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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES CITY'S LARGEST EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT CAMPAIGN, INVESTS CITY MONEY IN TAX PREP CENTERS FOR FIRST TIME EVER**

*City invests over \$3.1 million – nearly 20 times more than previous years – on tax credit campaign and program*

*More than 2,000 Volunteers will call over 100,000 New Yorkers in multiple languages about filing taxes for free and claiming tax credits worth up to \$10,000*

**NEW YORK**— Mayor Bill de Blasio and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin today announced the largest public education and outreach tax credit campaign in the City's history. Today is the first-ever Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Awareness Day of Action, an extensive day of outreach where more than 2,000 volunteers are calling New Yorkers to encourage them to file their taxes for free and claim refund-boosting tax credits. As a service to eligible New Yorkers, the City will contact more than 270,000 New Yorkers through phone calls and automated calls. This year, the City is for the first time, funding the free tax preparation partners, which will allow for an expansion of the City's network of sites to nearly 200 locations citywide, 60 more than last year, as well as increased staffing at partnering sites. The City has also launched a wide-reaching, targeted advertising and social media and texting campaign to reach eligible New Yorkers, including the estimated one in five households who are eligible for EITC but don't claim it.

The new elements of this year's campaign include:

- \$3.1 million investment - almost 20-fold increase - for the expansion of services and advertising
- The first time the City has funded the tax preparation programs for large-scale expansion
- Phone calls in three languages to reach 270,000 New Yorkers
- Increase of tax sites from 140 to nearly 200
- Interactive online map of all tax sites at [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep)

“The earned income tax credit is oftentimes the largest lump sum of money low-income New Yorkers will receive in the year, and it's a critical tool we can use to reduce inequality by directly putting back money in people's pockets,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “We can't afford to let tens of thousands of New Yorkers who are eligible for these valuable refunds not file, and so for the first time ever, the City's heavily investing to ensure every eligible New Yorker knows about the tax credits and City's services and gets back every dollar they can.”

“With credits like EITC, a tax refund can be the largest one-time sum a family receives in a year, which can be pivotal in helping them pay bills, get out of debt and save for their future,” said **DCA Commissioner Julie Menin**. “We have committed a nearly 20-fold increase in funding to the tax credit campaign because we believe every working New Yorker deserves to get their hard-earned refund.”

The City’s tax preparation services include traditional Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites where returns are prepared by IRS-certified volunteers with filers, convenient drop-off sites where filers can drop off their tax documents and return later to pick up the completed return or receive it by email, and self preparation online at [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep). DCA’s website also offers, for the first time, an interactive map where people can search for the most convenient free tax site in their neighborhood based on a number of criteria, such as language of service, location, and hours of operation.

With an investment of over \$3 million, including \$250,000 from Citi, the City’s 13th Annual Tax Credit Campaign is not only the largest in City history but represents an almost 20-fold increase in spending, reflecting the Administration’s commitment to delivering essential services to New Yorkers with low and moderate incomes and helping them improve their financial stability.

Today’s outreach efforts by the City will include 2,000 volunteers staffing call centers in each of the five boroughs to inform eligible New Yorkers about the City’s free tax preparation services and encourage them to claim tax credits like EITC. The volunteers include New Yorkers from all walks of life including EITC recipients, community based organizations, elected officials, and corporate sponsors. The City plans to call approximately 270,000 New Yorkers who were identified as likely candidates for eligibility based on neighborhood demographics, community tax data from the 2014 tax season 2014, and previous contact with City services.

In addition to the New York City Fire Department location in Brooklyn, additional sites include New Settlement Community Center in the Bronx, Hunter College in Manhattan, York College in Queens and Make the Road New York in Staten Island. Commissioner Phones were generously donated by AT&T and Verizon.

The \$800,000 advertising component of the tax credit campaign, which will run through April, is nearly five times the investment in advertising as previous years in an effort to reach a broad audience and target messaging to key audiences based on factors, such as income and language access. The ads ask New Yorkers what they will do with their refund and encourage everyone who files to share their story on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) using the hashtag [#GotMyRefund](#). DCA has also launched a Short Messaging Service (SMS) texting campaign, which will play a crucial part in fulfilling the campaign’s engagement goals. Anyone can subscribe to the service by texting “Refund” to 97779.

The outdoor advertisements are running in the City’s subway cars, stations, and entrances, the Staten Island Ferry, bus shelters, telephone kiosks and in local small businesses. Advertisements will also be on multiple radio stations in seven languages, online, and in 26 daily, community, and foreign language newspapers. The City’s tax season partners are also distributing 680,000 informational brochures in multiple languages to their networks of potentially eligible filers.

## **Free Tax Preparation**

The City’s Annual Tax Credit Campaign increases awareness about tax credits that put money back in the pockets of working New Yorkers, and help qualifying New Yorkers file their taxes online for free. EITC, the largest poverty reduction program in the U.S., is a federal, state and New York City tax credit for qualifying families, non-custodial parents (NYS EITC only), and singles who work full time or part time or are self-employed. During the 2012 tax season, approximately 30 million U.S. families claim EITC totaling more than \$60 billion. For working families in New York City, EITC claims average \$2,500 and can be worth as much as \$8,293. Families with low incomes who are employed or underemployed who have child care costs for children up to age four could also be eligible for up to \$1,733 with the New York City Child Care Tax Credit (NYC CCTC). Combined, these credits can total almost \$10,000.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit provides a vital economic boost for low- and moderate-income families – and it serves as a touchpoint to a suite of other important financial empowerment services,” said **Bob Annibale, Global Director of Citi Community Development and Inclusive Finance**. “Citi is proud to once again partner with the City of New York, and this new campaign will increase the reach and effectiveness of the EITC for New Yorkers across the five boroughs.”

“I commend Mayor de Blasio and Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Menin on this effort to educate tax filers on this vital credit, which helps working people alleviate economic stress. Too many New Yorkers who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit do not receive it due to either not being informed, or because they are not able to provide proof of income. Earned Income Tax Awareness Day will go far to educate low-income New Yorkers so that they can receive their earned funds,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**.

“Hard-working New Yorkers deserve their hard-earned tax dollars, yet one in five city households eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) are not taking advantage, leaving their money on the table. As the largest poverty reduction tax program in our country, and as a boost for our local economy, it is important that government educate every taxpayer about the EITC and make it possible for them to claim their benefits. I'm proud to join with Mayor de Blasio, DCA Commissioner Menin and thousands of citywide volunteers to spread the word about the EITC and how they can file their taxes for free, thanks to the City's support,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit is an important boost for working families and we need to spread the word,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “An EITC-enhanced tax refund could mean the difference between struggling and security, and money in working New Yorkers’ pockets is money that supports their own families and all the businesses where they shop.”

“The Earned Income Tax Credit is one of the most effective government initiatives to keep Americans out of poverty, and I urge everyone who can to take advantage. With this credit, poor and low income families can stretch their budget and have more to spend on essential needs, like rent, transportation, child care and utilities. I thank Commissioner Menin and the Department of Consumer Affairs for expanding their efforts on the Earned Income Tax Credit to The Bronx,” said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

“The Earned Income Tax Credit provides much-needed relief to countless hard-working families struggling to make ends meet,” said **Congressman Joe Crowley**. “I thank Mayor de Blasio for his effort in making sure no money is left on the table and that every eligible New Yorker is able to take advantage of this critical tax benefit.”

“Tax season can be stressful, especially if you are trying to prepare and review your returns by yourself,” **Congressman Eliot Engel** said. “The Earned Income Tax Credit is a vital program for working families, so I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin for spearheading their Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day of Action. And I encourage everyone to take full advantage of the city’s network of free tax preparation partners.”

“I commend Mayor de Blasio and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin on the City's announcement of the largest tax credit campaign and program. This commitment will ensure that many hardworking low-income families in New York claim all that they are entitled to on their tax return. For many, this will go a long way to leveling the playing field and returning hard-earned money back to those families who need it the most,” said **Congressman Gregory W. Meeks**.

“It is critical that New Yorkers who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit receive the refund for which they're entitled, and the Administration's outreach effort will put money back in the pockets of many city residents,” said **Congresswoman Grace Meng**. “I applaud the de Blasio Administration for launching this important initiative, and I look forward to the EITC/tax prep workshop that Commissioner Menin and I will be hosting next month in Queens.”

“The earned income tax credit is specifically designed to reduce taxes for low income workers and can result in thousands of dollars of tax refunds,” said **Rep. Jerrold Nadler**. “Unfortunately it may be overlooked by as many as 20% of qualified taxpayers who simply don’t file for the refund. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for undertaking this public outreach campaign and investing in tax prep centers so that New Yorkers who could use this extra money don’t miss out.”

“I applaud the Mayor for his enterprising initiative to bring the EITC to the forefront as our constituents begin filing their tax returns. I proudly fought to expand the EITC during the tax reform of 1986 and have never ceased to advocate for further expansion of this valuable tax benefit. The EITC is a proven work incentive and measure for lifting working low-income families out of poverty. Everyone eligible for EITC should be able claim it,” said **Congressman Charles B. Rangel**.

“The EITC is an important tax credit that helps millions of eligible families every year end up with more money in their pockets after filing taxes. This money, in turn, helps them make ends meet and increase their savings, boosting our local economy,” said **Congressman Serrano**. “I applaud Mayor de Blasio’s unprecedented effort to make sure eligible New Yorkers take advantage of this important program and know about the free tax preparation services available in the City to help them complete their taxes on time and take advantage of this and many other tax credits.”

“We are proud to support today’s EITC phone-a-thon, an event that is emblematic of Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to connecting New Yorkers with information about programs and opportunities that will have a beneficial impact on their daily lives,” said **Marissa Shorenstein, New York State President for AT&T**. “We look forward to working with the administration on additional initiatives in the future.”

“Verizon is proud to partner with the NYC Mayor’s Fund to help make New Yorkers aware of tax credits available to them,” said **Leecia Eve, Verizon Vice President, State Government Affairs for New York**. “We are glad to contribute to the city’s efforts to raise awareness for this very important cause.”

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