

Thursday, March 8, 2007

## **311 CALLS FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT AND FREE TAX HELP HIT RECORD HIGH**

### ***Two and a Half Times More 311 EITC Calls Received in First Month of NYC's Campaign***

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today reported that more people are getting free tax help and information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) through 311, where calls have hit at a record one-month high. This critical tax credit returns as much as \$6,000 to qualifying New Yorkers making less than \$38,000 and is one of the most successful tools to fight poverty and help working families and individuals get ahead. With the launch of the City's 5th annual EITC Campaign in January, a record 15,800 New Yorkers have called 311 to find out if they are eligible and how to get free tax help – two and a half times more than the same time last year, and almost reaching the 22,000 total EITC calls received during the entire 2006 tax season. Commissioner Mintz urged all New Yorkers who may qualify for the EITC to call 311 to find out more – and, most importantly, where they can get their taxes prepared for free.

"The record number of calls to 311 to find out about the EITC is hugely encouraging and very exciting," said Commissioner Mintz. "The Mayor's Coalition and all the good work of its members and partners are really getting the word out that there's real money to be had and that it's easy to get."

The EITC Campaign, part of Mayor Bloomberg's aggressive efforts to reduce poverty, aims to help New Yorkers get the money they deserve at tax time, and is an essential part of DCA's newly established Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE). The EITC Coalition will serve as a model for other large-scale public campaigns launched by OFE in order to help workers with low incomes build financial stability and make the most of their dollars.

"We are once again thrilled to help facilitate the EITC Campaign, another example of technology enabling New Yorkers to better their lives," said Paul Cosgrave, Commissioner of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications. "As ever, 3-1-1 stands ready to serve its customers, so I encourage anyone with questions about the EITC – or any City government service – to call today."

Coordinated by the Department of Consumer Affairs, New York City's EITC Campaign is the most comprehensive in the nation with more than 150 Coalition partners. This year's campaign includes distributing more than two million pieces of brochures citywide in eleven languages, advertising in the city's major media outlets, subways and bus shelters, securing agreements for discount tax preparation with private preparers, and directing eligible filers to more than 40 free tax filing locations throughout the city.

For more information on the EITC, whether you qualify, or to locate the closest free tax assistance site, call 311 (or 212-NEW-YORK) or go online to