

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 7, 2010

Media Contact:

Faith Hinz: (312) 630-0284

Raissa Allaire: (312) 630-0247

Free Tax Help Available to Low-Income Illinois Families

Services begin Saturday, January 23 in over 30 communities

(Chicago, IL) – With jobs disappearing and wages declining, low-income families in Illinois need their tax refund more than ever, and, thanks to the Center for Economic Progress, they can claim it for free. This tax season, the Center will be in over 30 Illinois communities, offering free tax and financial services to low-income families.

“In today’s difficult economy, hard-working, low-income families have been hit hardest,” said David Marzahl, Executive Director at the Center for Economic Progress. “The Center works to ensure that all families have a real chance at financial security, and thanks to our dedicated volunteer corps, we plan on returning more than \$50 million in refunds to 35,000 families and their communities in 2010.”

For low-income families, a tax refund is likely the largest lump sum they will receive all year. It is often their best chance to stop the cycle of debt thanks to credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), worth up to \$5,657 this year.

To help clients make the most of their refunds, bank and credit union partners will be available at CEP tax sites to help clients open checking and savings accounts. Some CEP sites will also offer prepaid debit cards and assistance with filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)—taking aim at a major barrier to success for low-income and first-generation students by helping them obtain need-based financial aid.

Families who earned less than \$50,000 in 2009 and individuals who earned less than \$25,000 are eligible for the Center’s services. Those interested in having their taxes prepared should bring the following items with them to tax sites: income documents for all jobs worked throughout the year; Social Security cards or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) for all family members; valid photo ID; copy of last year’s tax return (if available); bank account number and routing number for direct deposit of refund; college expenses including books; and your most recent property tax statement.

Most tax sites are open from Saturday, January 23 until Thursday, April 15. In Chicago, the Center’s free tax and financial services are available in Albany Park, Auburn Gresham, Bronzeville, Chicago Lawn, Humboldt Park, Lawndale, Loop, Pilsen, Rogers Park and Uptown. In Chicago suburbs and northern Illinois, services are available in Aurora, Crystal Lake, Elgin, Harvey, Joliet, Rockford and Waukegan. In central and southern Illinois, services are available in Alton, Bloomington, Champaign, Decatur, East St. Louis, Marion, Normal, Peoria, Rock Island and Springfield.

For more information, call 1-888-827-8511 or TTY (312) 701-1326 or visit www.economicprogress.org. All tax sites are ADA accessible.

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.

###

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.

CHICAGO (MAIN OFFICE)
29 E. Madison, Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 252-0280 Tel
(312) 252-0285 Fax

SPRINGFIELD
516 E. Monroe, Suite 501
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 753-3272 Tel
(217) 753-3508 Fax

info@economicprogress.org
www.economicprogress.org