

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Elizabeth Miller/Abigail Lootens, (212) 487-4283

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER MINTZ REMINDS LAST
MINUTE TAX FILERS AND THOSE WITH EXTENSIONS TO USE FREE ONLINE SERVICES**

*New Yorkers Earning Less than \$58,000 Can File Their Taxes Online for Free at
nyc.gov/OnlineFreeTaxPrep
Taxpayers With an Extension Can Continue to File for Free Online Through October
15*

With the April 15th tax deadline just hours away, Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz urges New Yorkers to take advantage of the City's free tax preparation services. Services include both free online filing at nyc.gov/OnlineFreeTaxPrep, as well as free drop-in sites across the City. New Yorkers who earn \$58,000 or less annually, of which there are an estimated 2.7 million, qualify to electronically file their federal and state tax returns for free online or at assisted online drop-in locations. Families earning less than \$50,000 and individuals earning less than \$18,000 qualify to have their tax returns prepared and filed for free at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites throughout the City; location and hour information can be found by calling 311 or visiting nyc.gov/ofe. In addition, New Yorkers with an extension can continue to file for free online through October 15.

“For the truly last minute filers out there, remember you may be one of the 2.7 million New Yorkers eligible to file for free online,” said Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. “New Yorkers can claim huge refund-boosting credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Care Tax Credit. It is not too late to go get your refund!”

Free Online Tax Preparation

The City’s first- ever, free online tax preparation service was created as part of the City’s Eighth Annual Tax Credit Campaign, which increases awareness about tax credits that can put money back in the pockets of working New Yorkers. The Campaign is spearheaded by the Department of Consumer Affairs’ Office of Financial Empowerment. The free online service is sponsored by One Economy Corporation – a nonprofit that uses the power of technology to empower people to enter the economic mainstream – with its online tax filing software called The Beehive. City residents interested in filing their taxes online using the City’s new service should visit nyc.gov/OnlineFreeTaxPrep and make sure they have the following information:

- An e-mail address;
- 2008 Adjusted Gross Income or self-selected pin number (Call the Internal Revenue Service at 800-829-1040 to get these numbers before filing);
- W-2 forms from all employers;
- All 1098 and 1099 forms;
- Proof of any other income, e.g. lottery winnings;
- Total paid for child care provider and the provider’s Taxpayer Identification Number or Social Security Number (if claiming the New York City Child Care Tax Credit);
- Bank account and routing numbers (if direct depositing a refund); and
- Name, address, and phone number of landlord (if claiming the Renter’s Credit).

When preparing tax returns online, City residents should type in “NYC” not “New York” when prompted to fill in their locality from Box 20 on the W-2 form.

Assisted Online Free Tax Preparation

The City also offers drop-in locations where certified tax specialists from Food Bank for New York City can assist New Yorkers as they file their taxes online and answer any question they may have. The following locations will offer free assisted online tax preparation through April 15:

- **Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC)**

76 Wadsworth Avenue New York, NY 10033-7038

- **St. John’s Bread & Life**

795 Lexington Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11221

- **CAMBA**

1117 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213 (Enter on Utica Ave.)

- **Mid-Bronx Senior Citizens Council**

1125 Grand Concourse (between McClellan St. and E. 166th St.), Bronx, NY 10451

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Sites

More than 70 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites throughout the City will also prepare tax returns, free of charge through April 15, for filers with dependents who make less than \$50,000, or filers with no dependents earning less than \$18,000. Volunteers at the City's VITA sites help City residents file for many tax credits including the Earned Income Tax Credit and the New York City Child Care Tax Credit. In 2009, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites in the Tax Credit Coalition helped more than 26,900 New Yorkers obtain an average EITC refund of \$1,900. With the CCTC, families earning \$30,000 or less could be eligible to receive up to \$1,733 to reimburse out-of-pocket costs for child care for children up to the age of four.

New York City's Tax Credit Coalition Campaign is supported in part by donations made to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. Funders include H&R Block, Bank of America, BNY Mellon, Citi, ConEd, Fidelity Investments and M&T Bank. The Campaign includes City agencies, non-profit organizations, the IRS and the *Daily News*, *El Diario* and Hot 97.

The Mayor's Fund is a not-for-profit organization established to strengthen public programs serving the needs and general welfare of New Yorkers. To learn more about the Mayor's Fund, or to make a contribution to the Tax Credit Coalition Campaign, visit www.nyc.gov or call 311 and ask about making financial contributions to New York City.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA licenses more than 71,000 businesses in 57 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment is the first municipal office of its kind in the nation with a mission to educate, empower and protect New Yorkers with low incomes. DCA's OFE administers a citywide network of Financial Empowerment Centers and other products and services that help these New Yorkers make the best use of their financial resources to move forward economically. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers.