

## Making an Impact for Working Families

For 20 years, the Center for Economic Progress (CEP) has been on the forefront of **turning tax time into an opportunity** for low-wage workers and their families to get ahead. Our free **tax and financial services** provide a holistic approach to help people move from **financial uncertainty to financial security**.



As Illinois' largest free tax preparer and provider of related financial services for low-income families, we enjoy a reputation as a trusted service provider, a strong and valuable partner in the communities we serve, and a responsible steward of funders' investments.

### CEP Economic Impact

For every dollar invested in CEP's services in Illinois in 2010, the economic impact to our clients and their communities was over \$33.

**\$441**  
Million

amount CEP has returned to Illinois families since 1995

**302,000**

number of hard-working, low-income families CEP has helped since 1995

**\$5**  
Million

amount saved by families using our free tax prep service in 2011

Nearly  
**10,000**

number of clients who have opened bank accounts through CEP

**\$1**  
Million

amount saved by clients who chose to direct deposit their refund instead of using a check cashing service in 2011 (*industry standard for check cashing fees*)



## Award

In June, CEP received the **2011 Financial Stability Impact Award** from the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago.

## Clients

CEP helps low-income workers and their families meet their immediate financial needs, weather emergencies, take advantage of financial opportunities, and plan for the future.

“I have gained back my self-esteem.”

– Dora, CEP Client Since 2006

“I had been given peace of mind, one less thing that would keep me up at night.”

– Shawna, CEP Client Since 2011

“CEP is greatly appreciated by the people in need.”

– John, CEP Client Since 2008

➔ In 2011

**\$50.2**  
Million

amount of refunds CEP helped return to clients

**28,134**

returns completed in 2011 tax season

**\$2,000**

average tax refund amount per client

**1,125**

number of volunteers

**70%**

amount of clients who used direct deposit services with their refund

**\$37**  
Million

amount clients direct deposited into bank accounts

**\$350,000**

amount CEP's Tax Clinic saved 112 clients

**610**

number of students we helped apply for Financial Aid

**92**

number of Individual Tax Identification Numbers completed



“Some clients wouldn’t have enough money to put food on the table that month if it wasn’t for this program.”

— Kyle, CEP Volunteer Since 2011

“The people that I’ve helped out over the years are so grateful for the service that we provide. It never gets old telling someone who has struggled all year that they will be getting several thousand dollars back as a tax refund.”

– Jessica, CEP Volunteer Since 2008

“Knowing that you are making a difference in someone’s life has always been rewarding enough to me. Each year, I returned to the site with a greater passion knowing that I was making an impact in someone’s life.”

– Rocio, CEP Volunteer Since 2006

## Volunteers

CEP’s volunteers come from all walks of life: community residents, former CEP clients, corporate professionals, non-profit employees, retired individuals, and students.

## 2011 Tax Season

Site Location	Federal Tax Returns Prepared	Federal & State Tax Refunds
Chicago*	12,633	\$21,228,841
Ashburn	503	\$1,057,225
Auburn Gresham	1,381	\$2,648,929
Lawndale	516	\$942,375
Loop	2,816	\$4,267,719
Pilsen	1,650	\$3,573,476
Quad Communities	936	\$1,417,304
Uptown**	4,087	\$6,074,529
West Garfield Park	525	\$944,725
Aurora	829	\$1,649,627
Bloomington/Normal**	1,201	\$2,074,006
Champaign	371	\$826,593
Crystal Lake	640	\$1,146,210
Decatur	1,072	\$1,660,231
East Alton	1,595	\$2,850,961
East St. Louis	1,305	\$2,576,963
Elgin	1,236	\$2,150,217
Harvey	1,354	\$2,666,628
Joliet	917	\$1,787,122
Marion	1,059	\$2,160,206
Peoria	623	\$1,165,706
Rock Island	724	\$1,328,836
Rockford	638	\$1,225,434
Springfield	714	\$1,406,591
Waukegan	855	\$1,869,317
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,134</b>	<b>\$50,222,898</b>

\* Includes single-day events. At events in Chicago and surrounding areas, about 219 returns were prepared and \$302,559 in refunds generated. At events in downstate Illinois, about 368 returns were prepared and refunds totaled \$449,409.

\*\*CEP has more than one tax site in this community.

## Partners

To truly create progress in a community, it takes more than one organization. It takes a team with the will to move a community forward.

Partners are the key to our success. We can tailor a partnership that benefits both your organization and the community.

### Among the Benefits CEP Provides

- Visibility within the community
- Listing in CEP's press releases throughout tax season
- Logo or listing on CEP's website
- Visibility of product or service
- Increased foot traffic

## Partnerships

### Community Partner

- Serve as the tax site host, providing a venue
- Offer marketing outreach assistance

### Volunteer Partner

- Enlist employees to be CEP volunteers
- Distribute volunteer information within organization
- Assist CEP to present volunteer opportunities to employees

### Financial Partner

- Provide safe, affordable products at tax sites
- Enlist dependable staffing to help clients with products

### Technology Partner

- Supply computer needs for tax sites
- Tech needed: computers, servers, routers, switches, USB memory sticks, etc.

### Media Partner

- Serve as CEP's voice within the community
- Detail CEP's services throughout tax season

# Partner Profile



Free tax preparation is an effective way to get clients—who may need help with a variety of financial issues—in the door. For many who visit our tax sites, the ritual of tax preparation provides an opportunity to learn healthy financial habits and put them into action.

Since 2007, Fifth Third Bank has helped 1,512 (and counting) low-income households use safe, affordable banking products at five of CEP's Chicago-area tax sites. After we file their tax returns, clients have met with Fifth Third Bank staff to review products designed for low- to moderate-income consumers such as:

- **Fifth Third Basic53 Checking account** – User can benefit from direct deposit, automatic checking-to-savings transfers, identity alerts, and free online bill paying.
- **Fifth Third Goal Setter Savings accounts** – This product requires no minimum balance or monthly fees, and provides incentives to meet a savings goal.

- **Fifth Third Secured Credit Cards** – With this credit card, customers choose their credit limit based on the amount of a security deposit. This lets them build a credit history without the risk of taking on too much debt.

CEP rigorously vets all financial products offered to the families we serve. We seek out financial partners who share our commitment to helping previously unbanked individuals make long-term progress. Many clients not only keep their accounts open for the long term, but also build an ongoing relationship with the bank by purchasing other products such as car loans. Connecting our clients to Fifth Third Bank is therefore not only beneficial for the client, but also for the bank, as it presents a steady stream of viable customers.

**Get Involved.  
Give Back.**

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