Earned Income Tax Credit initiative aimed to help working families

CINCINNATI – Mayor Mark Mallory and the United Way launched the Regional Earned Income Tax Credit Initiative by opening the Elder High School Tax Preparation Site on Saturday, January 29, 2011. The initiative is designed to help people determine whether they can claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), as well as receive free help preparing their tax return.

Last year, the initiative prepared 15,758 tax returns, giving back more than $18.6 million to the community.

“Why pay for something you can get for free,” Mallory said. “We are offering free tax preparation that will allow you to get 100 percent of the tax refund that you deserve. There is no reason to lose any portion of that tax refund by paying a tax preparer or paying a high interest rate on a loan.”

The Internal Revenue Service estimates that 20 percent of eligible taxpayers fail to claim the credit, which is worth as much as $5,666 for a family with three or more children, $5,036 for a family with two children, $3,050 for a family with one child, or up to $457 for a worker with no children. If you worked in 2010 and earned between $48,362 (married filing jointly with a family of more than three children) and $13,460 (single with no children), you and your family may be eligible for the EITC.

United Way is teaming up with the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, United Way 211 and other partners to provide more than 30 free tax preparation sites in Hamilton, Butler, Clermont and Dearborn counties and Northern Kentucky, many opening on National EITC Day, January 28.

Each tax prep site offers trained tax prep volunteers who will assist taxpayers in preparing their tax forms and determining whether filers are eligible for the EITC.

Those interested in the service should bring the following to their tax prep site:

• Valid picture I.D.

• Social Security cards for all persons listed on the return

• A copy of last year’s tax return is helpful but not required

• Form 8332 for non-custodial parent claiming child

• All income statements: Forms W-2, 1098, 1099, Social Security, Unemployment, or other

benefits statements, self-employment records and any documents showing taxes withheld

• Child/Dependent Care provider's tax number, if applicable

• Student loan interest/college tuition expenses paid

• Proof of account at financial institution for direct debit or deposit (i.e. cancelled/ voided check or bank statement)

• Additional documentation to claim possible tax credits, such as first-time homebuyer credit

To learn if you're eligible or to find opening dates and times for a site near you, please visit www.makeworkpay.com or call United Way 211 at 2-1-1.