation fees by having volunteers file their taxes for them. For 2012 (the 2011 tax year), the EITC can translate to a refund of up to \$5,751 for low and moderate-income families with three or more children - a figure equal to nearly two months of income for many hardworking but needy households.

EITC provides the following benefits for qualified working families:

- Families with two parents and three or more qualifying children who earn less than \$49,078 (\$43,998 for families with a single parent) are eligible for up to \$5,751
- Families with two parents and two qualifying children who earn less than \$46,044 (or \$40,964 for families with a single parent) are eligible for up to \$5,112
- Families with two parents and one qualifying child who earn less than \$41,132 (or \$36,052 for families with a single parent) are eligible for up to \$3,094
- Couples with no qualifying children who earn less than \$18,740 (or \$13,660 for a single person) are eligible for up to \$464

To qualify for EITC services and tax credits, claimants must be qualified working U.S. citizens and legal residents with Social Security number who have lived in the US for more than half the year.

For more information and to find one of over 100 free tax preparation sites, individuals and working families can call 2-1-1 or visit the EITC Partnership's web site at www.FreeTaxHelpLA.com. A list of the 21 FamilySource Centers can be found [here](#).

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