

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Want to Help Families Survive the Economy? Volunteer.

Volunteers needed to help offer free tax and financial services to low-income Illinois families

(Chicago, IL) – With debt, foreclosures, unemployment and heating costs on the rise, low-income families often find themselves falling behind. To help bring some relief during the upcoming tax season, the Center for Economic Progress is recruiting volunteers to help bring free tax and financial services to families who need them most.

With little tax training, low-income families are among the most likely to leave money on the table at tax time. They're also those who can least afford to do so. Many are simply unaware of credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Child Tax Credit (CTC), which can be equal to more than two months pay for a low-income family.

"After the year we've just had, we want to make sure that all eligible families claim their tax refund quickly and completely," said David Marzahl, Executive Director at the Center for Economic Progress. "We also want to make sure that they have the opportunity to start saving for a rainy day with sound financial products at our tax sites."

In 2009, more than 1,200 volunteers joined the Center in helping low-income workers get the max from tax time. Thanks to these volunteers and partners, the Center provided free tax and financial services to 33,000 individuals and families in Illinois, returning \$52 million to some of the most cash-strapped communities in Illinois.

No prior tax experience is necessary. Free, flexible training is available to volunteers willing to spend just a few hours a week providing this vital service to low-income families while building their skills and networking at one of many Illinois tax sites. In Chicago, volunteers are needed at tax sites in Albany Park, Auburn Gresham, Bronzeville, Chicago Lawn, Lawndale, the Loop, Pilsen, Rogers Park, Uptown and West Garfield Park. In the Chicago suburbs and northern Illinois, volunteers are needed in Aurora, Crystal Lake, Elgin, Harvey, Joliet, Rockford and Waukegan. In central and southern Illinois, volunteers are needed in Alton, Bloomington, Decatur, East St. Louis, Marion, Normal, Peoria, Rock Island and Springfield. Volunteers are supported at all times by experienced tax preparers and accountants. Certified Public Accountants who volunteer can also receive free Continuing Professional Education Credits.

The Center provides free tax preparation from January 23, 2010 thru April 15, 2010 at over 30 Illinois locations. For more information or to register to volunteer, visit www.economicprogress.org, or call (312) 630-0244.

About the Center for Economic Progress

The Center for Economic Progress is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping hard-working, low-income families move from financial uncertainty to financial security.

Local in service and national in voice, we have served more than 200,000 Illinois families, returning \$300 million plus in refunds – more than any other organization of our kind. We also provide year-round financial counseling and tools that support and empower the residents of our communities. Leading a coalition of like-minded organizations from across the country, we find the solutions that work for working families. What we learn on the ground, we translate into best practices in the field and into workable policies at the federal and state levels. Visit us online at www.economicprogress.org.

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Note to Editor:

Staff members at the Center for Economic Progress are nationally recognized experts on tax and financial issues affecting low-income working families. To reach the Center's experts, contact Faith Hinz at (312) 630-0284.