

January 29, 2004

**MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
COMMISSIONER GRETCHEN DYKSTRA URGE ELIGIBLE NEW YORKERS TO
FILE FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT**

*Citywide Campaign to Target Eligible New York City Filers;
311 to Direct Filers to Dozens of Free Tax Assistance Sites*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra, joined by Congressman Charles Rangel and various coalition partners, today kicked off the City's second coordinated campaign to increase the number of New Yorkers who file for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This year, eligible filers will be able to locate the free tax assistance site most convenient for them by dialing 311. In addition, informational materials in ten languages will be distributed and advertisements featuring the tagline "It's Your Money, Come and Get It!" will blanket subways, bus shelters, and media outlets to target the estimated 230,000 New Yorkers who qualify for the EITC but do not file. After last year's Citywide campaign, an additional 30,000 New Yorkers filed for the EITC than in 2002.

"The EITC is a great opportunity to return thousands of dollars back to City residents while circulating hundreds of millions into the local economy," said Mayor Bloomberg. "There are 230,000 New Yorkers eligible for the EITC who didn't claim it last year. If they did this year, the credits they would earn would pump more than \$540 million dollars into our neighborhoods. And now its even easier to find the nearest free tax assistance site - just dial 311. We hope all New Yorkers get the message loud and clear, *'It's Your Money, Come and Get It!'*"

"We are thrilled to once again coordinate a program that can directly benefit thousands of New York City residents and businesses," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "This year, numerous partners, including the Department of Education and other City agencies, will help distribute approximately two million pieces of materials in ten different languages. New Yorkers will spot the familiar EITC tagline on television and the radio, in ads, utility bills, paystubs, subways, McDonald's placemats, and more. We thank all the coalition partners, from the community organizations staffing free tax sites, to corporate sponsors, in particular our partners who are working hard to aggressively target Spanish-speaking workers, the largest group of qualifying filers in the City."

"When Congress created the EITC our goal was to lift ordinary workers out of poverty," said Congressman Charles Rangel. "These are the workers building our City and let me echo 'It's Your Money, Come and Get It!' I'm delighted that Mayor Bloomberg and New York City have put together the best coalition in the country to help people file for this credit."

"The EITC is an important, refundable tax credit for low income taxpayers," said Mike McCormick, Territory Manager for the Internal Revenue Service. "The effort undertaken by New York City and the accessibility of 311 will provide the information and assistance needed for eligible taxpayers to properly claim the credit."

The EITC returns federal and state dollars to filers either through tax credits or as cash refunds to working families. Full-time and part-time workers, including self-employed workers, who are legally authorized to work in the United States, are eligible for the tax credit.

Families with more than one child earning less than \$34,692 annually could receive up to \$5465; families with one child earning less than \$30,666 annually could receive up to \$3,311; and couples without children age 25 - 64, making less than \$12,230 annually could receive up to \$496.

Last year, the average combined EITC credit for New York City was \$2,354.

Participating partners in the Citywide EITC campaign include, but are not limited to, thirty New York City agencies, the New York City Council, dozens of community and not-forprofit organizations, and corporate sponsors including Cablevision, CD 101.9, Citigroup, Con Edison, Deloitte, Duane Reade, *El Diario la Prensa*, H&R Block, HOT 97, *Hoy*, Independence Community Bank, Keyspan, KISS 98.7, Marriott, McDonald's, Telemundo, Time Warner Cable, Viacom Outdoor, and Radio WADO/ Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation.

The Citywide EITC campaign materials will be printed in the following ten languages: English, Spanish, Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian, Korean, Russian, and Urdu. To locate the closest free tax assistance site or for more information about the EITC, call 311, or go

online at www.nyc.gov <<http://www.nyc.gov>>.