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NEW YORK CITY KICKS OFF TAX SEASON WITH THE 6th ANNUAL EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) CAMPAIGN

Free Tax Filing Sites Open Citywide to Help New Yorkers with Low Incomes Apply for the EITC and New City Child Care Tax Credit

Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs, Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz, Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) Commissioner Paul Cosgrave and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Dr. Guillermo Linares today kicked off the 6th Annual New York City Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition Campaign to help working families and individuals with low incomes claim up to \$6,000 when filing their taxes. Representatives from the New York City EITC Coalition – the most comprehensive effort in the nation including the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), leading nonprofit organizations and private partners – were all on hand for the announcement at the 311 Customer Service Center in Lower Manhattan.

"Tax programs like the EITC and the new City Child Care Tax Credit help to break the cycle of poverty by encouraging parents to work and allowing people to keep more of their earnings," stated Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs. "Finding ways to support hard working New Yorkers is one of the top priorities of this Administration and working with DCA to make sure people have access to free tax preparation sites and knowledge about new tax credits is critical."

"With 50 VITA sites this year – a 25 percent increase – and with a new pilot program, Tax Prep Plus, we are thrilled to provide New Yorkers with broader options for safe tax preparation and filing services for the EITC," said DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "These efforts put significant money where New Yorkers want it – back in their pockets and hopefully in the bank as well."

Partners in the New York City EITC Coalition run 50 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites citywide. These free tax preparation sites will prepare tax returns for families (with dependents) who make less than \$40,000, or individuals earning less than \$20,000, and can be located by calling 311. Some VITA sites will also help residents file for other tax credits, such as the New York City Child Care Tax Credit, to help workers claim all the benefits they deserve.

"Part of 311's great success has always been its agency partners, and the EITC program is a prime example of that collaboration," said DoITT Commissioner Paul Cosgrave. "Last year, customers called 311 in record numbers about the EITC, totals we hope to exceed in 2008. Under the Deputy Mayor's leadership, we're proud to

again ensure accessibility to this important program for all New Yorkers.”

Each year, the EITC returns millions of tax dollars to working families and individuals. During the 2007 tax season, New Yorkers claimed more than \$1.6 billion in total EITC tax credits and VITA sites helped 65,000 New Yorkers obtain an average EITC refund of \$2,544. 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. Calls to 311 for EITC information spiked to more than 30,000 during last tax season – a record high.

This year for the first time, the City is offering New Yorkers the opportunity to apply for the City’s new Child Care Tax Credit. Families earning \$30,000 or less could be eligible to receive up to \$1,733 to reimburse costs for child care for children under 4-years old. When combined with the Earned Income Tax Credit and the federal and state Child Care Tax Credit, benefits can be very significant.

For the 2008 tax season, DCA’s Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) has expanded access to tax preparation assistance through an innovative pilot, Tax Prep Plus, which brings the resources of the private sector to trustworthy community organizations. A partnership with H&R Block and seven community organizations will offer dramatically discounted tax filing services throughout the five boroughs and ensure that refund anticipation loans and other predatory products will not be offered.

OFE is the first program to be implemented under the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) as part of Mayor Bloomberg’s aggressive efforts to fight poverty in New York City. The Center for Economic Opportunity’s mission is to reduce the number of people living in poverty in New York City by implementing result-driven and innovative initiatives. In addition, at Tax Prep Plus sites eligible filers will be screened for other benefits and credits using ACCESS NYC, a free service that identifies and screens for more than 30 City, State, and Federal human service benefit programs.

The NYC EITC Campaign with its Tax Prep Plus pilot program and the Child Care Tax Credit are examples of the Bloomberg Administration’s efforts to reduce poverty in New York.

For more information on the EITC and the new City Child Care Tax Credit, and to find out whether you qualify, or to locate the most convenient free tax assistance site near you, call 311 (or 212-NEW-YORK) or go online to www.nyc.gov/eitc. The EITC Campaign is supported in part by donations made to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City. 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 EITC Campaign, visit www.nyc.gov/fund or call 311.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace where consumers and businesses, alike, DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. OFE is the first municipal office of its kind in the nation with a mission to educate, empower and protect New Yorkers with low incomes, to help them 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/consumers.

[Download the NYC EITC Campaign Fact Sheet \(in PDF\)](#)

[Download the NYC Child Card Tax Credit Fact Sheet \(in PDF\)](#)