

## EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) NATIONAL AWARENESS DAY Friday, January 27, 2012

California/Nevada Community Action Partnership's (Cal/Neva) Program/Communications Manager Lynn Grogan and California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) Interim Director John A. Wagner joined California Senator Carol Liu (D-La Cañada-Flintridge), Foothill Unity Center, Inc. Executive Director Joan Whitenack, California State Board of Equalization Chairman Jerome E. Horton, and EITC recipient Maribel Ramirez at the Foothill Unity Center, Inc. in Monrovia, CA on Friday, January 27, to highlight free tax services that are available to working Californians on national Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day.



*Photo: (From left to right: CSD Interim Director John A. Wagner, Senator Carol Liu (D-La Cañada-Flintridge), Foothill Unity Center, Inc. Executive Director Joan Whitenack, tax filer Maribel Ramirez and California/Nevada Community Action Partnership Program Manager Lynn Grogan)*

“The EITC program is one of the largest and most successful antipoverty programs in the nation, but not all eligible Californians take advantage of this opportunity to put money back in their pockets,” said CSD Interim Director Wagner. “We urge all eligible Californians to file a tax return and claim the tax benefits already earned through EITC. When federal refunds are claimed, low-income, working families win, California businesses win and the local economy wins.”

Cal/Neva is working with state and local partners to increase EITC awareness and help working Californians take advantage of the EITC. This includes partnering with the Office of Senator Carol Liu (D-La Cañada-Flintridge) on her Pathways to Wellbeing and Economic Prosperity program, a targeted campaign to increase the number of Californians who file their federal income tax returns and claim the EITC. “We are proud to support her vision to achieve positive change in statewide policy and transform the quality of life for individuals and their communities,” said Lynn Grogan.

“At a time when families are struggling, the EITC can help them make ends meet,” said Senator Liu. “Too often families don’t know about the program and miss out on the benefits. We can prevent this by

making sure eligible families and individuals are aware that they qualify for the EITC and where they can find income tax preparation assistance to claim it.”

Seven years ago, Cal/Neva introduced its Community Action Sharing Hope – CASH campaign. Funded by the federal office of community services, it focuses on the successes of running tax VITA and referral sites and building coalitions.

“By supporting VITA and EITC, amongst community action agencies in California, the CASH Campaign resulted in tens of millions of dollars in EITC and other tax credits to low income Californians,” said Lynn Grogan. “Claiming federal tax credits is critical to building financial stability and it is important to increase awareness. Utilizing the available tax credits help provide an onramp to larger economic security, stimulate California's economy, and create jobs.”

This was evident when EITC filer Maribel Ramirez, a client who has taken advantage of free tax services offered by Foothill Unity Center, Inc., spoke at the press conference to highlight what these services have meant to her and her family. “Through the free tax services at Foothill Unity Center, Inc., I received \$7,000 in 2010,” said Maribel Ramirez. “With this money, I was able to pay off my student loan and buy a reliable car that helps me take my kids to school and get me to work.”

The need for a statewide Coalition was identified in 2010 at the first annual Symposium, Harnessing Tax Credits for California Working Families. A second symposium was held in 2011, where learning and sharing best practices, from innovative new models to proven strategies, that help Californians tap into their hard earned tax credits, and save their way out of poverty, were explored.

As the Administrative Agent for the California Asset Building Coalition, Cal/Neva has been designated as the state lead for the Assets and Independence Network by the Corporation for Enterprise Development. The Coalition is working hard to build a diverse network of policy makers, elected officials, practitioners, and advocates whose goal is to come together to support and advance asset building programs and policies in California. Ultimately by close of tax season 2013, Cal/Neva’s goal is to increase EITC participation by 200,000 and bring in many hundreds of millions in refunds to California.

The success of the EITC is just one step. Through our combined efforts - sharing resources, ideas, and promotion of the Earned Income Tax Credit - those working in the community, financial, and policy arenas can help more Californians claim their tax credits, save, and build assets!

Those earning under \$49,078 should see if they qualify for an EITC refund by going online to [WWW.IRS.GOV/EITC](http://WWW.IRS.GOV/EITC), or by contacting a [local volunteer assistance site](#).