

SACRAMENTO MUTUAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMHA Offers Free Tax Prep Services to Taxpayers

Encourages Filers Not to Be Fooled by 'Low-cost' Quick Refund Services

Sacramento, CA –Sacramento Mutual Housing Association (SMHA) is offering free tax preparation services to area residents who earned less than \$39,000 in 2006. It also is advising taxpayers to be aware of the real cost of quick refund services.

Taxpayers who are not sure if they are eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit are encouraged to seek the advice of SMHA's trained preparers.

Depending on the complexity of the return, using a free service can save each taxpayer hundreds of dollars. "Our tax preparation service is aligned with our mission of service and economic empowerment of low-income residents," said Rachel Iskow, Executive Director of SMHA.

Finally, if a Sacramento taxpayer is going to pay a professional tax preparer to file their return that offers quick refund loans, it is very important to understand the true cost of agreeing.

According to research done by several consumer rights organizations, the real interest cost of a quick refund loan can easily exceed 50 percent on an annualized basis or even more.

"It's easy to accept a check on the spot and pay what seems to be a small amount of money in order to walk out with cash in hand," said Iskow. "By waiting just a little while longer, a taxpayer can receive all of her or his money without paying interest, and continue down the path to becoming 'financially fit.'"

For more information about the tax preparation services offered by SMHA, contact Anne Marie Flynn at 916. 388.9205.

In existence since 1988, SMHA develops, owns and operates affordable, multi-family housing for more than 2,400 people in the City and County of Sacramento. SMHA builds strong and stable communities through financial education programs, leadership development and resident participation.

SMHA is one of many local nonprofit organizations in the national NeighborWorks network that offer free tax preparation services to low- and moderate-income clients.

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