

April 1, 2010

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER MINTZ ANNOUNCE
NEW YORKERS CAN FILE TAXES FOR FREE BEFORE THE APRIL 15TH DEADLINE
ONLINE OR IN PERSON AT THE CITY'S FREE TAX SITES**

***More Than 2,100 New Yorkers Have Already Filed Their Taxes Using City's First Ever
Free Online Filing Service***

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz announced today that, with two weeks left before the April 15 deadline to file taxes, more than 2,100 New Yorkers have already used the City's first ever free online tax preparation site to file their 2009 tax returns. Using the free tool, New Yorkers can claim refunds like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC). Of the 2,100 users, over 900 have filed directly through the City's website www.nyc.gov and 1,200 have used the City's drop-in locations, which provide free assistance from certified tax specialists. New Yorkers who earn \$58,000 or less annually - about 2.7 million people - qualify to electronically file their federal and state tax returns for free on the City's new online tax preparation service. In 2008, New Yorkers claimed approximately \$2.3 billion in total EITC tax credits. During the 2009 tax season, the City's 311 phone system fielded more than 35,000 EITC-related inquiries.

"Using the City's free online tax preparation site is the fastest, easiest, greenest, and most accurate way that qualifying New Yorkers can file returns and collect their well-deserved refunds," said Mayor Bloomberg. "There are only two weeks left to file taxes, so go online or

call 311 for more than 70 tax sites around the City that are helping return thousands of dollars to hard-working New Yorkers for free."

"One million New Yorkers qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which averages over \$2,700 - and that's no April Fool's Day joke," said Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "There's only two weeks left to do your taxes, so file online or call 311 for more than 70 free tax sites around the City 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 8th 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 their online tax filing software called The Beehive. City residents interested in filing their taxes online using the City's new service should visit www.nyc.gov 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.

"The City of New York is taking a bold step to empower New Yorkers to file their taxes online for free," said Moustafa Mourad, President and CEO of One Economy Corporation.

"TheBeehive.org's tax tool makes filing online easy. And with April 15 just two weeks away, it is a free, convenient way to get your state and federal taxes in on time."

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 offer free assisted online tax preparation, which also includes computer usage and internet access:

- 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

"However one chooses to file their return - online or in person - we urge all eligible New Yorkers to file and receive their Earned Income Tax Credit and child tax credit," said Lucy

Cabrera, President and CEO of Food Bank for New York City. "It provides immediate cash that low-income New Yorkers can use to pay rent, purchase food and make an investment in their future. Most especially during a year when so many New Yorkers have been struggling to put food on the table, the EITC has an immediate, positive impact for families and their communities."

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Sites

More than 70 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites throughout the City also prepare tax returns for filers with dependents who make less than \$50,000, or filers with no dependents earning less than \$18,000, free of charge. 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 EITC 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 partnering city agencies, non-profit organizations, the IRS and media sponsors 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 www.nyc.gov.

One Economy is a global non-profit organization that uses innovative approaches to deliver the power of technology and information to low-income people. More than 17 million people have used One Economy's online tools and resources including public-purpose media at www.pic.tv to build better lives. Learn more at www.one-economy.com. To date, One Economy has launched on-the-ground programs in 42 U.S. states, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.