

REQUEST FOR COVERAGE

What: The RI Community Action Association and the Citizens Bank Foundation, along with United Way of Rhode Island and Family Resources Community Action, announce the kickoff for the 2012 statewide Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Campaign.

When: Friday, January 27th 2012
10:00 am

Where: Museum of Work & Culture, 42 South Main Street, Woonsocket, RI.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: RI Governor Lincoln Chafee, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, RI Treasurer Raimondo will be attending and giving remarks. Additional speakers will include Anthony Maione, United Way of RI, Ned Handy, Citizens Bank, Jeanne Cola, LISC.

Details:

- (1) Representatives from statewide Community Action Agencies and other organizations and invited members of the community will gather for the statewide Kick-Off of the EITC Campaign. Speakers will highlight the benefit of the EITC/Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program for strengthening the local economy and assisting low and moderate income individuals to become more financially stable.

- (2) The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides low and moderate income individuals with free tax preparation and helps to ensure that they receive the Earned Income Tax Credits for which they are eligible. A recent national report noted that Earned Income Tax Credits lifted 5.4 million people out of poverty, including 3 million children. Last year, RI Community Action Agencies completed over 4,000 tax returns, generating over \$7 million into Rhode Island's economy. This resource is especially critical at a time of high unemployment and the rising cost of food, utilities and rent.

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For Statewide Release

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FREE TAX PREPARATION ANNOUNCED

Tax credits & free preparation give low and moderate income Rhode Island Families thousands.

Cranston, RI, (for Statewide circulation) January 25, 2012

The Rhode Island Community Action Association (RICAA), the Citizens Bank Foundation, the United Way of Rhode Island and the Internal Revenue Service are announcing a public education campaign promoting free tax preparation for working Rhode Islanders earning less than \$49,078 per year.

RICAA welcomes Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee, US Senator Jack Reed, US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Rhode Island Treasurer Gina Raimondo as they join the EITC / VITA annual campaign at the Kickoff event to take place on:

Friday, January 27, 2012 at Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket at 10am.

The campaign, taking place on the National IRS Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Awareness Day, Friday, January 27, 2012 is to generate recognition of the IRS Earned Income Tax Credit program and its benefits for working families; create awareness of Rhode Island's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) free tax preparation program; and offer no-cost financial literacy to low-income earning Rhode Island families.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, in its eighth year, opens Monday, January 23, 2012. VITA sites are located at the Rhode Island Community Action Association's eight member agencies, as well as other organizations throughout the state. United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI), the funder of the VITA sites since 2004, contributed \$68,000 to the program's community action agencies last year alone. UWRI will also provide information regarding site locations through their toll-free *United Way 2-1-1* in Rhode Island for any tax filers looking for FREE Tax Preparation and more on EITC and other tax credits.

At the VITA sites, certified tax preparation volunteers will help individuals and married couples determine if they are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), education credits, child care credits and other deductions. The maximum tax credit savings a filer can be eligible for in the 2012 tax season as published by the IRS guidelines is \$5,751.

Joseph DeSantis, Board Chairman of the R.I. Community Action Association, whose member network serves more than 200,000 Rhode Islanders annually, states, "We see more working people struggling to make ends meet every day." He said "The EITC can be used to put food on the table, pay fuel bills, obtain reliable transportation, child care, invest in education, or to save for the future."

"By leveraging the power of partnerships, people are given the chance to change the course of their lives and secure a financially stable future for themselves and their families," said Anthony Maione, President & CEO, United Way of Rhode Island. "Together, we are helping to ensure that every Rhode Islander has the building blocks of a good life."

The EITC / VITA program awareness campaign is funded by the Citizens Bank Foundation. The campaign includes both a radio ad campaign on the Citadel broadcast network and print ads throughout the community.

"The Citizens Bank Foundation is pleased to support the EITC public awareness campaign," said Ned Handy, President, Citizens Bank, Rhode Island and Connecticut. "The tax credit benefits the hard working members of our community as well Rhode Island's economy, bringing \$13.5 million back to the state last year."

Eligibility Guidelines:

To claim the EITC, taxpayers must meet the following rules:

- Must have earned income from employment or self-employment
- Must have a valid Social Security number
- Filing status can't be "married filing separately."
- Generally must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year, or a nonresident alien married to a U.S. citizen or resident alien and filing a joint return.
- Cannot be qualifying child of another person
- Cannot file Form 2555 or 2555-EZ (related to foreign earned income)

(Other rules may apply)

Special rules may apply for members of the U.S. Armed Forces and taxpayers in designated disaster areas.

Earned income and adjusted gross income (AGI) must each be less than:

- \$43,998 (**\$49,078 married filing jointly**) with three or more qualifying children
- \$40,964 (\$46,044 married filing jointly) with two qualifying children
- \$36,052 (\$41,132 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child
- \$13,660 (\$18,740 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children

The maximum EITC for 2012:

- \$5,751 with three or more qualifying children
 - \$5,112 with two qualifying children
 - \$3,094 with one qualifying child
 - \$464 with no qualifying children
- Do you have children? To have a qualify child for the above credit:
The child must meet the relationship, age and residency tests described at www.irs.gov/eitc or in Publication 596, Earned Income Tax Credit.

For more information about eligibility for the EITC program and to schedule an appointment for free tax preparation services visit www.ricommunityaction.org to link to all Community Action Agency site locations, or call toll free 2-1-1 for information on all of the tax preparation site locations offered by Community Action Agencies throughout Rhode Island.