

Low-income filers get a helping hand

Clinics start up around area.

By Claudia Buck Friday, Jan. 30, 2009

Free tax help for low-income individuals is available starting this week at dozens of area community centers, high schools and county agencies. It's an effort to ensure more working poor receive the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a refundable amount of nearly \$5,000.

"In these difficult economic times, we want to ensure everyone who's eligible can take advantage of it," said Claudia Wreyford, an Internal Revenue Service supervisor in Sacramento. She said many low-wage earners don't realize they're eligible for the refundable tax credit.

As an example, Wreyford said, a married fast-food worker with two children, making \$12,000 a year, would be eligible for the maximum amount, or \$4,824. (The maximum refundable amount with one qualifying child is \$2,917; with no dependents, it's \$438.)

The first free tax-help event will be held today at the IRS office, 4330 Watt Ave., from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Spanish-speaking tax assistance will be available. Subsequent sessions at the IRS office will be held on Saturdays, Jan. 31, Feb. 7 and Feb. 21, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Also Saturday, a free tax-help session will be offered at Grant High School, 1400 Grand Ave., from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Information also will be available on child-care referrals, free or reduced-cost health insurance, free credit counseling and discounted utility programs.

The free tax assistance, which includes electronic filing, is available to any taxpayer earning less than \$42,000. Those attending should bring their W-2 forms, a Social Security card or taxpayer I.D. number, a prior tax return or 1099 forms (if applica-

ble) and photo identification. In most cases, an appointment is recommended.

Additional free clinics will start next week at various locations. Among them: Starting Feb. 7, Spanish, Russian and Hmong tax preparers will be available at Victory Townhomes, 1075 Dixie Ave. in North Sacramento, (Mondays and Thursdays, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.), sponsored by the Sacramento Mutual Housing Association. For an appointment, call (916) 929-0576.

For more information on free clinics offered through VITA – the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program – call (800) 829-1040 or go to: www.irs.gov.

The AARP also offers free tax-assistance help at various libraries and community centers. For locations, go to: www.aarp.org/taxaide.



Sacramento Mutual Housing Association develops housing that is affordable to a diversity of households. Our housing builds strong and stable communities through resident participation and leadership development.

For more information, call (916) 453-8400 or visit our website at mutualhousing.com.